



**WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY**  
**LAND USE POLICIES and GUIDELINES**  
800 Waterfront Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
412-288-2777, [www.waterlandlife.org](http://www.waterlandlife.org)

## **Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Land Use Policies and Guidelines**

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Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) lands are open to the public free of charge. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy promotes 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 hunting, camping, horseback riding, etc. are done at the participant's own risk. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy property is found in its natural state and is unimproved land. Your request for a hunting, horseback riding, or camping permit; and your acceptance thereof, is your acknowledgment that you agree to use WPC property at your own risk and to hold WPC harmless from any liability or damages arising out of your use of WPC property.

Staff and Volunteer Land Stewards monitor over 40,000 acres of land held by Western Pennsylvania Conservancy or under conservation easement. Should you wish to become a volunteer, please contact the WPC Stewardship Coordinator at (412) 586-2318.

If you have questions that are not addressed in the following land use policies and guidelines please contact Western Pennsylvania Conservancy at (412)-288-2777.

**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 also 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 permitted at Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 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 on Western Pennsylvania Conservancy property between March 1<sup>st</sup> and May 25<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> through December 1<sup>st</sup>. Collection of dead and down tree limbs is permitted for firewood use at campsites only. No vegetation is to be removed from the property. During periods of drought, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 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 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy lands unless otherwise posted. Where permitted, all dogs must be on a leash 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 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 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 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 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 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 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](http://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](http://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 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 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 of natural land.

***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, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy will permit landowners adjacent to Bear Run Nature Reserve access to designated horseback riding trails.

This permission is granted for a one-year trial basis. Neighbors must acquire a free annual permit by contacting the Fallingwater office at 724-329-8501 or [fallingwater@paconserve.org](mailto:fallingwater@paconserve.org). There are a limited number of permits available. Also, riders are required to 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, horseback riding can also have damaging effects. Therefore horseback riding is limited to designated trails only.***

**HUNTING & TRAPPING** are allowed on Western Pennsylvania Conservancy property in accordance with Pennsylvania Game Laws. For more information, contact the PA Game Commission or visit <http://www.pgc.state.pa.us/>.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy may participate as a qualified landowner in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP). As a participant, WPC will receive a limited number of coupons (determined by acreage for each parcel) that it will make available to hunters, who, in turn, may redeem them for a DMAP **antlerless deer** permit to hunt on the property for which they are issued. Hunters may use them during any established deer-hunting season for the applicable year. **Under no circumstances may an antlered deer be taken with a DMAP permit.** Hunters may not obtain more than one DMAP permit per property. However, DMAP permits do not impact a hunter's eligibility to apply for and receive antlerless deer licenses issued for Wildlife Management Units (WMUs). DMAP permit allotments are not part of the annual general antlerless deer license allocations for WMUs. Hunters must mail DMAP coupons, along with a check for \$6 made payable to the Pennsylvania Game Commission, to the address listed on the coupon to receive their DMAP **antlerless deer** permit. The permit can be used to harvest one **antlerless deer** on the specific DMAP property. For further information on WPC's participation in DMAP, visit Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's website at [www.waterlandlife.org](http://www.waterlandlife.org), or call 412-288-2777. For further information on DMAP, visit the Pennsylvania Game Commission website at [pgc.state.pa.us](http://pgc.state.pa.us)

Permanent tree stands are not permitted on Western Pennsylvania Conservancy property. Hunters must acquire a free annual permit before hunting at Bear Run Nature Reserve, and must abide by all areas posted no hunting or safety zone. Contact the Fallingwater office at 724-329-8501 or [fallingwater@paconserve.org](mailto:fallingwater@paconserve.org) to request Bear Run Nature Reserve hunting permits, maps of the safety zones and no hunting areas.

***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 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 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 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy property. This includes 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 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 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Stewardship Coordinator.

Scientific collection of plants, animals, prehistoric artifacts, and other inorganic 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 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 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. Any party interested in conducting appropriate research on Western Pennsylvania Conservancy property 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. This lake is one of the most significant natural areas in northwestern Pennsylvania. The lake and surrounding wetlands support 24 plant species as well as two fish species of special concern in Pennsylvania. 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**.

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

**VEHICLES** are NOT permitted on Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 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, and noise and pollution that result.***