

FORRS BOARD POLICY
COMMERCIAL USE IN THE ROSSLAND RANGE RECREATION SITE

APPROVED JANUARY 9, 2020

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to guide the directors of FORRS in their deliberations about commercial use in the Rossland Range Recreation Site, so that their approach is consistent over time and among applicants.

COMMERCIAL USE

For the purpose of this policy, “commercial use” means an activity within the Rossland Range Recreation Site organized by a for-profit entity (including an individual) and requiring a person to pay for participation.

OBTAINING PERMISSION FOR COMMERCIAL USE IN THE REC SITE

Commercial use of recreational amenities in the Rossland Range Rec Site is not allowed without a permit from the Ministry of Forests District Recreation Officer, and there are penalties for failing to obtain a permit. See the [Forest Recreation Regulation](#), sections 16 to 24.

Before deciding whether to issue a permit for a proposed commercial use, the District Recreation Officer refers the application to FORRS, as the Ministry’s Rec Site management partner and community liaison.

The directors of FORRS consider the application in light of this policy, and recommend a course of action to the District Recreation Officer.

The District Recreation Officer then decides how to deal with the application, giving due weight to the FORRS recommendation.

STARTING POINT – THE REC SITE AS A FREE PUBLIC AMENITY

Rec Site users and concerned members of the community at large have made it clear that the Rec Site should not be seen as generally available for commercial use. This position is driven by two concerns:

First, as stated in the Rossland Range Rec Site Management Plan, the Rec Site is a place for free public recreation. The public expect the District Recreation officer not to allow activities that could encroach on public enjoyment of the Rec Site, or that could lead to expectations of increased use over time on the part of commercial operators.

Second, the Rec Site is managed and maintained entirely by volunteers and funded by donations. There is a need to ensure that a proposed commercial activity would not impose a burden on the Rec Site without making a suitable contribution in return.

The FORRS directors should approach any application for commercial use keeping these concerns in mind, but also with the understanding that a particular proposed commercial use could be allowed if it is a suitable fit with the Rec Site.

FIRST LOOK AT AN APPLICATION

On first review of an application, the directors may decide that the activity proposed is so far from being appropriate for the Rec Site that it should be recommended for rejection without further consideration. (A flea market at Mosquito Cabin comes to mind.)

On the other hand, the directors may be presented with an application for an activity that would clearly be worthwhile for the Rec Site and its users and virtually free of negative impacts, such as an avalanche safety or backcountry survival course. They could then decide to recommend it for a permit without further in-depth review.

Where a proposed activity has some merit, but would need to be carefully managed to make sure it would work for the Rec Site, the directors can recommend that FORRS explore whether an agreement could be negotiated between FORRS and the applicant, setting out the terms for use of the Rec Site. If an agreement is created, it can be forwarded to the District Recreation Officer with a request that it form part of the conditions of a permit. (This procedure is the usual practice in other Recreation Sites in the District.)

TERMS OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN FORRS AND A COMMERCIAL OPERATOR

(Note: Insurance, safety equipment, qualifications of trip leaders, and similar concerns are matters to be agreed between the applicant and the District Recreation Officer.)

An agreement between FORRS and a commercial operator should include these terms:

1. Leave no trace: Experience has shown that this needs to be very specific and pointed, e.g. even compostable food waste must be removed, outhouses are not for garbage disposal, etc.
2. The trip should be an educational experience: Clients should learn about the Rec Site and what it means, the natural values they are enjoying, appropriate wilderness etiquette, safe practices and skills (the right gear, staying oriented in the landscape, etc.)
3. Trip leaders and clients should practice “good neighbours” behavior, e.g. introduce the group, don’t block trails, clean up garbage even if it’s someone else’s, etc.
4. The commercial operator should contribute to the Rec Site to help maintain the amenities created by the Rec Site volunteers. This could take the form of a donation to FORRS, participating in trail and access work, using advertising materials to acknowledge the Rec Site, or any other contribution that is reasonably proportionate to the amount of potential wear and tear on the Rec Site. (FORRS can receive donations to support the Rec Site, but cannot charge a fee; the District Rec Office is also not allowed to charge a fee.)
5. The agreement is time-limited. The commercial operator should not expect the agreement to be automatically renewed.
6. **CABINS: SPECIAL ADVISORY:** Since the first version of this policy was approved by the directors of FORRS in June of 2017, public use of the cabins at all times of day has increased many-fold. It is now clear to the directors that most potential commercial uses of the cabins would be incompatible with the goals and principles that apply to the Recreation Site. See “STARTING POINT – THE REC SITE AS A FREE PUBLIC AMENITY” above.

The process for applying for a permit to use Rec Site amenities remains as explained in the first 5 sections of this policy. However, potential applicants need to be aware that FORRS cannot support, and will not recommend in favour of, an application to use a cabin for a commercial purpose, except in very rare and exceptional circumstances.