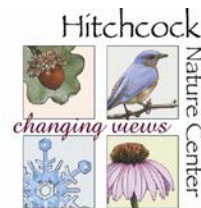


Pottawattamie County Conservation Board
The Loess Hills Lodge at Hitchcock Nature Center
Policy and Procedures



I. Statement of Purpose

Hitchcock Nature Center (HNC) is owned and operated by the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board (PCCB) for the purposes of developing and fostering an appreciation and understanding of the Loess Hills as a globally significant landform through:

- Land Stewardship (restoring ecological integrity);
- Environmental Education (fostering appreciation of natural resources through interpretive experiences); and
- Low-Impact Recreation (developing awareness, understanding, and commitment to our natural world)

The Loess Hills Lodge (LHL) at HNC serves as the environmental education (EE) hub for Pottawattamie County Conservation and includes an exhibit gallery, indoor and outdoor classrooms, observation tower, and lodge deck. The LHL exists to promote the Land Stewardship and EE missions by promoting an understanding of ecological integrity as it relates to the Loess Hills ecosystems and through encouraging environmental literacy by building relationships between people and the natural world through year-round educational programming opportunities.

II. Policy for Use of The Loess Hills Lodge

The LHL cannot be all things to all people due to limitations on time, staff, and space. Thus, priorities have been established to insure an orderly use of these limited resources based on the stated purposes.

III. Conservation Related Groups

Rental fees for conservation related groups, as determined by PCCB, are based on a sliding scale. Conservation related groups will still be responsible for cleaning and damage expenses if applicable.

IV. Other Users

There is a rental fee for all other uses not associated with conservation activities.

V. Types of Building Use Not Permitted

Overnight uses are not permitted.

VI. This policy has been written with the following points in mind:

A. Hours of Operation

Regular LHL Hours are defined as (March through November) 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Sunday
Closed on Mondays

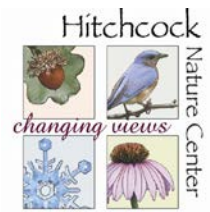
Winter LHL Hours are defined as (December through February):
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Friday & Saturday, and
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Sunday
Closed on Mondays through Thursdays. Open by appointment only, including rentals.

The LHL will be closed on the following holidays including Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

The Hitchcock Nature Center hours for trails, playground, and campground access are 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.



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B. Rental Agreement

The Rental Agreement must be signed for the use of the LHL at HNC. The Rental Agreement must be signed by the Renter in advance of the rental date.

C. Rental Hours at the Loess Hills Lodge

1. Saturday & Sunday Rental Hours: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., full days only
2. Tuesday through Friday Rental Hours: 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., half days only

Daytime rentals during the work-week are subject to facility availability & must be booked through staff at the LHL.

No Monday rental hours are available due to LHL maintenance activities & facility hours.

Rental hours indicate time in and out of the building, *including* preparations and clean up, not duration of an event. HNC will take rental reservations for the following year starting September 1st of the current year.

D. Room Rental Options at the Loess Hills Lodge

1. **Goldfinch Room**
 - 50 people maximum capacity
 - upstairs location; off of the courtyard
2. **Bluestem Room**
 - 70 people maximum capacity
 - downstairs location; off of the patio

E. Rental Fees for the Loess Hills Lodge

1. Saturday & Sunday Rentals: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., full-days only, \$350 per room/per day, cash or credit cards accepted, payment collected at the time of reservation, subject to cancellation policy
2. Tuesday through Friday Rentals: 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., half-days only, \$175 per room/per day, cash or credit cards accepted, payment collected at the time of reservation, subject to cancellation policy

Payment Methods: Fees may be paid by cash, credit card, or checks (checks require the approval of LHL staff).

Park User Fee: The \$2/vehicle park user fee normally required at the entrance of HNC is covered by the rental fee. Renters and their guests do not have to pay the park user fee during their rental times on the day of rental.

F. Deposits

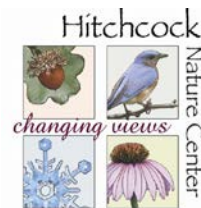
All rentals are subject to a \$300 room deposit and a \$300 alcohol deposit (if applicable) via cash or credit card. Deposits made via credit card must be **collected no earlier than 7 days prior to the event.** **Deposits will be refunded within 10 business days of the completion of the event. Individuals wishing to place a deposit via check should contact LHL staff.** Damage deposits are assessed to partially cover damage or loss of items.

Alcohol deposits can be withheld for violations of state or local liquor laws (e.g. serving minors, damage related to drunken behavior, etc). Only beer and wine are allowed in the LHL. **No kegs or hard liquor are permitted.**

The deposit is to be returned if the room(s) is found in satisfactory condition. If not found satisfactory, a portion of the deposit may be kept to assist with maintenance schedule. Penalties from this deposit will be assessed according to the following guidelines:



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1. Cleaning fees will be deducted from room deposit per the following schedule:
 - Clean-up taking up to ½ hour = subtract 25% of deposit
 - Clean-up taking ½ to 1 hour = subtract 50% of deposit
 - Clean-up taking 1 to 1½ hours = subtract 75% of deposit
 - Clean-up taking more than 1½ hours = subtract 100% of deposit
2. The deposit is not to be construed as a limit of liability for damage to county property. The conservation board may take any legal action necessary to recover additional damage.
3. Missing or broken items, or damages to the facility will be charged at their replacement value.

G. Reservation Form and Payment

1. **Reservation Form:** The form must be completed and signed by the individual responsible for the room rental. The form may be emailed to the responsible individual, but they must return a signed, printed copy of the agreement within 7 days of receipt of the form.
2. **Deposit Payment:** The building deposit (and alcohol deposit if applicable) is due *no more than 7 days prior to the rental date*.
3. **Rental Fee Payment:** The rental fee is due at least 60 days prior to the rental date. If a room reservation is made within 60 days of the rental date, the rental fee will be required at the time of the reservation.
4. **Payment Methods:** Payment may be made via cash or credit card (VISA or Mastercard only). Individuals wishing to make payments via check should contact LHL staff.

H. Cancellation Policy

Cancellation refunds will be paid based upon the following schedule:

30 days or more notice.....	100% refund
29-22 days notice.....	50% refund
21-15 days notice.....	25% refund
14 days or less notice.....	no refund

I. Cleaning Policy

All Renters must leave the premises in as good or better condition than they were found. Please realize that this helps maintain the integrity of county property from rental to rental, reduces wear and tear on the building, and keeps the cost of rentals low.

RENTER RESPONSIBILITIES:

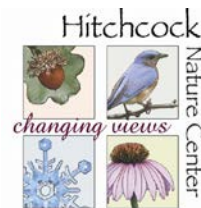
1. Wipe down tables and chairs.
2. Clean kitchen counters and sinks.
3. Sweep and mop floor (Bluestem Room Only).
4. Vacuum carpet (Goldfinch Room Only).
5. Bag all trash in the provided trash bags, tied tightly and placed in the designated location outside the LHL after rental ends.
6. Both the Bluestem and Goldfinch Room have a standard set-up format for the tables and chairs. At the end of the rental, the room(s) must be returned to this format as part of the clean-up process.

HNC staff will remove all bagged trash and clean restrooms.

Cleaning supplies are located in the kitchenette in each room and include a vacuum cleaner (Goldfinch Room), mop (Bluestem Room), broom & dustpan, trash bags, all-purpose cleaner, and rags.



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NOTE: Failure to satisfactorily accomplish the tasks outlined in this cleaning policy will be considered a breach of the signed Rental Agreement. As per the Rental Agreement signed prior to the rental, and the policies and procedures of this document, deductions will be made from the building deposit according to the amount of cleanup required of the HNC staff.

J. Rental Amenities

Rental of either room includes:

1. Tables (8' long x 30" wide) and Chairs
2. Kitchenette access (refrigerator, sink, and microwave).
3. Limited office equipment is available upon request. Projection screens are always available.
4. All LHL furniture, including tables and chairs, must remain indoors and cannot leave the building.
5. Renters **MAY NOT** bring in outside equipment or items (e.g. chairs, tables, canopies, etc.) to alter the existing structure of the LHL, both interior and exterior.

**DO NOT TAPE OR HANG ANYTHING DIRECTLY ON WALLS OR
DAMAGE WILL OCCUR AND PENALTIES WILL BE ASSESSED.**

K. Parking Amenities

All Renters and their guests must park in designated parking spaces. Renters may unload items near the LHL entrance, but cannot park there. Parking is not allowed between the parking lot and the LHL, other than three designated handicapped parking spaces. There are 35 parking spaces in the large lot by the trailheads.

L. Food and Beverage

1. **Outside Food and Beverage:** Renters may bring in outside food or look into catering options.
2. **Catering:** The LHL does not contract with any catering services. Caterers must provide a certificate of insurance and license. All arrangements for catering services must be made directly between the Renter and the caterer, and HNC and the PCCB accept no responsibility for performance of caterers. Deliveries and pickups must be arranged in advance with the LHL staff. Deliveries need to be conducted in a manner that does not interfere with the staff, programs, or visitors of the LHL.
3. **Alcohol:** Beer and wine may be permitted with permission from LHL staff. No kegs allowed. The use of any alcoholic hard liquor is prohibited in the LHL and surrounding area.

All food and beverages **MUST BE** retained within the Rental Room(s) and may not be taken into the Exhibit Gallery.

M. No Smoking

As a public facility, the LHL will be a smoke-free zone. Any violation of this policy may result in a breach of these contract conditions and may result, at a minimum, in the assessment of the cleaning fees provided in Article IV.E of this document.

N. Children

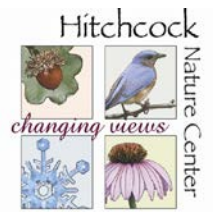
All children under the age of 18 must be supervised at all times.

O. Outdoor Space

1. We do not take reservations for any of our outdoor and/or exterior spaces at HNC and Renters may not commandeer these outdoor, public-use spaces for their private functions. These spaces have been designated as public-use space and may not be reserved or dominated by one group unless that group has prior authorization from HNC staff.



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2. Renters MAY NOT bring in outside equipment or items (e.g. chairs, tables, canopies, etc.) to alter the existing structure of the LHL, both interior and exterior.
3. All LHL furniture, including tables and chairs, must remain indoors and cannot leave the building.

P. Music

The LHL staff reserves the right to control both the volume and time of recorded music. Amplified sound is permitted only until 9 P.M. No live bands or disc jockey services are permitted.

Q. Use of Candles

Candles are allowed as long as the following guidelines are met:

1. Candles must be constantly supervised to avoid any potential fires. Please note the location of the fire extinguishers once you arrive at the LHL.
2. The base of each candle must be secured in an appropriate holder that is able to accommodate all wax overflows to avoid any damage to HNC property.

R. Animals

1. Animals (other than service animals) are not permitted in the LHL. Exceptions will be made for animals used by the education staff and/or by program presenters.
2. The release of any live animals including doves, butterflies, or similar animals is prohibited.

