

Sohier Park Regulations

SECTION 1: MISSION/VISION STATEMENT

As Sohier Park was donated to the Town of York by William D. Sohier in 1929 for the public's use and enjoyment, the mission is to preserve Sohier Park's rich history, enhance its natural beauty, and ensure the safety of all visitors. The Town of York is committed to protecting the park's ecosystems, promoting sustainable practices, and providing a welcoming environment for everyone. Through community engagement and responsible stewardship, the Town aims to balance nature and recreation, foster appreciation for the park's heritage while preserving the park's beauty and tranquility for future generations.

Pertinent Deed Information

Book 781, Page 424-425 (May 1929 Sohier Deed)

Book 781, Page 485-486 (June 1929 Sohier Deed)

Book 8831, Page 283-288 (1998 Nubble Lighthouse Deed)

Deed Requirements of William Sohier May 1929 and June 1929

- The following restriction/requirement, as stated in the deed, is that Sohier Park is conveyed “ . . . upon the express condition that it is to be kept as a public park and used for the ordinary and usual park purposes and for no other uses, and is not to be leased, sold, assigned or used for any other purpose whatsoever.”

Highlights of the Deed Requirements of Nubble Light 1998

- Historically preserve and protect this historical landmark with approval in writing by the State Historic Preservation Officer. (SHPO).
- SHPO shall be permitted to inspect the property at any time without notice in order to ascertain if the above conditions are being observed.
- Consequences of violation of the deed requirements are set forth in the Quitclaim Deed Without Covenant specifically paragraphs 12 - 14.
- The Town of York included the Financial plan designating the Sohier Park Gift Shop to raise funding to maintain Nubble Lighthouse and Sohier Park.

Additional Requirements and Relevant Information

- 1977 Transfer of the Deed of York Beach Village Corporation to the Town of York.
- 1985 Cape Neddick Light Station was added to the National Register of Historic Places
- 1998 Survey by Anderson/Livingston.
- 2002 Town-Fox Consent Agreement.
- 2004 CLD Consulting Engineers boundary plan.
- 2007 Sohier Park Masterplan Design developed by Todd Richardson Associates — approved by Town of York voters.
- 2025 Regulation and Management: Standards in Section 4.2.2 of the Zoning Ordinance Requirements.

SECTION 2: PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of the Regulations is to ensure the sustainable use; establish standards for public use; and define the decision-making process and authority to regulate Sohier Park consistent with any deed restrictions and other legal requirements.

SECTION 3: PARK BOUNDARIES

Sohier Park includes the property acquired from William D. Sohier in 1929 (the mainland) and the property acquired from the federal government in 1998 (the island and the lighthouse).

SECTION 4: AUTHORITY

These regulations are adopted pursuant to Section 7 of the Municipal Parks Ordinance adopted by the Town of York on November 4, 2025.

SECTION 5: ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

5.1. Management

- A. The Parks and Recreation Director or their designee is responsible for the oversight of this park.
- B. The Parks and Recreation Director or their designee is responsible for day-to-day park management, operations, and compliance.
- C. The Sohier Park Committee, serving as the Town's advisory board for Sohier Park, provides recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Director for use and management of the park.

5.2 Enforcement

The Parks and Recreation Department, in collaboration with the Police Department, is responsible for enforcing these regulations.

SECTION 6: PARK STANDARDS AND RESTRICTIONS

6.1 Hours of Operation

The park is open during daylight and evening hours. No parking is allowed between the hours of 12:00 am – 5:00 am.

6.2 Animal Use and Standards (leash, animal waste etc.)

- A. Domestic animals must be leashed and owners must follow the Town's Animal Control Ordinance
- B. Owners must carry their own pet waste bags, immediately clean up after their pets, and properly dispose of waste (see Trash/Carry Out).

6.3 Alcohol and Drugs

- A. Consumption of alcohol and/or illegal drugs is prohibited.
- B. Smoking and vaping are prohibited.

6.4 Commercial Use excluding the Welcome Center/Gift Shop

- A. Non-Sohier Park commercial use to include solicitation, collecting, selling/vending, and advertising is prohibited.
- B. Photography and videography cannot impede the general public's use of the park.

6.5 Signage

All signage displayed in the park must be approved by the Parks and Recreation Director or their designee.

6.6 Drones

Launching and landing Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) to include drones is not allowed unless authorized by the Parks and Recreation Director or their designee.

6.7 Scuba and Skin Diving

- A. In accordance with State of Maine regulations, no person within the limits of the park property shall engage in, participate in, conduct or carry on any so-called scuba, skin diving, or snorkeling activities on Sundays, State of Maine Holidays, and National Holidays from the first Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October inclusive.
- B. No person within the limits of the park property shall fill or recharge, by any means whatsoever, any so-called air tanks, scuba, or skin-diving apparatus.

6.8 Metal Detectors

Metal detectors are prohibited throughout the park.

6.9 Motor Vehicles/Parking

Parking is provided at Sohier Park for the use of Sohier Park visitors. All vehicles must stay in the designated parking areas.

6.10 Natural and Cultural Resources - Sohier Park and Nubble Island

- A. Visitors are not allowed on the island at Sohier Park without prior authorization from the Parks and Recreation Director or their designee.
- B. Harassment of wildlife is illegal in the State of Maine - do not approach, follow, or feed wildlife including birds. Releasing or introducing any animal is prohibited.
- C. Rocks, wildflowers, other plants, and natural objects must be left alone.
- D. Naturally occurring wetlands, as designated by the Town of York, are protected.

6.11 Noise Levels

Amplified music is not allowed unless authorized by the Parks and Recreation Director or their designee.

6.12 Vandalism

- A. No person may deface, paint, damage, mutilate, or vandalize any object or structure within the park area.

- B. Possession of paint or marking materials, or tampering with, altering, or removing any sign, marker, or structure, is strictly prohibited.
- C. Driving nails or permanently installing any object is prohibited.

6.13 Trash/Carry Out

- A. The park is a “carry in/carry out” park.
- B. Visitors are responsible for carrying out all refuse including human and animal waste for proper disposal.
- C. Special events that provide food must provide trash receptacles for patrons and dispose of the trash by taking it out of the park.

6.14 Open Flame and Grills

Open flame, grills, or any other use of fire are prohibited unless authorized by the Parks and Recreation Director or their designee

6.15 Risk

Park visitors assume all risks, should be prepared and equipped, and shall take reasonable precautions against endangering themselves or others.

6.16 Trespassing

Any unauthorized use is considered trespassing and is punishable by law. This includes trespassing on the island.

SECTION 7: PERMITS

A written Special Events Permit reviewed by the Parks & Recreation Director or their designee is required for any special request or activity not covered by the Standards and Restrictions (Section 6).

SECTION 8: AUTHORITY TO REGULATE MUNICIPAL PARKS

8.1 Minimum Requirements.

The Selectboard is hereby authorized to enact and amend regulations for Sohler Park per Section 7 of the Municipal Parks Ordinance.

8.2 Process for Enacting, Amending, or repealing these Regulations.

The Selectboard shall conduct at least one (1) public hearing prior to amending these regulations.

SECTION 9: EFFECTIVE DATE

These regulations shall take effect following the date of adoption or approved amendment by the Selectboard.

SECTION 10: VIOLATION AND PENALTIES

The Parks and Recreation Director, or the designated official for the management of this park, may institute action for any violations. Any person who violates any provision of the Regulation

shall be subject to a civil penalty of \$300.00 for the first offense, \$350.00 for the second offense, and \$400.00 for the third and subsequent offenses.

These rules and regulations have been promulgated for the protection of park visitors, facilities, and the natural resources of Sohier Park and Nubble Lighthouse. In addition to any criminal and civil sanctions imposed by law, any person violating these rules or other laws or regulations may be required to immediately leave and may have the privilege of entering the area revoked for a specified period.

SECTION 11. WAIVER/PAYMENT OF FINES

Any person charged with a violation of these regulations shall be allowed to waive such violation and tender to the Town of York the fine amount if paid within 20 days of issuance of the summons. If the waiver fine is paid, no appearance before a District Court Judge or other judicial officer shall be required. If the offender pays the waiver fine, the matter will be closed in the York Police Records system and listed as a subsequent offense for future violations. If the offender chooses not to pay the waiver fine, he/she shall appear in court on the specified date to answer for the ordinance violation. If the offender is found to have committed the offense in court, fines, applicable court fees, attorney's fees, and prosecution costs may apply.

SECTION 12. SEVERABILITY

Should any portion of these regulations be held by the courts to be invalid, this shall not affect the validity of remaining portions of these regulations.