

FOREST PRESERVES OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY
OVERNIGHT CAMPING POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

POLICY STATEMENT

This Forest Preserves Policy Statement is established to assure that no person shall be discriminated against because of his or her political or religious opinions, affiliations, race, sex, creed, national origin or disability. It establishes the following rules and regulations that will govern all camping on Forest Preserves of Winnebago County properties.

PURPOSE OF THE CAMPGROUND

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County campgrounds are established for the convenience and enjoyment of outdoor recreation by the visiting public. Forest Preserves campgrounds are not places for permanent or semi-permanent residences, bases of operation, or a business, or facilities for non-camper residences. All campground amenities are for the sole purpose of registered camping parties, i.e., showers, dumpsters, etc.

CAMPING REGULATIONS

1. **No Refunds or transfers to another party.**
2. Reservations may be rescheduled to another date with ten (10) or more business days advance notice from your arrival date.
3. Disorderly conduct or excessive noise will not be tolerated. Visitors are required to arrive by 9:00 PM and leave the campground by 10:00 PM. Quiet hours are 10:00 PM to 8:00 AM.
4. Destroying, damaging, pruning or transplanting any trees, shrubs, flowers or other plants are unlawful. This rule applies in particular to the misguided use of knives and hatchets in cutting down branches and in felling young trees. No nails or screws shall be driven into trees.
5. Overnight camping is allowed only by permit from preserve staff. Permits will be issued on a first-come first-served basis after campers are set up. All units must be established and registered by 10:00 PM and vacated by 3:00 PM.
6. a. An adult only (18 years old or over) may apply for a permit. Adult must remain on site.
b. A group composed of up to 20 juniors must be supervised by a minimum of 3 adults. Above this figure, a ratio of 1 adult to not more than every 5 juniors must be observed.
7. The area where campout will be held must be indicated, and unless permission to change sites is obtained from preserve staff, the group must locate their camp in this area.

8. Permit will be valid only on date(s) and during period of time as indicated and campground use will be limited to a maximum of 14 consecutive nights, after which repeat camping is permitted after a 2-night vacancy.
9. The adult in whose name permit is issued accepts responsibility for the actions of any and all campers and pets in the group.
10. Permit must be in the possession of group during campout and must be exhibited upon request by any forest preserve or law enforcement officer. The camper's copy of the permit must be displayed on the post and the orange copy displayed on the camping unit.
11. Cooking or other fires may be built and contained only in steel campfire rings in regular campgrounds, or in established campfire areas in the youth camps. **If outside firewood is brought in, all must be burned before leaving, due to Emerald Ash Borer concerns.** No pallets or lumber with nails is allowed. Fires should be no more than (3) three feet high. All fires should be extinguished before leaving the site.
12. Rubbish or garbage must be wrapped and then placed in the waste receptacles, which are located conveniently throughout the camping areas. All campsites shall be cleaned of refuse before leaving.
13. Gray water and/or sewage water must be disposed of in the sanitary dump station.
14. Only site registered campers are allowed to use showerhouses. Youth area campers are not allowed to use showerhouses.
15. Any unlicensed motorized vehicle use in the campground is prohibited unless authorized by the Area Manager.
16. Quiet pets are welcome if they are on a leash, not to exceed 10', and are under control at all times. Do not leave pets unattended. Cleaning up after pets is the owner's responsibility. Do not tie pets to trees. **All dogs need to comply with local and state required rabies vaccinations.**
17. Campers will be charged a camping fee per unit/night in developed camping areas. Should more than one unit be established per site, a fee will be collected and separate permits issued for each unit. Limited to three units/three vehicles maximum per site.
18. A violation of any of the above rules may result in revocation without refund of camping privileges of the responsible individual(s) and/or organization.
19. All campers are subject to provisions of the Forest Preserves General Use Regulations Ordinance and the current Forest Preserves Reservation Policy Statement, copies of which are available at the Forest Preserves Office.
20. **Area Managers** are the final authority regarding interpretation of rules.

21. Winter Camping is not permitted at any of the campgrounds.

DEFINITIONS AND CAMPING FEE POLICY

Regular Campgrounds are defined as those areas at Hononegah, Sugar River and Seward Bluffs that are developed with electricity, dump stations, water and pit toilets. All four areas have numbered sites. All camping units pay the daily fee with electrical hookup, if used, extra. Group camping will not be allowed in family or regular camping areas unless they camp on individual sites and pay the regular fee.

A Camping Unit is a tent, trailer, vehicle, or portable equipment used by the person, family, or group for bedding or housing.

Primitive Area is defined as that area at Sugar River where camping is allowed but no electricity or dump station is available. Only pit toilets and a hand-pump well is provided. Walk-in use only.

Equestrian Camping designated sites at Oak Ridge and Seward Bluffs Forest Preserves. Campgrounds are for registered equestrians only unless a Special Use Permit is obtained.

Canoe Camping designated sites at Hononegah and Hinchliff Forest Preserves are for canoeists only unless a Special Use Permit is obtained.

Equestrian and canoe campers are subject to the same rules that apply to other Forest Preserves of Winnebago County campgrounds.

Senior Citizens are those persons 62 years of age or older. They will be charged a senior citizen rate at regular campgrounds. Verification of age may be made by birth certificate, driver's license, Golden Age Passport or other valid document required by law to establish proof of age and date of birth and issued by a federal or state governmental agency.

Disabled Citizens are those persons who are blind or disabled. They will be charged a disabled citizen rate at regular campgrounds. Blind or disabled person is defined in the Illinois Public Aid Code, Illinois Compiled Statutes. An individual wishing to qualify for a reduction in camping fees under the provisions stated above must be able to submit one of the following documents as verification:

1. Applicant or spouse must have a current Illinois Disabled Person Identification Card issued by the Department of Public Aid. This medical eligibility card's case number code must identify the recipient as being blind or disabled; or
2. Applicant or spouse must have a letter or Report of Confidential Social Security Benefits Information less than 1 year old requested by the applicant or spouse from the Social Security Administration indicating that benefits are being received for qualifying as being blind and/or disabled or possess a Supplemental Security Payment Decision letter or a Social Security Award Certificate from the Social Security Administration if issued during the

current year and indicating that benefits are being received from qualifying as being blind and/or disabled; or

3. Applicant or spouse must possess a document (card or letter form) of less than a year old from a bona fide private or public retirement system individually personalized and indicating disability retirement income is being received due to physical or mental impairment preventing gainful employment; or
4. DAV license (Disabled American Veteran) with a license ID card issued to the applicant because of being a 100% service-connected disabled veteran and receiving a grant from the Veteran's Commission; or
5. Applicant or spouse being disabled according to the Public Aid Code, Illinois Compiled Statutes, but not qualifying for any of the aforementioned verifications to a reduction in camping fees must sign a statement indicating that he or she is disabled according to the above statute and in doing so will be allowed to camp at a reduced camping fee; or
6. Applicant must be driving and/or riding in a vehicle with handicap plates or a mirror-hanger handicap card.

The problem may arise where a senior citizen or disabled person wants to register and receive the reduced fee even though that person appears to be a guest in a younger family. In this example the person may register 1 unit only. Any other units in the group would be charged full rates.

CAMPING IN AREAS RESERVED FOR ORGANIZED YOUTH GROUPS

1. Application for a grounds use certificate for a youth group camping area will be accepted online at www.winnebagoforest.org or at the Forest Preserves Office. Youth camping areas will be provided at Hononegah, Rockford Rotary, Pecatonica River and Sugar River Forest Preserves. Primitive camping area at Sugar River Forest Preserve may be used from October 1 through May 1. Youth groups over 50 will be limited to Pecatonica River and Rockford Rotary Forest Preserves.
2. The organized youth camping area and quarry at Pecatonica River Forest Preserve may be reserved for military training overnights at no charge.
3. Reservations will not be held for any period of time and must be paid in full at the time of reservation to confirm the date.
4. An adult only (18 years old or over) may apply for a permit. A group of up to 20 juniors must be super-vised by a minimum of 3 adults, and above this figure a ratio of 1 adult to not more than every 5 juniors must be observed.

The adult in whose name the certificate is issued accepts responsibility for the condition of the camping area upon conclusion of the activity. Leaving the area in an unreasonable

state of disorder where excessive clean up is necessary may result in the revocation of the reservation privileges of the responsible individuals and/or organization. The permit must be in possession of the group during the campout and must be exhibited upon request by any forest preserve or law enforcement officer.

5. Designated youth camping areas are to be reserved only by scout troops, youth organizations or church youth organizations. **Not available for individual or general camping use.**
6. Cooking or other fires may be built only at established sites unless permission is otherwise obtained from the preserve staff.
7. Rubbish or garbage must be wrapped and then placed in the waste receptacles. All campsites shall be cleaned of refuse before leaving.
8. Destroying, damaging, pruning or transplanting any trees, shrubs, flowers or other plants are unlawful. This rule applies in particular to the misguided use of knives and hatchets in cutting down branches and in felling young trees.
9. No beer or other liquor is allowed on campouts that are sponsored by an organization and are attended by individuals who are younger than 21 years of age. Sponsoring organization and/or responsible individuals must adhere to the District policy regarding use of alcoholic beverages on District properties.
10. Youth area campers are not allowed to use showerhouse at Sugar River Forest Preserve.
11. It is the responsibility of the person(s) making a reservation to be familiar with the Forest Preserves General Use Regulation Ordinance and the current Forest Preserves Reservation Policy Statement, copies of which are available at the Forest Preserves Office.