



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Katmai National Park & Preserve
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Katmai National Park & Preserve Commercial Services Strategy Public Meeting

COMMENT SUBMISSION

Comment cards are available at tonight's meeting to provide on-site feedback. The park will also accept comments online through Friday, July 31, 2015. Members of the public may review information about commercial services and provide comments at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/KATMCommercialServicesStrategy>

If you have questions regarding the project or comment process, please contact Caroline Gimmillaro (caroline_gimmillaro@partner.nps.gov; 907-246-2158) or Michael Mulhall (michael_mulhall@partner.nps.gov; 907-246-2157).

WHAT IS A COMMERCIAL SERVICES STRATEGY?

Katmai National Park & Preserve is in the process of creating a Commercial Services Strategy, which when completed will provide a framework for evaluating and managing existing and potential commercial service opportunities. This Commercial Services Strategy will also be used to inform Katmai's Backcountry Management Plan, which will help the park better manage visitor use in designated wilderness areas of the park. Public input is invaluable to Katmai as it works to design a Commercial Services Strategy that will benefit park visitors, commercial operators, and the local community. Tonight's meeting is one phase of the park's input gathering process.

WHAT ARE COMMERCIAL SERVICES?

Commercial services are any compensated activities that take place within a park. Katmai's major commercial services are air taxis, guided bear viewing, and guided sport-fishing. Commercial services offer opportunities to park visitors that are not directly provided by the government. Commercial services can help generate economic activity in the local community while increasing the park's visibility and access. All commercial services in a park must be authorized in writing by the park superintendent.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES IN KATMAI

Katmai National Park & Preserve already offers a wide range of commercial services. In 2014, 93 different commercial operators were active in the park, one of the highest counts among National Parks. This is in large part due to the remote nature of Katmai. With the exception of the Lake Camp area, visitors cannot drive into the park, and the vast majority rely on commercial operators for access.

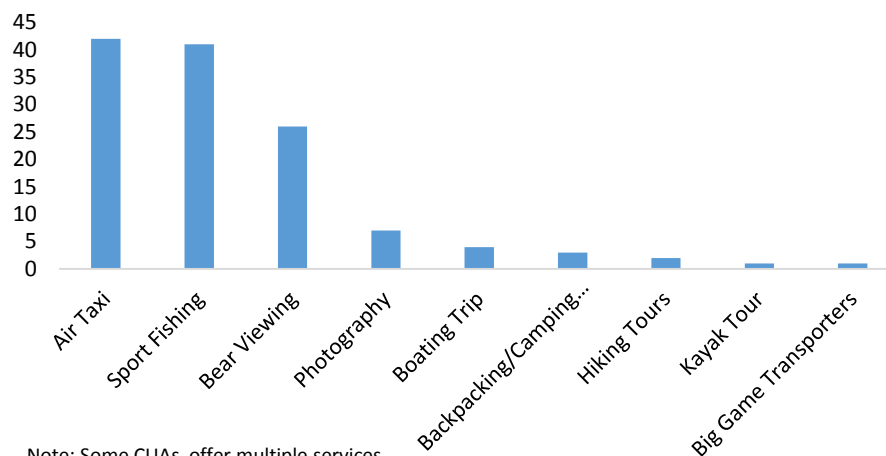
Most of Katmai's commercial operators hold Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs). These are 1-2 year permits that enable some types of commercial activity within the park. CUA holders pay a flat fee upon application as well as a set rate based on the number of visitor use days accrued within the park each year. CUA holders must provide an annual report of their visitor use days in the park. Katmai had 84 active CUA holders in 2014. All commercial services enabled with CUAs must be deemed **appropriate** for the park. Currently, the following services can be offered under a Katmai CUA:

- Guided bear viewing
- Air taxi
- Guided backpacking
- Guided boat trips
- Guided hiking tours
- Big game transportation
- Guided kayaking tours
- Guided mountaineering
- Guided photography
- Guided sport-fishing
- Incidental hunt transportation
- Guided dog sledding
- Guided skiing
- Guided snowshoeing

Nine of Katmai's commercial operators hold concession contracts. Concession contracts are typically 10 year agreements and, unlike CUAs, may allow for land assignment within the park. Concessioners are selected through a competitive process. A share of each concessioners' gross revenue is annually remitted to the park as a franchise fee. Concessioners must provide visitor use and financial data to the park each year. All commercial services authorized with concession contracts must be deemed **necessary** and **appropriate** for the park.

More commercial operators offered air taxi service than any other commercial activity in 2014. Next most common was guided sport-fishing and bear viewing.

Active CUAs by service, 2014



Note: Some CUAs offer multiple services

NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE FOR KATMAI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE

The National Park Service Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 states that “the development of public accommodations, facilities, and services in units of the National Park System shall be limited to those accommodations, facilities, and services that are necessary and appropriate for public use and enjoyment of the unit of the National Park System in which they are located.” Necessary and appropriate criteria help parks determine which commercial services can enhance the visitor experience while not negatively impacting the park and its ability to carry out its mission. They allow a park to easily identify which services can be considered for commercial use authorizations or concession contracts.

Appropriate criteria help to answer the question, “*Can the park authorize this service without compromising the reason it is a unit of the National Park System?*” These criteria provide insight into the critical components of the park and visitor service, while also describing the potential negative impacts of commercial services the park must prevent. All commercial services—whether authorized by CUA or concession contract—must meet all appropriate criteria to operate in the park.

Necessary criteria help to answer the question, “*Why is this service important for the park?*” These criteria describe how a commercial service could enhance the visitor experience and further the goals and mission of the park. Necessary criteria are unique to NPS concession contracts: While CUAs do not need to meet any necessary criteria, concession contracts must meet at least one necessary criterion.

Katmai National Park & Preserve is working to define “necessary” and “appropriate” in a park-specific context. The park has **preliminarily** identified the following criteria for commercial service operations:

Necessary Criteria: *Concession contracts must meet at least one necessary criterion. Commercial Use Authorizations may be issued without meeting any necessary criteria.*

1. Provides the opportunity for visitor understanding and appreciation of park purpose and values.
2. Enhances visitor experience by facilitating access to and protection of park resources.
3. Assists the park in managing visitor use.
4. Provides a basic service that is not available within a reasonable distance from the park.
5. Educates visitors on important issues related to the park including its geological, biological, and cultural significance, minimum impact techniques, and opportunities for healthy outdoor activities.

Appropriate Criteria: *All commercial services including Commercial Use Authorizations and concession contracts must meet all appropriate criteria.*

1. Services do not compromise public health, safety, or well-being:
 - a. Services must carry appropriate insurance.
 - b. Services must meet all federal, state, and local health and safety codes and regulations and provide relevant safety instructions to visitors.
 - c. Services encourage activities that are age and skill appropriate.
 - d. Services do not promote dangerous recreational activities.
 - e. Where applicable, services must be provided by certified individuals and businesses.
2. Services do not conflict with the purpose for which Katmai National Park and Preserve was established.
3. Services are provided in a manner that complies with all National Park Service policies and regulations, federal, state, and local laws and regulations including, but not limited to; Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and the 1964 Wilderness Act.
4. Services do not unduly conflict with:
 - a. Park programs or activities
 - b. Traditional or subsistence activities
 - c. NPS concessioner or contactor operations or services
5. Services do not significantly impact fundamental park resources and values.
6. Services do not monopolize recreational opportunities at the expense of the general public.

CUA REPORTING AND KATMAI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE VISITOR USE AREAS
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CUA holders are currently required to submit annual activity reports to the park. These reports include information about the number of clients and type of service provided by the operator each day in the season. In addition, operators state the location within the park their services were provided as defined by the park's visitor use areas. Shown on the map on the following page, visitor use areas help the park track commercial activity and visitor use by location. The most active visitor use areas in 2014 were Brooks Camp, Moraine Drainage, and Hallo Bay.

