

Appendix 7

NPS APPROVAL TEMPLATE AND GUIDANCE FOR THE USE OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS)

Background

Documentation will be developed by parks requesting use of UAS and submitted for approval to the Regional Director. If a UAS approval package contains unique complexities, elements of emerging issues of national significance, or create significant issues of concern, the regional director always has the discretion to consult with or forward the package to the AD-VRP for review and/or approval.

The Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Directorate (NRSS) has developed a set of best practices for personnel developing and approving requests for UAS operations to avoid impacts to natural, cultural, and historic resources. Superintendents may adopt more protective measures that are necessary to address park-specific concerns. This document can be found on the [NPS Natural Sounds website](#).

Applicability of template and guidance.

1. **Location of UAS activity** – This template and guidance applies to operations that involve the launching, landing, or operation of a UAS on lands and waters administered by the NPS.
2. **Administrative use** – This template, including all required documentation and approvals, must be completed before the commencement of UAS operations on behalf of or by the NPS for administrative purposes, including scientific study, search and rescue operations, fire operations, law enforcement, natural and cultural resource stewardship, and education/interpretation.
3. **Exception for emergencies** – In an emergency where there is an imminent threat exists to health and safety of persons, property, or natural, cultural, or historic resources, the approving official may authorize the immediate use of UAS, to be followed by written approval through the process described in this document.
4. **Scientific research and collecting permits** – This template and guidance should be used for activities conducted under a scientific research and collecting permit that specifically authorizes the launching, landing, or operation of a UAS on lands and waters administered by the NPS.
5. **Special use permits** – This template and guidance does not apply to UAS activities conducted under a special use permit. Follow the guidelines in Exhibit B to Policy Memorandum 14-05 for these activities.

Questions may be directed to the regional aviation manager.

[**UAS Operation**]

APPROVALS

Prepared by: Name: Signature: Date:

Park Aviation Manager: Name: Signature: Date:

Superintendent Approval: Name: Signature: Date:

National Aviation Manager Review: Name: Signature: Date:

Regional Aviation Manager Review: Name: Signature: Date:

Regional Director Approval: Name: Signature: Date:

Consider the following before requesting approval for UAS operations:

- Will the operation endanger public health and safety? Yes No N/A
- Will the use of UAS conflict with the park's enabling legislation or the purposes for which the park was established?
Yes No N/A
- Will the use of UAS comply with NPS and other authorities regarding the protection of natural, cultural, or historic resources, including the Wilderness Act, Endangered Species Act (ESA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), Park System Resources Protection Act (PSRPA), or Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)? Yes No N/A
- Will the operation conflict with the visitor experience, interpretive programs, or concession or other park operations?
Yes No N/A

Specific considerations:

- Is the UAS the safest way to accomplish the mission? Yes No N/A
- Does the UAS and operator meet FAA and DOI operating requirements? Yes No N/A
- Is the UAS capable of performing the mission objectives? Yes No N/A
- Can the UAS platform and payload (e.g. sensor package) gather the required data? Yes No N/A
- Can the raw data be processed in a useful manner? Yes No N/A
- Is the UAS a cost effective and efficient tool for the purpose of the mission? Yes No N/A
- Could the mission be executed without a UAS, and if so, how or what other devices would be utilized instead (e.g., remote sensing, fixed wing or rotary aircraft)? Yes No N/A

Approval Request Package:

Briefing Statement with the following information:

1. The purpose of the mission or project.
2. Designated locations, dates, and times of use for the UAS.
 - Requests may cover more than one mission over a period of time if the impacts and risks of the operation can be properly evaluated at the time of the request.
3. Confirmation that the operation complies with current:
 - DOI and NPS policies regarding UAS operations (applies to NPS or other DOI pilots).
 - FAA policy regarding UAS operations (applies to outside agency/entity cooperator operations).
4. Confirmation that the operation will not interfere with the visitor experience, interpretive programs, or concession or other park operations.
5. Procedures for data management and processing.
6. Why the use of a UAS is appropriate and consistent with the Organic Act and NPS authorities related to the protection of park resources and values, and visitor enjoyment.
7. Confirmation of compliance with relevant laws and regulations including the Wilderness Act, ESA, NHPA, MMPA, ARPA, PSRPA, MBTA.
8. Potential for controversy.
9. Compliance with NEPA, by one of the following:
 - a. Citing a categorical exclusion.
 - b. Explaining that use of the UAS was necessary to control the immediate impacts of an emergency under 43 CFR 46.150.
 - c. Referring to an EA/EIS that has been prepared.
 - d. Contacts at the park or program for further questions.

Required Documentation:

- Copy of the FAA 14 CFR Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate and FAA Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (as applicable).
Attached N/A
- For UAS operations under NPS operational control a completed and signed PASP with a risk analysis (see RM-60, Appendix 3).
Attached N/A
- For UAS operations NOT under NPS operational control a completed safety brief or operation plan acknowledged by the applicable park. Attached N/A
- Copy of scientific research and collecting permit, if applicable. Attached N/A
- Minimum Requirements Analysis – required for all NPS actions within wilderness or areas managed as wilderness that may impact wilderness character and values. Attached N/A
- Aviation enhancement application, (RM-60, Appendix 5) if applicable. Attached N/A

Additional Comments: