



Katmai National Park and Preserve Seeks Public Input on the Brooks River Corridor Permit System

Katmai National Park and Preserve is seeking public comment on the seasonal Brooks River Corridor permit system, first piloted in 2022. Public comments will be accepted from March 27 through April 28, 2023 at: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/BrooksRiverCorridorPermitSystem>

In 2022, the park piloted a seasonal permit system in the Brooks River Corridor for all activities, except for redbfish fishery subsistence activities. The Brooks River is an important habitat for migrating and spawning salmon, a primary fishing location for Alaskan brown bears, and is enjoyed by visitors through fishing, bear viewing and photography. The number of bears using the river has been consistently high in recent years and the number of people visiting the Brooks River Corridor is increasing. This system was developed to learn how many people use the Corridor every year, while providing an avenue for creating future visitor safety measures that ensure an enjoyable visit, limit human- bear interactions and protect natural resources

Summary of the 2022 Pilot Permit System

Three types of permits were made available during the pilot permit date range: 7-day permits, 1-day permits, and season-long permits. A description of these permit types follows:

7 Day Permits

Valid with a maximum group size of 6 individuals and were required for both commercial and non-commercial use of the corridor. Permits could be obtained prior to arriving at Brooks Camp by purchasing the permit through Recreation.gov, where the park also manages its Brooks Campground reservation system. To provide an alternative way of obtaining a permit for those desiring one upon arrival at Brooks Camp, visitors were able to reserve a permit with the help of park staff by working through the reservation process at the Brooks Camp Visitor Center. Permits were free but included a non-refundable \$6 booking fee per permit. Reservations were open to the public beginning June 28, 2022 with no limit established to the number of permits issued during the permit-required timeframe.

1 Day Permits

In September, the park piloted the issuance of one-day

permits with a maximum group size of 6 individuals. These permits were free of charge and only available through the Brooks Camp Visitor Center. There was no limit established to the number of permits issued during the permit-required timeframe.

Season-long Permits

Season-long Permits were issued for the Brooks River Corridor to those commercial operators who met the requirements of the Brooks River Guide Program (BRGP) in 2022. Requirements to be included in the BRGP were as follows:

- Must hold a valid Katmai Sportfishing Commercial Use Authorization (CUA).
- Must hold a valid Alaska sportfishing guide license.
- CUA holder must have operated in a satisfactory manner within the park for 2 years prior to operation as a BRGP participant. Of those two year, one season must consist of at least 20 days guiding on in the Brooks River Corridor. Satisfactory manner is defined as:
 - * There must be no relevant violation notices or more than 2 written warnings to the business owner, manager, or lead guide.
 - * There must be no relevant violation notices or more than 2 written warnings for the guide in question.
 - * Relevant violation notices and warnings pertain to State of Alaska Fish and Game and NPS resource violations or any regulation specific to the Brooks Camp Developed Area.



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- CUA holders and guides wishing to be included in the BRGP must complete and pass the online testing module provided by the park. The test must be passed with a score of 80% or higher.
- CUA holders and guides wishing to be included in the BRGP must attend a live virtual or in-person training facilitated by the park.
- CUA holders and guides wishing to be included in the BRGP must provide a satisfactory bear orientation to park personnel.

To learn more about the CUA program, check out [Commercial Use Authorizations - Alaska \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/comm/learnmore/cua.htm).



Common to All Permits

Permit holders were required to sign in on a clipboard each day they accessed the Brooks River Corridor. Clipboards were in two locations in 2022: Brooks Camp Visitor Center and Lake Brooks Picnic Area. Groups were strongly encouraged to maintain 100 yards between each other in order to facilitate bear movement and minimize interactions between humans and bears.

Summary of Updated 2023 Permit System

Park managers are pleased with the results of the initial pilot year and plan to continue with the seasonal permit system. However, the public is encouraged to continue providing input on the system to ensure that all perspectives are being considered. The current plan for 2023 follows:

- Permits are required for all activities within the Brooks River Corridor, except for redfish fishery subsistence activities, from June 15-October 31st. This expansion in the permit season better aligns with when anglers have historically arrived to the area as well as when bears start frequenting this section of the river.
- Permits obtained through Recreation.gov are valid for 7 days with a maximum group size of 6 individuals.
- Season-long permits for the Brooks River Corridor will be

issued to those CUA holders and guides who meet the Brooks River Guide Program criteria.

- Permits should be obtained prior to arriving at Brooks Camp (recommended) by purchasing the permit through www.recreation.gov or can be acquired at the Brooks Camp Visitor Center with the help of park staff using the same platform. Either way, permits are free but include a non-refundable \$6 booking fee per permit.

Reservations are open to the public beginning June 1, 2023. There is no limit established to the number of permits issued during the permit-required time frame currently, but this will be considered if public feedback to the plan supports a limitation or if conditions change within the Brooks River Corridor to warrant a limitation.

The park's intent with this permit system is to ensure a safer experience for visitors using the river. The permit serves as an integral planning and management tool to enhance visitor safety and resource protection and will build on other actions taken to manage the Brooks River Corridor within the park's 1987 General Management Plan.

The public is invited to comment on the Brooks River Corridor Permit System. Please post your comments online at:

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/BrooksRiverCorridorPermitSystem>

Once on the website, select "Open for Comment" to provide feedback. Additionally, comments can be mailed to: Katmai National Park and Preserve, Superintendent, 1000 Silver St., King Salmon, AK 99613

Comments will be accepted through April 28, 2023

The park will be holding public meetings to discuss the permit system and solicit feedback. Below are the schedule and locations of public meetings:

April 3, 2023 from 7-8:00pm AKT

Location: Coast Inn at Lake Hood, 3450 Aviation Ave. Anchorage, AK

April 4, 2023 from 7-8:00pm AKT

Location: Best Western Bidarka Inn, 575 Sterling Hwy, Homer, AK

April 17, 2023 From 7-8:00pm AKT. This is a virtual meeting through Microsoft Teams. A link to the virtual meeting or call-in (audio only) information is available on the site.

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