

Sebasticook Chapter of NAVHDA Land Use Policy

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Introduction

This policy identifies specific land use criteria for Sebasticook NAVHDA members, Non-members, Maine Residents and Non-residents.

Sebasticook Chapter of the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA), referred to as Sebasticook NAVHDA or Chapter, is the sole owner of land at 1011 Village Road Smithfield property, Maine. The parcel of land comprised a total of approximately 85 acres with approximately 60 acres of field and the remaining being forest. The parcels include water frontage along the “Serpentine Stream” leading to East Pond. In March of 2020, Sebasticook NAVHDA purchased the land with the intention to provide traditional use of the property primarily for hunting dog training for its members, as well as allowing recreational activities for members, non-members and the local community.

Sebasticook NAVHDA is a volunteer 501c3 nonprofit organization. Volunteering is critical for the continued success of the well-functioning Chapter. The membership biennially elects the Sebasticook NAVHDA Executive Council (EC) / (Board) to organize and maintain all aspects of the Chapter's functions. The EC's current positions and occupants can be located on the Chapter Website <https://sebasticook.com/contact.htm>.

This Policy is subject to change and it is the responsibility of the individual utilizing the property to remain up to date with changes.

Property Posting and Access Points

All land under Sebasticook NAVHDA ownership will be identified with “Access by Permission Only” signage or markings as defined by the State of Maine. Every 100 feet an “Access by Permission Only” signage or markings (vertical purple paint strips) are to be situated at the most common entrances to the property, along property boundary lines, as well as road frontage and water frontage. The signs will display primary and secondary contact phone numbers. All drive-in entrances to the property will be gated and locked. These gates will be far enough off the Village Road so a vehicle with a trailer can safely stage prior to opening the gate.

Safety is of the utmost concern for all people and dogs at all times while on the property. Situational awareness and being cognizant of other people, dogs, moving vehicles, and evolving scenarios at all times while on the property is critical given the nature of the activities Sebasticook NAVHDA is involved in.

Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager)(s)

The Land Use Manager (Assistant Land Manager/s) role has been established by the Sebasticook Executive Committee / Board of Directors as a means to help coordinate the safe and fair use of the property owned by Sebasticook NAVHDA. These managers will be the conduit for use of the property by members and nonmembers.

- On an annual basis the Board will determine and vote who will be the Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager/s) for the calendar year.
- The Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager/s) is responsible to manage use of the property per this policy.
- The Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager/s) will report to the Sebasticook Board of Directors on the following topics when requested.
 - a. Improvements to the process to ensure fair access to members of the Chapter, such as but not limited to
 - i. Communication/Issues for registration for use of the property
 - 1. Public access to the calendar for registration (online, onsite information to access online, etc.)
 - 2. Conflicts/Issues that need Board discussion for guidance
 - ii. Communication/Issue such as signage, postings, kiosk, access to property, and general care/needs of the property etc.
 - iii. Communication/Issue related to membership abuse or neglect of the property
 - b. Safety - to recommend updates/edits to the Land Use Policy to the EC regarding ensuring the safety for all those who use the property for any purpose.

Expectations while using the Property

“Leave it better than you found it”

1. Entry - If you drive into the property alone, close the gate behind you.
2. It is every member’s/visitor’s/user’s responsibility to “police”. Keep the place clean, and better than you found it should be the motto.
 - a. Trash should be removed. Spent shells, Vet wrap, etc.
 - b. Visually check things - Notify Land Manager (Sebasticook Board of Directors member or Assistant Land Manager) of any concerns.
3. All birds used in training are the responsibility of the user to dispose of properly. That means take them with you when you leave, DO NOT LEAVE AT PROPERTY (Disposing in the woods is NOT considered taking care of your used birds). Take them away from the Versatile Place to keep other dogs or scavengers from getting into them.
4. Duck Search: We do NOT own the water.
 - a. The water we use is open to the public, people fishing, people kayaking/canoeing etc. please be pleasant, be courteous, have friendly communications with them.
 - b. Any dead ducks used in training and put in the marsh MUST BE picked up!
 - c. Any live ducks with restricted movement MUST BE picked up!
 - d. Vehicle use at search -
 - i. Please keep vehicles to a minimum
 - ii. Keep speeds to a reasonable level. You will be responsible for repairing any damage to the road!
 - iii. Turning around is to be done at the cabin, and not at the point.
5. Returning items used to proper place - clean and secured
 - a. Muck out canoe/kayak
 - b. Store Life Jacket and Paddles.
 - c. If hunting, take down “hunting flag” from the flagpole
6. Secure gateways to property on departure

Property Usage

1. **Primary Usage – Sebasticook NAVHDA Scheduled Events:** The primary use of the property will be for Sebasticook NAVHDA, its members or guests and people considering membership. Sebasticook NAVHDA scheduled events or Non-Sebasticook scheduled events will take priority over all other activities and use of the property.

1. Annually the Board will designate all scheduled events on the Chapter's calendar schedule, available at <http://www.sebasticook.com/calendar.html>. The calendar will be updated each year on or before the Chapter's Annual Meeting in December and periodically throughout the year.
 2. The uses of the property include, but are not limited to training clinics, sanctioned tests, work days or maintenance activities, special events, seminars, educational events or community functions.
 3. All Sebasticook NAVHDA members are allowed use of the property during Sebasticook NAVHDA scheduled events or observe Non-Sebasticook scheduled events.
 4. All participants attending a scheduled event and those who are not yet members of NAVHDA International are required to sign a **NAVHDA insurance liability** form. The NAVHDA insurance liability form will be part of the annual membership application. Those who have not yet joined can find the form available at scheduled events, included in the new member packet, and/or it can be downloaded at Sebasticook NAVHDA's website.
 5. The Sebasticook NAVHDA property may be used by people or organizations who are considered professional trainers, but if a conflict emerges with other objectives or intent to accommodate all members use of the property, then the EC will hear issue and make a determination, Any member of the EC that may have a conflict of interest related to the "heard issue" will abstain on the matter.
2. **Secondary Usage Sebasticook Members Personal Use** – Access and use of the property outside of Sebasticook Chapter Scheduled Events for the purposes of personal dog training is allowed after a member has accrued volunteer hours for activities as determined by the Executive Council.
1. Training: Training is when a member visits the property for the purpose of exercise, water work, with or without use of birds and familiarity with the test site with a dog the person is responsible for.
 - i. See policy section: Requesting use of property by Sebasticook Members for DOG TRAINING
 - ii. While training the member is responsible for the stewardship of the property they use and any damages incurred, i.e. If you rut up the property YOU are responsible to fix it.
 2. Members Standing -
 - i. The individual must be an active member in Sebasticook NAVHDA and in good standing.
 - ii. The individual must be an active member of NAVHDA International and in good standing.
 - iii. The individual must be approved by a current member of the EC or the Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager) for completing a safety review regarding activities and property use.
 - iv. The individual has the required volunteer hours accrued before the day of use or on that day of use.

3. Activities to accrue volunteer hours-
 - i. Activities will vary from year to year based on what Sebasticook NAVHDA needs to maintain an efficiently run Chapter.
 - ii. These types of activities include, but are not limited to, attending and working at sporting events where the Chapter is being represented, workdays, test setup help, test volunteers (bird planters, gunners, etc), clinic organization and assistance, any and all actions related to the coordination of test or training events, bird care and maintenance of bird pens/aviaries, property maintenance (plowing, mowing, weed whacking, brush/tree removal, building up-keep), assisting with judges, any EC related work, educational events, monitoring other non-sponsored events but EC approved use of property by other organizations, coordination/preparation of meals for chapter events, attending meetings (local, state etc.) for representing the interests of Sebasticook NAVHDA. Members can seek approval from the Sebasticook NAVHDA's President (P) or Vice President (VP) between EC meetings for questions on an activity that might be considered in the Chapter's interest. The P/VP will consult the EC for agreement in these cases.

4. Required hours - The number of hours required will be established annually and posted on the Chapter's Website.
 - i. Volunteer hours will accrue on an annual basis for 12 months beginning on the setup day for the Spring Test until the next Spring Test.
 1. To use the property prior to the Fall Test, a person must have accrued 4 hours at a minimum between the Spring and Fall tests or item 3. below.
 2. An additional 4 hours from the setup day of the Fall Test to the next Spring Test will be required to use the property prior to next year's Spring Test.
 3. If 8 hours have accrued at any time from Spring Test to Fall Test in a 12 month period, the member has satisfied their volunteer requirement until Spring Test the next calendar year.
 - ii. Members must enter their own volunteer hours through the Sebasticook Website and are based on the honor system.
 1. If determined by the EC, hours are inaccurately inflated by a member, that member may lose their privilege of use of the property outside of scheduled events for a year. The EC will make a determination and the decision will be communicated by the Secretary of the Chapter to the offending member. This decision will be final.
 - iii. There are no options for the purchasing of volunteer hours or providing materials/services etc. for acquiring volunteer hours to use the property for personal dog training that is not EC approved. Volunteering is the only process for individuals to maintain access to the property outside of scheduled events for dog training.

Requesting use of property by “Sebasticook Members” for DOG TRAINING

Safety and Respect for others is the guiding principles for the use of the property

1. In general - Multiple Chapter members are permitted to use the property at any given time. The property is large enough for multiple people or groups of people to be able to train or hunt concurrently with a little self-coordination.
2. **The Chapter wishes to maintain good relations with our abutting landowners.** Be considerate in the early morning when needing to fire rounds and consider when using the property:
 - a. We follow Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department legal times (½ hour before sunrise until ½ hour after, Bangor Maine time).
 - b. In the Fields - On anticipated hot days and the desire to complete training in the coolness of the morning, the Board has adopted the similar hours as legal hunting times even outside of hunting season.
 - c. At the Water - Duck Search and Remain/Steady work requires numerous rounds to be fired. Be considerate of the neighbors in your early morning or late evening training.
 - d. During the Hunting Season on Water Fowl over-water or in the field setup to hunt waterfowl - It should be noted for waterfowl simulating training during waterfowl season our hours are adjusted to Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department legal times (as of 1/1/2022 - ½ hour before sunrise UNTIL SUNSET, Bangor Maine time or current law) . It is recommended you contact the Game Warden Service to indicate you are training in general, not hunting.
3. **How to schedule?** Contact the Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager) to obtain access clearance so to avoid conflicts. Groups working together are encouraged by the E-Board.
 - a. Website: <http://www.sebasticook.com> has the calendar being maintained by the managers.
 - i. Requests for individual or paired individuals use must take place within a 2-week window from time of request to use.
 - ii. Group Requests (4 or more people) may coordinate with the Land Manager (Assistant Manager/s) for dates/times outside of the two week window.
 - iii. The date, time and name of the person(s) who have committed to use the property will be indicated.
 - iv. Multiple members may be registered to use the field at one time, and it will be the responsibility of the individuals using the field to communicate with the others using the fields.
 - v. Member usage of the water/search site will be **reserved** for a maximum of two hours. The member reserving the water will have priority during their scheduled block. Group training is highly encouraged, and if multiple individuals wish to train at the water together, **reserved** hours

will be calculated as follows: two hrs initially, plus one hour for each additional dog.

4. **How to communicate?** Phone numbers of people listed on the calendar are available at the NAVHDA International website: <https://www.navhda.org> member portal.
5. **When arrive on site to do:**
 - a. **When Training: “outside of clinic dates only”**
 - i. Indicate what area of field or water plan to be located.
 - b. **When Hunting:**
 - i. Indicate where you plan to be on the property.
 - ii. Raise the “Safety Flag” on the flagpole. This is to indicate people are hunting and not to use property without contacting those on the property.
6. **Encouraged to share:** The property belongs to all members and all members look out for each other, either training or hunting. Forming training groups is essential due to the large size of the chapter. Speak with the director of training about forming groups.
7. **Safety is to be at the forefront at all times.** Any safety issues that are brought to any EC attention may lead to loss of use of property for a period of time. After investigation by the EC, the decision made by the EC regarding safety concerns will be final.

Process to help ensure safe use of property and of others

1. Individual members “first time” use of the property
 - i. You will be required to discuss property boundaries, safe shooting areas and general use criteria/protocols with a Sebasticook NAVHDA EC member or the Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager) prior to being allowed to use the property. These people are publicly available on the Chapter Website <https://sebasticook.com/contact.htm>
2. Individual, Group or Sponsorship Member property use request
 - a. Contact the Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager/s). Contact information can be found on the “access by permission only” signs, the entrance gates and the buildings located on the property. Info can also be found at <https://sebasticook.com/contact.htm> where current names and contact information will be listed.
 - b. The Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager/s) have the authority to decide individual or group requests and will follow guidance provided by the Sebasticook NAVHDA Board of Directors.
 - c. Each time access is requested, as a courtesy the Board strongly encourages the individual/group to contact the Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager/s) a minimum of 24 hours prior to the requested use time.
3. Individuals who meet all criteria defined in this policy and in good standing are allowed access outside of Sebasticook scheduled events and will be allowed drive-in access to the property.

Training and use of the property can take place all year at the Versatile Place

[Any New Membership after the final day of the annual fall test and before the next official Chapter activity where volunteer hours can be logged.](#)

Volunteer hours may be hard to acquire after the annual fall test and prior to the normal opportunities to gain volunteer hours the coming year. Members join Sebasticook NAVHDA Chapter happen year round. This section defines the process for gaining access to use prior to volunteer hours being acquired.

Definitions:

- Sponsorship Member: (SM) This is a current membership member for the last 3 years.
- New Member:(NM) In this context this portion of the policy ONLY refers to becoming a member in the months from the Fall Test to the first new calendar year Chapter Activity where volunteer hours can be accrued.

- Sponsorship Member Day of Training: The day(s) registered to use some portion of the property with NM. All other parts of the entire Land Use Policy apply.

A NM joining NAVHDA after the fall test, may use the property in December, January, and February for dog training if “all” of the following conditions are met on the day of training.

1. NM has a membership with the Sebasticook Chapter of NAVHDA on the day of training.
2. NM has a membership with NAVHDA International.
3. SM must be with a current member of the Sebasticook Chapter with three years of concurrent Chapter membership.
4. SM must have the required volunteer hours accrued on the registered day of training.
5. SM must have a current valid Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Training permit if using firearms.
6. SM can only have “two” NM during any one registered day of training.
7. SM is the “only” person allowed to use a firearm in training, including blanks. Until the NM has had Land Use Orientation validated.
8. SM must explain to the NM the property, use safety and other protocols.
9. SM must seek Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager)s approval, like any other register of property day.
10. SM must provide Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager) with names, phone number, address, description of vehicle, of new member(s) training with.
11. SM and/or the NM is responsible for the stewardship of the property they use and any damages incurred, ie. If you rut the property up YOU are responsible to report it to the Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager) AND fix it. This includes financial responsibility.
12. SM training day cannot occur during September, October, November due to conflict with hunting seasons. Safety reasons.

If it is determined, after the fact, that these things were not followed; The Sponsorship Member (SM) and New Member (NM) may lose land-use privileges for a period of time or indefinitely and depending on severity of the offense the Sebasticook Board of Directors may revoke/deny membership as determined by Sebasticook Board of Directors.

Reminder: It is expected a New Member (NM) joining the Chapter uses the property with a Sponsored Member (SM) will complete volunteer hours as soon as possible prior to or at the Spring Test.

Requesting use of property – “Non-Maine Resident” Sebasticook NAVHDA Member or NAVHDA International members from other Chapters

Members of NAVHDA International who live outside of the State of Maine are permitted to use the Sebasticook property for the purposes of dog training outside of scheduled Chapter events with a Sebasticook Member who has the volunteer requirement satisfied and registered property for use on that day.

1. Non-Maine residents will not be required to complete volunteer hours prior to using the property.

2. A property usage fee will be required for Non-Maine Resident NAVHDA International members. The fee schedule will be \$25 per day.
3. Requestor must:
 - a. Requests for use of the property will follow the same process as described in this policy for members of Sebasticook NAVHDA by contacting the Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager) to register.
 - i. Provide affiliation with another NAVHDA Chapter
 - ii. NAVHDA International membership number.
 - iii. Requestor must sign a **NAVHDA insurance liability** form
 - iv. Review the safety information with a member of the Sebasticook NAVHDA EC or the Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager). All visiting members are responsible for obtaining the necessary state permits and licenses to train in Maine.
4. Release of birds or use of a gun (including blanks) to train dogs requires a Maine valid Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Training permit if using firearms.

Property Usage – NO affiliation with any NAVHDA group

1. To schedule events or use of property for Non-Sebasticook scheduled events not listed on <http://www.sebasticook.com/calendar.html>.
 - a. Other organizations or groups – requesting use of the property are to contact the President of the Sebasticook Chapter of NAVHDA or Vice President. Contact information can be found at <http://sebasticook.com/contact-sebasticook-navhda.html>. Usage of the property by outside groups will be reviewed by the EC and an agreement will be drafted for both parties.
2. Individuals who are not Sebasticook NAVHDA Members but are Maine residents, will be allowed access to the property. This access can include, but is not limited to hunting, fishing and recreational activities.
 - a. Access for non-members does not include dog training.
 - b. Non-members who wish to use the property for dog training purposes must join Sebasticook NAVHDA and NAVHDA International and meet all membership requirements for property use.
 - c. Non-members who wish to utilize the property for these activities must still contact the Land Manager (Assistant Land Manager) for access to the property **each time they plan to utilize it.**
3. Individuals/Groups are required to contact the Land Manger (Assistant Manager/s) of Sebasticook NAVHDA. Contact must be a minimum of 24 hours prior to the requested time of use.

4. Should a Non-Sebasticoock NAVHDA member and Sebasticoock NAVHDA member request access to the property during the same time, for similar purposes, priority will be given to the Sebasticoock NAVHDA member.
5. Drive-In access will NOT be granted to Non-Sebasticoock members except during those Scheduled Events. Walk-In access will only be permitted to Non-Sebasticoock Members.
6. Non-members and/or groups will NOT have access to the Sebasticoock storage shed AKA “The Saloon”.

Property Usage – During any Hunting Seasons

1. Safety is the priority and enjoyment of this traditional use of the property. Consideration for other people's hunting is proper sportsmen's etiquette.
 - a. Should a Non-Sebasticoock NAVHDA member and Sebasticoock NAVHDA member request access to the property during the same time, for similar purposes, priority will be given to the Sebasticoock NAVHDA member.
 - b. Contact the Land Manager (or Assistant Land Manager) for coordination of the use during hunting season. The awareness of other hunters, location and purpose/type of hunting must be shared when requesting access.
 - c. Arrival to hunt process -
 - i. A conscious effort to not interfere with another person's hunting experience must be honored. Lack of consideration for this may lead to revocation of access and use of property.
 - ii. Raise the Orange flag. This is a safety measure and indicates someone is already on the property hunting. It is the responsibility of each person to know who and where others are hunting for a safe and enjoyable experience.

Facilities and Equipment

1. The Chapter has invested in facilities to help support the Chapter's functions. Reference the facilities and equipment policy on the website. (To be written as of 5/15/2023)
 - a. Chapter equipment is for chapter sponsored events such as clinics, tests, other events approved by the Sebasticoock Board of Directors and not for individual use.
 - b. Individuals, Groups, Sponsorship Members must use their own training items such as but not limited to bird bags, launchers, radios, auto backing dogs, etc.
 - c. Use of the canoes, kayaks are allowed by members training.
 - d. Use of the outhouse is allowed and encouraged.

Property Usage – Denial and Revocation

1. Usage of Seabasticook NAVHDA property is a privilege. The Seabasticook NAVHDA Board reserves the right to revoke or deny usage of the property to members and non-members. Major damage to the Seabasticook property by Seabasticook members or non-members as a result of allowed usage will require repair at the users' cost. Inappropriate actions, abuse of this policy, unsafe acts or issues that cause negative impacts for Seabasticook NAVHDA or its members are possible reasons for denial or revocation of property usage.

End of Land Use Policy

Adopted: November 18th 2020

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