



## City of Suwanee Park Use and Usage Policy

Large and small groups that gather can impact other park users and demands on city services. As such, the city has guidelines and restrictions on certain park gatherings. This document summarizes certain provisions of the City of Suwanee Special Events Policy and Public Assembly Ordinance to help define which events warrant an approval from the city and which gatherings typically do not need approval. It is intended to help maintain the public's use and enjoyment of parks as well as to appropriately regulate usage of park and trail facilities.

Please note that some activities may require approval of a Special Event Permit while others may be verbally approved by the city. Also every situation is different; please contact the city with any questions or to obtain any required formal or informal permission as appropriate.

### **Definitions:**

***Traditional Park Use*** – Use of a public park for typical and traditional park and recreation purposes, excluding organized sports, by individuals and/or small groups that comply with all relevant established guidelines, policies, and laws. Traditional park utilization does not require special permitting or approvals, except that pavilion rentals at certain parks require rental agreements for advance reservations.

***Fitness Recreation*** - Classes, gatherings or groups who wish to use the park for fitness on a regular basis under the direction of a leader, coach, or teacher. Examples include: boot camp, yoga, Pilates, and speed and agility training, etc. Fitness recreation is typically allowed as a traditional park use provided all guidelines are met. (Note: Camps/classes taught by anyone doing business within City of Suwanee city limits who charge a fee for participation should obtain a Suwanee business license/occupational tax certificate.)

***Limited Nonconforming Activity*** – Use of a public park in a largely traditional manner, but in a way that does not comply with all relevant established guidelines and/or policies. Such limited nonconforming activities, may be allowed, at the discretion and pre-approval by the city. Individual use activity or such park usage may be granted by the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Suwanee Special Events Manager, Chief of Police, and/or their designees.

***Special Event*** – A significant activity sponsored by an organization or individual for profit or non-profit, other than the City of Suwanee, held on public property and designed for entertainment, competition, amusements or social, ethnic, religious and/or cultural awareness that generally: 1) requires restricted or exclusive use of any portion of public property, including but not limited to roped lawn areas, stages, tables, bleachers, tents, temporary barriers and/or boundaries; and/or 2) significantly impedes the normal flow of traffic; 3) substantially impedes the enjoyment or use of the property by the general public; and/or 4) otherwise does not comply with established guidelines. In such cases, the event requires approval by the city as a Special Event.

Applications for Special Events are generally taken in the fall for the next calendar year. Once the schedule is determined, events may not be added.

***Public Assembly*** —A significant political or non-political meeting, demonstration, picket line, rally or gathering of more than eight persons for a common purpose as a result of prior planning that interferes with or tends to interfere with the normal flow or regulation of pedestrian or vehicular traffic and occupies any public area in a place open to the general public. Public Assembly Applications are available through the police department, may require up to 10 days processing time, and are approved by the Chief of Police.

**Organized Sports** – A sporting event that includes referees, umpires, or a defined playing space or marked field. (Note: Given that the city’s parks are designed for passive recreation, only non-organized sporting activities are allowed within Suwanee-owned park facilities. Gwinnett County has a robust active recreation program, including facilities inside George Pierce Park where organized sports are allowed.)

**General Guidelines:**

In all cases, prior planned city-sanctioned events have precedence over any park use, gathering, or assembly.

Traditional park use includes those activities which do not:

1. Violate any established park rules or laws;
2. Interfere with the normal use of the park or trail system, requires volunteers, marked course, etc.);
3. Reserve space or restrict areas of the park or parking area(s);
4. Provide booths or displays, including vending, selling, giving-away free food or drinks (including bottled water, ice cream, popsicles, etc.) or food/drink sampling of any kind;
5. Distribute handbills, coupons or other printed information placed in the park on benches, walls, chairs, blankets or cars. However, you may hand these items directly to people in the park;
6. Include specialized equipment that is used or delivered to the park such as tables, chairs, tents, inflatables, catering, etc.;
7. Include significant entertainment (live music, DJ), except that persons with individual non-amplified instruments are permitted;
8. Include amplified sound;
9. Include onsite financial transactions;
10. Advertise in advance to increase attendance via web, mail, social media, signs or banners;
11. Have an anticipated attendance over 100 people;
12. Create unusual quantities of trash;
13. Damage parts of the park including, but not limited to, turf or plantings; and/or
14. Otherwise serve the interest of public safety;

**Additional Alternatives:**

Several of Suwanee’s parks have pavilion rentals for picnics, gatherings, family reunions, or other group functions. See the pavilion rental policies for fees, rules and regulations about renting a park pavilion and which parks have pavilions that are available for rent. Please review the Pavilion Rental Policy and Special Events Policy, which can be found under Parks on the website.

Public Assembly Ordinance – please call Suwanee Police at 770-945-8995

If you have further questions, please call the City of Suwanee events coordinator at 770-945-8996.

Please note: the city reserves the right to permit, waive, suspend, or amend this policy, or any portions of it, at any time as the city deems appropriate and warranted.