

MORRIS COUNTY PARK COMMISSION
Policy and Procedure

Subject: Access to Park Properties for Scientific Research and Studies	Effective 10/17/14	Approval: Resolution No. 114-14
	Revised Date:	Approval:
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Purpose:

The Morris County Park Commission recognizes that its lands provide valuable opportunities for scientific research and study and that its lands may benefit from scientific research that provides information about its natural and cultural resources. This policy is intended to provide guidelines for individuals and/or institutions wishing to use Park Commission lands for scientific research and study to ensure that such research does not negatively impact any natural, cultural and recreational resources and to ensure that the results of any research are provided to the Park Commission so that it may inform best management decisions.

1. General Applicability

All research done on property owned or managed by the Park Commission requires a research permit. There is no fee for the research permit. School trips for the purposes of simple observation do not require a research permit but classes that visit a park to collect specimens or to conduct experiments are required to obtain a permit. Any activity that involves a group of 25 people or more, including any school trips, must also obtain a Park Commission reservation permit.

All research must be affiliated with a professional, scientific, governmental or educational institution or organization.

Activities that the Park Commission recognizes as scientific research include but are not limited to:

- Biological surveys
- Observational surveys
- Plot sampling
- Soil, air or water sampling
- Collection of any object or organism including but not limited to soil, rocks, plants or their parts, animals and invertebrates
- Handling of any organism including trapping or banding activities
- Establishment of permanent or temporary plots, transects or experimental areas
- Use of any location markers including flagging or signs

All research must be done in a manner that minimizes impacts to park resources. When appropriate,

the Park Commission may establish specific conditions to minimize potential impacts to park resources. Projects that involve any of the following activities will not be approved:

- Collection of specimens for commercial profit or personal benefit
- Removal or destruction of geological specimens or features
- Collection of artifacts
- Construction of permanent structures or establishment of permanent markings
- Alteration of terrain
- Introduction of exotic species

2. Applications

Applications must be submitted at least one month prior to the anticipated project start date to allow time for Park Commission review and issuance of the permit. Submission of an application does not guarantee that a permit will be granted.

Applicants are responsible for determining whether additional permits or licenses are required to conduct their research and for contacting the appropriate agencies to obtain such permits. Applicants must document that they have acquired the necessary state and institutional permits to do the work they are proposing. For any research that involves the pursuit, holding of, capture or collection of any animal, or that may impact animals in any way, the applicant must provide documentation of approval from the affiliated organization's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), if one exists.

3. Permits

The primary researcher and any associated field assistants must carry a copy of the research permit with them at all times when conducting research on Park Commission property. For research involving school groups, the lead instructor must carry a copy of the research permit with them at all times.

4. Equipment and Personal Property

The Park Commission is not liable for any equipment or property used by the researcher on park property. All markings and/or equipment left unattended in a park must be labeled with the research permit number and must be removed within two weeks upon completion of the research. Equipment and markings without a permit number will be subject to removal.

5. Reporting Requirements

Following the completion of the research project, the researcher is required to submit a report to the Park Commission that summarizes the project's goals, methodology, results and conclusions. For research projects that last more than one year, the researcher must submit an annual report containing this information by November 15 of the permit year. The reporting requirement may be waived for school classes that use a park as an outdoor classroom.

6. Permit Renewals

Permits expire on December 31 of each year. Permits may be renewed upon submission of the required Annual Report. Permit renewals may be requested by submitting another application and following the same procedures outlined herein. Applications for permit renewals must be submitted by December 1.

7. Permit Revocation

The Park Commission may, at its discretion and at any time, revoke the research permit by informing the researcher of the revocation orally or in writing. If orally revoked, such will be confirmed in writing.

8. Publications

Publications resulting from the use of Park Commission property must acknowledge the Park Commission using the following language:

“The author(s) would like to thank the Morris County Park Commission for the use of its property to conduct this research.”

Electronic copies of any publications including theses and dissertations generated from any research done on Park Commission property must be submitted to the Park Commission’s Natural Resources Department. Published or unpublished data must be made available upon request.