



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY
Visitor Guidelines for WPC-owned properties
800 Waterfront Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-288-2777, www.waterlandlife.org

Visitor Guidelines for WPC-owned Properties

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Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) lands are open to the public free of charge. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy promotes the use of its property for outdoor recreation and enjoyment. In general, common sense is the best guide to the use of WPC lands. Consideration for resident plants, animals, and human visitors should always be practiced. Recreational activities, such as hiking, hunting, fishing, etc. are done at the participant's own risk. Most WPC property is found in its natural state and is unimproved land. In using WPC property, and in receiving any permit for specific activities, if applicable, the participant acknowledges that they agree to use WPC property at their own risk, and agree to hold WPC harmless from any liability or damages arising out of their use of WPC property.

Staff and Volunteer Land Stewards monitor approximately 40,000 acres of land held by WPC or under conservation easement. For information on how to become a volunteer, please contact the WPC Stewardship Coordinator at (412) 586-2318.

The following guidelines are subject to change. Some modifications will be posted at specific properties. For questions not addressed below, please contact WPC at (412) 288-2777 or (412) 586-2318. For questions specifically related to Bear Run Nature Reserve, call (724) 329-7803.

CAMPING is permitted on selected properties and at designated sites. Bear Run Nature Reserve is the only property with designated camping areas at this time. Sign-up for sites at Bear Run is on a first come, first served basis. At the south end of the parking lot is a kiosk where campers must leave a notice that a specific site is in use. The best guideline to follow while camping on the land is to leave with everything you brought and to leave a minimal trace of your visit.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy believes that primitive camping is a valuable way for visitors to experience the natural qualities of the lands we conserve. We also recognize that not all lands are suitable, safe, or comfortable for camping, and are constantly evaluating the potential for this activity on all properties.

CAMPFIRES are currently permitted only in designated areas at Bear Run Nature Reserve campsites, and only during the months of December through February and June through September. Fires are not permitted between March 1st and May 25th and from October 1st through December 1st. Only dead and downed tree limbs may be used for firewood. No vegetation is to be removed from the property. During periods of drought, WPC staff may post "No Campfires Permitted" signs at Bear Run Nature Reserve.

Due to fire safety concerns, campfires are not permitted from March 1 through May 25 and October 1 through December 1. All campfires should be closely monitored and completely extinguished before leaving the camping area.

CLIMBING is permitted at designated areas only.

Climbing is a form of recreation that can bring visitors closer to natural land. However, due to threats to rock face moss communities, dry moss/lichen/fern communities at the tops of the rock faces, and moist cliff base communities, climbing is permitted in designated areas only.

DOGS are permitted on WPC lands unless otherwise posted. Where permitted, all dogs must be on a leash (except when accompanying a hunter in accordance with Game Commission regulations) and under the control of the owner at all times.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy understands that dogs are often family members, and deserve the benefits of open land, as do humans. In an effort to not infringe on activities of other visitors, dogs must be under control at all times.

DUMPING any materials, including private household waste, landscaping materials, and municipal waste is strictly prohibited on all WPC land.

Dumping of materials creates a health and human safety liability on Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and other lands, as well as threatens natural resources.

FISHING is permitted on waters adjacent to or flowing through WPC lands in accordance with PA Fish and Boat Commission regulations. The only exception to this are the waters of Bear Run beginning at the SR 381 bridge just north of the entrance to Fallingwater to where Bear Run enters the culvert passing under the ConRail line adjacent to the Youghiogheny River. Here, no fishing is permitted.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy believes that fishing is a wholesome recreation and should be permitted on our lands. The exception on the lower portion of Bear Run is due to potential conflicts with Fallingwater visitors.

GEOCACHING is permitted on WPC property. Geocaching is an outdoor adventure game for individuals who wish to explore the land while utilizing their Global Positioning System (GPS) units. Caches are placed on the property and their locations are shared on the Internet. Users then use their GPS unit (coordinates) to find the cache. When found, the cache provides the visitor with a “reward” such as a logbook. Food items may not be placed in a cache. Before locating a cache on WPC property, individuals must first obtain an approval form from the WPC Stewardship Coordinator (forms may be available via the WPC website, www.waterlandlife.org). Western Pennsylvania Conservancy will strictly adhere to the guidelines set forth by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. To view these regulations, go to the following website: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/geocaching.aspx.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy believes that exploring the natural land while utilizing new technology provides a new and unique opportunity to enjoy, understand, appreciate, and learn to be good stewards of the natural wealth of western Pennsylvania.

HIKING, snow-shoeing, and cross country skiing are encouraged on all WPC property. Visitors are asked to remain on the trails when possible and if they exist, and to wear fluorescent orange vests during hunting season. Otherwise, lands are open to nature study, bird watching, wildflower identification, and other passive uses.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy believes that walking and skiing natural land is the best way to enjoy, understand, appreciate, and learn to be good stewards of the natural wealth of western Pennsylvania.

HORSES are limited to designated areas only. Historically, the Kaufmann family permitted adjacent neighbors to use the trails at Bear Run Nature Reserve for horseback riding. In keeping with this practice, WPC will permit landowners adjacent to Bear Run Nature Reserve access to designated horseback riding trails. Neighbors must acquire a free annual permit by contacting the Fallingwater office at 724-329-8501 or fallingwater@paconserve.org. There are a limited number of permits available. Riders should wear fluorescent orange during hunting season.

Horseback riding is a form of recreation that can bring individuals closer to natural land. However, on unhardened trails and in some natural areas, horseback riding can also have damaging effects. Therefore horseback riding is limited to designated trails only.

HUNTING & TRAPPING are allowed on WPC property in accordance with Pennsylvania Game Laws. For more information, contact the PA Game Commission or visit www.pgc.state.pa.us.

Permanent tree stands are not permitted on WPC property. All temporary stands must be removed at the end of the deer season. Any stands remaining may be removed by and become the property of WPC. Hunters must abide by areas posted no hunting or safety zone. Prior to hunting at Bear Run Nature Reserve, hunters must acquire a free annual permit. Contact the Fallingwater office at 724-329-8501 or fallingwater@paconserve.org to request Bear Run Nature Reserve hunting permits and maps of the safety zones and no hunting areas.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy may participate as a qualified landowner in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP). As a participant, a limited number of DMAP antlerless deer permits will be available for specific WPC properties. Hunters may use these permits during any established deer-hunting season for the applicable year. **Under no circumstances may an antlered deer be taken with a DMAP permit.** For further information on WPC's participation in DMAP, visit WPC's website at www.waterlandlife.org, or call the WPC Stewardship Coordinator. For further information on DMAP, visit the Pennsylvania Game Commission website at www.pgc.state.pa.us.

Over 1 million individuals practice hunting in Pennsylvania. It is an important economic activity in the state, a form of recreation, and an effective management tool. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy believes that present deer populations in Pennsylvania are excessive, and ecological damage to forests in the state is accelerating. We believe that, presently, an effective means to retain some control over excessive deer populations is to allow hunting.

PESTICIDE/HERBICIDE USE is prohibited on WPC land without prior approval of staff. This policy is site specific.

The Conservancy recognizes that appropriate pesticide use may be necessary under certain situations but may also be detrimental and unnecessary at other times. Pesticide and herbicide use will be determined on a site-by-site basis and will only be used by Western Pennsylvania Conservancy staff or licensed contractors.

REMOVAL OF PLANTS, ANIMALS, AND OTHER OBJECTS, including fossils, is prohibited on WPC property. This includes the picking and collection of plants (flowers, trees, mosses, fungi, lycopodiums, etc.), animals not otherwise covered under the PA Game and Fish laws, invertebrates, and inorganic materials such as rocks and minerals.

Introduction of exotic plants and animals is strictly prohibited. Introduction of **native** plants and animals is by permission only and on a case-by-case basis. For permission, requests must be forwarded to the WPC Stewardship Coordinator.

The scientific collection of plants, animals, prehistoric artifacts, and other materials is by written permission only. Specimens must be deposited in a public depository, such as a museum or other academic institution. For permission, requests must be forwarded to the WPC Stewardship Coordinator.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy believes removal of natural materials can lead to damage in a variety of ways, and that our lands are primarily intended to retain as much of their natural qualities as possible.

We recognize that there are times when scientific collection is a valuable tool to further understand land and its ecological functions. We will grant written permission for collection that furthers our understanding of

the land that will be properly cared for, and made available to the overall scientific community. Redundant collections may be required.

RESEARCH focused on ecology and species is encouraged on WPC property. Any party interested in conducting appropriate research must submit a pre-proposal to the WPC Stewardship Coordinator.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy encourages appropriate research to further our knowledge of species and natural processes.

SCUBA (SKIN) DIVING is permitted at Lake Pleasant, a 64-acre glacial lake located in northeastern Erie County. Groups must first obtain a special activities permit from the PA Fish and Boat Commission's northwest regional office. Individuals are not permitted to remove plants, animals, and other objects from the lake, as stated in the section titled **REMOVAL OF PLANTS, ANIMALS, AND OTHER OBJECTS**. To minimize the potential risk of spreading invasive species, all equipment should be thoroughly washed (ideally with a pressure hose), dried, and kept on land for at least 48 hours prior to entering Lake Pleasant or any new body of water.

VEHICLES are NOT permitted on WPC property, except in designated parking areas. Vehicles include all-terrain vehicles (ATV), dirt bikes, mountain bicycles, quads, trikes, amphibious craft, snowmobiles, cars, and trucks. **Motorized boats are not permitted on Lake Pleasant.**

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy believes that vehicles are inappropriate on conservation lands due to the physical damage, conflicts with passive recreation, potential for the spread of invasive species, and noise and pollution that result.

NON-MOTORIZED BOATS, such as canoes and kayaks, are permitted at designated sites on WPC property. Users should take appropriate precautions to minimize disturbance to wildlife and natural features. To minimize the potential risk of spreading invasive species, boats and equipment must be thoroughly washed (ideally with a pressure hose), dried, and kept on land for at least 48 hours prior to entering WPC property or any new body of water.