



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

*from qualified nonprofit organizations for
the raffle of McNeil River State Game Sanctuary
permits for the 2025 bear viewing season.*

State of Alaska
Department of Fish and Game
Division of Wildlife Conservation
1801 S Margaret Drive
Palmer, AK 99645

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Governor's Auction/Raffle Permits

August 26, 2024

Partners in Conservation,

We are excited to invite you to apply for McNeil River State Game Sanctuary bear viewing permits under the Governor's Auction and Raffle Program. McNeil bear viewing permits will be awarded through AS 16.05.343(c). More details about the program can be found in this packet.

We will accept applications from qualified nonprofit organizations until the deadline of **Friday, September 27, at 5:00 p.m.** Applications may be received via email or by mail; however, they must be delivered by the application deadline. To be eligible, nonprofit organizations must complete and submit a full application package consisting of:

- A completed and signed application- this is available online here:
<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=mcneilriver.raffle>
- If you cannot access the site, please contact the person listed below for a hard copy.

Complete instructions for eligibility, submission of application, evaluation criteria, award/protest procedures, marketing requirements, and reporting and remittance requirements are included in this Call for Applications. Most of these topics are also reflected in the cooperative agreements that have been drafted between your nonprofit and the department if you have already participated in the program. If you have questions, or should you need any clarifying information, the contact person is:

Chelsea Pardo
Partner Outreach Coordinator
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Wildlife Conservation
1801 S Margaret Drive
Palmer, AK 99645
Email: chelsea.pardo@alaska.gov
Phone: 907-717-0725

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KEY ACTION DATES

EVENT	DATE
Call for Applications Released	August 26, 2024
Final date to submit applications: NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM	September 27, 2024
Applications Evaluated and Ranked	September 30- October 25, 2024
Notice of Intent to Award Sent	October 28, 2024
Deadline to meet with Partner Outreach Coordinator for Raffle Plans	December 30, 2024
Deadline to Conclude Raffle	May 5, 2025
Deadline to remit funds to Alaska Department of Fish and Game	June 6, 2025

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Under AS 16.05.343(c), subject to regulations, the department may issue up to four permits for guided bear viewing in the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary established under AS 16.20.160 and 16.20.162. Additionally, organizations may retain up to 30% of the net raffle proceeds. It is statutorily required that the 30% of proceeds retained by an organization *“may be used only to support outdoor tradition education projects and wildlife conservation and wildlife protection programs approved by the department and may not be used to make a contribution to any candidate for political office or to any organization supporting or opposing ballot propositions or to pay expenses associated with lobbying the legislature or administration.”* The department must approve use of project funds before those funds are spent.

Under AS 16.05.130(h), funds retained by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (70% of proceeds) shall be deposited in a separate account known as the nongame conservation account in the fish and game fund. Money in the account shall be allocated to programs relating to wildlife sanctuaries and refuges, fish and wildlife diversity, wildlife viewing, educational programs, and related outreach efforts.

To participate in the program an organization must:

1. Promote education in outdoor traditions and conduct wildlife conservation and wildlife protection programs
2. Be incorporated in Alaska as a nonprofit corporation; and
3. In the judgment of ADF&G, demonstrate support for a state-based model of wildlife conservation through a user-pays system based on sustained yield and use principles.

If chosen as the McNeil raffle partner, your organization will work directly with the department partner outreach coordinator to plan raffle dates and rollout and develop a marketing strategy. Your organization will ultimately be responsible for soliciting donations to build the raffle package (air charter services, hotel stays, etc.), promoting and marketing the raffle using email lists, social media platforms, Google Ads and other methods, maintaining the raffle sales website, paying for marketing costs (to be reimbursed after the raffle), receiving funds from

raffle ticket sales and communicating with customers, and remitting funds at the close of the raffle. The department's responsibility will be writing a communications plan for the raffle to be distributed to department staff and partner organization contacts (once dates are decided), creating marketing content for the raffle (graphics, videos, write-ups etc.), promoting and marketing the raffle using email lists, social media platforms, in-person events and other methods, tracking raffle success real-time and advising marketing strategy adjustments to reach more customers, ensuring the raffle winner receives their permits on time, and answering customer questions regarding a visit to McNeil River State Game Sanctuary. The organization applying agrees to maintain open and consistent communication with the partner outreach coordinator before and during the raffle. Specified dates and raffle package materials shall be decided upon at least 1 month in advance of the raffle start date such that the partner coordinator has adequate time to create marketing and communications materials in collaboration with the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary staff within the department and the nonprofit sponsor.

GENERAL CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Applications must be complete in all aspects as required by this Call for Applications. An application may be rejected if it is conditional or incomplete or if it contains any alterations of form or other irregularities of any kind.
- 2) The application must be signed by a representative of the nonprofit organization or chapter thereof who has authority to sign agreements binding upon the organization. An unsigned application will be rejected.
- 3) An application with false or misleading statements may be rejected. If, in the opinion of the department, the information provided was intended to mislead the department in its evaluation of the application, it will be the basis for rejection of the application. If information in the application is insufficient for the department to determine eligibility and understand how a nonprofit organization plans to raffle a permit, the department may reject the application. The department's determination of the applicant's integrity, based on the information provided in their application, shall be final.
- 4) No officer of the department may actively help an organization craft their application. If an organization has questions about how to fill out the application form, they may contact the listed department contact. However, this contact cannot help craft answers.

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Applicant is a nonprofit organization or chapter thereof, as defined by the Internal Revenue code and has Alaska nonprofit status.
- 2) Applicant agrees that the raffle will be conducted under terms and conditions that comply with all Alaska State laws. If the event is held outside of Alaska, the parties agree that Alaska law will control in the event of any dispute.

- 3) The applicant will conduct the raffle event prior to May 5 of the year in which the permit is valid. This allows department staff adequate time to prepare bear viewing permits and for the winner to arrange their trip.
- 4) The applicant agrees that the raffle will be conducted under standards of good faith and commercial reasonableness, and the applicant will use their best effort to obtain maximum return. The organization may opt to raffle the permit at an in-person event, a live-streamed event, or another method in a manner accommodating similar public participation as in-person or live-streamed events.
- 5) The applicant agrees to offer a raffle package including transportation to McNeil River State Game Sanctuary to the permit winner. The expenses can be deducted from the total raffle revenue.
- 6) Revenue generated by the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary bear viewing permit raffle must be transferred to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game within 30 calendar days of the event or by June 6th, whichever comes first. Failure to submit payment to the department within 30 calendar days of the event may result in disqualification from next year's application period and may result in your permit winner not receiving their permit on time, which will not be at fault of the department. The department cannot issue bear viewing permits until department staff receive a signed report form by the nonprofit and the remittance payment.
- 7) When raffling bear viewing permits, the nonprofit shall clearly indicate in all advertisements and to potential permit recipients that such permits are subject to all existing conditions, such as visitors needing to take a gap year between visits to the sanctuary. If unsure about the governing regulations, the nonprofit shall reach out to department staff for guidance *before* advertising.
- 8) By statute, to receive a permit, your organization must support a state-based model (for game management) through a user-pays system based on sustained yield and use principles. Your organization must support this model and has taken no actions to exhibit otherwise against the department.
- 9) A nonprofit organization is unlikely to receive a permit if the nonprofit, or any of its Board members, are involved in an active lawsuit against the State of Alaska, Department of Fish and Game, or the Commissioner of the department.
- 10) Organizations may deduct marketing costs from the gross proceeds but must abide by the Marketing Requirements on Page 9.
- 11) If an organization is awarded the permit but does not correspond with the partner outreach coordinator by December 30, 2024, with raffle dates and package information, the permits may be rejected and re-issued to another partner organization for raffle. This will give adequate time for another organization to sponsor and execute the raffle before the May deadline.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

- 1) The application may be submitted in one of two ways:
 - In a sealed envelope marked "MRSGS Bear Viewing Permit Application". The mailed application must be received by the date and time shown in "Key Action Dates". An application received after this date and time will not be considered. Applicants are cautioned that department processing of mail may add an extra 48-hours of delivery time, so please plan accordingly.

Mailing Address:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Wildlife Conservation
ATTN: Chelsea Pardo
MRSGS Bear Viewing Permit Application
1801 S Margaret Drive
Palmer, AK 99645

By email to: chelsea.pardo@alaska.gov

- 2) Applications must be typed or legibly printed in ink.
- 3) The application must be signed by a representative of the nonprofit who has the authority to sign agreements binding upon the organization.
- 4) Before submitting the application, applicants should review to ensure all necessary signatures are in place and areas have been filled out. Department staff will only review applications once the application window closes, so please be sure that your application is complete upon submittal.
- 5) If your application has been received via mail or email, you will receive an email confirming receipt of application. Please give at least 48-hours for response, and do not expect a response on a weekend. Note that the confirmation is only that your application is in the pool, but if the application is incomplete, department staff will not know until the window has closed. If you do not receive a confirmation within 7 business days of when you expect staff should have received your application, please contact the Partner Outreach Coordinator at chelsea.pardo@alaska.gov.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

- 1) Each application will be logged as it is received but will remain closed until the designated review period.
- 2) Applications will first be reviewed by the Partner Outreach Coordinator to ensure all signatures are in place and eligibility requirements are met by the applicant.
- 3) Eligible applications will be dispersed to the review team, made up of a small group of department staff. Applications will be scored based on the criteria below in "Evaluation

Criteria". Upon final scoring, the list of recommendations will be submitted to the Division Director for review and approval.

- 4) If an application is rejected based on criteria review, the applicant will receive a letter on the same day as "Notice of Intent to Award" letters are sent out (October 28, 2024). The department reserves the right to reject any or all applications at any time.

DEPARTMENT-APPROVED PROJECTS AND GOALS

As part of the application, the department must approve where funds generated from the Governor's permit raffle/auction go. Per 16.05.343(g), proceeds from the raffle or auction may be used only by the organization awarded the permit and cannot be used to make a contribution to a candidate for political office or to other organizations supporting or opposing ballot propositions or paying expenses associated with lobbying the legislature or administration. Although this gives a fair amount of flexibility to an organization, those projects shall align with our mission, which is to conserve and enhance Alaska's wildlife and habitats and provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits. Further, projects that support wildlife sanctuaries and refuges, fish and wildlife diversity, wildlife viewing, educational programs, and related outreach efforts will be prioritized over others.

An awarded organization has 1 calendar year to spend retained funds from the raffle. That organization must submit a report to the department outlining how funds were spent (correlating directly with the department-approved spending plan from the application) one month following the spend-out of raffle funds. For example, if an organization was awarded a permit and completed the raffle on May 5, 2025, the spending report would be due to the department on June 6, 2025.

WINDOW TO MAKE CHANGES

For the permit winner:

- McNeil River State Game Sanctuary permits *only within the Governor's permit program* may be assigned by the permit winner to other individuals; however, permits cannot be sold. If a raffle winner wants to gift their bear viewing permits to another, please ensure that the new permit designee is listed on the raffle report form. This decision must be made within the 30-day window that nonprofits have for report and remit payment to the department. Once a report is received by the department, staff will begin issuing the permit. At that point, if the permit designee has any issues, he or she can work with department staff to make additional changes if permitted.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation criteria have been established to help identify eligible applicants and to help provide an objective way to determine permit distribution. The goal of the program is to generate maximum revenue to support nongame conservation programs and to generate funds to support projects in Alaska, so those organizations with proven ability to reach a larger audience outside of Alaska but will spend the funds within Alaska on department-approved projects, will likely be prioritized for higher value permits. Factors to be evaluated are outlined below:

- Permit Raffle Detail and Package Proposal.....5 points
- Marketing Strategy.....15 points
- Fundraising experience and ability.....15 points
- Use of retained funds.....20 points

TOTAL: 55 points

MARKETING REQUIREMENTS AND PERMIT SPONSORSHIP

Awarded applicants may deduct marketing expenses from the gross proceeds from the raffle/auction. If you plan to deduct marketing expenses from the sale of your awarded permit(s), please document the expenses on a separate page.

- If, as a marketing strategy, your organization chooses to ask a larger national organization, or a larger local organization, to sponsor your permit, you may write off a maximum of 5% of the gross as a marketing cost to pay the other organization for processing and hosting the permit. Please include this deduction in your receipts.
- If another organization is sponsoring a permit, on all advertisements, the organization that holds the permit MUST be listed to avoid confusion from the public.
- Even if a permit is sponsored by another organization, the original organization awarded is responsible to meet all reporting and remission requirements. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring organization and the organization with the permit to enter an agreement on how this will happen within the reporting window. The department will not be involved and is not responsible for any issues that incur from this relationship. We recommend that the permit sponsor disperses funds generated from their sponsored raffle/auction to the permit holder within 15 days to provide adequate time for that organization to submit their report in time.
- If reporting and remittance requirements are not met, the organization holding the permit will be held responsible for not meeting deadlines, not the sponsoring organization.

REPORTING AND REMITTANCE REQUIREMENTS

A completed report form and at least 70% of raffle-generated proceeds must be remitted to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game within 30 calendar days of the raffle end date or by June 6th, whichever comes first. Failure to submit the report and payment to the department within 30 calendar days of the raffle close may result in disqualification from next year's Governor's permit program and may result in your raffle winner not receiving their bear viewing permit on time, which will not be at fault of the department. The department cannot issue bear viewing permits to the winning bidder until department staff receive a signed report form by both the nonprofit, as well as a remittance payment. Incomplete report forms will be returned to the organization to be completed.

- Receipts for marketing costs shall be included with the report forms.
- A copy of the most recent report form will be sent to the awarded organization(s) with their Notice of Intent to Award on October 28, 2024. From that date on, please use only that report form to ensure reporting and remittance requirements are met.