

## Use of the Trails and Lands located at Saint John's

Welcome to the lands of Saint John's Abbey. The Abbey has owned and cared for this site since 1856. In keeping with our Benedictine values, the monastic community is pleased to share our home with you where you may observe nature and be physically and spiritually refreshed. As a guest on this private property, please be respectful of our policies and this land which we consider sacred. Thank you.

### Policy Statement

The following list highlights activities not allowed on land owned by Saint John's Abbey, including lands leased to Saint John's University or other entities:

- No disturbing the natural order or scenery or leaving a trace of your presence.
- No dogs or other pets, except designated service animals. ([See separate Pet Policy.](#))
- No biking on unpaved surfaces.
- No use of skateboards for stunts, tricks or other non-transportation purposes; or inside buildings.
- No use of hoverboards or similar motorized or mechanized self-balancing devices.
- No driving unauthorized vehicles or off-road vehicles on any trails or land.
- No building of fires without written permission from Life Safety Services/Fire Chief.
- No tenting or camping without written permission from Life Safety Services.
- No building of "forts" or structures from native or human-made materials.
- No gathering or harvesting of any plants, plant materials, animals, fungi, or inorganic material without written permission from the Abbey Land Manager.
- No educational research or sampling without permission from the Abbey Land Manager.
- No possession or use of weapons (whether real, toy, or facsimile) is allowed without written permission from Life Safety Services. (This includes weapons otherwise authorized by conceal and carry or similar permits.)

### Additional Policy Statement Information

- This policy applies to all students, residents, employees and visitors of Saint John's.
- This policy applies to all areas of the outer, undeveloped Abbey forest and lands and on all inner campus lands and buildings leased to Saint John's University or other entities.
- Trail users are encouraged to donate to the Abbey Arboretum to help support the costs of providing these opportunities.

### **Recreational Use and Users:**

The following uses are permitted with the described limitations and subject to revocation at any time for any reason. Users must not disturb the natural order or scenery or leave any trace of their presence beyond footprints.

1. Permitted without written authorization
  - a. Walking and hiking on trails, except on groomed winter ski trails
  - b. Running and jogging on trails, except on groomed winter ski trails
  - c. Cross country skiing on and off groomed trails
  - d. Snowshoeing anywhere except on groomed winter ski trails
  - e. Low-impact off-trail hiking
  - f. Biking, skating and rollerblading on paved surfaces only
  - g. Finding existing geo-cache locations
  - h. Using existing land navigation points
  - i. Fishing (must also adhere to DNR licensing and regulations)
  - j. Canoeing and use of non-motorized boats
  
2. Permitted without written authorization, but in designated areas only
  - a. Swimming
  - b. Picnicking
  - c. Sledding
  - d. Snowboarding
  - e. Frisbee golf
  
3. Permitted only with expressed, written permission
  - a. Bonfires
  - b. Camping and tenting
  - c. Creating land navigation courses or points
  - d. Creating new geo-cache locations
  - e. High impact off-trail hiking
  - f. Organized races, fun-runs, outdoor events, etc.
  - g. Motorized vehicles and off-road vehicles
  - h. Hunting (must also meet DNR licensing and regulations)
  - i. Gathering of plants, plant materials, animals and fungi
  - j. Cutting or collecting poles, logs or firewood.
  - k. Ground disturbance including pits, berms and new trails.

### **Educational, Research, and Training Use and Users:**

The following uses are permitted with the described limitations and subject to revocation at any time as per the Abbey-Saint John's University agreements.

1. Permitted without written authorization from Abbey Land Manager for College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University, Saint John's Prep School, ROTC, Abbey, and Arboretum class field trips and outdoor events.
  - a. Walking and hiking on trails, except on groomed winter ski trails, for observational purposes.

- b. Low-impact off-trail hiking, cross country skiing on and off groomed winter trails, and snowshoeing for observational purposes.
  - c. Canoeing and use of non-motorized boats for observational purposes.
2. Permitted with oral authorization from Abbey Land Manager for CSB/SJU, SJ Prep, ROTC, Abbey, and Arboretum class field trips and outdoor events.
    - a. Sampling & harvesting if limited to small, incidental levels of common species/materials.
      - i. Leaf collections, earthworm sampling, lake water sampling, etc.
    - b. No destructive sampling. No obvious or permanent ground disturbance.
    - c. No flagging, wire flags, posts, or other markers will be left on site.
  3. Permitted only with written permission from Abbey Land Manager for CSB/SJU, SJ Prep, ROTC, Abbey, and Arboretum class field trips and events. (An account number or deposit may be required.)
    - a. Sampling & harvesting that exceeds incidental level.
    - b. Sampling and harvesting that includes less common species and/or sensitive resources.
    - c. Sampling and harvesting that includes destructive procedures; for example, tree borings.
    - d. Obvious and/or permanent ground disturbance occurrences.
    - e. Flagging, wire flags, posts or other markers that will be left on site for more than 8 hours but removed by the end of the semester.
    - f. Sampling locations that may affect other land uses.
    - g. Long-term research plots where sampling and research will extend beyond a semester.
  4. Permitted only with written permission from Abbey Land Manager for all other groups
    - a. All outdoor classes, events or field trips not affiliated with CSB/SJU, SJ Prep, ROTC, Abbey or Arboretum. (A deposit may be required.)
    - b. All other outdoor events on Abbey land.

<b>Reason for Policy</b>
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**Private Property:**

The land of Saint John’s Abbey is private property and is the permanent home of the monastic community as well as the home of many students for much of the year. As the owners, the Abbey has set forth these rules for the use of their property.

**Safety:**

The trails, prairies, forests, wetlands and other lands of Saint John’s are used by many people. Conflicting uses such as hiking and mountain biking could quickly become a safety hazard on the narrow, winding trails. Campfires in undesignated areas could spread out of control.

**Respect:**

Respect for the natural surroundings is important. Quiet areas and tranquil settings are less common all the time. Saint John's is a spiritual place and the monks who live here feel it is important to provide a peaceful setting for those who live here and those who come here. Limiting motorized travel increases the amount of quiet areas.

**Litter and Remnants of Experiments:**

The Abbey's land provides a wonderful setting for many potential experiments and studies. However, many studies require that flagging or markers be placed to allow re-measurement at a later time. The clutter of leftover flagging and markers can be a serious problem of litter on the land. Designating each experiment with the student's name, professor's name and final date of experiment assures that the litter will be removed in a timely manner. Deposits may also be required to insure that experiment residue is removed.

**Wildlife and Plants:**

Habitat preservation is a key reason for these policies. Saint John's has been a Minnesota State Game Refuge since 1933. Saint John's Abbey established the Game Refuge to assure that native plants and animals are given a place to prosper naturally. Any harvesting and land stewardship is done with care and long-term intent for the welfare of the ecosystem. Activities like taking a "few" mushrooms or taking a few sample specimens or establishing a few test plots may seem innocuous, but, due to the large number of users, can quickly become a detriment to the land or a visual blight. Similarly, building a campfire with your own wood could spread tree diseases.

**Liability:**

Saint John's is private property, not a public park. All use of Abbey land and lakeshore is at the individual's own risk.

**Other options:**

There are many nearby parks and private lands for activities not allowed at Saint John's.

**Special Situations**

The Abbey Land Manager and/or Life Safety Director may approve exemptions.

**Rates, Fees, or Penalties**

Fee for student research permit: Free, but an account number may be requested which can be billed to pay for any damage to the land or the actual cost of cleaning up a research site, if the student does not clean it themselves, whichever is more.

**Contacts**

Subject	Contact	Phone	E-mail
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Policy Enforcement	Life Safety Services	320-363-2144	LSaftey@csbsju.edu
Permits for campfires and tenting	Life Safety Services & Fire Chief	320-363-2144	<a href="#">Online Form</a>
Educational or special harvesting or vehicle permits	Abbey Land Manager	320-363-3163	<a href="mailto:abbeyarboretum@csbsju.edu">abbeyarboretum@csbsju.edu</a>
Policy Modifications	Abbey Forest & Lands Committee	320-363-3163	<a href="mailto:abbeyarboretum@csbsju.edu">abbeyarboretum@csbsju.edu</a>
Corporate Responsibility	Saint John's Abbey Treasurer	320-363-3167	<a href="mailto:sjainfo@osb.org">sjainfo@osb.org</a>

## Procedures & Forms

In support of this policy, the following procedures and forms are included:

### **Potential Exemptions to Policy:**

- Apply to Life Safety Services (320-363-2144) at least 10 days in advance of needing an exemption.

### **Educational or Special Recreational Use Requests:**

- Apply to Abbey Land Manager (320-363-3163). See Outdoor University website for details. [www.csbsju.edu/OutdoorU](http://www.csbsju.edu/OutdoorU)
- On-line form to apply for a land study permit:  
<https://apps.csbsju.edu/arboretum/request/NewForm/Educational.aspx>
- On-line form to apply for a special recreational permit:  
<https://apps.csbsju.edu/arboretum/request/NewForm/Recreational.aspx>

## Definitions

Land includes any land owned and controlled by Saint John's Abbey in Minnesota. Order of Saint Benedict, Saint John's Abbey, Saint John's or Abbey all refer to the monastic community legally named Order of Saint Benedict.

## Policy History

### **Approved by:**

Saint John's Abbey Treasurer on 14 June 2010  
 OSB Forest and Lands Committee on 14 June 2010  
 OSB Senior Council on 29 June 2010

Updates Approved by:  
Saint John's Abbey Treasurer on 28 March 2016  
OSB Senior Council on 29 March 2016

**Endorsed by:**

Saint John's University on \_\_\_\_\_  
Saint John's University Regents on \_\_\_\_\_

- Saint John's Abbey owns and controls the land and retains the right to modify its policies at any time. Minor amendments and corrections endorsed by the Abbey Forest and Lands Committee and approved by the Abbey Treasurer may be made as needed.
- Some version of a "Land Use and Restrictions" rule has been in place for decades.