

Portage Lakes Advisory Council

Our Mission

COLLABORATION
EDUCATION
CONSERVATION
COMMUNITY



Facilitate communication among the local community and government organizations, including ODNR and Summit Metroparks.

Educate the residents around the Portage Lakes on issues related to the Lakes and conduct programs to increase public awareness.

Promote both active and passive recreational use of the Portage Lakes.

Winter Rules!

On the Portage Lakes

***We all know that Winter Rules on the PLX!
... but do you know the actual winter rules?***

At the Thursday November 1, 2018 Portage Lakes Advisory Council (PLAC) meeting representatives from ODNR spoke regarding winter activities on the Portage Lakes.

ODNR supports winter recreation on the Portage Lakes including skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, skating, fishing, snowmobiling and ATV riding, but ***safety is a top priority***. Mutual respect and common sense can go a long way in creating a safe and fun environment for all users.

Following is a summary of the question and answer portion of the program. . .



Portage Lakes Advisory Council
portagelakesadvisorycouncil.org



Q: Is there a Speed Limit for ATVs and Snowmobiles on the Portage Lakes?

A: Yes and No. Snowmobiles, ATV's, and Ice Boats are not permitted to operate at speeds greater than 20 MPH within 100 feet of any shoreline.

Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 1501:46-14-03 - Operating on Frozen Lakes

(E) No Person shall operate a Snowmobile, Ice Boat, or all Purpose vehicle upon the frozen surface of the waters of Portage Lakes State Park in excess of 20 mph when within 100 ft of any shoreline.

Meaning speeds in excess of 20 mph are NOT permitted in Turkeyfoot Channel, the Iron Channel thru the Clock Tower area, Miller Lake Channel, the Entrance into Rex Lake, or within 100 feet of any shoreline.



Q: Is there a time restriction (curfew) for Snowmobiles and ATV's on the Portage Lakes?

A: Yes. Operation is prohibited between 11PM and 6AM.



OAC 1501:46-14-04 Hours of operation; exceptions

No person shall operate at anytime between the hours of 11pm and 6am



Q: Are snowmobiles or ATV's permitted to operate on or around Nimisila Reservoir?

A: No, snowmobiles and ATV's are not permitted on Nimisila Reservoir or the surrounding parkland including the walking trail along to top of the dam.

Also, operation of snowmobiles and ATV's is prohibited on all park lands at Portage Lakes State Park. (i.e. you can not ride in the woods and on the trails at the State Park)



Q: What are the rules regarding the interaction between Snowmobile/ATV riders and fishermen?

A: It is always the snowmobile and ATV operators' responsibility to slow vehicle operation to a reasonable and prudent speed and yield the right-of-way when travelling near any person who is not upon a snowmobile - including those fishing, skating, skiing, snowshoeing, or other activity.

1501:46-14-08 Snowmobiles; right-of-way.

When operating a snowmobile on lands or waters administered by the division, the operator of said vehicle shall slow his vehicle to a reasonable and prudent speed and shall yield the right-of-way when overtaking or travelling near any person who is not upon a snowmobile.



Q: What are the rules regarding alcohol on the Portage Lakes?

A: The rules regarding alcohol are the same at all state parks. ODNR prohibits the use of alcohol while driving snowmobiles and ATV's. Ohio Revised Code law 4511.19 for Operating a Vehicle Under the Influence (OVI) applies to Snowmobiles, ATV's, and off road motorcycles operation on public property.

1501:46-3-22 Intoxicating Beverages

(A) No person shall publicly consume or display the presence of any beer or intoxicating liquor in any area administered by the division except within the confines and privacy afforded in a cabin, cabin site, lodge room, rented campsite, or in those areas designated by authority of the chief. . .



Q: Are Cars, Trucks or other Vehicles allowed on the Ice?

A: No, NEVER.

Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 1501:46-14-03 - Operating on Frozen Lakes

(D) No motor vehicles other than snowmobiles, ice boats, or all purpose vehicles shall be permitted on the frozen surface of waters of the Division at any time.

During the 2015 winter, ice thicknesses were measured in excess of 15". There were reports of people driving trucks and cars on the ice. This is prohibited and will be strictly enforced.



Q: Is registration required to operate an ATV or snowmobile on the Portage Lakes?

A: Yes, registration is required to operate ATVs and snowmobiles in Ohio, except on private property.

OAC 4519.02 Registration required . . .

No Person shall operate any snowmobile, off-highway motorcycle, or all purpose vehicle within this state unless the vehicle is registered and numbered in sec. 4519.03 and 4519.04 of the Revised Code.

You can register your snowmobile or ATV at any Ohio BMV office. Information on registering all-purpose vehicles (apvs), off-road motorcycles, and snowmobiles can be found at the following link:

<https://www.bmv.ohio.gov/vr-other-avp.aspx>

Additionally, Registration stickers/plates, lights, and mufflers are required by OAC 4519.20.

Please refer to OAC 4519 for detailed rules for registering and operating snowmobiles and ATVs in Ohio.



Portage Lakes Advisory Council
portagelakesadvisorycouncil.org



Q: Who do I contact to report an accident on the ice or other illegal activity?

A: If there is an emergency always call 911.

To report dangerous or illegal activity call

#ODNR

This ODNR hotline is manned 24 hours a day.



Portage Lakes Advisory Council
portagelakesadvisorycouncil.org



Q: What are the age restrictions for operating a snowmobile or ATV?

A: No one under 12 is allowed to operate a snowmobile or ATV on the Portage Lakes. Persons 12 thru 15 can operate under direct visual and audible supervision of an adult.

[1501:46-14-09 Snowmobile; prohibited operation.](#)

No person between the ages of **twelve and fifteen**, inclusive, shall operate a snowmobile or all purpose vehicle, as defined in section [4519.01](#) of the Revised Code, on any lands or waters administered by the division unless such person is **under direct visual and audible supervision** of a parent, guardian, or person over the age of eighteen.

No person under **twelve years of age** shall operate a snowmobile or all purpose vehicle, as defined in section [4519.01](#) of the Revised Code, on any lands or waters administered by the division.



Q: How will ODNR be enforcing rules on the Portage Lakes in the Winter?

A: When the ice is sufficiently frozen that winter activities are happening, ODNR routinely (day and night) patrols both on the ice and by land. They will be enforcing after hours violations, registration violations, impaired operation violations, responding to complaints, and other dangerous activities.

Comments: ODNR supports winter activities on the ice. Have fun and be safe.

To avoid calling attention to yourself. . .

- Travel at safe speeds for the conditions, including respecting the speed limits in the channels and within 100 feet of any shoreline.***
- Drive vehicles that are registered, have the required lights, and have muffled exhausts.***
- ODNR receives the largest volume of calls because of noise related concerns late at night. By being out past curfew - 11:00 pm, on a loud machine with no muffler makes you a target. Respect the neighbors.***



Q: How can I access Portage Lakes and where can I park my truck and trailer for winter activities?

A: All Portage Lakes State Park Ramps (New Ramp, Old Park, State Mill) are accessible for winter recreation activities.

Q: Can we park cars/trailer overnight at the state park ramps?

A: There is NO overnight parking at any Portage Lakes Lots including public boat launch ramp.



Q: Bubblers are becoming more popular around the lakes as dock owners try to minimize the damage ice can have on their investment by keeping the area clear around docks. These bubblers, however, pose a risk to snowmobilers, skaters and others using the lake in the winter as melted areas and thin ice are not always visible. Does ODNR have a policy regarding the use of Bubblers?

A: ODNR does not currently have a policy regarding the use of bubblers to prevent ice from forming around docks, the issue is currently under review to develop that policy.

Dock owners should practice prudence if planning to use bubblers to avoid impacting others ability to enjoy the ice.

- Melting large areas of ice should be avoided as it creates a safety hazard for others.***
- The impact of the bubbler should be limited to the area immediately around the dock being protected.***
- Owners should place signs (Large enough to see visually from lake) on docks indicating a bubbler is in use.***



Topic: Ice Safety
There is no such thing as 100% safe ice!

Recommended Minimum Ice Thickness
(Rough Guidelines for New Clear Ice Only)

2" or less
STAY
OFF!!

Vehicles are NOT Permitted
on the Portage Lakes!



Follow the Winter Rules

And have a fun and safe time on

***The Portage Lakes
this Winter!***



***This presentation was produced as a public service by the
Portage Lakes Advisory Council***
portagelakesadvisorycouncil.org

