



# Unmanned Aircraft, RC Vehicles, & Model Rocket Policy

Department: Community Services	Division: PROS
Supersedes: N/A	Effective Date: 1/1/2021
Approving Authority: Chris Snow, Parks, Recreation & Open Space Director	

- I. **Purpose:** Due to the increasing use of Unmanned Aircraft, Remote Control Vehicles, and Model Rockets, Wake County Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) has developed a policy to protect park resources and ensure an enjoyable experience for all park visitors.
  
- II. **Policy Statement:** The use of Unmanned Aircraft, Remote Control Vehicles, and Model Rockets is allowed subject to the following regulations:
  - A. Users must comply with all state and federal regulations governing their use.
  - B. FAA regulations restrict drone use within five miles of an airport. The Wake County portion of the American Tobacco Trail, Crowder District Park, Historic Oak View County Park, Historic Yates Mill County Park, Lake Crabtree County Park, and Robertson Millpond Preserve are all within five miles of an airport, so Unmanned Aircraft use is prohibited unless the user has notified the airport operator and the air traffic control tower (if one is present). The FAA’s B4UFLY app can provide assistance in determining which airports require notification at which park locations.
  - C. All Model Rocket launches must be approved in advance by the Park Manager.
  - D. Use must be for hobby or recreational purposes – commercial use is prohibited without prior approval of Park Manager.
  - E. Use for research, natural resource monitoring, or mapping purposes must be approved in advance by the PROS Director or designee.
  - F. Use cannot interfere with other park users’ reasonable enjoyment of the park or expectation of privacy. Users cannot conduct surveillance.
  - G. Users cannot disturb or degrade the park’s natural resources, including wildlife nesting and breeding.
  - H. Users must keep Unmanned Aircraft and Remote Control Vehicles in sight at all times.
  - I. Users must be proficient in the safe operation of their equipment.
  - J. Users cannot fly over or disturb park programs, events being held at the park, large gathering of people, or moving vehicles.
  - K. Users cannot operate Unmanned Aircraft or Remote Control Vehicles within 50 feet of any other park building or structure that could be occupied.
  - L. Organized events or groups utilizing Unmanned Aircraft or Remote Control Vehicles must receive written permission from the PROS Director or designee.
  - M. Users cannot hold Wake County liable for any damages to or by their equipment while at Wake County park locations.
  - N. Retrieval of lost or broken Unmanned Aircraft, Remote Control Vehicles, or Model Rockets is the sole responsibility of the owner. Owner must receive approval from park staff before entering any part of the park not generally available to park visitors, or before using any extraordinary methods or equipment, for retrieval.

- O. Some parks may establish designated operational zones and/or designated exclusion zones for the use Unmanned Aircraft and/or Remote Control Vehicles. Users are responsible for determining if any such zones are in place.

Enforcement

- P. Any user of an Unmanned Aircraft or Remote Control Vehicle that fails to comply with this policy will be reported to Wake County Security and/or law enforcement officials.

**II. Definitions:**

- FAA – Federal Aviation Administration
- Remote Control Vehicle – any vehicle that is operated and controlled by a means external to the vehicle that does not restrict its motion. Typical means of operating the vehicle include a radio control device, cable between controller and vehicle, or an infrared controller.
- Unmanned Aircraft – a device that is used or intended to be used for flight in the air without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the device, and the associated operational elements and components that are required for the pilot or system operator to control the device (such as cameras, sensors, communication links). This term includes all types of devices that meet this definition (e.g., model airplanes, quadcopters, drones) that are used for any purpose, including for recreation or commerce.

**IV. Applicability:** This policy applies to all park visitors.

**V. Policy Responsibility and Management:**

- The Parks, Recreation & Open Space Director, or his designee, is responsible for reviewing this policy annually.
- Each Park Manager is responsible for ensuring that staff at their park is trained on this policy and any related procedures.
- For questions about this policy contact each site’s Park Manager.

**VI. Related Policies, Procedures, and Publications:**

- N/A

**VII. Appendices:** N/A

**VIII. History:**

Effective Date	Version	Section(s) Revised	Author
8/1/2016	1.0	Entire document	Roylance/Hester
9/1/2016	1.1	Policy Statement and Definitions	Roylance/Hester
1/15/2021	1.2	Sections I & V	Emerson Barker