



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service Permit Process for Communication Uses

Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

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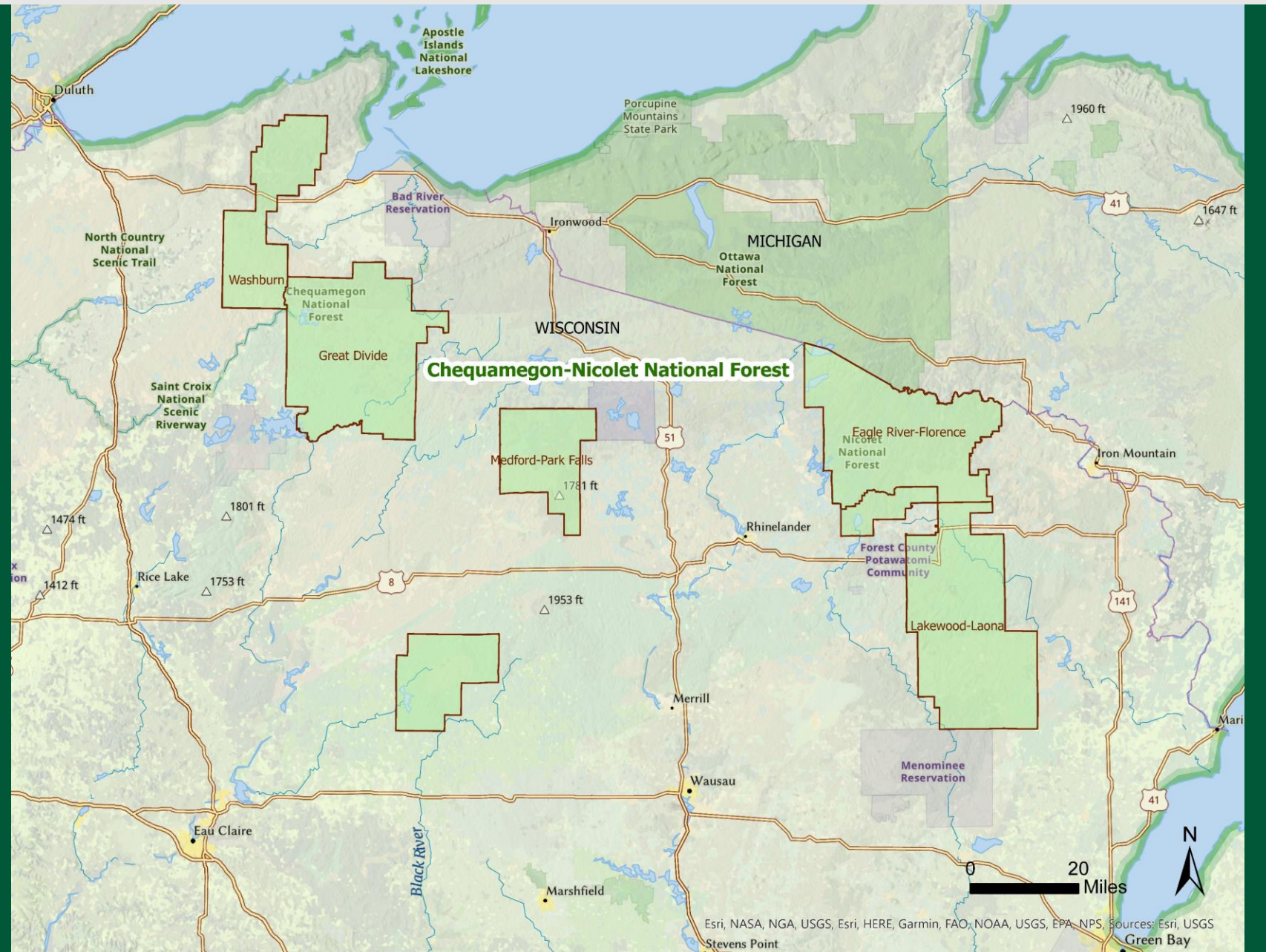
Utility Permits

- A permit serves as a permissive license for uses of National Forest System lands
- Uses on NFS lands include utilities, such as fiber optic systems and access to fiber optic.
 - Components include fiber optic cables, conduits, and individual fiber.
 - Important to delineate access to fiber optic system if proposing to use closed routes

How do I know if I need a FS permit?

- If you are within the USFS proclaimed boundary, then most likely you need a permit.
- State (Highway) and County (Roads) easements on NFS lands were authorized for transportation only, which does not include utilities within the ROW.

Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Overview



How do I apply to install utilities on National Forest System lands?

- Initiate proposal through portal:
<http://tiny.cc/xh1kxz>
- The owner or contractor of the utility must submit the application.
- If the proposed installation “ties” into another company, confirm with that company that they have a Special Use Permit at that location.



Important Application Items

1. Company registered in Wisconsin

- Require contact that has the authority to sign the permit and the contact representing the company if is not the authorized signatory.
- Cannot issue to doing business as company.
- If have an existing authorization, please list the Authorization ID number.

Important Application Items

2. Type of occupancy (use) with Design Factors

- Example: Buried fiber optic cable
- List all design factors to be considered, such as ancillary uses, staging areas for equipment, guy-lines for poles, structures, junction boxes, etc.
- Provide typical drawings for the types of facilities to be placed (poles, anchors, handholes, etc.)

Important Application Items

3. Physical Specifications

- Example:
 - Vilas County, WI at Township 41 North, Range 1 East, Section 39
 - Propose to bury fiber optic cable on the east side of FR2470 for approximately 7,922 feet long by 10 feet* wide containing 1.8 acres.

*Note: 10 feet width is the minimum width required per FS directives (FSH 2709.11, 48.23c)

Important Application Items

4. Construction or Installation of Facilities

- Construction/installation schedule. (Duration of work)
- Method of work with machinery listed.
- Flagging or staking requirements.
- Vegetation removal.
 - If so, what type of vegetation and how many trees.
- Any structures proposed.
- Any access needs that are temporary or permanent.

Important Application Items

5. Maps with geospatial data

- All proposals require maps with GIS data.
- Only acceptable data is an ESRI File Geodatabase, ESRI Shapefiles, or a published feature layer in AGOL. KMZ files or other forms of data will not be accepted.
- Descriptive attribute table in GIS supports and improves the environmental review process

Timeline for Communication Uses

WITHIN 60 CALENDAR DAYS	APPLICATION PROCESSING BEGINS	60 DAYS (CATEGORY 1-4)	60 DAYS (MAJOR CAT)	60-270 DAYS
<p>Proposal received and contact proponent to notify of suitability and if the Agency will give further consideration</p>	<p>Initial Screening & 2nd Level Screening Met</p> <p>Cost Recovery fee determination initiated</p>	<p>Minor Cost Recovery, FS endeavors to process within 60 days from receipt of Cost Recovery payment</p> <p>Minor Category, notify applicant prior to 30 calendar days of reasons for delay and projected date for processing completion</p>	<p>Notify applicant within 60 days from acceptance anticipated steps and schedule</p>	<p>Based on request and timing of submittal, review ranges from 6 months to 9 months</p> <p>Includes environmental review, heritage consultation, tribal notification, and authorized officer review</p>

270-day Guidance

- 270-day timeline from the acceptance of a proposal as an application is only for processing of communication uses.
- Within 270 days, the Forest Supervisor shall grant or deny the application and notify the applicant in writing of the grant or denial.

Before a proposal is accepted

- All required information must be submitted.
- Timeline does not begin on first day of submittal. It begins when all required information has been received.

What is Cost Recovery?

- Cost Recovery Fee is an assessment of fees to recover agency processing costs for special use applications and monitoring costs for special use authorizations.

2024 Processing Fee Schedule		
Fee Category	Hours	Rate
1 (Minor)	>1 and up to and including 8	\$151
2 (Minor)	> 8 and up to and including 24	\$535
3 (Minor)	> 24 and up to and including 36	\$1,007
4 (Minor)	> 36 and up to and including 50	\$1,443
5 (Master Agreements)	Varies	As specified in the agreement
6 (Major Agreements)	> 50	As specified in the agreement

How To Shorten Timeframes

- Submit all required documentation.
- Align requests with the field season (specialists cannot conduct field surveys in the winter).
- For known large requests, submit as soon as possible understanding the potential for longer timeframes due to specialist review.
- Due to a large influx of requests, the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest may soon require utility companies to complete National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for larger requests. The Forest recommends all utility companies consider this in their planning.

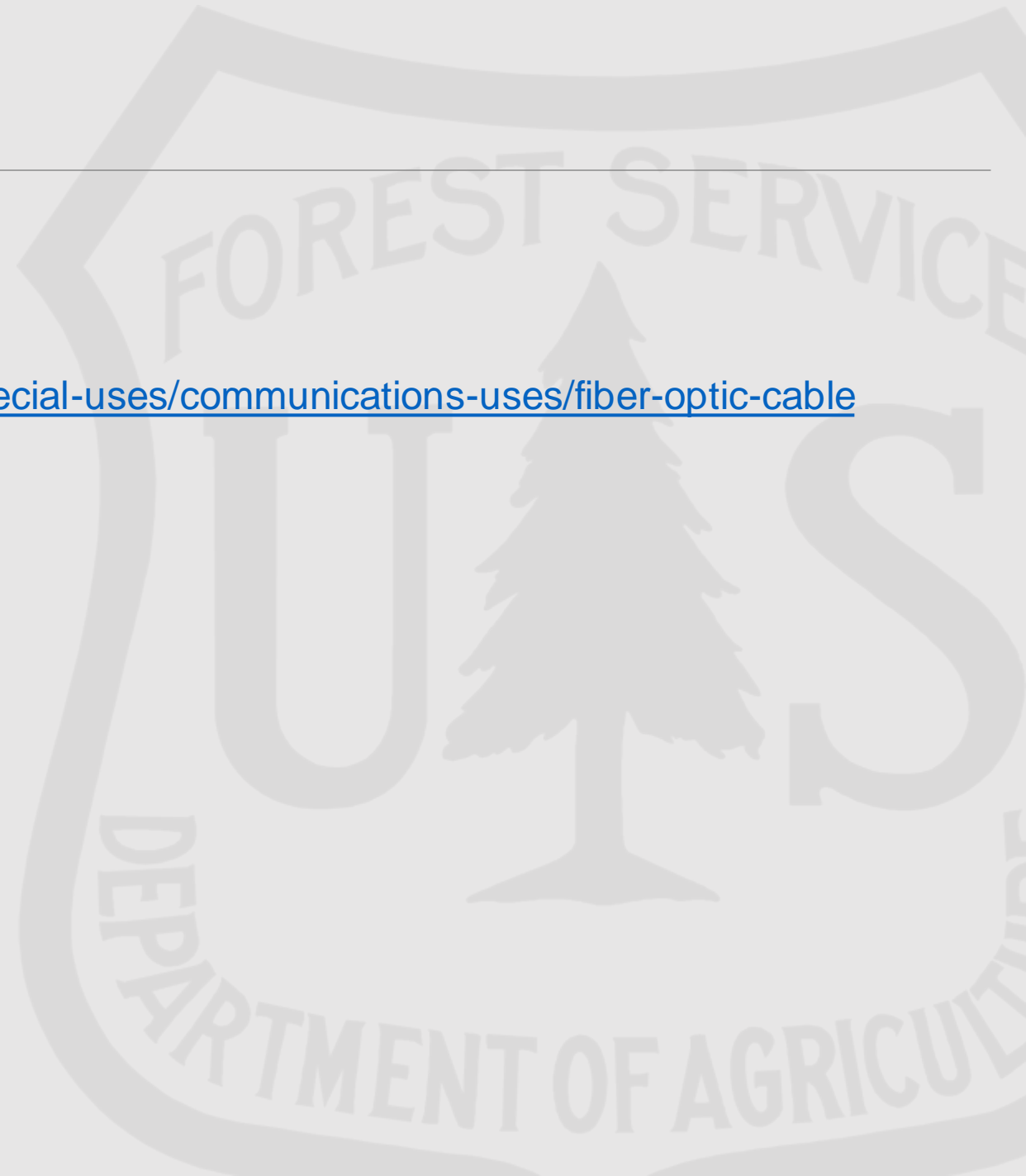
Where to submit a proposal

- National Broadband Team created to support the influx of fiber optic proposals
- Online form available to initiate application process
<http://tiny.cc/xh1kxz>
- After submittal, a follow-up email will be sent from the National Broadband Team requesting
 - Perfected SF-299 application
 - Plan of Development
 - Map(s) meeting certain standards
- The external portal is the only location to submit an application.



National Broadband Team

- Email: sm.fs.broadband@usda.gov
- Website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/special-uses/communications-uses/fiber-optic-cable>



USFS Wisconsin Contacts

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