



Big Island Park Rules

Orono's Big Island Nature Park - Rules and Regulations

As one of the newest gems in Orono's public park system, Big Island Nature Park encompasses approximately 56 acres of land and wetland located at the easterly end of Lake Minnetonka's Big Island. The Park property was formerly the site of the Big Island Veterans Camp, which operated for many decades as a summer recreation area serving veterans and their families. When the Veterans Camp Board of Governors determined in 2004 that the property should be sold, the City put substantial effort into discussions with existing and potential stakeholders, and concluded that permanent public ownership of this exceptional property was of paramount importance. Private ownership would have resulted in subdivision of the property into as many as 6-8 individual lots and eventual development of private seasonal homes.

A financial package was put together to meet the \$5.85 million price tag of the Camp, including \$1.4 million in available City park funds, \$1.6 million in Orono HRA Public Project Revenue Bonds, and a \$2 million grant from the State of Minnesota. In early 2005 MCWD agreed to partner with the City by contributing the remaining \$850,000 in exchange for a Conservation Easement over a major portion of the property. Purchase of the property was completed in January 2006.

On June 28, 2010 the Orono City Council adopted an Ordinance establishing rules and regulations for Big Island Nature Park.

New Regulations Reflect Existing Park Rules and Conservation Easement Limitations

Many of the newly codified Park rules are identical to those affecting all Orono parks, and have been in effect since the property was acquired by the City, such as hours the park is open; prohibitions on alcohol, fires, fireworks, overnight camping, and motor vehicles (including ATVs and snowmobiles); and requirements to keep dogs and cats leashed. Additional rules have been adopted specifically for Big Island Nature Park based on its unique character as a passive recreation/nature area and in line with the provisions of the Conservation Easement that encompasses 80% of the Park property. These rules are intended to protect the natural and cultural resources within the property to ensure they remain available for all to enjoy.

Big Island Nature Park Regulations

(Codified as Municipal Code Chapter 22, Article IV)

ARTICLE IV. SPECIAL REGULATIONS FOR BIG ISLAND NATURE PARK

Sec. 22-111. Purpose

Through mutual collaboration between the City of Orono and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Big Island Nature Park is intended to be preserved, maintained and

improved as a passive recreational, ecological and educational asset to the Lake Minnetonka community and its visitors. A Conservation Easement has been established over the Park property that restricts the level of improvements and activities to ensure these goals are accomplished.

The rules within this Article are established as written guidelines for the use of Big Island Nature Park. These rules are intended to ensure that visitors to the Park enjoy a safe and positive experience, while protecting and preserving its natural and cultural amenities.

Sec. 22-112. Regulation of Public Use

(a) Park Hours. Big Island Nature Park shall be open to the public from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily. It shall be unlawful for any person to enter or remain in the Park between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

(b) Closed Areas. Any section or part of the Park may be declared closed to the public by the City of Orono at any time and for any interval of time, either temporarily or at regular and stated intervals (daily or otherwise) and either entirely or merely to certain uses as the City shall find reasonably necessary. It shall be unlawful for any person to enter an area in the Park posted as "Closed to the Public".

(c) Reservations. No facilities within Big Island Nature Park shall be reserved nor designated for exclusive use by any individual, group or organization.

(d) Special Events, Private Events, Large Assemblies. No activity for which a permit is required per the provisions of Chapters 38 or 66 of the Orono Municipal Code shall be allowed unless such permit is obtained.

Sec. 22-113. Regulation of General Conduct

(a) Alcohol. The sale, possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages in the Park is prohibited.

(b) Gambling. It shall be unlawful for any person to gamble or participate in any game of chance in the Park.

(c) Nuisance. It shall be unlawful commit any act within the Park that constitutes a nuisance as defined by the City Code or State Statute.

(d) Littering & Sanitation. It is unlawful to litter or dump trash in the Park. Garbage and recyclables shall remain in the possession of the Park user and shall be removed from the Park upon leaving the Park property.

(e) Glass Containers. Glass beverage containers are prohibited in the Park.

(f) Dangerous Weapons/Fireworks. Explosives, slingshots, bows and arrows, and paintball guns are prohibited in the Park at all times. Discharge of firecrackers or fireworks or detonation of explosive devices of any kind in the Park is prohibited.

(g) Interference with Employee Performance of Duty. It is unlawful for any person to impersonate a park employee or City official or to interfere with, harass, or hinder any employee or City official in the discharge of his/her duties.

Sec. 22-114. General Park Operation Regulations

(a) Commercial Activity. No person shall sell or by any means advertise for sale any goods, wares, merchandise, liquids, edibles or services of any kind, nature or description in the Park.

(b) Sign Posting. The posting, distribution and display of private signs, notices, posters or advertisements is prohibited within the Park property.

(c) Noise/Amplification of Sound. The operation or use of loudspeakers, sound amplifiers, or other devices for the production or reproduction of sound is prohibited in the Park. The operation or use of any radio, phonograph, television or other machine or device for the production or reproduction of sound in such a manner as to be disturbing or a nuisance to reasonable persons of normal sensitivity within the area of audibility is prohibited in the Park. Live bands are prohibited in the Park.

(d) Fires. Open fires are prohibited everywhere in the Park including the swimming beach. Open fires include campfires and charcoal grills. Propane grills are allowed.

(e) Motorized Vehicles. The operation and use of motorized vehicles in the Park is prohibited. The City or its designees may utilize motorized vehicles as necessary for park operations, maintenance, emergency vehicles or handicap accessibility.

(f) Bicycles. The operation of mountain bikes or other bicycles within the Park is prohibited.

(g) Engine-powered Models and Toys. It shall be unlawful for any person to start, fly or use any fuel- or battery-powered model aircraft, model car, or rocket or like powered toy or model within the Park.

(h) Animals & Pets. Animals and pets brought into the Park shall be under the owner's physical control and effectively restrained by means of a leash or chain no more than six (6) feet in length, and shall be kept from disturbing persons, wild animals and wildfowl. Animals and pets are prohibited in the swimming beach area. The owner of an animal or pet shall have in his possession at all times equipment for the removal of any feces deposited by such pet; and, upon such deposit being made, shall use such equipment for the immediate removal and sanitary disposition of such feces. Animals and pets shall not be tethered to a tree, plant, building or park equipment nor left unattended. Horses are prohibited within the Park.

(i) Regulation of Recreation Activity.

(1) Camping. Overnight camping within the Park is prohibited.

(2) Picnicking. Picnicking in the Park is allowed subject to the following:

(i) No person or group shall assume exclusive use of a picnic site or shelter.

(ii) No person or group shall set up temporary shelters, tents, tarps, canopies and other such devices without authorization by permit.

(3) Swimming. Swimming in Lake Minnetonka is at the individual's own risk. Life guards are not provided.

- (4) Boating & Dock Use. It shall be unlawful to land a watercraft or leave a watercraft unattended except at locations designated for that purpose. The docks at the main landing area are intended solely for the purpose of loading and unloading boats. No overnight docking is allowed. It shall be unlawful to fish, lounge, sunbathe or otherwise loiter on said docks. It shall be unlawful to dive or jump from the docks. It shall be unlawful to use the docks in a manner so as to disturb or endanger any other person.
- (5) Hunting & Fishing. Hunting and trapping are prohibited in the Park at all times. Shore fishing is allowed except in the designated swimming beach area. Fishing from the boat docks at the main landing area is prohibited. It is unlawful to fish in an area designated as a “no fishing” area.
- (6) Golf Practice. Hitting golf balls in the Park is prohibited.
- (7) Research Activity. Research activity within the Park shall be by permit only.

Sec 22-115. Protection of Property, Structures and Natural Resources

(a) Vandalism. The intentional defacement, destruction, alteration, injury, removal or disturbance of any Park property is prohibited. It is unlawful to intentionally deface, destroy, cover, damage, tamper with or remove any placard, notice or sign, or parts thereof, whether permanent or temporary, posted or exhibited by the City or by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

(b) Disturbance of Natural Resources.

- (1) Plant Life. All plant life within the boundaries of Big Island Nature Park is protected. Patrons shall not intentionally alter, mutilate, cut, prune, trim, injure, destroy, or remove any live or dead tree, shrub, vine, wildflower, grass, sedge, fern, moss lichen, fungus or any other member of the plant kingdom or portion thereof, except upon approval by the City of Orono and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. No person shall collect or harvest dead wood or plants, or portions thereof, except upon written approval. Introduction of non-native species is prohibited. This section shall not apply to employees or designees of the City of Orono or the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District performing property maintenance or invasive species control under an approved management plan.
- (2) Wildlife. All wildlife within the boundaries of Big Island Nature Park is protected. No person may kill, harm, harass, pursue, hunt, trap, remove, feed or in any manner disturb or caused to be disturbed any species of wildlife, except fishing in designated areas pursuant to the State game laws, except upon written approval of the City of Orono and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. No person shall intentionally remove, alter, injure, or destroy habitat used by any species, including but not limited to nests, dams or burrows. No person shall allow a pet to act in violation of these regulations.
- (3) Harmful or foreign substances. No use of pesticides or biocides is allowed, including insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, herbicides, or “bug-zappers”, except that this limitation shall not apply to employees or agents of the City of Orono or the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District performing invasive species

control under an approved management plan. No person shall place any debris, pollutant or other agent in or upon the Park or adjacent waters. No person shall discharge wastewater or any other wastes in the Park except into designated containers or receptacles, except as authorized by the City or the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

- (4) Topography. No alteration of topography is allowed, including ditching, draining, diking, filling, excavation, dredging, mining, drilling, or removal of earth materials except as minimally necessary to effect a permitted use.

(c) Interference with Park Property.

- (1) Cultural resources. All sites, objects, buildings, artifacts, implements, and locations of historical, archaeological, geologic, scientific or educational interest of every character located in, on, or under the surface of Big Island Nature Park are protected. No person may remove, excavate, take, dig into, or destroy any site, object, building, artifact, implement or location of archaeological, geological, scientific or historical interest without having first obtained written permission from the City of Orono.
- (2) Fences, gardening, etc. It shall be unlawful for any person to encroach on Park property with such items as fences or gardens, or to disturb the natural landscape, vegetation, or structures on Park property or otherwise use Park property for private use.

Sec. 22-116. Enforcement

(a) Compliance Required. All persons shall comply with the Park signs and markers installed by the City of Orono or Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

(b) Enforcement Authority. Designated City officials and law enforcement authorities shall have the jurisdiction to enforce any violation of these rules and any state or local laws which occur on Park property.

(c) Violation a Misdemeanor. Any infraction of a duly adopted Park Rule constitutes a misdemeanor and is punishable by law.

(d) Permit Revocation. The City shall have the right and authority to immediately revoke for good cause any permit issued for use of the Park.”

Updated 1/24/14 with corrected Code Section numbering.