

Group Camping Policy # 13-5

October 2013

The Elkhart County Parks encourages organized youth group camping within the park system. A group is defined as campers over the number of eight (8) for the purposes of this policy.

- I. A qualified organized youth group must have an affiliation with a recognized organization that may include but not limited to such groups as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, church youth groups, 4-H groups, Boys & Girls Clubs, educational groups and other sponsored organizational groups where youth are included in the camping experience.

- II. A permit application must be filled out and presented to the park administration office a minimum of three weeks in advance: 211 W. Lincoln Avenue, Goshen Indiana, 46526. Reservations are taken Monday – Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. The office is not open weekends or national holidays.
 - A. A reservation for group camping must be made one (1) month prior to the campout date.
 - B. Fees must be paid for the entire reservation and a payment estimate of the number of campers within two weeks after making the reservation. A fee schedule is included in the permit application. Vehicle entry fees into Ox Bow Park are not included in the camping fee and will be paid prior to the campout so a parking permit pass can be issued.
 - C. A cancellation refund will be returned if the cancellation is made two weeks prior to the date of the reservation.
 - D. No refunds will be given if the cancellation is within two weeks prior to the reservation. The only exception to this policy is if there is inclement weather to the degree that the County Park is officially closed.
 - E. A reservation may be made starting on the first weekday of October of the preceding year. Maximum advance reservation is 15 months.
 - F. Reservations are not accepted for periods when a park sponsored special event is scheduled.
 - G. Reservations must be made by an adult supervisor of the camping group that is over the age of 21. That individual will become the contact person for the group and must be present for the entire camping reservation.
 - H. There is a maximum of three (3) consecutive nights for any reservations.

- III. Campsites are considered primitive and may have limited or seasonal water and rest room facilities.
 - A. Group Camping is limited to specified locations within the Elkhart County Park System. A listing of available sites is attached.
 - B. Some group camping reservations require the rental of a nearby shelter.

- IV. Check-in is between 3:00 P.M. and one (1) hour before park closing. Check-out is 12:00 P.M.

- V. A minimum of two (2) adult chaperons are required for group camping. Additional adult chaperons are required at the following rates:
 - A. Camper age 4 - 8: 1 adult per every 5 campers
 - B. Camper age 9 – 14: 1 adult per every 7 campers
 - C. Camper age 15 – 18: 1 adult per every 10 camper

Chaperons must accompany campers if they venture into other park areas other than the group camping site. Roaming the park after park hours is forbidden.

- VI. All vehicles are restricted to the existing parking lots and roadways of the park. Please inquire at the time of the permit application if there is to be other camping equipment other than tents involved in the camping experience.
- VII. There are to be no guests or visitors in the group camping area starting one (1) hour before park closing to 9:00 AM. If there are guests or visitors during that time, they will be charged as a camper. All guests or visitors must park in the public lots provided for the general public in all parks.
- VIII. There will be temporary parking passes issued for the adult chaperons of the campers.
- IX. There is a general daily camping fee per site plus a daily fee per camper.
- X. Special use camping permits may be issued by the Park Director.
- XI. All park rules and ordinances must be followed at all times.

General Camping Guidelines

- Fires are only allowed in park supplied fire rings or grills. Fire rings are not to be moved.
- Parks do not supply firewood except at Red Pines Campfire Ring. Gathering or cutting of firewood is prohibited by park ordinance. Please remove any unused firewood from the group campsite.
- Any charcoal used should be disposed of in the fire pits provided.
- Do not leave a lit fire unattended.
- In primitive sites, the camper is required to remove any trash generated.
- There will be no trenching of tents.
- Please do not move additional picnic tables into the group camping site. Tables may be moved within the reserved group camping site but must be returned to their original locations.
- Campers are expected to respect all park users. Quiet hours are 10:00 P.M. to 8 A.M.
- There is no alcohol allowed on park property.
- Pets must be restrained on a leash and supervised at all times.
- Disturbing of any wildlife or plant life is prohibited by park ordinance.