

ORGANIZED & GROUP ACTIVITIES IN MICHAUX STATE FOREST

DCNR's Bureau of Forestry issues letters of authorization, special activities agreements, or commercial activities agreements to evaluate and manage organized activities and events on state forest land. To hold an organized activity or event in Michaux State Forest the appropriate authorization or agreement is required.

DEFINITIONS

Letter of Authorization (LOA): A Letter of Authorization is required for any group or organized activity that poses minimal threat of damage to the environment on state forest land. Examples include group camping exceeding 10 persons, weddings, organized hikes or rides and emergency response training.

Special Activities Agreement (SAA): A Special Activities Agreement allows the Bureau of Forestry to permit and control activities on state forest lands that are organized, potentially dangerous, large, or otherwise atypical of common forest visitor activities. Examples include charitable events, foot and bike races, rock climbing, outdoor programming and historical reenactments.

Commercial Activities Agreement (CAA): A Commercial Activities Agreement covers for-profit events or business activities on state forest lands. It basically covers the same type of activities as a special activities agreement, with the added fact that a profit is being realized. It also covers commercial activities that occur off state forest land but use state forest lands to further their business efforts. Examples include foot and bike races, guide services, commercial film and photography services and ecotourism. The current annual fee for a CAA is \$250.

Requests are reviewed on a case by case basis to determine the appropriate type of agreement for the activity. Additional fees may apply, see the FAQ's section for more information.

APPLICATION PROCESS and PERIOD

Those interested in a LOA, SAA or CAA must first complete the attached Michaux State Forest Organized Activity Request and return to the district office. Once received, a link to an Activity Information Form will be supplied via email. This is the formal application for a letter of authorization or agreement. Application does not guarantee approval. Increasing demand to hold organized activities may necessitate that some requests for agreements be placed on a waiting list.

Activity related information and documentation is required to complete the Activity Information Form. A detailed checklist has been provided to inform sponsors of what information is required and when. Required documentation varies based on activity type, location, size and complexity.

LOA: Requests must be received at least 30 days prior to the proposed activity date.

CAA and SAA: Formal applications will be accepted from October 1st until December 31st annually for the upcoming calendar year. Requests received on or after January 1st will NOT be considered for that calendar year. Activity sponsors are encouraged to contact the district office in advance of the application period to discuss a potential agreement.

ITEMS DUE WITH APPLICATION

- Activity Information Form submitted (Oct 1st to Dec 31st for CAA & SAA)
- Risk management/emergency action plan (submitted as part of the activity information form)
- 501(c)3 determination letter or other proof of status (if sponsoring organization is non-profit)
- Detailed activity route map including labeled trails & roads, direction of travel, check points, aid stations, event HQ, radio stations, rainy weather route, start/end point, etc. Map must be of a legible scale. (PDF's preferred. May not be required for certain LOA's)
- GPS file of activity route (if applicable, only .gpx/.kml/.shp file types are accepted)
- Copy of temporary easements granted by adjoining landowners (required if activity leaves state forest lands)
- List of ALL sponsoring organization officers (name, title, mailing address, phone number, email)
- Activity related advertising: website address, flyers, brochures, etc.

ITEMS DUE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENT REVIEW

- Current certificate of insurance (if applicable, due 30 days prior to activity date)
- Commercial Activities Agreement fee (\$250 if applicable, submit with agreement signature page)
- Signature page – LOA (May be scanned, emailed, faxed, etc. original signature NOT required)
- Signature page - SAA or CAA (Original signed document due at least 90 days prior to activity date. Copies not accepted. If signed by a non-officer, a corporate resolution authorizing such person to bind the sponsor is required. Activity may be canceled or rescheduled if not received on time)
- Copy of written notification to county emergency management agencies (due 30 days prior to activity date)
- Written request for gates to be opened (If applicable, GPS coordinates of gate locations required)
- Participant list (submit post activity)
- Intent to renew letter submitted by October 31st annually (if agreement is multi-year)

***Items required varies, additional items may be requested.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Is there a fee associated with an Activities Agreement or Letter of Authorization?

A: There is no fee for an SAA or LOA. The current annual fee for a CAA is \$250. However, CAA and SAA sponsors, and on some occasions LOA sponsors, may be invoiced for Bureau personnel time related to an activity. This may include event monitoring, removing course markers, garbage clean-up, trail inspection, etc. This will be detailed in the agreement.

Q: What if the agreement signature page is submitted late?

A: Sponsors applying for a CAA or SAA are required to submit a signed signature page to the district office at least 90-days prior to the activity date to allow for processing and review. If a completed signature page is not received on time the event may be rescheduled or canceled.

Q: Does the 90-day signature page requirement apply to Letters of Authorization?

A: The 90-day requirement does not apply to activities covered by a Letter of Authorization.

Q: What trails are available for use as part of my event course?

A: Trail availability depends on several factors including compatibility with event type and trail factors such as location, usage level, condition, permitted uses, etc. New events will be directed to use Bureau of Forestry designated trails and roads only. Use of informal, user generated trails will not be permitted. Events previously authorized to use informal trails will be migrated to DCNR designated trails.

Q: How do I collect GPS information of my event route?

A: GPS data of your activity route should be collected in the field using a portable GPS device or a smartphone application. We have found GPS files created using online mapping programs alone, without field collected data, to be largely inaccurate. Only GPS files with .gpx, .kml or .shp file extensions will be accepted.

Q: Why am I required to submit a GPS file *and* a map of my event route?

A: Both items are necessary to allow DCNR to accurately review, confirm and monitor activities on state forest land.

Q: Can I hold multiple events in the forest each year?

A: It depends. CAA and SAA holders will be permitted no more than one event per sponsor per calendar year. This number could be adjusted in the future. Recurring low impact, low volume events covered under a Letter of Authorization may be permitted.

Q: How many participants am I permitted to have in my event?

A: The number of event participants may be limited depending on the event type, location and potential impact to the forest and other forest users.

Q: When can I hold my event?

A: To minimize conflicts with casual forest visitation, organized events will not be permitted on holidays, holiday weekends, the opening day of trout season, during archery hunting season, rifle deer hunting season and on Saturdays during the spring turkey hunting season. Event dates are coordinated based on availability. The need to reschedule or alter an event may arise due to unforeseen circumstances such as wildfires, weather events or forest management activities.

MICHAUX STATE FOREST ORGANIZED ACTIVITY REQUEST FORM

*Complete all fields below and return this form to the district office

Organization Sponsoring Activity :

Sponsor Contact Person:

Sponsor Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Primary Phone Number:

Secondary Phone Number (Optional):

Email Address:

Sponsoring Organization Status: Commercial/For Profit Non-profit

Activity/Event Title:

Type of Activity:

Activity Date(s):

Activity Start Time:

Activity End Time:

Setup Start Date & Time:

Cleanup End Date & Time:

Estimated Number of Participants:

Estimated Number of Spectators, Event Staff & Volunteers:

Are Participants Charged a Fee/Donation? YES NO

Proposed Location of Activity (Brief Description):