Park Authority Regulations

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These regulations were adopted on October 23, 2002, and amended on May 24, 2006, and on June 26, 2011 by the Fairfax County Park Authority Board and are authorized by §15.2-5704(17) of the Code of Virginia. Violations of any of these regulations are punishable as a class four misdemeanor pursuant to the Code of Virginia §15.2-5705. Upon conviction, the penalty is a fine of up to $250 (§18.2-11). Failure to abide by these regulations may also result in violators being prohibited from future use of park property, facilities or services.

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(continuation)

Revised and Adopted May 24, 2006

Definitions

For the purpose of administering, enforcing or interpreting these regulations the following definitions shall apply:

Park Authority shall refer to either the Fairfax County Park Authority or the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.

Park shall refer to any property or facilities owned, leased or maintained by either the Fairfax County Park Authority or the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.

Express Permission shall refer to a special allowance granted by the Park Authority or its director on a case-by-case basis to conduct a specific behavior or activity in exception to these regulations.

Law Enforcement/Police Officer has the same meaning as in the Code of Virginia §9.1-101 and also includes the Sheriff of the respective jurisdictions and his or her deputies.

General Provisions

Parks belong to the people and were created to provide for recreational facilities, the enjoyment and leisure pursuits of the citizenry and for the preservation and interpretation of open space resources.

The Fairfax County Park Authority and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority have been charged with the operation and maintenance of parks under the Park Authorities Act of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Chapter 57, Title 15.2 of the Virginia Code, 1950, as amended).

The Park Authority is proud to be a host for public activities, but reserves the right to regulate these activities in the best interest of the park, its users, neighbors and the general public.

In order to protect public parks, assure the safety of park users and maximize the public's enjoyment of these parks, it is necessary that Park Authority Regulations be established and adhered to by all park patrons. These regulations shall also apply to all paid and volunteer park staff except in those instances where an exception to these regulations is required for staff to complete tasks as part of their assigned duties. This document seeks to define those activities that are prohibited and/or regulated by law in Park Authority parks. In addition to these regulations, all State and/or local codes, to include but not limited to, Fire Prevention Codes, traffic and game laws, and zoning ordinances are enforceable on park property. These regulations are authorized by §15.2-5704(17) of the Code of Virginia.
The following regulations shall apply to all property and facilities owned, leased or maintained by the Park Authority.

Park Authority Regulations (continuation)

A VIOLATION OF ANY OF THESE REGULATIONS IS PUNISHABLE AS A CLASS FOUR MISDEMEANOR PURSUANT TO THE CODE OF VIRGINIA §15.2-5705. UPON CONVICTION, THE PENALTY IS A FINE OF UP TO $250 (§18.2-11). FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THESE REGULATIONS MAY ALSO RESULT IN VIOLATORS BEING EJECTED FROM THE PARK IMMEDIATELY AND PROHIBITED FROM FUTURE USE OF PARK PROPERTY, FACILITIES OR SERVICES.

Park patrons shall follow the lawful orders of Park employees given to enforce or uphold these regulations. Park employees include both paid and authorized volunteer staff. For the purposes of these regulations, a lawful order is any direction by a law enforcement officer or Park employee for a person or persons to comply with park regulations, rules or policies, state laws or local ordinances or to provide for public safety.

If any of these regulations, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held invalid, the remainder of the regulations and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall remain in full force and effect.

In addition to these regulations, park patrons shall follow rules and policies established by the Park Authority governing the use of parks and park facilities.

Regulations

§1.01 Amplified Sound

No person shall operate in a park, in a manner audible to others, any device designed to produce, reproduce or amplify sound without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

§1.02 Business Activities, Soliciting and Advertising

A. Business Activities. No person shall sell or make an offer to sell goods or services or conduct business activities within a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

B. Solicitation. No person shall solicit monetary or other valuable contributions from others in a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

B. Advertisements. No person shall advertise goods, services or events within a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority. For the purposes of this regulation, advertisements include, but are not limited to, the distribution or posting of handbills, flyers, coupons or public announcements or signs mounted on vehicles (see also §1.20 Signs below).

§1.03 Camping

Park Authority Regulations (continuation)

A. Areas and Fees. No person shall set up an overnight camping or lodging site in a park except in areas designated and posted as camping areas. Campers shall register and pay appropriate fees.

B. Sewage. No person shall dispose of sewage or gray water within a park except by transferring it to a dumping station provided by the Park Authority for this purpose or by storing it in a completely closed container and removing it from the park.

§1.04 Dangerous Devices

A. Projectiles. No person shall operate in a park any device or undertake any activity which will cause a projectile to be loosed or propelled which could injure a person or animal or damage property unless the person is operating the device or engaging in the activity in accordance with established park practices as part of a Park Authority managed or permitted activity. Activities and devices restricted under this provision include, but are not limited to, the hitting of golf balls, and the operation of a bow and arrow, crossbow, taser, spear, slingshot, dart device, or other device designed for high-speed missile projection.

B. Knives. No person shall possess a knife with a blade more than four (4) inches in length within a park except for the purpose of food preparation.

C. Fireworks. No person shall possess or discharge fireworks in a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

§1.05 Domestic Animals

A. Cages and Leashes. No person shall have in his or her custody within a park any animal, other than a horse, that is not either caged, or on a leash and under the person's control; except that a dog may be under the direct supervision of its owner or their agent without a cage or a leash in an area designated as an off-leash dog exercise area. (See §1.05 (B) Horses below for horses.)

B. Horses. No person shall ride or lead a horse other than in an area designated by the Park Authority for horseback riding.

C. Feeding Domestic Animals. No person shall feed any domestic animal other than an animal under his or her own care within a park unless such feeding is expressly authorized by the Park Authority by a posted sign or in writing.

§1.06 Fires

A. Location. No person shall start or use a fire within a park except in facilities provided or approved by the Park Authority for this purpose.

B. Control and Extinguishment. Fires shall be attended at all times and fully extinguished before the site is left unattended.

C. Violation of Fire Bans. No person shall violate any provision of fire bans that the Park Authority may institute from time to time in order to protect the park resources or public safety.

§1.07 Fishing

Fishing is allowed in a park unless otherwise posted. Persons fishing in a park shall comply with Virginia State game laws and all special conditions established by the Park Authority.

§1.08 Historic Artifacts, Features and Man-Made Objects

No person shall damage, disturb or remove any historic artifacts, historic features or other man-made objects from a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority. For the purposes of these regulations, "historic artifacts" are any material remains that give physical evidence of human occupation, habitation, use or activity; and "historic features" include, but are not limited to, walls, fence lines, cellars, fire pits, mill races, trenches, tent platforms, quarries or any other man-made arrangement of materials or the trace thereof.

§1.09 Hours of Operation

A. Opening and Closing. No person shall enter a park more than one half hour before sunrise or remain in a park more than one half hour after sunset unless the person is (i) using a lighted facility (as provided for in §1.09(C) below) or specially posted park, (ii) attending a special event permitted by the Park Authority, (iii) is a bonafide renter or camper or (iv) has the express written permission of the Park Authority to be in a park before opening or after closing. If a patron is in a park outside of operating hours in accordance with exceptions (i – iv) above, the patron must leave the park by the closing time posted for the facility, park or event or specified in the permit.

B. Visiting with Campers. Persons visiting with campers and renters are NOT exempt from a park's hours of operation as set forth in §1.09(A) above.

B. Lighted Facilities. Hours of operation for facilities for which the Park Authority furnishes artificial lighting shall be posted at the facility or stipulated in a use permit.

§1.10 Hunting and Trapping

Hunting and trapping of wildlife are prohibited in a park except when expressly permitted in writing as part of a Park Authority controlled activity.

§1.11 Ice Skating

No person shall go upon the ice of any body of water in a park except at such places and at such times as may be designated by the Park Authority. Indoor ice skating is permitted at rinks maintained by the Park Authority for such use, at such times and subject to the rules prescribed and posted at the facility.

§1.12 Maintenance of Motor Vehicles

No person shall repair, clean, wax or otherwise maintain a motor vehicle in a park. In no case shall anyone discharge or cause to be discharged hazardous substances, including but not limited to, gasoline, antifreeze or motor oil, in a park.

§1.13 Metal Detectors

No person shall use a metal detector or similar device within a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

§1.14 Motor Vehicles and Traffic

A. Speed Limit Where None Is Posted. Where no speed limit is posted, no person shall operate a motor vehicle within a park at a speed greater than 20 miles per hour.

B. Prohibited Vehicles.
(1) No person shall operate within a park a motorized vehicle not licensed for regular use upon public highways, except that motorized carts furnished or approved by the Park Authority may be operated within designated areas and motorized wheelchairs may be operated in areas as provided for in §1.14(C) below.
(2) No person shall operate within a park a farm tractor or other farm machinery or a type of vehicle used primarily for earth-moving operations, whether or not licensed for regular use upon public highways, without the express written permission of the Park Authority.
(3) Motor-assisted bicycles (commonly referred to as "mopeds") are permitted only in areas where motor vehicles are permitted.

C. Motorized Wheelchairs and Assistive Devices. Motorized wheelchairs and other motorized assistive devices for mobility impaired persons are permitted in all areas where pedestrian access is permitted, unless otherwise posted by the Park Authority.

D. Off-Road Vehicle Operation. No person shall operate any type of motorized vehicle in areas of a park other than established roadways without the express written permission of the Park Authority except as noted in §1.14 (C) above.

E. Parking and Overnight Parking. No person shall park a motor vehicle in areas of a park other than those designated by the Park Authority as parking areas. Motor vehicles may not be parked overnight in a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority. Motor vehicles left over night in violation of this regulation may be ticketed and/or towed.

§1.15 Protection of Park Property

A. Construction. No person shall erect or construct any structure of any kind, install or perform any maintenance on any utility, equipment or other device on, below, over or across a park

without the express written permission of the Park Authority or in accordance with the terms of an existing easement duly recorded in the appropriate jurisdiction's land records.

B. Encroachments. No person shall in any way alter, damage, remove or deface any facilities, features, vegetation, man-made objects or equipment in a park or place; nor erect or store personal property, plant vegetation or deposit debris or refuse in a park as an extension of a use on adjacent property without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

C. Excavation. No person shall make any excavation by tool, equipment, blasting or other means in a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority or in accordance with the terms of an existing easement duly recorded in the appropriate jurisdiction's land records.

D. Off-Trail Use. No person shall bicycle, skate, ski or ride horses off of established trails, walkways or roadways without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

E. Unauthorized Trails. No person shall create any new trails without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

§1.16 Public Gathering

No person shall organize or engage in a public gathering of more than 75 persons in a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority. For the purposes of these regulations, "public gathering" shall be defined as demonstrations, picketing, speeches, vigils, parades, ceremonies, meetings, rallies, entertainment, games, shows, concerts, picnics, weddings and all other forms of public assembly.

Park Authority Regulations (continuation)

§ 1.16-1 Athletic Field Use

Use of an athletic field that results in a gathering of 20 or more participants, including spectators, shall require the express written permission of the Park Authority.

§1.17 Remote-Control Devices and Powered Models or Toys

No person shall operate hobby rockets, remote-control gliders or powered remote-control or tethered planes, boats, cars or other like devices in a park except in areas designated by and with the express written permission of the Park Authority.

§1.18 Restricted Areas

No person shall enter any area in a park designated and posted as restricted without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

§1.19 Rest Rooms and Bath Houses

A. Harassment and Intimidation. No person shall remain in the vicinity of a washroom, rest room, dressing room, or bathhouse in a park with the intent to harass, intimidate or solicit users of such facility.

B. Inappropriate Behavior. No person shall engage in inappropriate behavior in rest rooms, wash rooms or bath houses. For the purposes of these regulations, inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to, sexual activity, use of controlled substances, sleeping, loitering, washing clothes, bathing in fountains or washbasins - or any activities prohibited by law.

§1.20 Signs

No person shall post signs in a park except at locations designated by and with the express written permission of the Park Authority.

§1.21 Swimming, Bathing and Wading

Swimming, bathing and wading are prohibited in bodies of water, to include, but not limited to, streams, rivers, ponds or lakes, within or adjacent to a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority. Swimming, bathing and wading in a park are permitted only in water facilities established by the Park Authority for such purposes and only during posted hours of operation.

§1.22 Wildlife and Habitat Protection

A. Animals. No person or his or her pet shall harass, capture, remove, injure or kill any animal or its young or eggs found in a park, or disturb the nest, den, burrow, lodge, roost, dam or other structure of any animal found in a park, or attempt to do so, unless the person possesses a federal or Virginia state permit and has the express written permission of the Park Authority.

B. Feeding of Wild Animals. No person shall feed any wild animal within a park unless such feeding is expressly authorized by the Park Authority by a posted sign or in writing.

C. Removal of Plants and Fungi. No person shall remove from a park any plant or fungus (e.g., mushrooms) or parts thereof including, but not limited to, cuttings, flowers, seeds, berries, nuts or foliage, without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

D. Abandonment or Release of Animals. No person shall abandon, release or cause to be released into a park any animal or other organism without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

E. Planting or Release of Seeds or Spores. No person shall plant any plant or release or cause to be released into a park any plant or fungus seeds or spores without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

F. Habitat Preservation. No person shall disturb or modify woodlands, streams, stream banks, meadows, ponds, lakes or other natural areas within a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

G. Removal of Natural Materials. No person shall remove or use any wood, wood chips, sod, earth, humus, rocks, minerals, fossils, sand, water or any other natural material from a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority.