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NEWS RELEASE

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Don't miss your chance at incredible bear viewing in 2023

Are you looking for an unforgettable adventure this summer? If so, bear in mind that now is the time to enter for your chance to visit the best bear viewing site in the world. Located 100 air miles west of Homer, McNeil River hosts the world's largest gathering of brown bears as they come to feed on migrating salmon, with as many as 80 bears observed at one time.

Every summer, a limited number of people visit the world-renowned McNeil River State Game Sanctuary for a one-of-a-kind bear viewing experience between June 7 and Aug. 25. Visiting the sanctuary requires a permit issued by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and this year there are two ways to obtain these coveted permits.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game issues guided bear viewing permits through a lottery system. Online lottery applications for this summer must be submitted by midnight on March 1 through the department's [online store](#). Individuals may also [obtain a hard copy application and submit it by mail](#), but it must be received by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game by close of business on March 1. A nonrefundable application fee of \$30 per person is required. Applications are selected by lottery in mid-March. If drawn, Alaska residents must pay a \$225 permit fee per person and nonresidents must pay \$525. Worth the cost? Absolutely.

In addition to the lottery, there are two permits available through a raffle operated by the [Outdoor Heritage Foundation of Alaska](#), the department's official nonprofit foundation. The raffle winner will receive two permits for June 15-18 as well as funds to support lodging and travel associated with the trip. Raffle tickets can be purchased at ohfak.org by April 2 and the winner will be announced on April 7, 2023. Proceeds from the raffle will go to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to fund conservation of non-game wildlife.

For information on the McNeil River bear viewing program and application process, contact Lands and Refuges Manager Adam DuBour at 267-2189 or adam.dubour@alaska.gov

For information on the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary Raffle, contact our Partner Outreach Coordinator Molly McCarthy-Cunfer at 907-717-0725 or molly.mccarthy@alaska.gov.