

# CNA3C Campus Natural Areas

## Use and Management Policy and Guidelines

July 2021

Michigan State University is endowed with a diversity of woodlands and wetlands located on campus properties. These invaluable natural resources include more than 700 acres in 25 distinct sites. These Campus Natural Areas provide important examples of our rich natural heritage and represent significant resources for teaching, research, demonstration and nature appreciation.

Stewardship of the Campus Natural Areas is overseen by the *Campus Natural Areas Classroom, Curriculum and Conservation Committee*, CNA3C. This advisory group consists of faculty and staff representing an array of disciplines and expertise in natural science and resource management. The CNA3C is responsible for establishing policies and guidelines to preserve Campus Natural Areas for future generations. This includes protecting native biodiversity, sustainable management of resources within the natural areas, and balancing activities proposed for specific natural areas with conservation objectives.

### Use of Campus Natural Areas

Campus Natural Areas are managed to optimize instructional and research value, and to encourage public enjoyment, while safeguarding high quality habitats and sensitive species, maintaining high levels of biodiversity, and contributing to campus sustainability.

Activities in alignment with the following General Use Guidelines, such as walking or hiking, class field trips, bird watching, nature photography, etc., are encouraged and do not require special approval. Activities that fall outside of the General Use Guidelines will require a permit from the CNA3C. Please note that organized instructional, research or outreach activities that fall within the General Use Guidelines do not require a permit, but should be reported via the online link, <https://campusnaturalareas.msu.edu/Report-Your-Use>. Documenting use of CNAs is essential to ensure these areas are protected from encroachment or development.

### I. General Use Guidelines

All visitors to Campus Natural Areas must abide by these guidelines:

- A. Bicycles, motorized vehicles, and unleashed pets or service animals are prohibited. Unleashed pets can injure and kill wildlife including ground-nesting birds. Owners should bring along their own bags to clean up after their pets and service animals.
- B. Removing, damaging, or defacing infrastructure such as signs and fences is prohibited.
- C. Fishing, hunting, camping, campfires and establishment of any structures are prohibited.

D. Visitors and users of Campus Natural Areas should leave nothing behind. All litter must be removed. Note: Use of flagging, tags or related materials may be approved for specific activities in specific Campus Natural Areas but will require a permit from the CNA3C (see below).

E. Harvesting, collecting, poaching, damaging or killing biota within CNAs without an appropriate permit is prohibited.

F. Moving, removing or otherwise disturbing down woody material such as fallen trees, logs and branches is prohibited.

G. Aquatic features, including lakes, ponds, wetlands, or vernal pools, are vulnerable to damage. Do not swim, wade or walk into lakes, ponds, pools or wetlands without an appropriate permit.

## **II. Use of Campus Natural Areas for Instruction, Research and Outreach**

A. Any use of Campus Natural Areas for teaching, research, outreach or extension events that fall within the General Use Guidelines should be reported via the online link, <https://campusnaturalareas.msu.edu/Report-Your-Use>.

B. Use of CNAs on the main campus (Baker, Red Cedar and Sanford) for instructional or research activities that do not involve manipulation or any destructive activity is encouraged. This includes only observations or measurements that will NOT involve collections of plants, animals, down woody debris, or samples of soil or water, and do not require markings, tags or flagging, or any equipment left on site.

C. Any activity that falls outside of the General Use Guidelines requires a permit, <https://campusnaturalareas.msu.edu/Permit-Request>, from the CNA3C before the activity can be conducted. Each permit application will be considered by the CNA3C Committee, or an appropriate designee, to ensure the proposed activities are appropriate for the specific natural area(s).

D. With a permit, many CNAs can be used for manipulative activities such as experiments, trapping, intensive sampling or management. Demonstration projects that include active management or restoration are appropriate on some CNAs, typically those with relatively few public visitors. Such activities are less likely to be approved for CNAs with high quality habitats, sensitive or unique species, or high public use.

E. With a permit, many instructional or research activities that involve implementation and evaluation of restoration techniques, forest management practices, invasive species removal, etc., are allowed and encouraged in CNAs that are degraded or have few unique or high quality features. To ensure CNAs remain free from debris and clutter, activities that will involve leaving research equipment, traps, flagging, markers, or any other object on site will require a permit and are allowed under the following rules:

1. The permit application must specify the end date by which all equipment, flagging, etc. will be removed.
2. A small laminated tag with the name and contact information (phone, email address) of the PI and the end date of the project should be attached to each piece of equipment, trap, etc. Anything lacking a tag is subject to removal.
3. Permanent field markers are discouraged and must be carefully justified in the permit application.

**F. Instructional or research activities that involve collecting biota**

1. Best practices and ethical guidelines should be included on the permit application and followed in the field. Collecting any organism that is listed on the Michigan Natural Features Inventory Rare Plants or Rare Animals lists (<https://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/species>) is not allowed for instructional activities and must be carefully justified for research activities. Additional permits are required from state or national authorities for activities that involves working with threatened or endangered species.
  - a. Personnel should have a copy of the CNA3C permit while conducting field work.
  - b. When possible, voucher specimens should be submitted to the appropriate campus natural history collection (e.g., MSU Museum, A.J. Cook Arthropod Collection, or MSU Herbarium).
  - c. Instructors can apply for a general permit to allow a group of students to collect biota for a specific project. The permit application should include the names of all students who may be collecting the organism(s).

Instructors or researchers in violation of these policies are subject to having their permit revoked and may be declared ineligible for further CNA permits.