



Forest Service News Release

Media Contact: Tod McKay - (406) 363-7122

Bitterroot National Forest Christmas Tree Permits Now Available

Hamilton, MT, November 10 — The holiday season is fast approaching, and Christmas tree permits are now available at Bitterroot National Forest Office locations for a cost of \$5 with a limit of three permits per household. Permits may also be purchased online at www.Recreation.gov for a cost of \$5 with a \$2.50 transaction fee.

“Harvesting a National Forest Christmas tree for the holiday season is a long-standing tradition on the Bitterroot National Forest,” said Matt Anderson, Forest Supervisor. “We encourage the public to check with their local offices for suggested harvest locations and regulations. We are also excited to offer fourth graders free Christmas tree permits through the Every Kid Outdoors program.”

Additional Information for Office Purchase: Christmas tree permits can be purchased weekdays at any Forest Service office from 8:00am to 4:30pm. Only cash or personal check will be accepted for payment. Permits will not be sold at local vendors this year, as in previous seasons.

Additional Information for Purchase on Recreation.gov: For online purchase, set up an account on Recreation.gov in advance. Carefully read the overview and need-to-know information prior to purchasing the permit. Permits will need to be printed.

Free Christmas Tree Permits for Fourth Graders! Through the [Every Kid Outdoors \(EKO\) program](http://www.EveryKidOutdoors.gov), fourth graders are eligible for one FREE Christmas tree permit! Fourth graders must present a valid EKO pass or paper voucher at a Bitterroot National Forest office to receive a free permit. To obtain the pass or paper voucher, fourth graders need to visit www.everykidoutdoors.gov. Vouchers can also be redeemed on Recreation.gov.

The hunt for the perfect Christmas tree can be a fun, festive way to begin the holiday season. Here are some tips for a great Christmas tree cutting experience:

- Be aware of changing weather as well as road and snow conditions
- Carry the right gear like a map and cold weather attire
- Bring the right tools: a handsaw for cutting the tree and a shovel for removing snow around the base of the tree
- Please observe the following regulations when cutting your Christmas tree:

Regulations for cutting Christmas Trees:

- Display permits on the dashboard of your vehicle when you go out to harvest the tree(s). It is your responsibility to know where you can and cannot harvest Christmas trees, and to follow all permit requirements.
- Cutting is not allowed in restricted areas such as developed recreation sites and campgrounds, existing timber sale areas or previously thinned areas.
- Do not leave branches on the stump and trim the stump to no more than five inches above the soil. Do not cut the tops off trees and do not cut down trees taller than 12 feet.
- Do not cut trees within 150 feet of riparian areas (creeks or streams) or within Wilderness Areas.

Cutting a Christmas tree also improves forest health. The permit system helps to thin densely populated stands of small-diameter trees. Removing these trees helps other trees grow larger and can open areas that provide forage for wildlife.

For more information contact the Bitterroot National Forest office near you or visit our website at www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot. Stay in touch with us through www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF.

We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

Bitterroot National Forest – Hamilton (406) 363-7100

Stevensville Ranger District – (406) 777-5461

Darby-Sula Ranger District – (406) 821-3913

West Fork Ranger District – (406) 821-3269

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.