



# Hot Springs National Park

## Special Use Permits Guidelines

### General Information:

#### Special Park Use

A special park use is defined as an activity that takes place in a National Park area, and that:

- provides a benefit to an individual, group or organization rather than the public at large;
- requires written authorization and some degree of management control from the National Park Service in order to protect park resources and the public interest;
- is not prohibited by law or regulation;
- is not initiated, sponsored, or conducted by the National Park Service; and
- is not managed under a concession contract, a recreation activity for which the NPS charges a fee or a lease.

In order to monitor and regulate the use of the park while still conserving the scenery, national and historical objects and wildlife within park boundaries, all National Park Services area require special use permit for certain activities which include but are not limited to:

- Festivals, Parades, Plays, Organized Exercise Groups,
- Weddings, Vow Renewals, Memorials, Spreading of Ashes
- Competitive & Non-Competitive Walks/Runs
- Commercial Filming/Photography
- Public Gatherings, First Amendment Activities

Hot Springs National Park's policy is to accommodate requests for special use permits when and where possible. However, the primary consideration must be given to potential resource damage and to anticipated disruption of normal park use.

There is a nonrefundable application fee associated with most of the permits as well as an additional cost for administrative duties and monitoring of these activities.

#### Permits for Special Events & Activities

The National Park Service is directed to conserve park resources "unimpaired" for the enjoyment of future generations. Therefore, any activities that would cause derogation of or detract from the values and purpose for which a park has been established will not be authorized.

An Act of Congress on April 1832 established the Hot Springs Reservation to preserve the natural resource of thermal waters. While your application is under review, the Park will be reviewing multiple

criteria, including whether or not there is a meaningful association between the preservation of the thermal water and the requested event as well as how the event contributes to the visitors understanding of the significance of the park in preservation of the thermal waters.

Providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment is an important part of the National Park Service mission. Approval of any special uses of the park - unrelated to public enjoyment- may be allowed if not otherwise prohibited by law or regulation. However, the National Park Service can only allow uses that are (1) appropriate to the purpose for which the park was established, and (2) can be sustained without causing unacceptable impacts to the parks resources.

Please keep these requirements in mind when contemplating a request for special park use permit.

### **Permit Application Procedure**

Permit application may be printed off the Hot Springs National Parks official website or requested in person or by phone at the parks administration office. The parks administration office must receive a completed application along with the non-refundable application fee prior to discussing details regarding the event. Applications will only be accepted with original signature. Faxed or emailed application will not be accepted.

The information provided on the application will be used by National Park Service (NPS) staff to evaluate the impact of the proposed activity on park resources and visitors. Allow at least 5 business days for processing. Events which require management oversight will require a minimum of 15 business days to process. Uses which require environmental or cultural resource evaluation must be submitted not less than 45 days before the start of proposed activities. Applications are processed in the order in which they are received. Incomplete applications, applications that cannot be approved as submitted, and applications that are received without payment will be returned to the applicant.

The NPS may permit a special event if the proposed activity will not:

- Cause injury or damage to park resources; or
- Be contrary to the purposes for which the park was established; or
- Unreasonably impair the atmosphere of peace and tranquility maintained in wilderness, natural, historic or commemorative locations within the park; or
- Unreasonably interfere with the interpretive visitor service or other program activities, or with the administrative activities of the NPS; or
- Substantially impair the operation of the public facilities or services of NPS concessionaires or contractors; or
- Present a clear and present danger to public health and safety; or
- Result in significant conflict with other existing uses.

The National Park Service will not permit the public staging of special events that are conducted primarily for the material or financial benefit of the organizers or participants, or which involve commercialization or in-park advertising or publicity. Admission fees for the event or any other monies associated with the event may not be collected within the park boundaries.

## Fees & Monitoring Cost

A non-refundable application fee of must be submitted at the time of the initial application. Applications will not be reviewed until the application fee has been submitted.

<b>Special Use Permit for:</b>	<b>Application Fee (Non-Refundable)</b>	<b>Permit Fee</b>	<b>Monitoring Cost:</b>
First Amendment	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
Special Event (75 persons or less)	\$50.00	\$200.00	1 hour min
Special Event (76 -100 persons)	\$100.00	\$300.00	1 hour min
Special Event (100 or more persons)	\$100.00	\$400.00	1 hour min

## Cost Recovery

The authority for the National Park Service to recover and retain costs associated with managing of special park uses is found at 16 U.S.C. 3a and 31 U.S.C. 9701. Charges established for a special park use under this authority are intended to recover costs associated with managing the activity and not to generate revenue beyond actual cost. If any additional costs are incurred, the permittee will be billed at the conclusion of the permit.

If the event requires NPS supervision for resource protection or the health and safety of visitors, the cost will be estimated and payable when the permit is approved and prior to beginning the event. The scope and complexity of the permit activity will determine the level and type of supervision of which the rates are based.

All special use permits have a set of standard conditions as well as a set of park specific conditions. By accepting the responsibility of hosting an event under a special use permit, the permittee agrees to abide by the conditions under which the permit is being issued. Some of the conditions are listed below...

1. Reservation of an area can only be authorized by the Park Superintendent through issuing a permit.
2. Areas to be reserved will not block access to any public area, interfere with regular visitation or operations and the Superintendent will not reserve any areas that would constitute a detriment to the general public use.

3. All costs are to be paid for by the permittee, including the costs of setup, cleanup, removal of debris, policing, supervision, and damage. If necessary, a bond, set by the Superintendent, to cover these costs will be secured at the time the permit is issued. It is refundable upon acceptable inspection by the District Ranger.
4. The park reserves the right to require personal liability insurance for special use activities, naming the National Park Service as co-insured, and require the sponsoring organization to sign a statement holding the Park Service harmless in the event of legal claims.
5. Events are to be strictly controlled by the permittee. The Superintendent will decide whether NPS will police the event or whether a private security firm will be acceptable for crowd control. All infractions of Title 36 CFR or any other federal or state laws will be handled by the NPS Park Rangers.
6. All cleanups shall begin immediately after the event and debris removed from the park, any extension of this requirement will have to be approved in advance.
7. No onsite sales, payments, or admission charges will be allowed.
8. If the area does not have public restrooms readily available, portable restrooms must be provided by the permittee and must be removed within 24 hours following the event.
9. Activities of the permittee and guests must not create or cause any permanent or irreversible impacts.
10. Failure to abide with these and/or any other special restrictions will be grounds for revocation of permit and denial of future permits.

#### **Additional Information:**

##### **Informal Ceremony**

A letter of authorization may be issued for Informal Ceremony. An informal ceremony is defined as a simple ceremony lasting no more than **20 minutes** and consisting of no more than **15 individuals**. Informal ceremonies do not involve set-up, music, or small receptions. Requests for an informal ceremony should be received **no less than 10 days** prior to the start of the event. To apply for a letter of authorization, please complete an application for special use and return it along with the **\$50 non-refundable application fee** to the Administration Office for consideration.

##### **Non-Competitive Walks/Runs:**

A non-competitive walk/run consists of no more than **50 participants** and is held between the hours of **6:00 am and 10:00 am**. There are approximately 2.2 miles of park walkways available in the areas of Whittington Park Pathway (1.2 miles) and the Bathhouse Row and Grand Promenade (1 mile).

**\*\*\*Walk/Runs requesting to use roads and trails located on either Hot Spring or West Mountain or to utilize the area for a longer period of time are required to apply under the special use permit process. \*\*\***

Requests for a non-competitive walk/run should be received **no less than 10 days** prior to the start of the event. To receive authorization, please complete an application for special use and return it along with the **\$50 non-refundable application fee** to the Administration Office for consideration.

### **Photography & Commercial Filming**

A permit is generally not needed for personal, noncommercial filming and photography activities within normal visitation areas and hours. However, filming outside normal visitation hours and all commercial filming will require a special use permit.

For more information, please see the Commercial Film and Still Photography Guidelines located on the Hot Springs National Park official park service website.

**Commercial filming** is filming that involves digital or film recording by a person, business, or other entity for a market audience. This includes recordings such as those issued for a documentary, television or featured film advertisement, and/or similar projects.

For more information, please see the Commercial Film and Still Photography Guidelines located on the Hot Springs National Park official park service website

**Commercial media** which is covering the breaking news never requires a permit, but is subject to the restrictions and conditions necessary to protect park resources from unacceptable impacts.

**Still Photography** (whether commercial or noncommercial) in accordance with Public Law 106-206, will not require a permit unless; it takes place at a location(s) where or when members of the public are generally not allowed, or it uses model(s) or prop(s) that are not a part of the locations natural or cultural resources or administrative facilities, or National Park Service would need to provide management and oversight to prevent unacceptable impacts.

For more information, please see the Commercial Film and Still Photography Guidelines located on the Hot Springs National Park official park service website

### **Public Gatherings:**

Groups of less than 25 participants may gather to exercise their First Amendment Rights without a permit being required. These small groups may peacefully gather however; the gathering must remain within one of the Parks designated First Amendment Activities Areas. First Amendment Areas are designated to protect the safety of the participants, as well as allow park visitors to enjoy the Parks resources without disruption from non-park related activities.

Groups larger than 25 participants may still exercise their rights; however a permit with conditions will be required. There are no fees associated with permits issued for Public Gatherings. Conditions are required

to protect the participants as well as park visitors and the parks resources. In no way will conditions be imposed to restrict the rights of the permit holder. The National Park Service is content neutral and will remain content neutral when issuing a permit for a Public Gathering.

For more information, please see the Guidelines for First Amendment- Public Assemblies located on the Hot Springs National Park official park service website

### **Learn More**

For more information about the special uses of national parks, see current planning documents:

- National Park Service Management Policies 2006 (<http://www.nps.gov/policy/MP2006.pdf>)
- Chapter 8: Use of the Parks (<http://www.nps.gov/policy/mp/chapter8.htm> )

If you are unsure if you need a special use permit, please call the Administration Office at 501-6206720.

### **Park contact information:**

**Special Park Use Coordinator**  
**Hot Springs National Park**  
**101 Reserve Street**  
**Hot Springs, AR 71901**

**Telephone: 501-620-6720**  
**Fax: 501-620-677**  
**Website: [www.nps.gov/hosp](http://www.nps.gov/hosp)**  
**Email: [hosp\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:hosp_superintendent@nps.gov)**