

The Waukesha County Department of Parks and Land Use appreciates the photographers who help capture and share the beauty of our park system, as well as the families and visitors who create meaningful memories within them. Our park system is intended to serve as the backdrop for these special moments, and we encourage their thoughtful use and enjoyment.

We invite you to explore and photograph the natural areas, wildlife, and scenic vistas that we are proud to preserve and maintain. In doing so, we ask for your partnership in protecting these resources so they may be enjoyed by all, now and into the future.

This Photography Policy has been developed to support both the protection of natural resources and the continued public enjoyment of our park system. While most visitors are respectful stewards, this guidance helps ensure a consistent approach for all. Thank you in advance for your cooperation - and as always, please leave park system areas better than you found them.

Copyright, Licensing, and Use of Images

To protect Waukesha County from legal, financial, and reputational risk related to copyright infringement, the following requirements apply to all photography, videography, and image use associated with Waukesha County Parks and Land Use properties:

1. Ownership and Responsibility

- a) All photographers, videographers, organizations, and other third parties are solely responsible for ensuring that any images, video, audio, music, graphics, or other creative materials they create, use, distribute, publish, or sell are owned by them or properly licensed for such use.
- b) Photographers shall also be responsible for any documented physical damage to County property caused by themselves, their clients, agents, representatives, or guests.

2. No County Liability for Copyright Use

- a) Waukesha County does not assume responsibility for, and expressly disclaims liability related to, the unauthorized use of copyrighted materials by photographers, videographers, or third parties. Any claims, damages, fines, or legal actions resulting from copyright infringement shall be the sole responsibility of the individual or entity using the materials.

3. Prohibition on Unauthorized Commercial Use

- a) Images or video captured within the Waukesha County Park System may not be used for commercial purposes without a valid Commercial Photography & Videography paid permit. This includes but is not limited to: portrait sessions, engagement and wedding photography, family photography, senior portraits, maternity photography, and other commercial photography such as used for advertising, marketing, promotion, or resale.
- b) In addition to a paid permit, Special Use Agreements are required for all commercial photography and videography conducted on County property that require exclusive use of an area.

4. No Implied Endorsement

- a) Use of photographs, video, or other imagery taken on Waukesha County property may not imply or suggest endorsement, sponsorship, or approval by Waukesha County, the Department of Parks and Land Use, or any County employee.

5. Operational Rules and Resource Protection

Updated August 2026

- a) All photography and videography activities must comply with the following operational requirements to ensure protection of park system resources and public access:
 - 1. Park system property, including grass areas, athletic fields, walkways, and trails, shall not be driven on by vehicles.
 - 2. Prairie areas and designated “Grow Don’t Mow” zones are protected for ecological management and shall not be entered, trampled, or altered in any way (including placement of blankets, staging, or posing subjects).
 - 3. Public access shall not be restricted, obstructed, or impeded at any time. Park system areas must remain open and accessible to all visitors.
 - 4. At Retzer Nature Center, pets are prohibited due to the site’s science-based educational environment; service animals are permitted in accordance with applicable law.
 - 5. Permits are required for drone photography.
 - 6. Permits are required for placement of trail cameras.

6. Indemnification

- a) By engaging in photography or videography on County property, the photographer or organization agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Waukesha County, its officers, employees, and agents from any claims, losses, damages, or expenses arising from the use, publication, or distribution of copyrighted materials.

7. Right to Revoke Permission

- a) Waukesha County reserves the right to revoke permission for photography or videography if activities are found to violate this policy or permit requirements.

This policy is in addition to all standard Park System Rules and Regulations, available at **waukeshacountyparks.com**. We take pride in maintaining our park system for the enjoyment of all visitors and appreciate your cooperation in following this policy. Individuals who do not adhere to these requirements may be asked to leave.

For information on drone permits, trail camera permits, and other required forms, please visit **www.waukeshacounty.gov/parkformsandpermits**.