

# Tallgrass Prairie

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve  
Cottonwood Falls, Kansas



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## GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT

**Permit Conditions:** Special use permits will be issued only after the National Park Service (NPS) determines that the activities involved will not impair park values and resources, and that the activity meets the mission of the park. An “appropriate use” is a use that is suitable, proper, or fitting for a particular park, or to a particular location within the park. Not all uses are appropriate or allowable in units of the national park system, and what is appropriate may vary from one park to another and from one location to another within a park.

Each Special Use Permit issued is based upon general conditions that protect visitor access, safety, and park values and resources. Other permit conditions may be imposed depending upon the proposed event activities and the park site in which it is held. This document has been written to facilitate your Special Use Permit application, providing guidelines surrounding an event or activity in the park.

### How to Apply

**Letter to the Superintendent:** The first step in applying for all special use permits is writing the park superintendent. This letter should include a short summary detailing the requested activity. Based on this information, the correct permit application will be issued to you. Letters requesting permits shall be sent to:

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve  
Attn: Superintendent  
P.O. Box 585, 226 Broadway  
Cottonwood Falls, KS 66845

**Permit Application:** The appropriate application form (Appendix I and II) enables you to clearly articulate all aspects of the potential event or special use for NPS evaluation, and delineates the planning criteria that are essential for NPS approval of the proposed event or program. It is important that the application be as detailed as possible concerning your proposed activity. For example, we must know your requested location within the park, what kind of activity you are proposing, the types of equipment you may use, catering requirements, and any special needs you may have. If you are not familiar with the area, it is advisable to make an advanced planning trip. Depending upon the complexity of your event request, proposals may take up to six weeks to evaluate, especially for large, high- impact activities, which may require an additional pre- permit contract. **A non- refundable processing fee of \$100.00 is required with each application submitted.** Return the application to the address on the form with a check made payable to Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, National Park Service. This non- refundable processing charge covers up to two hours of documented staff time for permit negotiation, preparation, and processing. It is not a guarantee that you will be issued a permit.

**Review of Application:** The Superintendent and Special Use Permit Office will review your application. Please allow at least 30 days to review your application. If more information is required, a meeting may be called to further discuss your application. Once a decision is reached, you will be notified of your permit status via telephone.

**Permit Guidelines:** If the permit is approved, an on- site meeting will be scheduled to finalize all plans. At this meeting an open dialogue of questions, answers, and ground rules for the permit will be discussed. A permit may be issued with stipulations to protect the resource from damage. After all questions have been answered and logistics finalized, your permit will be written and sent via mail for signature. Permittee may request to be notified when permit has been written, so that signatures can be collected in person to expedite the process. NPS staff will classify all proposed events for cost recovery. An event will not be placed on the annual calendar until a completed application form accompanied by the application fee is received, reviewed at the park, and the permit issued.

**Event Scheduling and Permit Issuance:** An annual calendar is maintained of all special events held in the park. All requests for event dates are issued on a first- come, first- served basis no more than one year in advance. The NPS cannot issue additional Special Use Permits for park sites that are already affected by park events.

**Fees:** Admission fees or any other monies associated with the event may not be collected by the permittee on park property.

**Certificate of Insurance:** The Certificate of Insurance should list the United States/National Park Service, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, P.O. Box 585, Cottonwood Falls, KS 66845 as "additionally insured" for the date(s) of the event or activity. This liability coverage (range: \$100,000 to \$3,000,000) includes operations, personal injury, product liability, property damage and loss, and other necessary categories listed in the permit. The amount of insurance required is based on the relative risk involved in the proposed use. Liability insurance should be issued in the name of the group, not the applicant. Commercial general liability insurance protects the government from negligent actions by the permittee that could result in harm to persons or property and will be in an amount to protect the interests of the United States. Depending on the permitted activity, the superintendent may require additional coverage such as proof of vehicle insurance, pollution insurance, or special event coverage for events where alcohol is served. **Proof of insurance is required before permit can be issued.**

**Performance Bond:** For events with potentially high participant impact, permittees must post a performance bond (certified or cashier's check or money order) made payable to the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, National Park Service. No personal checks shall be accepted. The bond amount is based upon projected number of attendees, and level and scope of event activities. The bond (or remainder) is refundable unless the deposit must be used (in whole or in part) for site cleanup, trash removal, or property damage because the permittee fails to comply with permit conditions.

**Tax ID Number or Social Security Number:** This number is required by 31 United States Code (USC) 7701(c) from each person or organization doing business with the federal government. This number will be used by the federal government to collect and report delinquent debt.

**Event Supervision and Management:** The NPS reserves the right to monitor the conditions of all issued Special Use Permits. Arrangements for on- site NPS staff to supervise, monitor, or staff special

events are made in advance of the event, and fully agreed to by the NPS and the permittee. For large events, the permittee must appoint an Event Manager if the permittee will not be on site. This individual must be on-site and carry the Special Use Permit at all times during the event for reference. The Event Manager must ensure that all event agents, attendees, and audiences comply with the permit conditions, directives, and instructions from NPS rangers and staff, and all posted NPS regulations.

**Cost Recovery:** Permittees should be aware that the NPS is required to recover all direct costs that the government incurs as a result of receiving, writing, issuing, managing, restoring park areas, or otherwise supporting a Special Use Permit.

**Compliance:** All special park uses must take into account the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act of 1996 (NHPA), and other applicable laws. Unless a proposed special use is categorically excluded from NEPA review, an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared to agency standards that identify reasonable alternatives both inside and outside the park, and that any additional compliance documentation is completed. The applicant may be required to prepare the EA/EIS or other documentation, but the National Park Service remains responsible for its content. Regardless of who prepares the documentation, the applicant bears the cost incurred in satisfying NEPA and NHPA. Each application will be reviewed individually.

### **Termination of Permit**

The NPS is committed to the protection of resources and safety of its visitors. All permits issued by the National Park Service may be revoked **without notice**, if the terms of the permit are violated. Deliberate infractions of the terms of the permit or deliberately making false or misleading statements concerning intended actions in order to obtain a permit are causes for immediate termination of the permit and cause for possible prosecution. Permits will be revoked if damage to resources or facilities is threatened, or if there is a clear danger to public health or safety.