



# Harvesting of Special Forest Products on San Juan Public Lands

## Guidelines and Regulations for Sustainable Harvest of Special Forest Products

Special Forest Products are botanical products, other than timber, that are harvested from public land. On San Juan Public Lands in southwestern Colorado (National Forest and Bureau of Land Management), this includes corral poles, firewood, tipi poles, fence stays, walking sticks, Christmas trees, boughs, pine cones, medicinal plants, berries, mushrooms, transplants, native plant seeds, basket making material, and decorative plants.

## General Regulations

Generally, a permit is required to remove a product from public land. Permits are either free (called a free-use permit) or have a charge. Free-use permits are given for the collection of small quantities of forest products for personal use (not for resale), valued at less than \$20. Charge permits are for removal of larger quantities of products or for commercial sales (products for resale).

Unless specifically authorized by FS personnel, harvest of forest products is not allowed in:

- ◆ The Weminuche, South San Juan, or Lizard Head Wildernesses
- ◆ Piedra Special Management Area
- ◆ Canyons of the Ancients National Monument
- ◆ Developed Campgrounds and Picnic Areas

- ◆ Administrative Sites

## How Permits Work

The person to whom the permit is issued is responsible for following the requirements of the permit and all other applicable laws and regulations. Violation of the terms of the permit or illegal collection of products may result in the forfeiture of all collected products; termination of the permit; and/or criminal prosecution, with a fine of not more than \$5,000 or up to 6 months in prison, or both.

## Personal Use

- ◆ The gathering of small amounts of forest botanical products (medicinal plants, material for basketry, berries, mushrooms, boughs, seeds, decorative plants, and dry pine cones) for personal use is allowed without a permit.
- ◆ A permit should be obtained if collecting more than ½ bushel of plants, boughs, or sprigs, or more than 1 lb. of mushrooms, roots, or seeds.
- ◆ A \$20 product-removal permit is required for more than 10 lbs. of mushrooms, two bushels of plants or boughs, or more than 2 lbs. of seeds or medicinal roots.



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The removal of firewood, poles, transplants, fence stays, walking sticks, or Christmas trees always requires a permit.

- ◆ *Firewood permits* are \$10/cord for up to 10 cords/household.
- ◆ *Transplants* are available for \$5 for aspen, shrub, or white fir. All other trees are \$10 each. A minimum \$20 permit is required for a maximum of 20 transplants/person.
- ◆ *Pole permits* are available for a minimum of \$20. Prices vary, depending on quantity and product.
- ◆ *Christmas tree permits* are \$8/tree for a maximum of 5 trees/household.

### Commercial Permits

Removal of any product from public land for resale requires a commercial permit or contract. Not all products are available for commercial harvest. Areas for commercial collecting are usually designated in the permit or contract. Permits or contracts may be obtained at any San Juan Public Lands office. Anyone interested in collecting products commercially should contact us at least 2 months before harvest, to allow adequate time for response. Any forest product collected for personal use cannot be sold. Permits may not be transferred or exchanged and are not refundable.



### Guidelines for harvesting forest products

- ◆ Any person collecting on public land is expected to exercise reasonable care in protecting resources from damage.
- ◆ Know your species. Do not eat or collect wild plants or mushrooms unless you are certain of the species.
- ◆ Know what species are at risk in your bioregion. Never collect threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants or fungi.
- ◆ Be opportunistic and harvest from areas that will be disturbed by logging or development.
- ◆ Harvest only what you need or can reasonably use.
- ◆ Try not to disturb or compact soils where you are working.
- ◆ Leave the area as you found it. Fill in any holes and step lightly.
- ◆ Go back to the same places and monitor the effects of your harvest. Become a steward of that place. Study the plants and how they respond.
- ◆ Do not break bushes or trees that will be left. Do not strip the leaves of berry bushes.
- ◆ Collect mushrooms in a mesh bag or open-weave basket, to allow the mushrooms to spore while you are harvesting, and cover the hole where the stem was with forest litter or damp soil, to protect the mycelium from drying out.
- ◆ Spread the impacts of your harvest out and leave some behind for wildlife.
- ◆ Do not drive off roads, create ruts, or leave trash behind.