

DNR Guide Concession FAQ

1. **Question:** Why do we need such a program?

Answer: The Board of Game, and the Big Game Commercial Services Board and Representatives from the Big Game Guide Industry have requested DNR to analyze and develop a program that addresses problems occurring in the field that range from user conflict to lack of wildlife conservation.

2. **Question:** What will the scoring criteria be based on?

Answer: There will be five categories for scoring with each having multiple sub-categories. The main five categories are:

- Experience as a Big Game Hunting Guide and Guide Business Owner
- Operating Strategies Used to Protect and Conserve the Natural Resources of the Concession Area
- Business Plan for Operating a Successful Business while Providing Quality Service to the Clients
- Financial Ability/Commitment to Operate as Big Game Hunting Business and Bid Amount
- Violations/Citations/Convictions/Defaults

The answers will be given a point value and the panel assembled to review the applications will review and score each answer. The panel will be responsible for choosing the most qualified applicants based on the scores.

3. **Question:** Will the questions be required to be answered in essay style, true or false, or multiple choice?

Answer: All questions will require a yes or no response and a written explanation to the answer. Documentation supporting each answer will also be required.

4. **Question:** Will there be a bidding process or a set price for each concession?

Answer: The base fee for each area will be set to cover the cost of administering the program; bids above the base will be accepted. Additionally fees may be charged for each client that is taken into the field. Bids will be awarded points based on highest to lowest with the highest bid receiving the maximum points. The fee and bid for the area will amount to no more than the total points available for the section.

5. **Question:** What is the timeline for the concessions to be implemented?

Answer: The Department is looking to make applications available to the public January – April 2011. Award notifications and results would be available summer, 2011. Program implementation would begin January 1, 2012. The time frame is preliminary and could change due to staffing and funding for the program.

6. **Question:** What will happen to my leased site if I do not win a concession area?

Answer: If the leasee is not selected to operate in the area, DNR will provide an opportunity to modify the operations plan to specifically exclude big game guiding. A lessee will not be allowed to operate as a hunting guide in that unit, if he/she is not chosen for the concession area in which the lease is located.

7. **Question:** How long will I have to remove my property from state land if I do not win a concession?

Answer: Award notifications and results would be available by summer, 2011. If you were not a recipient of a concession you would have until December 31, 2011 to remove all personal property from state land. Each location will be reviewed independently to allow sufficient time to remove personal property.

8. **Question:** If I am selected for a concession will I be allowed overnight camping in the area on state land?

Answer: Yes, upon award of the concession permit you will be authorized to camp within the concession area for up to 14 days. Camps or improvements staying in one location in excess of 14 days will be required to secure additional authorization from the land owner. Obtaining a land use permit or lease on state land will be subject to the same process that is currently being used.

9. **Question:** How many years will I be able to keep the concession?

Answer: Initially the concession areas will be offered in three different lengths to build in a stagger of offerings. Approximately 1/3 will be issued for 4 years, 1/3 will be issued for 7 years and 1/3 will be issued for up to 10 years. Subsequent concession offerings will be issued up to 10 years with a re-evaluation at five years with a renewal clause if the concession holder is in compliance with the terms of the authorization. The re-evaluation will give us a chance to review your ability to meet the program requirements and gives the concession holder the opportunity to cancel the remaining term.

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10.Question: Will I have to go through the same process once my initial term is up if I want to continue use of the area?

Answer: Yes, once your original term is over you will need to re-apply for the area and go through the same competitive application process. No preference will be gained specifically for being the former concession holder.

11.Question: Will the concession areas be transferable once issued to the winner?

Answer: No, concessions areas will not be transferable. If a concession area becomes unutilized, the area will be rolled back into the next group being made available at the next regularly scheduled offering.

12.Question: Will the public have another opportunity to give input on the boundaries or number of guides for each concession area?

Answer: Yes, the public will be given an opportunity to make comments in regards to all aspects of the program which includes modifications of boundaries and number of users for each concession area.

13. Question: Will the public have another opportunity to give input on the all the terms of the concession area?

Answer: Yes, the public process will continue this fall and winter. Future modifications to the program may also require additional public notice.

14.Question: How will the state deal with predator control areas?

Answer: DNR will be working closely with the Department of Fish and Game and the Board of Game to address these issues. We are working to put the program together to not interfere with the ADF&G predator control management.

15.Question: How will this affect the transporters or other commercial operators?

Answer: This program will not limit transporters bringing hunters into the field nor any other commercial or private party from working or recreating in the area. This program is specific to the Big Game Hunting Guides only.

16.Question: What role does the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Alaska State Parks (Parks) have in the process?

Answer: BLM and Parks are involved in the planning and development process. Both agencies are committed to making the effects of this program

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seamless across land ownership boundaries. Additional authorizations may be required for each separate land owner within each concession area.

17.Question: How will new operators be able to get into the system while competing against operators that have been in the area for many years?

Answer: After each ten year term is up, all concession holders will need to re-apply in the competitive process open to all Registered and Master guides. Also as guides retire or no longer wish to work in the business those concession areas will become available for new operators to apply for. Applicants that have worked as an assistant guide will be able to use their time in the field as experience in an area.

18.Question: Why do we need such a program in Kodiak since there are already tag drawings which limit the number of operators in the area?

Answer: DNR has decided to implement this program statewide. We understand some areas are currently experiencing higher conflicts than others but we need to keep state wide continuity for the guiding community.

19.Question: When will the new guide use area boundaries go into effect?

Answer: The guide use area maps are not under the control of DNR. Effective dates for revised Guide Use Area boundaries will be up to the Big Game Commercial Services Board to decide when the new boundaries will go into effect.

20.Question: Does size of development have a positive or negative effect on scoring?

Answer: We are working toward resource conservation and how an applicant addresses that depends on their operating goals and needs.

21.Question: Will the concession areas be made into Guide Use Areas?

Answer: The concession area boundaries are subdivisions of the Guide Use Areas. Decisions regarding the Guide Use Areas are under the control of the Big Game Commercial Services Board. DNR will only be making decisions with regards to the concession area boundaries.

22.Question: Will I gain extra points because I have an established camp under a commercial recreation permit, land use permit or lease with the state?

Answer: No.

23.Question: Will an assistant guide be able to apply and obtain a concession?

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Answer: No, only Registered, and Master Guides will be able to apply for and receive a concession area.

24.Question: What will be considered confidential in my application packet?

Answer: Only financial and personal information will be kept confidential consistent with Chapter 92 SLA 08 (AS 45.48) and AS 38.05.035. All information will be kept confidential until the bids are released to the public after the award is made.

25.Question: Is this really going to happen?

Answer: Yes, DNR is actively working on building this program towards a viable and helpful tool for the big game guiding industry. We have the support of many in the industry in addition to the other agencies and boards involved. However, without additional staff and the necessary funding to support this program, DNR cannot commit to implementing such a program.

26.Question: How many areas will I be able to apply for?

Answer: At this time an applicant will be able to apply for up to three guide concession areas.

27.Question: How will the renewal process be implemented?

Answer: Renewals will be handled in the same competitive process. No preference will be given to an applicant for being a previous concession holder.

28.Question: If I am guiding on private land, but need to use public land for access. Will I need a permit for access on the public land?

Answer: Each case will need to be evaluated and will depend on the nature of the access on whether a permit is required. If access is granted or it falls under a generally allowed use no hunting will be allowed while crossing through a guide concession area to non-state owned land.

29.Question: What if there is a tie in the process?

Answer: Questions in the application will be weighted differently prior to review. In situations of a tie the review panel will look back at these questions and the applicant with the higher point value will break the tie.