

Williamson County Parks and Recreation Department

Rules and Regulations Policy

This policy serves as a guideline to help govern the health, safety, and general welfare of persons using Williamson County parks, venues, preserves, and trails. The policy also establishes guidelines to protect the property, and the natural and cultural resources associated with the Williamson County Park system. Adherence to these guidelines will ensure the use, enjoyment, and protection of the parks, venues, preserves, and trails managed by the Williamson County Parks Department (Department) for current and future generations.

This policy applies to all properties and facilities within the Department. Existing and any future site-specific rules and regulations apply as amended. Failure to abide by these rules and regulations shall be cause for fine, removal, and/or arrest by the appropriate authorities.

Please call the Williamson County Parks & Recreation Department at (512) 943-1920 for more information.

SECTION 1 AUTHORITY

The Commissioners Court of Williamson County, Texas, acting in its capacity as the governing body of Williamson County, Texas, adopted these Rules and Regulations. These Rules and Regulations are authorized by *Chapter 320 of the Texas Local Government Code*, as amended, for public parks, venues, trails, and preserves owned, operated, or maintained by a County in the State of Texas.

SECTION 2 ADMINISTRATION

The Commissioners Court hereby designates the Department personnel to advise and inform park patrons regarding these Rules and Regulations.

Upon finding a need for public safety or welfare, or preservation of park resources, the Parks Director (Director) may impose restriction on public activity and conduct and may limit the use of any area or facility in Department parks, venues, trails, preserves, or facilities, or a portion thereof. It is an offense for a person to enter or remain in an area or participate in an activity so restricted by the Director (or designee).

Additionally, the Commissioners Court hereby designates the Williamson County Sheriff and respective deputies, and Williamson County Constables and respective deputies, and any other appropriate authorities as defined by the Code of Criminal Procedure to enforce these Rules and Regulations. With officer discretion, failure to comply with the Rules and Regulations shall be cause for fine, removal, and/or arrest. Violation of these rules and regulations constitutes a Class C misdemeanor.

An employee of the department, peace officers, and emergency personnel are exempt from these Rules and Regulations when they conflict with the discharge of his or her official duties to the extent of that conflict.

The Director by written order may waive any provision of these Rules and Regulations not governed by Penal Code or any similar pre-existing code in response to a natural disaster or other similar emergency.

SECTION 3 AREAS COVERED

Except as specifically noted, these Rules and Regulations apply to all County parks, venues, trails, and preserves located within Williamson County, Texas.

SECTION 4 DEFINITIONS

As used in these rules and regulations:

- (a) "Alcoholic Beverage" means any beverage containing more than one-half of one percent (.5%) of alcohol by volume, which is suitable for use as a beverage, either alone or diluted;
- (b) "Commissioners Court" means the Commissioners Court of Williamson County, Texas;
- (c) "County" means Williamson County, Texas;
- (d) "Department" means Williamson County Parks and Recreation Department;
- (e) "Explosives" means any chemical compound or mixture that is commonly used or intended for the purpose of producing an explosion;
- (f) "Individual" means a human being;
- (g) "Light truck" means any truck with a manufacturer's rated carrying capacity not to exceed two thousand (2,000) pounds and is intended to include those trucks commonly known as pickups, panel delivery trucks, carry-all trucks, and vans;
- (h) "Motor Vehicle" includes gasoline, diesel, electric and/or battery powered vehicles and every device in, upon, or by which any individual or property may be transported or drawn upon a road, trail, or lands under control of Williamson County except a device moved by human power;
- (i) "Music" means sound provided by band(s), D. J.(s), radio, etc.:
- (j) "Noise" means any loud, unusual, or raucous sound(s), in excess of 85 decibels;
- (k) "Park" means a park owned, operated, or maintained by Williamson County for recreation and enjoyment by the general public;
- (l) "Director" means the individual named or designated as the Director of all county owned parks, trails, preserves, and facilities by the County Commissioner's Court;
- (m) "Peace Officer" means a peace officer as defined in Tex. Code of Criminal Procedure Article 2.12, as amended;
- (n) "Person" means any individual, group of individuals, organization, corporation or other legal entity, but does not include a Williamson County employee acting in his/her capacity;
- (o) "Pet" means a domesticated animal kept for pleasure rather than utility;
- (p) "Preserve" is a protected area of importance for flora, fauna or features of geological or other special interest, which is reserved and managed for conservation and to provide special opportunities for study, research, and public use.
- (q) "Road" is any road maintained or controlled by the County for public passage for vehicles within a park;
- (r) "Special event" means a special, organized activity intended for more than fifty (50) individuals to share a common purpose as a group;
- (s) "Weapon" means a rifle, bow and arrow, club, handgun, firearm, illegal knife, shotgun, short-barrel firearm, gas gun or gas pistol, BB gun or BB pistol, pellet gun or pellet pistol, zip gun, sling or sling shot, and includes those objects defined as weapons or prohibited weapons in Chapter 46 of the Texas Penal Code, as amended; and
- (t) "Wildlife" means living things that are neither human nor domesticated.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1.01 ADHERENCE TO PARK SIGNS

All persons shall comply with the signs and markers installed by the Department and other regulatory agencies having jurisdiction in the County.

1.02 USE OF PARK FACILITIES

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Enter or remain within a park between the closing hour and the opening hour
 - a. except for persons authorized by the department to use a camping facility, trailer space or other facilities,
 - b. or for persons who have paid the overnight use fee.
 - c. Park Hours – The Director by written order may establish closing hours and opening hours for a park, venue, trail, preserve, or other facility or portions thereof. Closing hours or opening hours shall be posted.
 - i. Day Use Park facilities are generally available for public use from 7:30 am to 10:00 pm.
 - d. Refusal to comply with this provision is not limited to enforcement under these Rules and Regulations and in the alternative may be enforced by Texas Penal Code 30.05, as applicable.
- B. Disturb the peace and quiet of the park setting.
 - a. Quiet Hours are from 10:00 pm to 7:30 am.
 - b. To ensure quality visitor experiences, guests remaining in approved overnight facilities must refrain from participating in loud or disruptive conversation and must not play loud music or cause other amplified sounds or noise that disturbs the peace and quiet of the park setting.
 - c. Refusal to comply with this provision is not limited to enforcement under these Rules and Regulations and in the alternative may be enforced by Texas Penal Code 42.01, as applicable.
- C. Occupy or use park facilities that require fees without paying fees or to occupy facilities that have previously been reserved.
 - a. Park facilities are generally available on a first-come first-served basis except for areas that require Day Use fees, facility use fees, and / or areas/facilities previously reserved.
 - b. Persons shall not use or occupy a facility or area for which a reservation fee has been paid when such use conflicts with the use by persons holding the reservation.
 - c. Reservations shall be made in accordance with the Department's reservation policies.
 - d. Confirmation of the reservation shall be displayed upon request to County employees charged with supervision, management, or patrolling of parks.
- D. Use park facilities without paying established day use fees
 - a. Day Use Fees - Persons shall not use any park, preserve, or facility for which a Day Use fee has been established, unless each person has first paid the fee or is otherwise authorized.
 - b. Day Use permits, receipts or passes shall be displayed to park staff and Commissioned Peace Officers upon request and according to park guidelines.
- E. Enter a Preserve without successfully completing the Leave No Trace program provided by the department
 - a. The Leave No Trace program provides research, education and initiatives so every person who ventures outside can protect and enjoy our world responsibly.
 - b. The Leave No Trace program focuses on educating people—instead of costly restoration programs or access restrictions—as the most effective and least resource-intensive solution to land protection
 - c. The principles of the Leave No Trace program assist the department in management of federally protected endangered species while allowing public use at the same time.
 - d. Exceptions by written authorization

1.03 CLOSED AREA(S)

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Enter posted/designated closed areas.
 - a. The Director or his/her designee may close parks, preserves, trails, or facilities to public entry, or otherwise may restrict use until such time the area or facility can be safely made available for public use.
 - b. Except in emergency circumstances, notice of closure shall be posted, and patrons shall not enter closed or restricted areas.
 - c. Patrons shall not enter areas closed due to flooding.
- B. Refusal to comply with this provision is not limited to enforcement under these Rules and Regulations and in the alternative may be enforced by Texas Penal Code 30.05, as applicable.

1.04 CAMPING AND OVERNIGHT USE

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Camp at any Department park, preserve, trail, or facility, except as authorized by permit and only in areas designated or areas marked for that purpose.
 - a. Camping is defined as:
 - i. Occupying a designated camping facility.
 - ii. Erecting a tent or arranging bedding, or both, for the purpose of, or in such a manner which facilitates overnight lodging.
 - iii. Use of a trailer, camper, or other vehicle for the purpose of sleeping overnight.
- B. Exceed the established Camping Time Limit
 - a. To afford all the public a wider use of the Williamson County Parks and Recreation Department's camping facilities, continuous occupancy of camping facilities by the same person or persons in a park is limited to fourteen (14) consecutive calendar days in a thirty (30) day period.
 - b. The Department may establish an alternate time limit for continuous occupancy of a facility (or facilities) by the same person or persons in a park, or in a designated portion of a park, when necessary to achieve maximum utilization of the park, or designated portion of the park, by all the public.
 - c. When a person has used the camping facilities in a park for a period of time greater than seven (7) consecutive days and voluntarily vacates or is required to vacate the facilities, they may not use the overnight camping facilities in the same park until a 24-hour time period has elapsed between their date of departure and date of re-entry. This provision shall not prevent park staff from re-admitting the camper if adequate camping spaces are available.
- C. Under the age of 17 years of age to be in a park facility between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7:30 a.m. unless accompanied or supervised by an adult.
 - a. The ratio of adults to minors shall not be less than one adult for every seven (7) minors.

1.05 OCCUPANCY LIMITS

It is an offense to:

- A. Exceed posted maximum occupancy limits and/or check in/check out times as established for each location
 - a. The Department may establish and post maximum occupancies and check in/check out times for any park, preserve, trail, or facility.
 - b. No more than eight (8) people may occupy a campsite unless otherwise noted in park specific locations.
 - c. Vehicle limits per campsite vary by park and facility type.
 - d. Check in time for campsites is 2:00 pm. Check out time is 12:00 pm.
 - e. Persons shall not enter into or remain in an area or facility for which an occupancy limit has been established when such action will have the effect of exceeding the established occupancy limits.
 - f. Persons shall confirm site specific requirements before occupancy.

- g. The following limits are established for the Williamson County Expo Center RV Park:
 - i. Check in time is 8:00 am on arrival date
 - ii. Check out time is 8:00 pm on date of departure
 - iii. Maximum occupancy per site is six (6) people
 - iv. Overnight horse tie outs are not allowed in the RV Park

1.06 FIRES, SMOKING, FIREWOOD OR FIREWORKS

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Light, build, or maintain a fire on any of the Department parks, preserves, trails, or facilities, except in a facility or device provided, maintained or designated for such purposes, or as authorized by the Department.
 - a. Portable camp stoves or portable barbecue grills of metal construction may be used in designated campsites or picnic areas, unless otherwise prohibited.
 - b. Campfires shall be allowed only in approved locations and under such conditions as may be prescribed by the Director or park supervisor. Campfires must be attended at all times by an adult until fully extinguished.
 - c. During periods of extreme fire hazard, the Williamson County Commissioners Court may issue burn bans for specified periods of time. During these times, and as circumstances dictate, the Director may prohibit or further restrict fires in designated areas.
- B. Cut, gather, or collect wood or other combustible material at any Department park, preserve, trail, or facility, for use as firewood or fuel, except for material designated for this purpose by the Department.
- C. Possess or use any kind of firework, except by permit, in any park, preserve, trail, or facility.

1.07 METAL DETECTORS

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. To use a metal detector in County Parks, preserves, trails, and facilities.
 - a. The Director may grant permission under special circumstances (e.g. contractors for work related activities; lost heirloom or keys, etc., utility companies searching for lines).

1.08 ALCOHOL

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Sell, or possess with intent to sell, alcoholic beverages unless authorized in writing by the Director
- B. Possess alcoholic beverages in the following areas:
 - a. Softball fields and dugouts.
 - b. The Quarry Splash Pad.

1.09 GLASS CONTAINERS

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Possess glass containers in Williamson County Parks and Recreation Department parks, preserves, trails, and facilities.

1.10 WEAPONS AND FIREARMS

The constitution and laws of the State of Texas, and those of the United States of America, govern the possession and use of Weapons within a park, venue, trail, or preserve.

1.11 ABANDONED OR UNATTENDED PROPERTY

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Abandon a vehicle or other personal property at any park, preserve, or facility.
 - a. Abandoned property shall be removed, impounded, and sold in conformance to County policy or state laws, or as may be determined by the County.
 - b. No person shall leave a vehicle or other property unattended at any park, preserve, trail, or facility in such a manner as to create a hazardous or unsafe condition, or to be in violation of a park curfew. Such property may be removed to a safe place or impounded.

1.12 MOTOR VEHICLES (to include gasoline, diesel, electric, propane, and/or battery powered)

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Operate a motor vehicle at any park, preserve, trail, or facility, except upon roads, driveways, parking areas, and areas designated for motor vehicles except as authorized by the Department.
 - a. Except for park staff, public safety, or emergency service personnel, no person may operate or use a motor vehicle, including a motorcycle, motorbike, all-terrain vehicle, or a motorized (including electric powered) bicycle on a trail or path not designated for use with such vehicles.

1.13 PARKING

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Park a motor vehicle on Department park land or preserve land except in designated areas
- B. Park, store, or leave a vehicle or trailer in areas posted "restricted" or with "no parking" signs.
 - a. A vehicle or trailer that is parked in such a manner that creates a hazardous or unsafe condition may be impounded, consistent with County and State Law.

1.14 WATER, WASTEWATER, SEWAGE, AND GARBAGE

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Deposit wastewater, sewage, or effluent from sinks, toilets, or other plumbing fixtures directly on the ground or into the water
- B. Use any water fountain, drinking fountain, pool, sprinkler, reservoir, lake or any other water body contained in the park for bathing, laundering, and washing dishes, pets, or vehicles (including trailers)
- C. Discard, deposit, or dump garbage in a park, preserve, or trail except for:
 - a. garbage generated inside the park during the course of park visitation; or
 - b. an amount of garbage consistent with what ordinarily would accumulate in a vehicle in the course of a day's travel.
- D. Dispose of garbage except in a receptacle provided for that use or as may otherwise be specifically authorized by Department personnel; or
- E. Use water provided by the Department for purposes other than drinking, washing or culinary uses.
- F. Refusal to comply with this provision is not limited to enforcement under these Rules and Regulations and in the alternative may be enforced by Texas Health and Safety Code 365.012, as applicable.

1.15 NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- (1) Plant life. It is an offense for any person to willfully mutilate, injure, destroy, thrash, or remove any portion of a live tree, shrub, vine, wildflower, grass, sedge, fern, moss, lichen, fungus or any other member of the plant kingdom or portion thereof, except upon written approval by the Department.
- No person shall collect or harvest dead wood or plants, or portions thereof, except upon written approval.
 - Collecting pecan nuts on the ground is allowed; thrashing pecan trees is prohibited without obtaining written permission of the Department.
 - All plant life within the boundaries of any Department park, preserve, or facility is protected.
- (2) Geological features. It is an offense for any person to willfully remove, destroy, take, tamper with, deface, or disturb any fossil, rock, earth, soil, mineral, gem, or other geological deposit except upon written approval by the Director.
- (3) Cultural resources. It is an offense for any person to willfully remove, destroy, take, tamper with, deface, disturb or otherwise adversely impact any historic or prehistoric resource, including but not limited to, buildings, structures, cultural features, rock art, or artifacts, except upon by written approval by the Director.

1.16 WILDLIFE

It is an offense for any person to:

- Harm, harass, hunt, trap or remove any animal, including mammals, fish, insects, birds, reptiles, or other living creatures from any park facility or preserve except upon written approval of the Department.
 - All wildlife within the boundaries of any Department park, preserve, trail, or facility is protected.
 - This section shall not apply where fishing is allowed, by an individual in possession of a valid Texas fishing license.

1.17 ANIMALS

It is an offense for any person who:

- Fails to keep pets or other animals under confinement or direct control.
 - Leads on leashes used to control animals shall not be more than six (6) feet long.
 - Dogs may be allowed to be without a leash if they are participating in pre-approved, commercial obedience training. Dogs may be without a leash in designated commercial obedience training areas, provided that each dog remains under immediate personal supervision and command. Please contact the Park Directors Office (512-943-1920) to ensure appropriate understanding of commercial use requirements related to dogs off their leash.
- Allows a pet or other animal to remain unattended or create a disturbance or a hazard.
- Allows a pet animal in the water area of the Quarry Splash Pad, or in designated swim areas, or within the land area adjacent to the water area of the Quarry Splash Pad or designated swim area, except for an animal trained in assisting handicapped or disabled persons
- Brings into, or allows to range at any park, preserve, trail, or facility, domestic fowl, horse, swine, sheep, goat, or other livestock except upon written approval by the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Rides, drives, leads or keeps a horse at any park, preserve, trail, or facility, except on a horseback riding trails, so designated and posted by the Department except as authorized under contract, approved reservation or permit.
- Rides a horse in a manner that is dangerous to any person or animal at any park, preserve, trail, or facility.
- Hitches a saddle horse to a tree, shrub, or structure in any manner that causes damage.
- Enters Department parks, trails, preserves, or facilities with an equine or equines, or cause the entry of an equine or equines to Department parks, trails, preserves, or facilities, unless that person has in his or her

immediate possession, for each equine in the person's custody or equine that the person allowed to enter the Department parks, trails, preserves, or facilities, a completed VS Form 10-11 (Texas Animal Health Commission) showing that the equine has tested negative to an official Equine Infectious Anemia test within the previous 12 months. The documentation required by this subsection shall be made available for inspection upon the request of any department employee acting within the scope of official duties.

- I. Except for an animal trained to assist disabled persons, pets and animals shall not be brought into designated preserves. Trained animals utilized by employees and agents of Williamson County in reasonable discharge of their duties are allowed.

1.18 TRAIL USE

Motor Vehicles (to include gasoline, diesel, electric, propane and/or battery powered)

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Operate or use a motor vehicle, including a motorcycle, motorbike, all-terrain vehicle, or a motorized (including electric powered) bicycle on a trail or path not designated for the use with such vehicles.
 - a. Except for Park staff, public safety, and/or emergency services personnel in the normal discharge of their duties.
- B. Operate bicycles, roller blades, or any other similar vehicle or equipment at a speed:
 - a. greater than is reasonable or prudent, having due regard for the traffic and the trail conditions then existing;
 - b. that endangers the safety of persons or property.

Equestrian Trail Use

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Participate in equestrian activities in a park or on a trail unless designated for such use.
 - a. Special permits and orientation may apply for some areas.

1.19 ASSEMBLY

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Conduct an assembly or public demonstration without written authorization
 - a. Organizers intending to conduct assemblies or public demonstrations on park land must provide at least three (3) weeks written notice to the Department.
 - b. Assemblies or public demonstrations are permissible except where such an activity will disrupt or interfere with scheduled events or prevent or be inconsistent with the intended use of park facilities at the proposed site of assembly.

1.20 VENDING

It is an offense for any person to:

- A. Conduct the commercial sale or offer to sell any goods, wares, drinks, food or food items, or render or offer to render any service for hire, at any park, preserve, trail, or facility except as authorized by contract, or permit properly issued by the Department and/or Commissioners Court.
 - a. Persons wanting to conduct charitable solicitations must provide at least three (3) weeks written notice in advance of the activity.

- b. Charitable solicitation is permissible except where such an activity will disrupt or interfere with scheduled events or prevent or be inconsistent with the intended use of park facilities, Department mission, and/or mission of Williamson County at the proposed site of solicitation.

1.21 PERFORMING ARTISTS IN PARKS

It is an offense for a person to:

- A. Block sidewalks, trails, or in any way impede pedestrian or vehicular traffic circulation.
- B. Be within 100 feet of any existing park concessions
- C. Juggle potentially hazardous materials or items, but not limited to items such as knives or fire.
- D. Use amplified sound unless authorized.
 - a. Individuals / groups must contact the Parks Director and gain understanding of procedures and guidelines, and to obtain written approval.
 - b. Entertainers should carry a copy of the letter of approval from the Department permitting their performance art. The letter is to be available on request by any park attendant or employee charged with patrolling or supervising park use.
 - c. Individuals may set up at special events only with written permission of event organizer.

1.22 CREMATION REMAINS

No cremation remains shall be disposed of on parkland without the written consent of the Director.

1.23 UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (REMOTELY PILOTED VEHICLES, DRONES, UNMANNED AIRCRAFT, ETC.)

It is an offense for a person to:

- A. Launch, land, or operate an unmanned aircraft system in (or over) County parks, preserves, and trails.
 - a. Except for park staff, public safety and / or emergency services personnel in the discharge of official duty

1.24 EFFECT ON EXISTING LAW

These Rules and Regulations are in addition to, and not in lieu of, all federal, state, and municipal laws, rules, and regulations applicable within a park, trail, or preserve.

1.25 ENFORCEMENT

The Williamson County Sheriff, the Williamson County Constables, and their respective deputies, or any other appropriate authorities as defined by the Code of Criminal Procedure, are authorized to enforce these Rules and Regulations, and shall be authorized to remove any person who violates any of these Rules and Regulations from the park. In addition to removal from the park, charges may be filed against a violator under Section 1.29.

1.26 SEVERABILITY

The provisions of these Rules and Regulations are severable. If any word, phrase, clause, sentence, section, provision, or part of these Rules and Regulations should be held invalid or unconstitutional, it shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions, and it is hereby declared to be the intent of the Commissioners Court that these Rules and Regulations would have been adopted as to the remaining portions, regardless of the invalidity of any part.

1.27 AMENDMENTS

These Rules and Regulations may be amended at any time at the discretion of Commissioners Court.

1.28 POSTING

These Rules and Regulations shall be conspicuously posted at or near the entrance of all Department parks, trails, and preserves and on appropriate County websites.

1.29 OFFENSES

In accordance with *Chapter 320 of the Texas Local Government Code*, Section 320.0455 (a), a violation of these Rules and Regulations is an offense punishable as a Class C misdemeanor. This shall be effective September 1, 2019.

1.30 EFFECTIVE DATE

These Rules and Regulations shall become effective on XX 2019. All previously adopted rules and regulations are superseded and repealed effective the same date.

The following applies to Designated Preserve areas under Williamson County responsibility:

1.31 COUNTY PRESERVES

No person may enter preserve areas without authorization from the Williamson County Conservation Foundation or designee. No person may deposit foreign material, commit vandalism, or commit any other acts of mischief which may harm or constitute "take" of federally protected species. (Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended.)

Adopted by the Williamson County Commissioners Court on this the 22nd day of October, 2019.

By: Valerie Covey
Valerie Covey, Presiding Officer
Bill Gravell, Jr., County Judge