

§ 251.123

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either the same or similar visitor services, the historical operator has no right of preference for the increased amount of authorized services. If additional operations are authorized, the special use authorization shall explicitly state that they are not subject to the historical operator preference.

§ 251.123 Most directly affected Native Corporation determination.

(a) Before issuance of the first special use authorization for a specific CSU pursuant to § 251.124 on or after the effective date of this subpart, the authorized officer shall give notice to Native Corporations interested in providing visitor services within the CSU and give them an opportunity to submit an application to be considered the Native Corporation most directly affected by the establishment or expansion of the CSU under section 1307(b) of ANILCA (16 U.S.C. 1397(b)). In giving notice of the application procedure, the authorized officer shall make clear that this is the only opportunity to apply for most directly affected status for that particular CSU.

(1) At a minimum, an application from an interested Native Corporation shall include the following:

(i) Name, address, and telephone number of the Native Corporation; date of its incorporation; its articles of incorporation and structure; and the name of the applicable CSU and the solicitation to which the Native Corporation is responding;

(ii) Location of the Native Corporation's population centers; and

(iii) An assessment of the socioeconomic impacts (including changes in historical and traditional use and landownership patterns) on the Native Corporation resulting from establishment or expansion of the applicable CSU.

(2) In addition to the minimum information required by paragraph (a)(1) of this section, Native Corporations may submit such additional information as they consider relevant.

(b) Upon receipt of all applications from interested Native Corporations, the authorized officer shall determine the most directly affected Native Corporation considering the following factors:

(1) Distance and accessibility from the Native Corporation's population centers and/or business address to the applicable CSU;

(2) Socioeconomic impacts (including changes in historical and traditional use and landownership patterns) on Native Corporations resulting from establishment or expansion of the applicable CSU; and

(3) Information provided by Native Corporations and other information considered relevant by the authorized officer to assessment of the effects of establishment or expansion of the applicable CSU.

(c) In the event that two or more Native Corporations are determined to be equally affected for purposes of the most directly affected Native Corporation determination pursuant to this section, each such Native Corporation shall be considered a preferred operator under this subpart.

(d) A Native Corporation determined to be most directly affected for a CSU shall maintain that status for all future visitor service solicitations for that CSU.

§ 251.124 Preferred operator competitive special use authorization procedures.

(a) In selecting persons to provide visitor services for a CSU, the authorized officer shall, if the number of visitor service authorizations is to be limited, give a preference (subject to any rights of historical operators under this subpart) to preferred operators as defined in this subpart who are determined to be qualified to provide such visitor services.

(b) In such circumstances, the authorized officer shall solicit applications competitively by issuing a prospectus for persons to apply for a visitor services authorization. Notwithstanding Forest Service outfitting and guiding policy in Forest Service Handbook 2709.11, chapter 40, when authorizations, including priority use permits for activities other than sport hunting and fishing, expire in accordance with their terms, they shall not be reissued if there is a need to limit use and when there is competitive interest by preferred operators.

(c) To qualify as a preferred operator under this subpart, an applicant responding to a solicitation made under this section must be determined by the authorized officer to be a local resident as defined in § 251.121 of this subpart, or the Native Corporation most directly affected by establishment or expansion of the CSU covered by the solicitation pursuant to § 251.123 of this subpart.

(d) Applicants seeking preferred operator status based on local residency must provide documentation verifying their claim. Factors demonstrating the location of an individual's primary, permanent residence and business include, but are not limited to, the permanent address indicated on licenses issued by the State of Alaska, tax returns, and voter registration.

(e) An application from a preferred operator in the form of a corporation, partnership, limited partnership, joint venture, individual entrepreneurship, nonprofit entity, or other form of organization shall be considered valid only when the application documents to the satisfaction of the authorized officer that the preferred operator holds the controlling interest in the corporation, partnership, limited partnership, joint venture, individual entrepreneurship, nonprofit entity, or other form of organization.

(f) A qualified preferred operator shall be given preference, pursuant to paragraph (g) of this section, over all other applicants, except with respect to use allocated to historical operators pursuant to § 251.122 of this subpart.

(g) If the best application from a preferred operator is at least substantially equal to the best application from a non-preferred operator, the preferred operator shall be issued the visitor service authorization. If an application from an applicant other than a preferred operator is determined to be the best application (and no preferred operator submits a responsive application that is substantially equal to it), the preferred operator who submitted the best application from among the applications submitted by preferred operators shall be given the opportunity, by amending its application, to meet the terms and conditions of the best application received. If the amended application of that preferred operator is

considered by the authorized officer to be at least substantially equal to the best application, the preferred operator shall be issued the visitor service authorization. If a preferred operator does not amend its application to meet the terms and conditions of the best application, the authorized officer shall issue the visitor service authorization to the applicant who submitted the best application in response to the prospectus.

§ 251.125 Preferred operator privileges and limitations.

(a) A preferred operator has no preference within a National Forest in Alaska beyond that authorized by section 1307 of ANILCA (16 U.S.C. 1397) and by § 251.124 of this subpart.

(b) Local residents and most directly affected Native Corporations have equal priority for consideration in providing visitor services pursuant to § 251.124 of this subpart.

(c) Nothing in this subpart shall prohibit the authorized officer from issuing special use authorizations to other applicants within the CSU, as long as the requirements of § 251.124 are met.

(d) If an operator qualifies as a local resident for any part of an area designated in the solicitation for a specific visitor service, in matters related solely to that solicitation, the operator shall be treated as a local resident for the entire area covered by that solicitation.

(e) The preferences described in this section may not be sold, assigned, transferred, or devised, either directly or indirectly, in whole or in part.

§ 251.126 Appeals.

Decisions related to the issuance of special use authorizations in response to written solicitations by the Forest Service under this subpart or related to the modification of special use authorizations to reflect historical use are subject to administrative appeal under subpart C of this part.