

The land protected by the Manchester Land Conservation Trust (MLCT) is private land generally open to the public for passive recreation. MLCT founding documents, promulgated in 1973, provide that the protection of these natural lands is solely for “conservational, educational, and scientific purposes.”

As Manchester grows, so too will the public use and enjoyment of MLCT-protected lands. Public enjoyment is a key benefit of protected open space. Increased use may also bring greater negative impacts on fragile areas and place a significant strain on limited volunteer resources to manage and enforce use policies. The land use policies set forth below are intended to clarify, for the general public, interested user groups, and law enforcement, what types of uses are permitted on MLCT properties.

Any unforeseen use not explicitly covered by these policies will be addressed on an as needed basis by the Board of Directors. Exclusion of an activity or use from this document does not imply that it is allowed. In situations where these policies allow for exceptions, the Board of Directors will consider the request, but exceptions will be granted only in writing. The Board of Directors of MLCT may stop or further limit access to a particular property if, in its discretion, that is reasonably necessary to further the goals of MLCT. The policies below apply to all MLCT-owned properties except as otherwise decided by the Board of Directors.

1. **Hours**
MLCT properties are open to the public from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset.
2. **Camping**
Camping is not allowed on MLCT properties.
3. **Fires**
Fires of any kind are prohibited on MLCT properties, except by written permission.
4. **Off Highway Recreational Vehicles**
The use of all-terrain vehicles, motorized bikes of any type, four-wheel drive vehicles, and snowmobiles is strictly prohibited by MLCT.
5. **Horses**
Use of horses on MLCT land is exclusively limited to those trails MLCT has identified for horse use. Those identified trails are identified on MLCT trail maps. Horse access on a trail within a property does not indicate general permission for horses on the entire property. Trail stewards may close trails to horses when necessary.
6. **Recreational Trails**
 - a. No trails may be constructed on MLCT properties unless a trail proposal is reviewed and approved in writing by the Board of Directors.
 - b. MLCT may limit the size of groups using properties if, due to the physical characteristics of the property (soils, slopes, sensitive wildlife, proximity to

neighboring landowners), it is determined that use by a large group is inappropriate.

7. **Mountain Bikes**

MLCT allows the use of mountain bikes on dry, marked trails within our lands. The construction of jumps or alteration of the trails or property in any way, and use of mountain bikes off of marked trails, is prohibited. Mountain bikes are prohibited from blue-blazed trails maintained by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. Some MLCT trails in Risley Preserve are included in the blue-blazed trail system.

8. **Dogs**

Dogs: The policy of MLCT is that dogs must be on leashes at all times, in order to protect wildlife and minimize disruptions for other property users.

Dogs are allowed off-leash but must be under the control of the owner. Under no circumstances should dogs be allowed to chase wildlife.

MLCT encourages courtesy with regard to other users and the removal of waste in heavily traveled trail systems.

9. **Boating**

There is no motorized boating allowed on any body of water owned by MLCT. Canoes and kayaks may be used where launching may be accomplished safely and without damage.

10. **Swimming**

There are no public swimming facilities on any body of water accessed by MLCT lands.

11. **Rock Climbing**

Rock climbing is not allowed on MLCT properties.

12. **Hunting**

Hunting generally is not allowed on MLCT properties. Any exceptions to this policy will be made only in writing. Any permit holders must comply with all state laws. Note: Hunting may be allowed on private property adjacent to MLCT land so be aware of your location during hunting season (September to February). Any recreational user should wear high visibility attire during hunting season as a precaution.

13. **Fishing**

Fishing consistent with state law is allowed on MLCT properties.

14. **Trapping**

Trapping is not permitted on MLCT properties.

15. **Fields/Agricultural Lands**

MLCT strives to maintain hayfields and may have plots used for agriculture.

Please respect the private property of farmers using MLCT property.

16. **Geocaches and Letterboxes**

Geocaches and letterboxes are permitted on MLCT land. Written permission of the MLCT Board of Directors must be requested to place the letterbox, however, so that the location and contents can be approved.

17. **Events**

MLCT requires advanced knowledge of use of its properties for gatherings of organized groups. Permission of the MLCT Board of Directors must be requested

for parties of 15 or more. Weddings or other large events are allowed in various locations by permission of the Board of Directors.

18. Academic Research

Academic research on MLCT properties is permitted with written approval of the Board of Directors.

19. Plants, Wildlife, Mineral, and Historical/Cultural Resource Collecting

The collection of plants, wildlife, minerals, and historical/cultural artifacts from MLCT properties is not allowed without written permission of the Board of Directors. Such collecting is only permitted if it is a necessary part of an academic investigation through an educational institution or research entity and will have minimal impact on the disturbed resource.

20. Dumping

No material of any kind, including yard waste, leaves, fallen trees, or Christmas trees, may be dumped, or otherwise introduced onto MLCT lands without written permission from MLCT.

21. Crimes including Vandalism and Criminal Trespass

It is the policy of MLCT to prosecute all violations of laws of the State of Connecticut or the Town of Manchester. Any vandalism that comes to our attention is reported to the appropriate law enforcement officials. We cooperate with law enforcement fully. This cooperation may include pressing criminal charges, and/or arranging for compensation or community service in the case of juveniles.

22. Liability

Using MLCT properties involves risks of injuries. Under the Connecticut Recreational Use Statute, MLCT has no liability or responsibility for any injuries sustained while using MLCT properties, including for medical bills. If you use MLCT property, you do so at your own risk, and MLCT makes no representations of any nature about the condition or safety of the use of its properties.