

# **REGULATIONS FOR THE USE OF CONSERVATION LAND IN LINCOLN**

*(Approved 7-13-22)*

*PUBLISHED BY THE LINCOLN CONSERVATION COMMISSION AND THE LINCOLN LAND CONSERVATION TRUST*

Welcome to the Town of Lincoln's conservation land and trails! These trails, fields, streams and forests represent generous gifts from earlier generations for all of us to enjoy. Please appreciate and respect these natural areas - use and manage them appropriately for those who will come after you, whether tomorrow or a century from now.

These regulations have been adopted for the benefit, safety, and enjoyment of you and others. If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

- Lincoln Conservation Department (781-259-2612 or [conservation@lincolntown.org](mailto:conservation@lincolntown.org)), or
- Lincoln Land Conservation Trust (781-259-9251 or [llct@lincolnconservation.org](mailto:llct@lincolnconservation.org)).
- In the case of an emergency, please call the Lincoln Police at 911.

## **1. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR USING THE TRAILS**

Lincoln's conservation land is open to the public for passive recreation without charge or special permit unless otherwise indicated in these regulations. Please observe the following:

- a. Conservation land is open to the public from ½ hour before sunrise until ½ hour after sunset.
- b. The trails which are open to the public for recreational use are identified by plastic markers posted on trees. Public trails are also shown on the OuterSpatial App, which can be downloaded onto your phone, and a paper trail map available at the Lincoln Conservation Department and the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust (LLCT). Unmarked paths are private or have not been sanctioned and are not for public use. Some trails cross private property and/or gated fields. Please remain on the trail and close any gates when you enter/exit.
- c. The numbered and lettered wooden signs found along the trails are part of a location system for public safety; please report the nearest number and letter in an emergency.
- d. Please keep strictly to the marked trail, and if any pets are accompanying you, they too must remain on the trail. However, snowshoers and cross-country skiers may cross Town and LLCT owned fields but must otherwise stay on trails. Note: Some trails cross private property, so if you are off the trail, or on an unmarked trail, you may be trespassing.
- e. The trails on Lincoln's conservation land are for multiple uses. Depending upon the season, you will encounter walkers, runners, horses, dogs, cyclists, skiers, people on snowshoes, sleds, sleighs, and farm equipment. Please respect other users. Note: some trails which cross private property prohibit certain activities as posted.
- f. Winter Trail Use Etiquette: avoid walking, biking, or snowshoeing in ski tracks set by backcountry skiers. Skiers rely on smooth forward motion for proper glide. Walk on the side of the trail.
- g. Failure to observe these regulations and common courtesies may result in restrictions on public use and fines.

## **2. WHO HAS THE RIGHT OF WAY?**

Many of Lincoln's trails are open to a variety of passive recreational uses. Please observe the following courtesies on Lincoln trails:

- a. Make yourself known. If you approach another trail user from behind, announce yourself in a friendly, calm tone and let them know you want to pass. Be sure that the other trail user hears you and

acknowledges that they hear you. Ambient noise, ear buds, and hearing loss may mean that your announcement was not heard.

- b. Horseback riders and their horses have the right of way at all times. If approaching a horseback rider, other trail users should yield and calmly ask the rider the best way to proceed around the horse. If a horseback rider is approaching you, move off the trail and let them pass. Do not overtake a horseback rider unless the rider has given you express permission to do so.
- c. Bikers must yield to all other trail users and make their presence known.

### **3. RESTRICTED USE OF THE FLINTS POND CONSERVATION AREA**

Flints Pond is the main drinking water supply for the Town of Lincoln. No activities of any kind are permitted on or in Flints Pond, or on the adjacent shoreline.

- a. To protect the public water supply, all users and their pets throughout the Flints Pond Conservation Area must remain on the marked trails.
- b. No fishing, boating, or swimming on Flints Pond
- c. No ice fishing, walking, skating, or cross-country skiing on the ice or the adjacent shoreline of Flints Pond.
- d. Dogs must be leashed on Flints Pond Conservation Area (see map).
- e. All visitors with dogs MUST pick up their dog's waste and remove it from the property.

### **4. BICYCLE RIDING**

- a. Bicycle riding is permitted only on those trails which are marked as specifically open to bikes ([See map here](#)). Riders must walk bikes along boardwalks (and bogwalks) and through wet/muddy sections of the trail.
- b. Riding off marked trails, including through the woods or down hillsides, is strictly prohibited in order to protect vegetation and wildlife and to preserve water quality.
- c. Riding bicycles is prohibited through any surface water, and across any permanently or seasonally wet areas in which the resulting bicycle track may be deep enough to collect water.
- d. Trails may be closed to bicycles during any periods when the trails are unusually wet, and during other posted periods when the trails are most susceptible to damage.
- e. Whenever bikers are in sight of another trail user, or on a curve or steep slope, their speed should be no more than that of a "slow jog", or about 5 m.p.h. Bikers should be in control and able to always dismount safely and quickly.
- f. Bikers must yield to all other trail users. Make yourself known. When a biker and another trail user are approaching each other on a narrow trail, the biker must dismount and walk her/his bicycle while passing. If you approach another trail user from behind, announce yourself in a friendly, calm tone and let them know you want to pass. Be sure that the other trail user hears you and acknowledges that they hear you. Ambient noise, ear buds, and hearing loss may mean that your announcement was not heard. If approaching a horseback rider, bikers should ask the rider the best way to proceed around the horse. If a horseback rider is approaching you, move off the trail and let them pass. Do not overtake a horseback rider unless the rider has given you express permission to do so and walk your bike until you are well past the horse.
- g. Any bike outing which involves five (5) or more unrelated people (i.e. not family members), must obtain a Group Use Permit (see section 9).

## 5. HORSEBACK RIDING

Horseback riding is permitted on the following conditions:

- a. Riding is allowed on all trails except where posted.
- b. Horses may be ridden in the Browning Field ring. Please contact the Lincoln Conservation Department in order to learn more about scheduling time in this ring.
- c. Horses must be kept under control, must remain on the marked trails (whether in the woods or across a field), and must not be galloped on woodland trails.
- d. Horseback riders must avoid permanently or seasonally wet areas where deep tracks or divots may be created. Trails may be closed to horses when the Conservation Staff determines conditions so warrant.
- e. Any horse-riding outing which involves 5 or more people/riders must obtain a Group Use Permit (see section 9).

## 6. DOG WALKING

Visitors with dogs are welcome to enjoy the trails on Lincoln's conservation land. With your help, we can ensure your dog does not negatively affect other visitors, wildlife, wetlands, or water quality. Please remember that other visitors and their dogs may not welcome your dog's affection. Please adhere to the following rules.

- a. Dogs must be leashed or under effective voice control at all times. "Voice Control" is defined by the dog being always within the owner's sight and hearing and trained to come immediately when called.
- b. Dogs must be leashed (or held by the collar) when approaching other trail users (i.e., people, dogs, horses, bikers) unless the other user expressly gives permission to leave the dog off leash. Dog walkers should recognize that others might not be comfortable around dogs. Children, in particular, can become fearful of dogs even with one negative experience.
- c. Dog owners must always carry a leash for each dog (8-foot maximum).
- d. A visitor may have up to 3 leashed dogs. If a visitor has 2 or fewer well-behaved dogs under voice control, they may be off leash, except where leashes are expressly required below, provided the dogs and their handlers comply with these regulations.
- e. Dogs are not permitted to chase, hunt, or harass people, bikes, wildlife, other dogs, horses, or livestock.
- f. All visitors with dogs must pick up their dog's waste and remove it from the property.
- g. Dogs must be leashed on the following properties or trails:
  1. Trailheads and Parking Areas – Dogs must be leashed within 100 feet of trailheads and parking areas.
  2. Mt. Misery - Specific dog walking rules are found at the Mt. Misery kiosks and on the Mt. Misery trail map flyer [found here](#).
  3. Flints Pond – Dogs must be leashed on the entirety of Flints Pond Conservation Area to protect Lincoln's water supply ([see map here](#)). Dogs are not allowed along the pond edge, in the water, or on the ice.
  4. Agricultural Fields - Dogs must be leashed year-round while walking on trails and farm roads around or through agricultural fields which are used for food production, in pastures while livestock (i.e. chickens, cows, and pigs) are on those fields, and in hayfields as posted.
  5. Dogs must be leashed on boardwalks and wetlands and in any ecologically sensitive areas, as may be posted from time to time.

## **7. CANOEING - KAYAKING**

A public boat launch exists on the north side of Rt 117, west of the Mt. Misery parking area. Kayaks and canoes can be carried a short distance from the parking area to access the Sudbury River. Please practice *Leave No Trace* principals.

## **8. ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE PROHIBITED**

The following activities are expressly prohibited on lands controlled by the Conservation Commission or the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust, except if granted a Special Use Permit from the Conservation Commission or the Land Trust:

- a. Operation of any motorized vehicle (e.g., ATVs, dirt bikes, motorcycles, motor scooters, and snowmobiles).
- b. Walking or riding off trail, including through the woods and across farm fields, meadows, or other fields, or in any way injuring crops, plantings, livestock, or wildlife in these areas.
- c. Cutting, picking, damaging, or removing any living organism, including trees, shrubs, flowers, fungi or agricultural products.
- d. Littering, dumping, or disposing of waste of any kind (including yard waste).
- e. Smoking or the building of fires. Fire is a serious danger on conservation land.
- f. Defacing, damaging, installing, or removing signs, gates, fences, trail cameras, walls, dams, or other structures (e.g. hunting stands and invisible dog fences).
- g. The use of drones or other electronic equipment which makes a noise which is likely to disturb wildlife or others, including trail users and neighbors. For example, trail users listening to music should listen through headphones or ear buds which don't impair situation awareness.
- h. Posting unauthorized signs, or selling or distributing printed materials or products.
- i. Commercial activities, fee-based programs, or organized group activities.
- j. Consumption of alcoholic beverages.
- k. Blocking of any fire lane, trail, or of any waterways or streams.
- l. Trapping, hunting, fishing (except catch and release with a valid MA fishing license), shooting, carrying firearms (even if unloaded).
- m. Swimming.
- n. Overnight camping.
- o. Any activity which is otherwise illegal or conducted in any illegal manner.

## **9. SPECIAL OR GROUP USE REGULATIONS**

- a. A Group Use Permit is required for any activity, such as horse, bike, or dog events, classes of instruction, or other organized events (e.g. trail races, hikes, orienteering events, ski races, weddings, picnics, and celebrations), which involves:
  1. A group of ten (10) or more people,
  2. A group of five (5) or more unrelated bikers, (i.e. not family members), or
  3. A group of five (5) or more horseback riders.
- b. On occasion, LLCT or the Conservation Commission may grant a Special Use Permit for certain activities which are normally prohibited.

Special and group activities are allowed only after applying for a “Request for Special or Group Use Permit” at least three weeks in advance of the proposed use and obtaining specific written permission from the Conservation Commission or the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust.

The Conservation Commission and the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust have full discretion whether to grant a Special or Group Use Permit. Considerations for approval include:

- Whether the activity unduly affects the land itself and/or its users,
- Whether sufficient parking exists for the activity requested, and
- The frequency of the requested use.

The Special and Group Use online application form is found on the Conservation Department website: <https://tinyurl.com/GroupUsePermit-Lincoln>.

## **10. PARKING REGULATIONS**

Please park only in legally designated areas marked on the paper trail maps or the OuterSpatial App. Public parking areas are available in many locations and are clearly marked as to any special regulations which may apply. Vehicles parked inappropriately may be ticketed and/or towed. In addition:

- a. After hours parking in conservation parking lots is prohibited and is strictly enforced.
- b. Blocking of gates is always prohibited; in particular, there is no parking at post “Fire Lane” emergency vehicle access points.
- d. Observe all posted signs which indicate “no parking”.

## **11. ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

- a. You are entering upon the land at your own risk. Neither the Town of Lincoln, the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust, nor private landowners assume any liability for injuries to persons or damage to their property while on conservation land.
- b. These regulations will be enforced by the Lincoln Police Department, Lincoln Conservation Department, and Lincoln Land Conservation Trust.
- c. Any person violating these rules and regulations shall be liable to the Town in the amount of \$50.00 for the first violation and \$100.00 for each subsequent violation. Fines may be recovered by non-criminal disposition in accordance with Article XVI of the Lincoln By-laws and with MGL Chapter 40 §21D, or by other legal means. Each day of violation shall constitute a separate offense.
- d. The Lincoln Conservation Commission and the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust reserve the right to amend these regulations and to prohibit any inappropriate activities.
- e. Copies of all current regulations are available at the Lincoln Town Offices, on OuterSpatial and on the LLCT and Town’s Conservation Department website at [www.lincolntown.org/245/Conservation](http://www.lincolntown.org/245/Conservation).