SOMERVELL COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
WHEELER BRANCH PARK AND RESERVOIR
RULES AND REGULATIONS

These park rules and regulations have been adopted by the Somervell County Water District Board of Directors. Any person who violates these regulations will be subject to penalties prescribed by law.

A. Definitions

The following words and terms when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

1. **Arms and Firearms:** Any device from which shot, a projectile, arrow, or bolt is fired by the force of an explosion, compressed air, gas or mechanical device. To include, but not limited to, rifle, shotgun, handgun, air rifle pellet gun, longbow, cross bow, sling shot, blow gun, or dart gun.
2. **Bicycle:** A device that a person may ride, that is propelled by human power, and has two tandem wheels at least one of which is more than 14 inches in diameter.
3. **Artifacts:** Objects used or modified by humans, including but not limited to arrow points, dart points: stone, bone or shell implements or any other prehistoric or historic objects.
4. **Boat/Watercraft:**
   a. Allowable: A vessel that is considered to be a canoe, kayak, paddleboard or open hull type boat.
   b. Non-allowable: A vessel that contains a bilge, live well, bait well, raised floor or outboard motor. Any vessel that has potential to transport concealed water.
5. **Camping:** The act of:
   a. occupying a designated camping facility;
   b. erecting a tent, or arranging bedding, or both, for the purpose of, or in such a manner as will permit, remaining overnight; and/or
   c. using a trailer, camper, or other vehicle for the purpose of sleeping during nighttime hours.
6. **Cultural features:** Include but, are not limited to state archeological landmarks, archeological sites, historic sites and structures, pictographs and petroglyphs.
7. **District:** Somervell County Water District
8. **Drone/Unmanned Aircraft**: An aircraft operated without the physical presence of a human operator on board, a model or hobby aircraft, and/or any remote-controlled or autonomous airplane, helicopter, or multirotor, whether or not equipped with a camera.
9. **Equine:** A species of animal belonging to the family of equidae, including horses, ponies, donkeys and mules.
10. **Garbage:** Trash, refuse, rubbish, household waste, medical waste, rubble, spoil, construction debris, yard clippings, offal, or any other similarly useless, noxious, or offensive material.
11. **General Manager:** General Manager of the Somervell County Water District
12. **Islands:** Refers to both the submerged and visible rock islands across the reservoir from the park swimming areas.
13. **Motor Vehicle:** For purposes of this subchapter, a motor vehicle does not include a wheelchair, a motorized wheelchair or a motorized mobility device. A motor vehicle is a motor powered vehicle, including, but not limited to:
    a. any motor driven or propelled vehicle required to be registered under the laws of this state;
    b. an all-terrain vehicle as defined in Transportation Code, §502.001;
    c. a motorcycle as defined in Transportation Code, §501.002 and §541.201;
    d. a golf cart, as defined in Transportation Code, §502.001;
    e. a moped as defined in Transportation Code, §541.201;

f. a neighborhood electric vehicle as defined in Transportation Code, §551.301;
g. a pocket bike or mini-motorbike, as defined in Transportation Code, §551.301;
h. an electric bicycle; or
i. a motor assisted scooter, as defined in Transportation Code, §551.301.

14. **Motorized mobility device:** A device designed for transportation of persons with physical disabilities that:
    a. has three or more wheels;
    b. is propelled by a battery-powered motor;
    c. has not more than one forward gear; and
    d. is not capable of speeds exceeding eight miles per hour.
15. **Night:** Any time from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise.
16. **Person:** Natural persons, firms, partnerships, corporations, clubs, and all associations or combinations of persons acting individually, or by an agent, servant, or employee
17. **Pet:** a domesticated companion animal accompanying a person who enters or uses the park.
    In no event shall a pet under this subchapter include the following:
    a. a dangerous wild animal, as defined in Health and Safety Code, §822.101
    b. wildlife;
    c. livestock and exotic livestock as defined in Agriculture Code, §§1,003, 142,001, and 161.001;
    d. any species of animal that is not ordinarily domesticated; or
    e. any species of animal that a person may not legally possess.
    f. any dog type that is specifically bred for fighting purposes (ie. Pit Bull).
18. **Plant life:** All plants including trees, dead or downed wood, shrubs, vines, wildflowers, grass, sedge, fern, moss, lichen, fungus, or any other member of the plant family.
19. **Public place:** Any place to which the public or a substantial group of the public has access. The interior spaces of the following are not considered public places:
    a. department cabins, screened shelters, recreation halls, group barracks, and lodges; and
    b. tents, campers, trailers, motor homes, or any enclosed vehicle(s) that are used as camping equipment.
20. **Park:** A park, park site, historical park, natural area, or fishing pier, administered, operated, or managed by the district.
21. **Remote-Controlled Vehicle:** Any watercraft or submersible, underwater, or ground vehicle operated without a human operator aboard, whether controlled by radio, wireless signal, tether, cellular link, or preprogrammed or autonomous route (including without limitation remote-controlled boats, submarines, cars, trucks, and tracked or walking devices.); provided that the term Remote-Controlled Vehicle does not include a wheelchair, motorized mobility device, or stroller.
22. **Unattended pet:** A pet that is unaccompanied or not under immediate control. Pets tied or secured outside of camping equipment or buildings are not considered under immediate control.
23. **Wildlife:** A species, including each individual of a species, that normally lives in state of nature is not ordinarily domesticated.

B. General Rules

1. **Park Entrance Fees:** The following entrance fees shall be applicable to all Wheeler Branch Park guests. Adults must have a valid driver's license showing a Somervell county address to qualify for a county resident discount. There is no charge for watercraft that meet rule B. 2.

Entrance Fee (Per Person)	
Somervell County Residents	$5
GRISD students (w/school ID) and Children 5 and older	$2
Somervell County Residents over 65 and under 5	Free
Non-Somervell County Adults	$10
Non Somervell County Children 5- 13 years of age	$5

2. **Boats/Watercraft:** Only canoes, kayaks or open hull john boats (without bilge, live wells or floors) allowed to launch or operate on Wheeler Branch Reservoir. All watercraft must have plugs pulled and be completely drained and dry of water prior to entering Wheeler Branch Park. No watercraft with a gas powered engine will be allowed on the Wheeler Branch Reservoir. Electric trolling motors are allowed.
3. **Fishing:**
   a. No fishing within 200 feet of any swimmers within the park area regardless of who was in the area first. Swimmers have right-of-way within the designated park area.
   b. No fishing within 200 feet of scuba divers displaying a surface flag.
   c. No fishing within 200 feet of the water intake tower located at the center of the dam.
   d. No fishing of any type by method of trotline, jugline, dropline, throwline or noodling. Only rod and reel fishing will be allowed.
   e. Fishing is allowed only during normal park hours; which will typically be between 7:30 am and official sunset. All boats are asked to be off the water by sunset, which will be posted at the entrance booth.
   f. Fisherman must comply with all Texas Parks and Wildlife regulations, including fishing and boating laws.
   g. All boats and trailers shall be free of all organic material including weeds, moss, mussels, and shell fish.
   h. Fishing tournaments will not be allowed on the Wheeler Branch Reservoir. "Paper" or "catch and release" tournaments may be allowed by special request to the General Manager for groups under 10 boats.
4. Upon finding a need for public safety or welfare, or preservation of park resources, the General Manager may impose restriction on public activity and conduct and may limit the use of any area or facility in the park or a portion thereof. It is an offense for a person to enter or remain in an area or participate in an activity so restricted by the General Manager.
5. An employee of the District, peace officers, and emergency personnel are exempt from this chapter when this chapter conflicts with the discharge of their official duties to the extent of that conflict.
6. The General Manager by written order may waive any provision of this subchapter in response to a natural disaster or other similar emergency.
7. **Swimming:** Park has no lifeguard on duty. All swimming is done at the swimmers own risk. Children must be supervised by an adult that can swim. Always swim with a friend. The rock islands across the reservoir from the swim areas have been designated as a bird sanctuary and nesting area and are off limits to swimmers.
8. **Hunting:** No hunting of any type is allowed in the Wheeler Branch Park area under any circumstances.
9. **Picnic Areas:** Picnic areas and table usage within the park is on a first come-first serve basis. No reserving or saving of tables is allowed.
10. **Pavilion Use**: The pavilion may be reserved up to one month in advance. A reservation fee of $50 will be required to reserve the pavilion and $25 will be refunded after the pavilion has been cleaned to the satisfaction of park management. Reservations of the pavilion is limited to one day per month during May, June, July, and August for any particular group or family. Commercial "for-profit" vendors, such as dive clubs, swim clubs, food vendors etc. are not allowed to reserve the pavilion. They may be allowed to utilize the facility on a first come-first serve basis at the normal rate if the facility is available on the morning of their planned event.
11. **Removal from Park.**
    a. Any person directly or indirectly responsible for disruptive, destructive, or violent conduct which endangers property or the health, safety, or lives of persons or animal may be removed from the park for a period of time to be determined by the General Manager
    b. Prior to removal under this section, the person must be given notice of the provisions of this section and an opportunity to correct the conduct justifying removal.
    c. A court of competent jurisdiction may enjoin a person from reentry to the park for any period set by the court.

12. **Enforcement of Regulations.**
Regulations adopted under this subchapter may be enforced by any peace officer, including those employees of the district commissioned as peace officers. A notice to appear may be issued by a peace officer for violation of a regulation on a form prescribed by the state.

C. Closing Hours and Overnight Use.

1. The General Manager may establish closing hours and opening hours for the park or a portion of the park depending on the season and park usage. Closing hours or opening hours shall be posted.
2. There will be no overnight use or camping at the Wheeler Branch Reservoir park other than park management employees.
3. Except for persons duly authorized to use camping, trailer space, shelter or boat ramp, it is an offense for a person to enter into or remain within the park between the closing hour and the opening hour.

D. Rules of Conduct:

1. **Abandoned and unattended property.** It is an offense for any person to:
   a. abandon a vehicle or other personal property;
   b. leave a vehicle, boat, barge, or other property unattended in the park in such a manner as to create a hazardous or unsafe condition; or
   c. leave property unattended in the park without having received prior permission from the General Manager or to leave a vehicle unattended after the closing hour, unless such person is legally in the park after closing, and unless he has parked the vehicle in a place designated by the General Manager or he has prior permission from the General Manager.
   d. Any vehicle, boat, trailer, or other property found parked, stored, or left at the park in violation of any law or rule may be removed and stored at the owner's expense.

2. **Alcoholic beverages.** No alcohol is allowed in the Wheeler Branch Recreational area. It is an offense for any person to:
   a. consume or display an alcoholic beverage in a public place within the park; or
   b. sell alcoholic beverages within the park.

3. **Animals.** Except as provided in this subsection, it is an offense for any person to bring into the park, possess while in the park, or release into the park any species of animal. A pet may be brought into and possessed within the park as provided in this subsection.
   a. **Pets.** It is an offense for any person to:
      (1) bring into, possess, or permit to roam within the park a pet, unless the pet is secured by a leash not exceeding six feet in length, confined in a vehicle, or confined in a suitable cage;
      (2) bring into or possess within the park an unattended pet;
      (3) fail to immediately collect and properly dispose of fecal material deposited by a pet for which a person is responsible. For purposes of this paragraph, "properly dispose" means to deposit fecal material in an appropriate solid waste collection container.
      (4) permit a pet (except a trained assistance animal accompanying a person with a disability) to enter into or remain in any building or enclosure designated for public use including, but not limited to a cabin, lodge room, restroom, park store, shelter or administration building;
      (5) possess a noisy, vicious, or dangerous pet, or a pet which creates a disturbance to or hazard within the park;
   b. **Wildlife.** It is an offense for any person to:
      (1) harm, harass, disturb, trap, confine, catch, possess, or remove any wildlife, or portions of wildlife from a unit of the park, except by a permit issued by the General Manager or as provided by the Parks and Wildlife Code, Chapter 62, Subchapter D;

(2) release any fish into the water of the park, except as authorized by the Parks and Wildlife Code; or
(3) feed or offer food to any wildlife or exotic wildlife, or to leave food unsecured in a manner that makes the food available to wildlife or exotic wildlife, unless specifically authorized by the district. The feeding of birds may be permitted within the park prescribed by the district.

4. **Arms and Firearms.** It is an offense for any person to display an arm or firearm in the park unless legally permitted by the State of Texas. It is an offense for any person to discharge an arm or firearm in the park.
5. **Closed Area.** It is an offense for any person to:
   a. prevent or interfere with development, construction, or management of the park; or
   b. enter or remain in an area of the park that has been closed by the General Manager for any reason, including security, safety, preservation, or restoration.
   c. enter or remain in the district's conservation area outside of the park boundary.
6. **Entrance and User Fees:** It is an offense for any person to enter, use, or occupy a facility in any portion of the park or adjacent conservation area for which a fee has been established, unless the person has first paid the fee or satisfied the requirements of the fee, has received an entrance/use permit issued by the district, and has attached the permit to their vehicle as and when required by the permit. If the office is closed, payment must be made according to posted instructions or signage.
7. **Facilities Use.** It is an offense for any person to:
   a. use an area or facility for any purpose contrary to its designated purpose; or
   b. keep, use, or arrange a motor vehicle, trailer, camping, or other equipment except as specified by the General Manager. All vehicles and trailers are restricted to designated roads and parking areas, unless otherwise specified by permit;
   c. enter into, or remain in, an area or facility for which a public use limit has been established when such action will have the effect of exceeding the established limitations;
   d. exceed the public use limit establishing a maximum number of persons and, if appropriate, the number and type of motor vehicles, trailers, and equipment permitted to enter into, or remain in, a designated area or facility at any time;
   e. continue to occupy a facility past check-out time when a check-out time has been established by the General Manager, or
   f. engage in camping except as authorized by permit in areas designated or marked for that purpose.
8. **Fires, Firewood, Smoking and Fireworks.** Portable gas-fueled cap stoves may be used in designated campsites or picnic areas; however, it is an offense for any person to:
   a. light, build, or maintain a fire within the park except in a facility or device provided, maintained, or designated for such purposes or to smoke or build fires when an extreme fire hazard has been posted by the District or a burn ban has been instituted by local government ordinance;
   b. gather firewood except when authorized by permit;
   c. leave a fire unattended; or
   d. possess within the park any fireworks, explosives, or similar devices capable of explosion, or to discharge, set off, or cause to be discharged in or into the park any such device or substance, except with written authorization from the General Manager.
9. **Fishing:** It is an offense for any person to fail to observe fishing regulations as shown in Section B. 4.
10. **Metal detector.** It is an offense for any person to operate or use a metal detector.

11. **Minors and children.**
    a. A person younger than 15 years who enters the park, must be supervised by a parent, legal guardian, or other responsible adult over the age of 17 years at all times.
    b. For purposes of this subsection, a person who is required by this subsection to be supervised and is a part of a

group will be considered supervised by a parent, legal guardian or other responsible person if there is at least one supervising adult over the age of 17 years for every 15 persons for whom supervision is required by this subsection.

c. It is an offense for a parent, legal guardian or other responsible person charged with supervision of a person under 17 years of age to permit the person under 17 years of age to violate a regulation contained in this subchapter.

12. **Motor Vehicle Use, Possession and Operation.** All Texas laws governing operation of a motor vehicle are applicable within the park.

a. Operation. It is an offense for any person to:

(1) operate a motor vehicle in the park except on roads, driveways, parking areas, and areas designated as open for motor vehicle use;

(2) operate a motor vehicle in the park if the motor vehicle is not licensed and inspected as required by the Texas Transportation Code or other law regarding the operation of motor vehicles, except as specifically authorized by permit; or

(3) operate a motor vehicle in the park in a manner not authorized by the Texas Transportation code or other laws regarding the operation of motor vehicles.

b. Parking. It is an offense for any person to:

(1) park a motor vehicle or trailer in the park except in areas designed, constructed, or designated for that purpose; or;

(2) park, store, or leave a motor vehicle or trailer in violation of this section when signs have been posted in the affected areas.

c. Speed Limit. It is an offense for any person to drive a motor vehicle within the park at a speed;

(1) greater than is reasonable or prudent, having due regard for the traffic and the road conditions then existing;

(2) that endangers the safety of persons or property; or

(3) that exceeds the posted speed limit in any portion of the park.

d. Traffic. It is an offense for any person to:

(1) operate a motor vehicle in the park between the park closing hour and the park opening hour, except for emergency or necessary purposes; or

(2) operate a motor vehicle in an indiscriminate or unnecessary manner (cruising).

e. Trail use. It is an offense for any person to operate or use a motor vehicle or a bicycle on an unpaved road, trail, or path not designated and posted for use by such a motor vehicle or use the trail in a manner that is dangerous to a person or animal.

13. **Natural and Cultural Resources.**

a. Plant life. It is an offense for any person to willfully mutilate, injure, destroy, pick, cut, remove, or introduce any plant life except by permit issued by the General Manager.

b. Geological features. It is an offense for any person to take, remove, destroy, deface, tamper with, or disturb any rock, earth, soil, gem, mineral, fossil, or other geological deposit except by permit issued by the General Manager.

c. Cultural resources. It is an offense for any person to take, remove, destroy, deface, tamper with, disturb, or otherwise adversely impact any prehistoric or historic resource, including but not limited to, buildings, structures, cultural features, rock art, or artifacts, except by written order of the General Manager.

14. **Peace and quiet.** It is an offense for any person to:

a. use electronic equipment, including electrical speakers, at a volume which emits sound beyond the immediate individual picnic site at any time without specific permission of the General Manager; or

b. create a disturbance capable of negatively affecting other park users by causing excessive noise by any means. Specific allowable noise levels for specific parks or parts of parks may be established by written order of the General Manager.

15. **Soliciting.** It is an offense for any person to solicit funds or donation of any item, or offer to sell any goods, wares, merchandise, liquid, or edibles, or render any service for hire, or distribute written material, in the park, except by authority of a concession agreement approved by the General Manager.
16. **Vendor Policy**.
    a. The General Manager may at his discretion issue vendor permits to vendors that enhance the Wheeler Branch Park experience for guests.
    b. The issuance of vendor permits is completely at the discretion of Water District General Manager and is based on space availability, need of product, anticipated park crowd and past experience with vendor.
    c. Vendors will be required to have appropriate liability insurance naming SCWD as co-insured prior to entering the park.
    d. The fee schedule for vendors will be $100 per day for holiday/holiday weekends and $50 per day for weekdays and non-holiday weekends.
    e. Vendor permit fees will gain park entrance for two vendor operators. Each additional vendor staff will pay normal park rates.
    f. Vendors will be assigned an open area to operate and will not be allowed to operate from park shelters.
    g. Vendors must be preapproved by the SCWD General Manager at least 7 days prior to the proposed activity.
17. **Water Recreation.** It is an offense for any person to:
    a. Operate any watercraft within the Wheeler Branch Reservoir other than a canoe, kayak or open hull john boat without a bilge, live well or floor.
    b. launch and/or operate any type watercraft with a gasoline powered engine on the Wheeler Branch Reservoir.
    c. bring water into the Wheeler Branch Park within any type of watercraft.
    d. engage in water skiing, surf boarding while being towed, towing a person or a similar device, or operate a motorized ski device on the reservoir.
    e. swim or operate any type of water craft within 200 feet of the District's water intake tower.
    f. enter water or swim in an area closed for that activity;
    g. operate any type of a motorized water craft within 200 feet of a designated swim area.
    h. swim at night;
    i. introduce, carry into, or possess, use, break, dispose of, throw, or abandon any glass container in the water or park area.
    j. moor, dock, or berth a boat or any other object between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., except in mooring areas designated by the General Manager; or
    k. moor, dock, or berth a commercial vessel at any part of the park except by permit from the General Manager;
    l. Swim around or to the rock islands across the reservoir from the swimming area. The rock islands have been designated as a bird sanctuary and nesting area.
18. **Water, Wastewater, Sewage, and Garbage.** It is an offense for any person to:
    a. deposit waste water, sewage, or effluent from sinks, toilets, or other plumbing fixtures directly on the ground or into the water;
    b. use any water fountain, drinking fountain, sprinkler, reservoir, lake or any other water body contained in the park for bathing, laundering, and washing dishes, pets, or vehicles (including trailers);
    c. deposit fish parts at any location except park fish cleaning facilities;
    d. discard, deposit, or dump garbage in the park, except for:
        (1) garbage generated inside the park during the course of park visitation; or
        (2) an amount of garbage consistent with what ordinarily would accumulate in a vehicle in the course of a day's travel;
    e. dispose of garbage except in a receptacle provided for that use or as may otherwise be specifically authorized by department personnel; or
    f. use water provided by the park for purposes other than drinking, washing or culinary uses.

19. **Drones and Remote-Controlled Vehicles.** It is an offense for any person to launch, land, recover, operate, or control within the park, or on, in, or over the waters of Wheeler Branch Reservoir, any Drone or Unmanned Aircraft or any Remote-Controlled Vehicle, without prior written permission from the General Manager.

E. Water Safety Act. All provisions of Title 4, Parks and Wildlife Code, Chapter 31, Water Safety Act, apply to the Wheeler Branch Reservoir. Penalties for violation of the Water Safety Act are as set out in Title 4, Parks and Wildlife code.

F. Penalties.

Penalties for violations of these rules and regulations (relating to General Rules, Closing Hours and Overnight Use, and Rules of Conduct) are Class C Misdemeanors as provided by state law.

1. A person violating any of the provisions of this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction shall be punished by a fine of not less than $50 and not more than $1,000, by confinement in jail for not more than 30 days, or by both.
2. Each day of continued violation of any provision of this chapter constitutes a separate offense for which the offender may be punished.

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