



NATIONAL GOLD MEDAL WINNER
BISMARCK PARKS AND
RECREATION DISTRICT
Est. 1927

So You'd Like to Have a Wedding in a Park...

Wonderful! Before you think about having a wedding in one of Bismarck Parks and Recreation District's (BPRD's) 63 parks, there are a few logistics to consider. Here are some tips, answers to frequently asked questions and ideas on how to get started to find out if a park setting works for you.

Guests:

Are you planning a small ceremony for a group of 20, or a ceremony and a reception, complete with food and music, for 200? Smaller means a smaller space, even an open green space in any park, or one of BPRD's smaller picnic shelters. More guests mean reserving one of BPRD's larger spaces – indoor or outdoor – and a few more considerations. You'll also want to take adequate parking and restroom facilities into consideration.

And, something else to think about is whether you just need space for your ceremony, or your ceremony and reception. That helps determine if you want to reserve space for a half of a day (8am-3pm, or 4pm-11pm), or entire day (8am-11pm).

Where:

Once you know the number of guests, you can start thinking about location, location, location. You are welcome to scout out your location. Do you want a shady area or sunny hillside? Do you want a picnic shelter or community center so you'll have some protection from the elements? (Remember – parks are outdoors!) Do you want a stage or amphitheater? Go for a drive and check out the many reservable shelters in the BPRD park system.

All parks and shelters and community rooms can also be viewed online (complete with pictures, space capacity, number of picnic tables, electricity – in case you need a microphone - tables and chairs, etc.) at www.bisparcs.org/facilities/park-shelter-information. You can find out about parking and restroom facilities (whether they're in a building or are temporary restroom facilities). You can also view our BPRD Rental Places and Spaces brochure to get an idea of the options and prices.

Availability:

Something that goes hand in hand with the location is the availability of that space on the date you've selected. As you know, special occasions are planned many months – sometimes years - in advance. Once you've selected a couple options for space, please call BPRD at 701-222-6455, or feel free to stop in. Our office hours at 400 E. Front Ave., are 7:30am-5pm, Monday through Friday. The BPRD staff can let you know of space availability.

If the space you'd like is available on the date you have in mind, you can reserve the space. Payment for any BPRD space use is due at the time of your reservation. If you plan on having alcohol at your event, you will also need to pay for a beverage permit at the time of your reservation.

If something changes with your plans and location, you can get your reservation fees refunded. It's a good idea to make your reservation because spaces and places get reserved all the time and can go quickly. Once you've made your reservation, you can then move on to the next step; getting permission.

Getting Permission

Public parks are public property. Anyone can be on park property, but BPRD does require that you get permission to hold your wedding (or wedding reception) on park property.

BPRD does this so that we are aware of your special day, and to avoid possible conflicts with any other special event that may be going on near you in a park that day. We want to be able to tell you if there are any large celebrations or performances scheduled in the area on your proposed wedding date. We don't want you to be surprised to know that

250 runners might go by on a nearby trail just as you're about to exchange vows. See what we mean? And perhaps that doesn't bother you, but it could affect parking and restroom access.

You get permission for your wedding/wedding reception by emailing BPRD at bisparks@bisparks.org. You can also write a letter asking for permission and drop it off or mail it to BPRD, 400 E. Front Ave., Bismarck, ND 58504. You'll simply need to spell out a few details, like: date, place, number of expected guests, if you're serving food and beverages, bringing in additional tables or chairs or a tent, (careful, we don't want any tent spikes to hit an irrigation line) or if you're having live music or a DJ.

Please note that the City of Bismarck does have a noise ordinance, (see the above mentioned music) and parks have closing hours (some at sunset, some at 11 pm) that must be abided by. BPRD wants you to be aware of these ordinances and rules in advance. BPRD will review your request and respond as soon as possible so that you can continue to plan for your BIG day.

Things to Know:

- **Park space:** Parks are open to the public. Keep in mind that there may be others in the park at the time of your ceremony. BPRD does not close a park for your wedding ceremony or reception.
- **Tables and chairs:** Contact a vendor if you need to rent additional tables and chairs. The number of picnic tables, tables and chairs at each picnic shelter or facility are listed on the BPRD website.
- **Selling alcohol:** If you plan to use a caterer that will sell alcohol to guests, your caterer will need to get a Special Event Permit from the City of Bismarck to transfer their liquor license off site to your wedding reception. Many vendors are aware of this permit process, but it's listed here as a reminder and something you should know.
- **Garbage receptacles:** Each park and community center have designated trash receptacles to handle the anticipated day-to-day trash generated by that area's use. For special occasions, such as a large wedding and reception, the containers on site may not accommodate your event. Additional receptacles are available for rent and placement from the park district. You can also contract with a local vendor to provide large trash dumpsters for your event.
- **Park rules:** Be aware of park rules that may affect your wedding. Rules that may pertain to your event include no glass beverage containers (including serving bowls), no fireworks, vehicles are restricted to roads and parking lots, fires are restricted to fire pits and grills and there is no overnight camping in city parks. A complete list of park rules can be found online at www.bisparks.org/park-rules-insurance.
- **Weather:** What will you do in the event of stormy weather? If Mother Nature is having a bad day, it may turn into a rain-soaked ceremony and reception site. Please think about your Plan B. Make sure you understand your backup options. The chances of BPRD being able to provide an indoor back up plan for you on the day of your ceremony is highly unlikely.
 - Remember, you are in the great outdoors. Your perfect day may include wind, heat and those uninvited guests - insects. BPRD does not spray for insects in the parks. Think about bug spray, water, umbrellas, paper fans and sunscreen for you and your guests.
- **Décor:** Since parks are naturally beautiful, you can rely on the surrounding scenery as a major decorative element, but please be sure to spell out your décor plans in your permission message. Some indoor facilities have restrictions on stapling banners and streamers to the walls.
- **Point the way:** Be sure to let guests know where to find you by including detailed directions with your invitations. Not just "Lions Park," but "Lions Park, Shelter Number Two."
- **Litter is litter:** Please do your best to keep all litter in the trash receptacles that are provided to you. Make sure your caterer picks up all items (serving dishes, plates) when your celebration is over. Do NOT leave items in the park or at the facility, please and thank you.

Bismarck Parks and Recreation District hopes this information has provided you with some helpful hints as you think about having your wedding in a park or facility. We wish you well in your wedding planning. Be sure to contact us at bisparks@bisparks.org or 222-6455 if you have any other questions.

And, finally: Congratulations!