



MNRCP Project Land Use Guidelines – Preservation Projects

The Maine Natural Resources Conservation Program (MNRCP) is a grant program that awards competitive grants to projects that restore and protect high quality aquatic resources and habitat throughout Maine. Projects that are funded through this program are considered to be mitigation projects and must comply with state and federal wetland mitigation regulations. MNRCP funds can be used to acquire properties in fee or to establish conservation easements to preserve valuable wetlands and other natural resources in perpetuity. The information outlined below provides details about land uses on parcels acquired with MNRCP funds as you consider MNRCP as a potential funding source, or as you prepare a formal proposal to MNRCP.

Forestry

Forestry may be allowed on MNRCP parcels, but any timber harvesting must be done with conditions ensuring aquatic resource and habitat protections and must conform to the following standards:

- Timber harvesting is not allowed within forested wetlands, within 100' of any mapped wetland or stream, or within 250' of mapped vernal pools. Timber harvesting is also not permitted in Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat.
- Timber harvesting is done in a sustainable manner.
- Timber harvesting may be allowed within large areas of upland forest that are accessible without impacting protected natural resources.
- A forest management plan is required and will be reviewed by MNRCP reviewers.

Recreation

Recreational use is allowed on properties acquired with MNRCP funds; however, it is not a requirement that public access be provided. Because the program must adhere to state and federal mitigation guidelines, there are limitations on what types of activities are allowed and where they can be located. See below for details on specific activities:

- **Trails** – Hiking, walking, and other low impact recreational trails are generally permitted on parcels acquired with MNRCP funds provided that the trails and associated infrastructure do not negatively affect aquatic resources or significantly disturb associated upland buffers.
- **Hunting/Fishing** – Hunting and fishing are generally allowed on MNRCP parcels.
- **Snowmobiling** – Access for snowmobile use on existing trails may be allowed depending on the location of designated trails. Development of new trails is generally not allowed, unless they can be sited to avoid aquatic resources and their associated buffers.





- **ATV's** – ATV use is generally not allowed on MNRCP parcels due to the potential for impact to natural resources.
- **Camping** – Overnight camping is generally not allowed on parcels protected with MNRCP funds.

Other Land Uses

Additional information is provided below regarding other potential land uses:

- **Existing structures** – In general, MNRCP prefers that land protected as a preservation site should be maintained in a natural state. On a limited basis, however, MNRCP has allowed existing structures to remain on a parcel acquired with MNRCP funds, provided that use of the structure does not threaten protected natural resources or their associated buffers. Use of existing structures would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- **New structures** – MNRCP will generally not allow the construction of new, permanent structures on parcels acquired with MNRCP funds. Limited exceptions may be possible for low-impact structures to facilitate recreational use (e.g., platform for bird watching, bog bridge or other crossing structure), provided the structure does not negatively impact natural resources. Informational kiosks, signs, and fences are allowed.
- **Parking areas** – MNRCP may allow a limited size parking area on a property for public recreational access; however, the parking area would need to avoid protected natural resources and be located outside of resource buffers.
- **Vehicle access** – Vehicle access for maintenance or stewardship purposes is generally allowed on existing roads as long as they do not impact protected natural resources. The construction of new roads is discouraged but may be considered on a case-by-case basis if they do not impact resources and buffers.
- **Wildlife habitat management** – Creation or management of habitat for wildlife species such as eastern cottontail, woodcock, white-tailed deer, etc. are generally not allowed on MNRCP project sites if it will affect protected natural resources or their associated buffers. Limited projects located away from resources may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- **Agriculture** – Agriculture is generally not permitted on MNRCP parcels, unless it is proposed to occur a significant distance from aquatic resources and adequate forested buffers are maintained between the agriculture and the protected natural resources.

Questions?

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