

## Fire Prevention

Campfires are a leading cause of wildfires. Before starting a campfire, it is important to:

- Check the weather and make sure conditions are safe for an open flame. Avoid fires in windy conditions, and when the weather is very hot and dry.
- Only burn wood inside the fire pits and keep the fire at a manageable size. Keep water nearby to keep fires under control.
- Only burn firewood and nothing else. Other materials like grease and petroleum products may be highly combustible and lead to a quickly spreading fire. Paper products can create burning ash that floats away and lands in dry leaves or treetops (or on you tent!).
- NEVER LEAVE A FIRE UNATTENDED.
- Take care when using lanterns, stoves and heaters. Make sure they are cool before refueling. Avoid spilling flammable liquids, and store fuel away from the devices and open fire.
- Completely extinguish the fire and any smoking materials with sufficient dousing before retiring for the night or leaving the campsite. Soak the embers, then stir and soak again.
- Do not discard cigarettes, matches, or smoking materials from vehicles, or anywhere on the campsite or trails. Completely extinguish cigarettes before disposing of them.
- Park in the parking lot only, and avoid parking vehicles on dry vegetation.
- Dispose of all trash before leaving.
- Call 911 in case of a fire emergency. The address of the campsite is posted at the entrance.

### Preparing Your Campfire Pit

- Start with small pieces of dry wood; never use branches from living trees, grass or debris. A small wad of paper can be used as a starter flame.
- Place unused firewood upwind and away from the fire
- Keep a bucket of water nearby

- Maintaining Your Campfire
- Once you have a fire going, add larger pieces of dry wood to keep it burning steadily.
- Supervise children and pets when near the fire.
- NEVER leave your campfire unattended.
- Do not build towers or stacks of firewood that could erupt in flame or topple over.
- Never put glass in the fire pit. Glass does not melt away, it heats up and shatters. Broken slivers of glass are dangerous.
- Extinguishing Your Campfire  
When ready to put out your fire at night or before leaving the campsite:
- Allow the wood to burn completely to ash, if possible
- Pour lots of water on the fire; drown ALL embers, not just the red ones. Make sure everything is wet and cold to the touch. If it's too hot to touch, it's too hot to leave!
- Do NOT bury the fire as the fire will continue to smolder

## Wildlife Considerations

Camping provides great opportunities to see or hear many of our wild creatures. Songbirds, chipmunks, wild turkeys, deer, beavers, and even black bears are all enjoyable to watch. But wild is "wild", and wild animals are happiest and healthiest when they are left wild. Here are some tips for safely enjoying the wildlife around you:

- Keep a safe distance from all wildlife
- Never feed wild animals! It is dangerous to both you and the animal.
- Report sick or aggressive animals.
- Prevent animals from getting into your food. Lock food and scented items in a vehicle when not in use. If you do not have a vehicle, hang food in a tree out of reach of animals and away from your tent.
- Always keep a clean camp. Never leave food lying out, or discard food scraps near the campsite.

- Never bring food in your tent or sleeping bag (that includes candy and cookies) - to keep you safe and keep unwanted animals out of your tent.
- Dispose of trash and food scraps in the trash container and carry leftover food home with you.
- Pets may not be left unattended, and must be leashed.

**Black bears are occasionally seen at Willowsford, so be aware. If you see a bear:**

- Remain calm. Do not run.
- Enjoy the sighting. Most people never get the chance to see a bear.
- Keep a safe distance (100 yards or more). NEVER approach bear cubs!
- If the bear approaches, scare it away with loud noises or by throwing rocks or sticks towards it.

## **Tick Safety**

Three tick species are commonly found in Northern Virginia: the American dog tick, the Lone Star tick, and the Black-legged tick (formerly known as “deer tick”), which transmits Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is caused by bacteria that are spread through the bites of infected Black-legged ticks, primarily at the nymph stage. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), transmission of Lyme disease from an infected tick to a person generally occurs after the tick has been attached to the person’s body for at least 36 hours.

Checking for ticks during and after outdoor activity and prompt removal of attached ticks is the most effective way of preventing infection. Check frequently as ticks, particularly nymphs the size of a pin head, may go unnoticed.

Wearing light-colored clothing with long sleeves, and long pants tucked into socks, makes ticks easier to detect and keeps them on the outside of the clothes. Avoid wearing perfume, scented soaps and similar products while outdoors; these can attract ticks.

Applying repellents that contain 20-30% DEET to shoes, socks and the lower portion of pants can help repel ticks.