

# Activities That Require a Special Use Permit

**Why Do I Need a Permit?** Thank you for choosing Gulf Islands National Seashore. We want to help ensure that your event or activity runs smoothly and without interference to the use and experience of the Park by the general public, park operations and resource protection. Special Use Permits are generally subject to certain conditions to ensure that the requested activity is appropriate to the area and that it will not reasonably interfere with the use of the park by the general public. Permits also ensure compliance with park regulations, establish a contact person and alert park maintenance and law enforcement rangers of upcoming special events. Please remember that permits do not guarantee space will be available at your selected location. If you only require guaranteed availability and exclusive use of a picnic pavilion in Florida at the Perdido Key, Santa Rosa area or Naval Live Oaks area, please call (850)934-2622, between 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. To reserve a pavilion at Davis Bayou in Mississippi, please call (228) 875-3962. The daily pavilion fees are between \$25-\$100, and are in addition to the permit application cost.

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## Special Events

Special Events are regulated under 36 CFR 2.50, NPS-53 and the Gulf Islands National Seashore Superintendent's Compendium. A Special Use Permit is required of activities or events that provide a benefit to an individual, group or organization, rather than the public at large and may require some degree of management from the National Park

Service in order to protect park resources and the public interest. Some examples of special events that require permits are: sporting events, public spectator attractions, festivals, weddings, regattas, concerts, ceremonies, races, cultural programs or gatherings of 100 or more people.

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## First Amendment Activities

Freedom of speech, the press, religion, and assembly are constitutional rights. The courts have recognized that activities associated with the exercise of these rights may be reasonably regulated to protect park resources. Therefore, all first amendment activities require special use permits and NPS may regulate the

time, place and the manner in which they are conducted. Some examples of first amendment activities that require permits are: distribution and/or sale of printed matter, political speeches, religious services, public demonstrations or assemblies, and collecting signatures for petitions.

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## Associated Costs

16USC Sec.3a. requires parks to recover all costs associated with the issuance of a Special Use Permit. This mandated administrative cost allows each park to recover the time invested in accepting, reviewing, and issuing a final permit determination. The basic, non-refundable application cost for a Special Use Permit at Gulf Islands National Seashore is \$50.00, made payable to the National Park Service. Permit costs do not include the normal park entrance fees that are required at the Fort Pickens, Perdido Key and Santa Rosa areas. Depending on the magnitude of your event or activity, some applications may assume additional administrative cost for reviewing your permit, performance bonds, or liability

insurance. Permittees will be financially responsible for any costs incurred by the government as the result of the permitted activity, such as monitoring costs for staff to oversee events, or clean up costs. If additional costs are required, you will be notified after we receive your completed written application. Any additional costs will be billed and paid after completion of the permitted event. The Superintendent may reduce or waive fees for activities that provide benefit to or promote the mission of the National Park Service. Entrance fees are not collected at the Naval Live Oaks area in Florida or at Davis Bayou in Mississippi.

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## Park Regulations and Conditions

- Access for other park visitors must not be impeded. A Special Use Permit is authorization for your private event to take place on parklands and does not grant exclusive use of a location or parking area. If you wish to increase the privacy of your event or activity, we recommend that you choose less visited sites, schedule your event during the slower months, or early or late in the day. Please remember that the Perdido Key, Santa Rosa and Davis Bayou areas of the park are only open from 8 am until sunset. Fort Barrancas is open 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. The Fort Pickens area is open from 7am until 10 pm.
  - Available parking is limited, and not guaranteed. Carpooling or shuttles are strongly encouraged. This will help ensure your guests arrive on schedule and at the correct location. Park in designated areas only. No off-road parking.
  - Special Use Permit requests may be denied during periods of heavy use, (e.g., Memorial or Labor Day weekends, Fourth of July, etc.)
  - Please take special care to prevent damage to park resources. Events must not impact vegetation or dune structure. Disturbing or cutting vegetation is not allowed. Do not disturb, harass, or feed any wildlife.
  - Decorations and equipment must be discussed prior to issuance of your permit. Using special equipment such as canopies, arches, chairs or other decorations may require park administrative review and are not allowed in certain areas. Please discuss your decoration plans with the Permit Coordinator and consider using the scenery of Gulf Islands as your backdrop.
  - In respect of other park visitors, amplified music is prohibited. Acoustic music will be considered. Exceptions can be made for portable tape decks or CD players if discussed in advance with the Permit Coordinator.
- Standing speakers, disc jockeys, karaoke machines, public address systems or any other type of amplified devices maybe prohibited.
- To protect parklands and wildlife, releasing balloons, doves, or butterflies and the throwing of rice, birdseed, flower petals or other natural or artificial material is not allowed. Birdseed provides an unnatural food source for park wildlife and may introduce exotic plant species. Because of the Park's close proximity to the ocean, balloons are prohibited since they can be harmful to marine life. Releasing doves, butterflies or other living things is prohibited by law and will upset the natural balance of wildlife in the Park.
  - During dry conditions, fires, candles, tiki torches and all other forms of open flames are prohibited.
  - Affixing directional signage to existing buildings, property, signs, poles or plants is not allowed. Please respect the uncluttered views of the Park. Park personnel will immediately remove any posted signs or information. Please provide your guests or participants with written directions or maps.
  - Alcohol is permitted in most areas though glass containers are not permitted on any beach.
  - Catered events require Public Health Service approval with documentation.
  - Park entrance fees apply to all vehicles associated with the permitted event or activity.
  - The Permittee is required to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, ordinances, regulations, and codes, as well as park regulations contained in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Failure to follow any of the conditions listed above may result in revocation of the issued permit and/or issuance of violation notices. (36CFR 1.5 – 36CFR 1.6)
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