

Athens Community Forest Use Guidelines: June 2023

In creating use guidelines for the Community Forest, the BCCL board intends to encourage respect amongst the people who use the forest and respect for the land that we are enjoying together. These initial guidelines were developed to protect the ecology of the forest, the conditions of the conservation easement, the safety of visitors, and the needs of the community.

Bull Creek Common Lands welcomes conversation and collaboration with the community to discuss and possibly amend the guidelines as outlined below. Please write to us at hello@bullcreekcommonlands.org if you have questions or an idea about how these rules can be amended for the better and benefit of all.

Trails are open to the public for low impact pedestrian use. Excluded are bicycles, horses and motorized vehicles. Exceptions may apply on a case-by-case basis for certain mobility devices for persons with mobility issues, such as small tracked wheelchairs. The concern is visitor safety. A review of trails with safety in mind when used by mobility devices needs to take place to determine if there are accessible trail sections that can be safely used, and this information will be posted.

Certain trail sections may be closed during muddy conditions to avoid erosion and harm to the top soil, mycelium, etc.

Regular wheelchairs will encounter unsafe trail sections and use may be difficult. Extreme caution is advised.

Dogs must be on leash and under control at all times for the shared safety of wild animals and fellow visitors. No dogs in the marked vernal pool, to protect important amphibian habitat.

No fires of any type.

No overnight camping.

Visitors must carry out all trash and refuse from their visit. No trash is to be left behind in the forest, trailhead or parking areas.

For groups over 12 people, please write to BCCL before use of the trails to avoid parking conflicts.

Parking is limited to the pulloff that is the trailhead and has signage. No parking is allowed in neighboring driveways. Parking along the narrow road is at visitors' own risk and not advised.

This property has a public access easement that allows for hunting and fishing. Hunters must follow all state regulations, are asked to know the property well before undertaking a hunt, understand where the trails are, and that hikers may be present. Written permission is required for tree stands or blinds. Hikers should wear bright colors during the regular hunting seasons.

Foraging of mushrooms, botanicals and herbs is allowed. Noticeable adverse impacts to habitat may result in a temporary moratorium or posted areas where foraging may need to be halted. All foragers should at the very least, respect the rule of thirds: forage no more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of any plant or mushroom that is available; that could be $\frac{1}{3}$ of the plants at a certain locale, or $\frac{1}{3}$ of the berries of an individual tree or plant. Never harvest endangered or threatened species. Edible and medicinal herbs and fungi are important food sources for both humans and wildlife. Be mindful! Do not disturb or tear the soil, living trees, or growing surface.

Collect only windfall when foraging barks, other parts of living trees, or lichens (already on the forest floor or detached from the tree or rock).

No cultural artifacts may be removed. Metal detectors are not allowed.