National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Juan Island
National Historical Park

Special Use Permits (General Activities)

A Special Use Permit is required to conduct private ceremonies, public events, First Amendment rights, and other activities that are not directly sponsored by the National Park Service. What follows are guidelines for permit processing to ensure that your permit is in place in time for your special event or occasion.

Timeline:

For simple events or ceremonies, the permit application and application fee must be received no less than two weeks prior to the requested date. For complex or large events and ceremonies, a minimum of four weeks is necessary in order for your application to receive environmental and cultural compliance review. Until a Special Use Permit is approved and issued, the requested date and location cannot be guaranteed.

Once an application is approved, a permit will be written and the permittee will have to review and sign it confirming their intent to adhere to all permit conditions. Once the permittee has signed the permit, the Park Superintendent will authorize the permit with his/her signature.

Application:

The submission of a Special Use Permit application starts the process. The application form can be found online at: http://www.nps.gov/sajh/planyourvisit/permits.htm or may be requested from the Chief Ranger's office.

Please fill out the application completely; incomplete applications will not be considered. Providing as much detail as you can about your activity will aid our staff in processing your request.

Along with your application, you must submit a non-refundable $100 application fee. We can only accept a check or money order made payable to the National Park Service. Applications will not be reviewed until payment is received.

There is no application fee for permits for First Amendment activities.

For permit requests to scatter ashes, a copy of the death certificate must also accompany the permit application and fee.

Applications should be addressed to the attention of the Chief Ranger and delivered as follows:

In Person: Park Headquarters (650 Mullis Street, Suite 100), Friday Harbor. Headquarters is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mail: P.O. Box 429, Friday Harbor, WA 98250

FEDEX/UPS: 650 Mullis Street, Suite 100, Friday Harbor, WA 98250

Fees and Charges:
Application Fee: A $100 non-refundable application fee is required. This covers the time spent on initial communications and writing of permit conditions.

Administrative Charges: Permits that require more than two hours of administrative time for review, site visits, meetings, or permit processing will be charged at the rate of $50 per hour. This is rare for weddings, ash scattering, and other small ceremonies. Sporting events and other complex activities may incur such charges.

Monitoring Charges: Permits will be monitored when there is concern of impact to other visitors, cultural sites, natural resources, or endangered species habitat. This charge is based on actual time spent (including travel time) and is charged at the rate of $50 per hour (in quarter hour increments). This, too, is rare for weddings, ashes scattering, and other small ceremonies.

If monitoring is necessary, the permittee will be charged up front for this. Any credit due the permittee for time charged but not worked will be refunded after the permitted activity is completed.

Insurance:
If your activity is of a complex nature, general commercial liability insurance may be required in the minimum amount of $1,000,000. This is rare for weddings, ash scattering, and other small ceremonies.

The United States Government will be named as additional insured on the insurance certificate and it should read as follows: United States Government, San Juan Island National Historical Park, PO Box 429, Friday Harbor, WA, 98250.

The name on the certificate of insurance must match your business name, including any names used as DBAs (doing business as). The certificate can be mailed or shipped to the Chief Ranger's attention using the contact information listed above.

An original of the insurance certificate must be received before the permit will be approved by the Superintendent.

Group Size and Locations:
Group size will be limited to 50 people per event; this is based on limited parking and facilities, potential conflict with other visitor activities, and potential impacts to natural and cultural resources.

At this time, permit applications may be made for any location within the park. Keep in mind that all park areas are public lands and the park will not exclude or allow you to exclude other park visitors from the site during your ceremony or event.

Permit will include, but is not limited, to these terms and conditions:

- The safety of the public, park employees and individuals involved with the special use activity will be a prime consideration at all times.

- Permitted activities cannot interfere with normal visitor activity in any manner nor deny them access to any facility normally open to the public; expect that there may be other visitors present.

- Native materials will not be used for props except as a natural backdrop.

- Throwing or scattering of rice, bird seed, flowers, confetti, streamers, or other litter is prohibited. All plant, flower material, decorations and trash shall be removed by the permittee after the activity concludes.

- The use of helium balloons is prohibited.

- Electrical power will not be furnished nor will generators be allowed. Audio devices (e.g. electrified musical instruments, P.A. systems, CD players, etc.) are prohibited. Non-amplified musical instruments (e.g. guitar, flute, etc.) that do not impact the visitor experience may be allowed.

- The use of tents, canopies, pop-ups or similar set-ups is prohibited.

- Erecting of banners and signs is prohibited.

- Food service is prohibited (except at designated picnic/camping areas).

- A separate Commercial Photography Permit may be required depending on the complexity of the activity.

- If in doubt about any proposed action, the permittee shall consult with the Chief Ranger prior to initiating the action. Failure to do so will not absolve the permittee from responsibility for their actions.

- (For ashes scattering) - No memorials, plaques, or photos will be left in the park.
- (For ashes scattering) - The permittee recognizes and is aware of the sensitivity of this activity and agrees to perform it in a discreet and private manner.

Additional Information:
Additional information about San Juan National Island Historical Park may be found on our website at http://www.nps.gov/sajh.

For additional information regarding permitting, contact the Chief Ranger's office at 360-378-2240 ext. 2225.