



## Helpful Notes on Parking at Wildlife/Game Lands, or Michigan DNR Wildlife Division’s Administered and Managed/Co-Managed Lands

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State of Michigan, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wildlife Division, 517-284-WILD (9453).

**Parking is Important to You, for your Vehicle, and for Our State Land – Please Consider These Comments to Help Make Your Recreational Adventure & Time on Our State Land the Best It Can Be, For Everyone!** *When in doubt or if you have any questions, please contact the appropriate office for the specific wildlife/game area, and ask about any local recommendations for parking or places to avoid, so you avoid having parking problems and have a great time outdoors!*

This document addresses many common parking-related questions, about parking lots, parking congestion, parking permits, side-street or side-of-road parking, parking do’s and don’ts, and provides some unofficial recommendations to help users of these public lands. Be aware this document cannot include all special local ordinances, special signed situations, etc. – these are some recommendations to help you, but there may be differences at some specific locations, which over-ride the comments in this help document; if so use appropriate steps for that special location, and avoid getting a ticket, fines, vehicle towed, etc.

*Note:* if the area has a detailed map, and it disagrees with signs on-the-ground or with the office directions, then be aware the signs (at location) over-rule any online or potentially old maps.

Below are sections addressing Parking Lots, parking congestion, when/where you need a special access parking sticker, and **Side-of-Road or Side-Street Parking**.

**Parking Lots:** Many areas have prepared parking lots; ***please try to use those first.*** Those locations has been assessed and significant investments made to provide the public with safe and appropriate parking at that location. Details for most [wildlife/game areas](#) are available on the DNR website [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr).

In provided lots, please:

- Park so you do not block drives in-and-out of area, and there may be multiple or one-way drives. Do not drive across grass or area to depart, unless it’s an emergency and if so then drive the shortest and safest distance to reach the road.
- Do not block any boating access areas, ramps, and/or rustic drop-in areas for canoes.
- Park to leave appropriate space for others to use the lot.
- Look for posted signs to help you; many prepared lots have information bulletin-boards or “kiosks” where there is updated information provided for users.
- *If a lot is full and no places to park*, then there may be another parking lot nearby so look for another parking area on Area map on bulletin boards. A full parking lot may also suggest this nearby area has more hunters, than another area with available parking.
- **Report visible poaching to the DNR Report All Poaching (RAP) line 1-800-292-7800.**

**Parking Congestion:** For many areas, parking at peak times can become a problem and tickets can be issued by local police, sheriff, and State police if you do not follow required parking regulations and laws. These can include ignoring side-street “no-parking” signs, signs limiting the time for side-street parking, parking which blocks the road, and more. Many of these parking laws are local regulations for local road-ways, side-street parking (or side of road parking), and apply even if you are parking and accessing towards State land.

*An excellent example:* At Pointe Mouillee SGA, during the annual local waterfowl festival; visitors sometimes park inappropriately and get a ticket when returning to their vehicle at the end of the day which can spoil an otherwise great day outdoors. We would like to help you avoid problems, if you work with us and contact the appropriate office if you have questions.

There are NO reserved parking locations within any wildlife/game area parking lots; all areas are first-come, first-get situations.

### **Parking “Permits” or stickers:**

There is a difference in those Dedicated State Wildlife/Game Areas, and Wildlife Units of State Recreation Areas or State Parks. All access or parking to State Parks and State Recreation Areas requires a “Recreation Passport” or Parks/Rec. access sticker. Below explains the differences:

#### ***For wildlife/game areas – off/away from State Parks/Rec. Areas or State Forests:***

- There are not any special State parking permits required for parking within prepared parking areas for any wildlife/game areas, off or away from State Rec. or Forest Areas.
- Do not let someone try to sell you a special parking sticker for wildlife/game areas which do not fall into the description in the next section below (those needing a *Rec.Passport*).
- If confused if a parking “permit” requirement applies, *please call and ask the local office* for the specific wildlife/game area which you are considering, or see the DNR website.
- If you wish to support wildlife/game areas or express your support for Michigan wildlife, please consider donating to the *Michigan NonGame Fund* for a sticker for your car, or consider applying for the *Pure Michigan Hunt (a prize package)*. Details for both these worthwhile programs are available on DNR website at [www.michigan.gov/hunting](http://www.michigan.gov/hunting). Both programs help support Michigan land, habitat and species work, and conservation.

#### ***For wildlife/game areas – on/at State Recreation Areas or State Forest Areas:***

- These areas include: Wildlife Units of State Recreation Areas, and any State Wildlife Management Area reached by parking at a State Forest campground parking lot. Look for signs to help you know requirements.
- A *State Recreation Passport* is required posted on your vehicle, for all State Parks and State Recreation Areas, State Forest campgrounds, select State boat launch parking (posted when required), State pathway parking, and more.
- *Please note:* Entry into State Parks, State Recreation Areas, State Forest Campgrounds, Boating Access Sites and non-motorized trail head parking lots are subject to available parking spaces on a first-come, first-served basis.
- You may already have a passport permit on the vehicle you are using. Check for a window sticker –and- check if a passport was purchased when renewing the Michigan license plate through the Michigan Secretary of State’s office. If purchased with renewing a plate, look for a little “P” near the date sticker on the license, or look for a statement in upper-left of the registration (the cited DNR online page, below shows you pictures). Window stickers have the round logo seen above on the right-side, saying “Recreation Passport” and an expiration date, etc. Staffed State Parks/Rec. Area offices and State Forest Campground offices typically may sell window-stickers.
- For more information on State Recreation Passports, which currently cost \$11 for use for a year (price subject to change; see cited webpage for details), please details on the DNR website at [www.michigan.gov/recreationpassport](http://www.michigan.gov/recreationpassport) , or call a DNR Customer Service Center listed in the blue pages of your local phone book.



**Side-of-Road or Side-Street Parking:** For some wildlife/game areas, prepared parking lots may not exist yet, for that portion of the area. In such situations, side-street or side-of-road parking is acceptable as long as you follow some requirements and recommendations:

**DO:**

- Please come and use State public lands – they are there for appropriate users to enjoy!
- Look for and use a nearby parking lot, to either side of the area you are considering.
- Look for any signs prohibiting side-street or side-of-road parking –and- No Trespassing. If there are any such signs, obey them – however, if you disagree with them because the information conflicts with a new area map or other information resource you have, please call the local area office and describe the situation; you may be helping to stop someone else's inappropriate and illegal signage or lands use (such as No Trespassing signs on State land due to someone adjacent starting to claim that ownership). Thanks.
- Park away from intersections or property corners, so your vehicle does not interrupt those driving on the road-way from seeing around corners when turning at corners.

*Good rule-of-thumb:* If your own driving along the road would be impaired by a vehicle parked where you are preparing to park, then don't park there.

- Avoid parking on any curves in the road, because someone may not see and hit your vehicle. However, if you must park on a curve, park on the outside side of the curve (the side with less-tight of a curve) for improved visibility.
- Park on the State-owned side of the road (look for signs), parallel to the road.
- Use care to not cause damage or increase erosion, and leave the area like you found it.

**DO NOT:**

- Park immediately adjacent to private landowners, crowd private driveways or private roads, or otherwise block any access to a private landowner getting to/from their land.
- DO NOT damage the land when selecting your parking location, such as drive over vegetation, drainage ditches, drive into wetland or marshy areas, or drive an unreasonable distance away from road.
- Do NOT expect because someone else may have parked there, that it's okay and legal. Just because you think others have parked in a location, or see someone parked there, does not mean it's a recommended location, or that you both avoid getting a ticket.
- Do NOT drive across State Land following a set of tire-tracks or ruts left by someone else; Off-Road damage on State lands is a tickable offense. Official access roads or two-tracks should look appropriate and may have signs; when questions, call area office.
- Do NOT assume rules for State lands apply across the road, which might be privately-owned.
- Do NOT Assume a DNR employee can do anything about your ticket, **so park carefully.**