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Most do not need permit to harvest mushrooms

- Mary Orr The Gazette Record

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The harvest has begun. The mushroom harvest that is.

Officials with the state and national forests encourage people to enjoy the hunt for the delectable delights but caution folks to be safe and respectful of the public land.

When collecting on federal land, people who plan to collect more than a gallon a day are required to get a free personal use permit from their local Forest Service office. The permit allows collection of up to five gallons per day and up to 20 gallons per season.

“The free permits are simply a way to appropriately manage mushroom harvesting activities, monitor use, and protect resources,” they wrote in a recent press release.

The state does not require those picking for personal use to get a permit.

“This is an honor system. There is no problem with people picking mushrooms and sharing the excess with friends and family,” Public Relations officer Sharla Arledge said.

“The concern is people collecting the mushrooms and selling them, making a profit at the expense of the endowment beneficiaries.”

On state land if individuals are collecting mushrooms for commercial use they are required to get a land-use permit from their local Idaho Department of Lands supervisory area office.

A land use permit is an authorization for short term use or activity in lieu of a lease, but with provisions and terms similar to leases. They usually have a fee, sometimes a bond, and special terms specific to the use or requirements to mitigate negative impacts to endowment lands.

Costs for these permits vary by activity. In many cases Land Use Permits charge a small percentage of sales on behalf of the endowment beneficiaries. Each permit would vary in cost based on the operation.

Officer Arledge said that Idaho Endowment Trust Land is unique.

“The lands were given to the state by Congress at statehood creating a legal trust for the sole purpose of financially supporting specific beneficiaries, primarily public schools,” she said. “Idaho’s Constitution requires these lands must be used to generate the maximum financial return to the beneficiary. If someone is making money from the resources on the endowment land, there should be payment to the endowment beneficiaries for those resources.”

Customer service staff at each office can also answer questions about travel and harvest locations in your area.

The Forest Service cautions those traveling through the wood on the roads and trails this time of year to be careful as the ground is often soft, muddy and landslides are common.

They also caution folks to be especially cautious in recently burned areas.

“Mushrooms often grow well in recently burned forests, but burned areas can have safety hazards,” according to the press release.

When hiking in burned areas, be aware of your surroundings. Wildfires can kill or weaken trees, and burned areas can have higher rates of erosion and flooding during

spring runoff. Hazard trees can fall down or drop limbs at any time, but especially during strong winds. Avoid camping or parking in areas where trees could fall.

Free motor-vehicle maps are available online at <https://tinyurl.com/34fxtcv9> that can be downloaded to a smartphone. These maps will track location even when not connected to WiFi.