

Gathering holiday greens on the Superior National Forest

Written by

Tuesday, 26 November 2013 12:44



Gathering your own Christmas tree or balsam boughs on the national forest is a great way to get outdoors with your family and celebrate the holidays. For many people this is an annual tradition. Here are a few things to keep in mind if you want to make this part of your holiday tradition:

Where can I get a Christmas tree permit? Stop by any of our Forest Service offices to obtain a permit for a Christmas tree. A permit to cut one Christmas tree on the Superior National Forest costs \$5.00. Two permits are allowed per household per year.

What about balsam bough permits? To obtain a permit for bough gathering, contact the Forest Service office closest to the area where you plan to collect. A "personal use" permit for gathering balsam boughs on the Superior National Forest allows for enough boughs to make approximately 5 door-size wreaths and costs \$20.00. If you plan to harvest a large amount of boughs, a commercial permit must be purchased.

How can I be sure I am on national forest lands and in the right place? Parcels of state, county, tribal and private lands are intermixed with national forest lands within the Superior National Forest boundary. Cutting of Christmas trees and boughs is not allowed inside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, plantations, recreation areas, or administrative sites. Visitor maps of the Superior National Forest which show land ownership are available for \$10.00 at all Forest offices and also via internet. Permits and maps may be obtained by mail but you must allow time for a check to travel through the mail and materials to be returned.

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Can I use my ATV? Off-highway vehicles (OHVs), including ATVs and dirt bikes, are allowed *only*

on designated trails and specific roadways. Motor vehicle use maps are available at Forest offices and are posted on our website. Snowmobiles may be used on designated trails and cross-country in most areas or on unplowed roads with a 4-inch minimum snow cover. Check with the Forest office issuing your permit about any restrictions in the area you plan to visit.

Make your tree-cutting outing a safe and enjoyable experience by following these tips:

- Arrive early at your cutting area as it may take longer than you think to find that special tree. Bring snacks and water as well.
- Check the weather outlook and be ready for changing conditions. Carry tire chains, shovel, flashlights, and blankets in your vehicle, plus rope to tie down your tree. Many national forest roads are not maintained or snowplowed during the winter, so be sure that your vehicle is equipped for winter travel and has a full tank of gas.
- Wear proper winter clothing and carry extras in case you get wet. You might be warm, dry and comfortable when you start, but you may get tired and cold as the day wears on.
- Let someone know where you are going and when to expect you back. Check in when you return.
- Don't rely on your cell phone as it may not work in many areas of the forest.
- Keep aware of your location. Bring a map, compass or GPS technology and know how to use it.
- Watch for other traffic – on foot, on the road, and on the trails.

For more information, visit the Superior National Forest web site: www.fs.usda.gov/superior