

Minnesota's Preserve Visitation Guidelines

You are invited to observe the preserves in Minnesota, but remember that your visit has an impact.

Most of The Nature Conservancy preserves in Minnesota are open year-round for hiking, birdwatching, photography, educational and other passive recreational uses. Each preserve has something special to offer at every time of the year. Take your time and enjoy nature's gifts!

The Conservancy's preserves protect plants, animals, and natural communities and the biological diversity they represent. They are frequently used for scientific study and educational instruction.

While nearly all of our preserves are open to the public, they are private properties and subject to rules to protect their natural features. Access to some areas is restricted based upon the rarity or sensitivity of what is being protected, and some preserves can only be visited for educational or research purposes with written permission from Conservancy staff.

The following guidelines should be followed to protect these special places.

Preparation: The Key to a Safe, Enjoyable Visit

To minimize disturbance to wild places, we do not maintain trail infrastructure or facilities, and you will not find any staff on duty at the preserves. Therefore, we ask you to prepare for your visit and take proper precautions while on site.

- Wear comfortable footwear suitable for hiking.
- To protect yourself from ticks, poison ivy or poison sumac, wear long pants, and tuck them into your socks.
- To get the most from your visit, and to protect yourself from the elements, you may want to bring the following items:
 - Binoculars
 - Camera
 - Compass
 - Field guides (to wildflowers, birds, butterflies and other natural features)
 - Insect repellent
 - Rain gear
 - Small first aid kit
 - Snack (fruit or trail mix)
 - Sunscreen
 - Water (dehydration is a serious risk at any time of the year)

What You Can Do

The following activities are permitted on Conservancy preserves:

- Birdwatching

- Cross-country skiing
- Hiking
- Nature study
- Photography and videotaping for personal use (if for commercial use, you must obtain permission from the Conservancy first)
- Snowshoeing

What You Cannot Do

Please help us protect our preserves by strictly avoiding the following activities while visiting:

- Use of motorized vehicles of any sort, including ATVs, motorcycles and snowmobiles, except on public roads
- Biking and mountain biking
- Camping
- To protect sensitive natural features and as a courtesy to other visitors, pets – as a general rule - are prohibited.
- Carrying of firearms or archery equipment on preserves closed to hunting
- Dumping of refuse
- Feeding animals, including birds or fish.
- Fires or gathering of firewood
- Horseback riding
- Introducing exotic plant or animal species (those that are not native to a particular area).
- Picking or digging up any tree, shrub, flower, grass, or removing any rocks, minerals or prehistoric or historic artifacts
- Prospecting for minerals or metals
- Picking of berries, nuts or mushrooms for other than personal use
- Placement of permanent structures including deer stands
- Target practice

Other Activities

The following activities are subject to various restrictions:

- Fishing is allowed at sites that have not been designated as Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) and which can be publicly accessed.
- Hunting is allowed at some but not all Conservancy preserves.
- To apply for a research permit, please download and fill out [our application](#) and send it to us electronically.

Policy on Dogs at Preserves

To protect sensitive natural features and as a courtesy to other visitors, pets – as a general rule – are prohibited.

- Service dogs are allowed at all preserves in Minnesota.
- Hunting dogs are allowed only during hunting season at Minnesota preserves that are open to hunting.
- All other dogs are otherwise prohibited from Conservancy preserves except at a few remote preserves where they are expressly allowed provided they are kept on a leash at all times:

- [Upper Manitou Forest](#) ○ [Pigeon River Cliffs](#) ○ [Sand Lake/Seven Beavers](#)
- [Glacial Ridge Project](#)
- [Norway Dunes](#)
- [Wallace C. Dayton Conservation and Wildlife Area](#)

Precautions

- Do not remove any stakes, signs or other objects—they may be part of a research project.
- Use trails and firebreaks where these are present. Do not make new trails.
- Because seeds stick to shoes and clothing, you may introduce weeds into the preserve without knowing it. Inspect pant legs and shoes to remove seeds before entering.
- Avoid walking on boggy, wet areas—they are more sensitive to the effects of foot traffic.
- If you flush a ground-nesting bird, stop and avoid walking near the bird's nest.
- Give wide berth to livestock, which may be grazing on TNC preserves.
- Close any gates that you open.
- The Conservancy conducts prescribed burns to control invasive species. Please be on the lookout for Conservancy burn crews in the spring and fall.
- During the fall hunting season, hunters may be near or on Conservancy property; wear bright, visible clothing.
- Conservancy lands that are designated as Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) are subject to [additional restrictions under state law](#).
- Be aware of your surroundings; large predators such as bears, wolves and mountain lions may be present on some Conservancy preserves.

Please report problems like trash, damage or broken signage to our Minneapolis office at (612) 331-0700 or minnesota@tnc.org.

Respect Our Neighbors' Property

A reminder: our preserves are often adjacent to private land. The Nature Conservancy respects and recognizes the rights and responsibilities of private property ownership. Please do not trespass on private property adjacent to Conservancy preserves. Property lines are clearly marked with small yellow signs featuring the Conservancy's logo.