



## County of Berks, Department of Parks

**Policy/Procedure Title:** *Special Use Permit Policy*

**Policy Number:** 2011-03      **Effective Date:** January 1, 2012

**Purpose:** *To provide a policy and procedure to manage special events held by outside groups in the Berks County Park system*

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### Background

The Berks County Park system is host to diverse special events each year including major walks and runs, wedding ceremonies, graduation parties, baby showers and corporate events; however, it lacks a policy, guidelines and procedures for Special Use Permits (SUPs). Such permits are a necessary tool to plan, implement and manage large group activities. Based on an analysis of SUPs in Lancaster, Chester, Montgomery, Lehigh and Bucks Counties, as well as a review of model programs in Portland, OR and Madison, WI, the Berks County Parks Department has developed the following SUP policy.

### Policy

Individuals and organizations must apply for a Special Use Permit to utilize a County park facility including the Union Canal Trail. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- walks, runs and cycling events,
- events where participation is controlled by donations or entry fees,
- concerts, festivals or athletic tournaments,
- graduation and birthday parties, baby showers, corporate events and other organized gatherings in excess of 100 people,
- wedding ceremonies, and
- events that use tents, canopies, stages, PA systems and sound equipment, and/or caterers.

When in doubt, applicants should contact the main park office to inquire whether a permit is needed. All SUPs are handled by the Special Events Coordinator.

Standard reservations for picnics, pavilions and other spaces for fewer than 100 persons use a separate process, fee structure and form. All standard reservations are handled by the Gring's Mill main office.

The Berks County Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to refuse any application for use if it is in conflict with Department/County purpose, in violation of the Rules and Regulations as set forth in the County Ordinance or deemed inappropriate for the site.

Department and/or County-sponsored events take precedence over events scheduled by outside parties.

Issuance of a permit for an event on County property does not mean the County condones, co-sponsors or co-hosts the event.

All applications must be received a minimum of 3 months in advance of the event.

The use of any County park property for fund-raising is restricted to non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations and individuals operating a program or event that requires a fee or donation must collect such fees/donations prior to or after the scheduled event. Fees and donations cannot be collected on County property. The collection of pledges is exempt. Non-profit organizations must provide proof of their non-profit tax status (i.e., IRS letter) with their application.

Commercial food/beverage/merchandise vendors are not permitted.

The Permittee will be required to submit a completed application, proof of non-profit status (if applicable), proof of insurance, down payment deposit, damage deposit and rental fee. Permittee will acquire any additional permits (i.e. individual municipality permits for large gatherings) and pay any fees for all additional support services (dumpsters, port-a-potties, EMS, etc.)

Any rentals such as equipment, tents, chairs, dumpsters, portable restrooms etc. must be supplied and paid for by the Permittee. A Certificate of Liability Insurance from the rental company will be required. Park Staff will not sign for or hold payment for any rental equipment.

**APPROVAL**

Title	Signature	Date
Director		12/7/11