

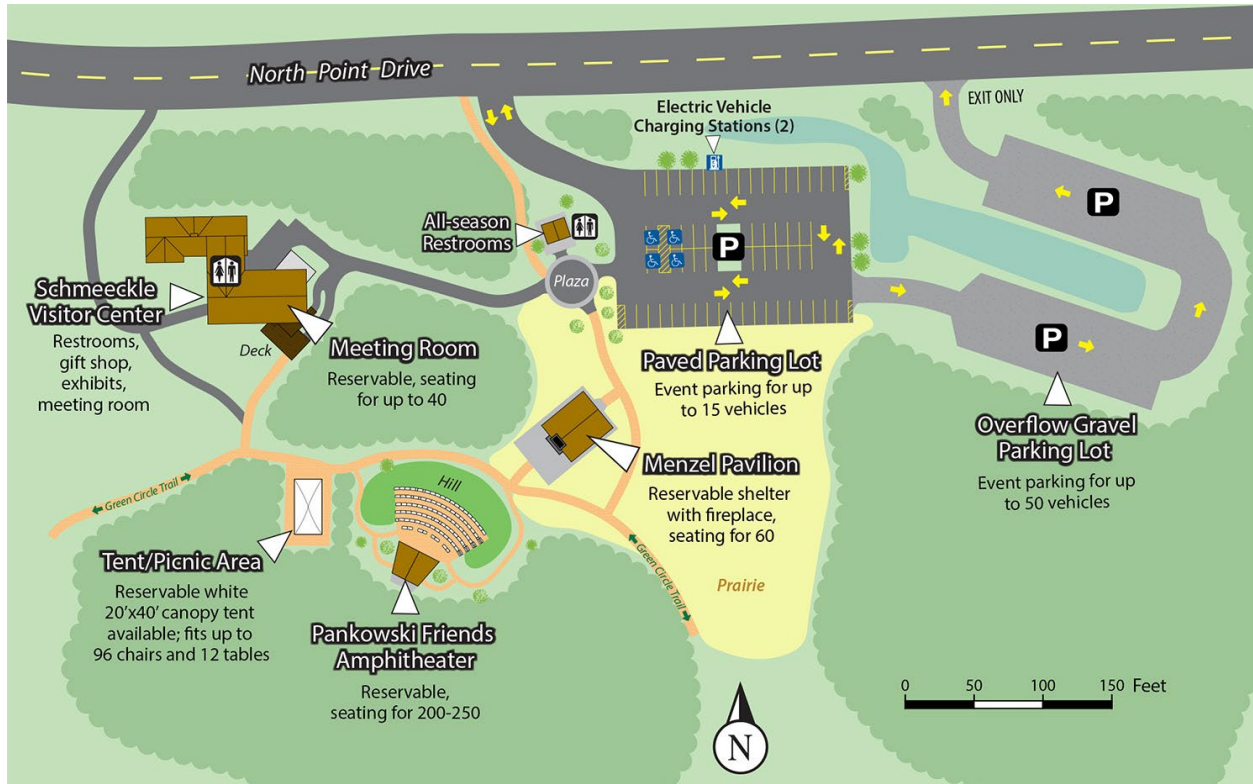
Pankowski Friends Amphitheater Rental Information & Policies

Schmeeckle Reserve, UW-Stevens Point

Updated: June 16, 2025

The following provides information about and rules for use of the Pankowski Friends Amphitheater located in Schmeeckle Reserve. If you have any questions or concerns, contact Schmeeckle Reserve.

Amphitheater/Visitor Center Area Site Map



Location and Contact Information

The amphitheater is located near the visitor center of Schmeeckle Reserve on the UW-Stevens Point campus. The address is:

2419 North Point Drive
Stevens Point, WI 54481

To contact Schmeeckle Reserve:

Phone: 715-346-4992
Email: schmeeckle@uwsp.edu
Website: www.uwsp.edu/schmeeckle

Amphitheater Description

The Pankowski Friends Amphitheater is a rustic open-air gathering space nestled into the woods near the Schmeeckle Reserve Visitor Center. It was constructed in 2019 by the Friends of Schmeeckle Reserve, a nonprofit support organization. It consists of a 25'x18' concrete stage covered by a curved cedar roof and supported by massive timbers. Tiers of native sandstone blocks built into a grassy hillside provide seating for 200 to 250 people.

Schmeeckle Reserve:

Schmeeckle Reserve is a 280-acre natural area on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. It was set aside to preserve, restore, and manage natural communities of central Wisconsin, serve as an outdoor classroom for learning, and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation. The Reserve is renowned for its five miles of trails and boardwalks, diverse habitats, and wildlife. It is the headquarters of the Green Circle Trail, a 27-mile hiking and biking trail that loops around Stevens Point, and the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame, which honors inductees who have contributed to the conservation legacy of the state.

Capacity:

The seating capacity of the tiered stone seats is 200-250 people. There is room for lawn seating at the top and sides of the hill for an additional 50-100 people.

Accessibility:

The amphitheater and Schmeeckle visitor center are wheelchair accessible. The paved parking lot has four accessible spaces. A hardpacked crushed granite trail connects the parking lot, amphitheater, and visitor center. The distance between the parking lot and amphitheater is about 350'. The distance between the visitor center and the amphitheater is also about 350'. At the amphitheater, the front row of sandstone seats has open spaces for guests using wheelchairs or walkers. Ramped trails provide access to the stage. Vehicle access to the amphitheater is not allowed. For accessibility or accommodation questions, please contact us at 715-346-4992.

Parking:

The paved Schmeeckle visitor center parking lot is located off North Point Drive about 350' northeast of the amphitheater. Two electric vehicle charging stations are available near a solar panel array on the north side of the lot. Parking in the paved lot is limited to 15 vehicles for event reservations. The remaining spaces in the lot must be left open for public visitors. A gravel overflow parking lot to the east of the paved lot provides parking for an additional 50 vehicles. If you expect more than 60 vehicles at your event, Schmeeckle staff will need to request that the City of Stevens Point open North Point Drive for street parking for an additional fee.

Restrooms:

An all-season restroom building adjacent to the parking lot offers two unisex restrooms with flush toilets. Men's and women's restrooms are also available in the Schmeeckle visitor center, about 350' away from the amphitheater area. The restrooms will be open during the event and are shared by the public.

Electricity:

The amphitheater stage is connected to 100-amp electrical service, which is partially powered by the sun through a solar panel array in the parking lot. Four power outlets are available, located on the back of each of the wood pillars. Electricity is included in the rental fee. Extension cords, power strips, etc. are not provided.

Wi-Fi:

Outdoor Wi-Fi is provided free of charge in the amphitheater through UW-Stevens Point. UWSP students, faculty, and staff should connect to the secure wireless network called "UWSPWIRELESS." Other guests can connect using the open, unsecured network called "UWSP_Unsecure_Guest"; this requires an email address but no password.

Lighting/stage lighting system:

The amphitheater has dimmable LED overhead lighting, which can be used for no extra fee by renters. A portable stage lighting system is available for an extra fee. It consists of two LED light arrays on stands and a controller. If interested in renting the stage lighting system, check the box on your reservation request.

Sound system rental:

A portable sound amplification system is available for an extra fee. The system includes two QSC powered speakers, two cordless handheld microphones, four cordless lapel microphones, a microphone stand, and a Shure 8-channel mixer. The sound system will be setup prior to the event, and our staff will train renters on its use.

The sound system can only be used in the amphitheater area. Since Schmeeckle is valued for its quietness, the volume must be set low enough that it cannot be heard more than 350 feet away, or the distance between the amphitheater and paved parking lot. Short music clips played as part of a ceremony are acceptable, but sustained amplified music (like that played during a dance) is not allowed. If interested in renting the sound system, check the box on your reservation request.

Food and drink:

Guests are welcome to bring in food and nonalcoholic beverages as part of a picnic or potluck. Guests are not allowed to bring in alcoholic drinks, per campus policy. Outside catering of food or snacks must be reserved through UW-Stevens Point's On Point Catering service. On Point Catering can also provide alcohol service. For more information about On Point Catering, visit www.uwsp.edu/dining/OnPointCatering/

Menzel Pavilion, open-air shelter:

The Menzel Pavilion, a beautiful open-air shelter, is included for no additional charge in the amphitheater reservation. It features a two-story, double-sided stone fireplace, stone columns, a concrete patio, and picnic seating for up to 60 people. Fireplace use, firewood, and kindling can be provided for an additional fee. If you are interested in reserving the pavilion as part of your event, check the box on your reservation request. Visit www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/schmeeckle/Pages/menzel_pavilion/index.aspx for more information.

Tent/Picnic Area rental:

A 20'x40' white canopy tent can be set up adjacent to the amphitheater for an additional fee. The location for the tent is a picnic area surfaced with crushed granite just west of the amphitheater. The picnic site has rustic wooden benches and tables that can be used by event guests. White folding chairs and tables can also be rented for placement underneath the tent (tablecloths are not provided). A maximum of 96 chairs and 12 tables (8'-long) can fit under the tent, although this is very tight spacing. Walls for the tent are also available. If interested in renting the tent, chairs, or tables, check the box on your reservation request.

Visitor center:

The Schmeeckle Reserve Visitor Center is located just 350 feet from the amphitheater via an accessible crushed granite trail. The center will be open to the public and staffed by a Schmeeckle employee during your event, even if outside the normal operating hours. Restrooms are located just inside the front door. The center features a gift shop, conservation museum, bird viewing area, and outdoor decks with seating. An indoor meeting room is available that can be reserved for an additional fee (see below).

Meeting room rental:

A 23'x27' meeting room inside the Schmeeckle Reserve Visitor Center can be rented in conjunction with the amphitheater, if available. It has room for about 40 to 50 people with chairs. It could serve as a rain or catering site for smaller gatherings or as a preparation room for an outdoor event. Check the online availability calendar located at www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/schmeeckle/Pages/facility_use/meeting.aspx. To add the use of the meeting room, if available, check the box on your reservation request.

Equipment/furniture:

Schmeeckle Reserve staff can coordinate the rental of folding chairs, folding tables, sound system, and stage lighting. Please indicate these on your request form. Schmeeckle does not provide any other equipment or furniture, but you are welcome to bring in your own tables, chairs, podiums, easels, archways, backdrops, or other small temporary equipment. Note that vehicular access to the site is not allowed, so everything must be carried or rolled in using the trails.

Weather and bugs:

The amphitheater is a rustic part of the natural landscape of Schmeeckle Reserve. As an outdoor experience, please keep in mind that the seating area is uncovered and exposed to the elements. We are not able to provide protection from rain, wind, or sun. It is recommended that participants wear appropriate clothing and bring along umbrellas for comfort. In late spring and summer, mosquitoes, deer flies, and other biting bugs may be a nuisance. Personal insect repellent is recommended. Insect foggers are not allowed.

Acceptable uses:

Schmeeckle Reserve is a natural area, and all uses must fit into its primary mission of preservation, education, and recreation. The Reserve is heavily used by family groups and youth groups. At the discretion of the Schmeeckle Reserve Director, group requests that conflict with the primary mission or that may be inappropriate for family audiences will not be approved. Please contact Schmeeckle Reserve if you have questions about what may or may not be acceptable.

Privacy:

The amphitheater is located in Schmeeckle Reserve, a conservancy area that is by law open to the public. While the hill that surrounds the amphitheater provides some privacy for events, there is no way to restrict public access or trail user noise. Note that the Green Circle Trail, a popular hiking and biking corridor, runs directly behind the amphitheater seating. All trails must be kept open and clear for public use.

Making Reservations

Reservation procedure:

Reservation requests for the amphitheater may be made a maximum of 1 year in advance of the event. Requests are reviewed by Schmeeckle staff and may be either approved or denied. No payment is required until a request has been approved. Requests can be submitted online at www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/schmeeckle/Pages/amphitheater/index.aspx.

When a reservation request is approved by Schmeeckle, the renter will be notified and will have 14 days to pay the full base cost amount of the rental to reserve the date and time. Additional charges can be added later. Payment can be made as a check or credit card over the phone. Reservations will not be confirmed until payment is received. If payment is not received within 14 days, the amphitheater will be made available to others for that date.

Once a reservation has been approved, a paying group is guaranteed that date and time; they cannot be bumped by another group. Non-paying groups, such as university and educational groups, may be rescheduled based on other requests.

Reservation costs:

Rental fees for the amphitheater directly support trail maintenance, habitat restoration, and student employees at Schmeeckle. The base cost for a rental includes the amphitheater, Menzel Pavilion, and adjacent woodchipped area for a full day (8 a.m. to 9 p.m.), parking (for up to 60 vehicles), the visitor center being opened and staffed, and restrooms (in the restroom building and visitor center). The price depends on the season and type of group using the space:

Types of Group	Peak Season Cost (April-October)	Off-season Cost (November-March)
Private events (weddings, celebrations, family gatherings)	\$500 per day*	\$250 per day*
For-profit groups / company events	\$500 per day*	\$250 per day*
Nonprofit / community groups: <u>Charging fees</u>	\$350 per day*	\$175 per day*
Nonprofit / community groups: <u>No fees charged</u>	\$250 per day	\$125 per day
UW-Stevens Point / school groups: <u>Charging fees</u> Event more than 2 weeks away	\$250 per day	\$125 per day
UW-Stevens Point / school groups: <u>No fees charged</u> Event more than 2 weeks away	\$150 per day	\$75 per day
UW-Stevens Point / school groups: <u>Event 2 weeks away or less</u>	Free to use	Free to use

*Price includes a 2-hour rehearsal on a day prior to the event, if needed.

Additional reservation options (these costs include administrative fees for coordination):

Reservable space or item	Cost
Menzel Pavilion (if available, holds 60 people)	Included in amphitheater reservation fee
Pavilion fireplace rental (includes kindling and firewood)	\$30
Parking along North Point Drive (required if more than 60 vehicles are expected for event)	\$50 coordination fee
Visitor center meeting room (if available, holds 40-50 people)	\$100 during event
Sound system rental (includes setup and training for an event representative)	\$100
Stage lighting system rental (includes setup and training for an event representative)	\$100
20'x40' white canopy tent (includes setup adjacent to amphitheater area. Walls available upon request. Can fit up to 96 chairs and 12 tables, but this is very tight)	\$100
White folding chairs and tables (these are rented from a local company. Cost includes delivery, setup, and take down. No tablecloths are provided.)	\$210 flat fee plus current rental costs for each item. In April 2023, this was \$1.50 per folding chair and \$13 per table.

Rescheduling:

Events can be rescheduled based on availability. Call the Schmeckle Reserve Visitor Center at 715-346-4992 to reschedule. A \$50 rescheduling fee will apply, except in case where events are rescheduled due to inclement weather (see below).

Cancellations:

Refund requests with at least a one-month notice will be reimbursed at 50 percent of the payment. Refunds will not be given for cancellation requests received less than a month before the rental.

Inclement weather:

In case of inclement weather, Schmeckle staff will work with renters to find an alternative date based on availability for no additional cost. Refunds will not be given. The seating area of the amphitheater is exposed to the elements, and we are unable to provide any shelter from rain or wind. A backup plan is strongly recommended. The stage of the amphitheater does have a roof and will offer protection from rain for about 30 people, if wind is minimal. If available, the Schmeckle Reserve meeting room or the adjacent Menzel Pavilion can be reserved, which will hold about 50-60 people. A 20'x40' tent can also be reserved and set up adjacent to the amphitheater with at least a one-month notice.

Visiting:

It is strongly recommended that you visit the amphitheater and visitor center prior to making a reservation to ensure it meets your needs. The amphitheater is a natural, rustic venue that may not be appropriate for all programs or events. The grounds and trails of Schmeckle Reserve are open every day from sunrise to sunset. The visitor center is open daily (see website for hours).

Policies and Regulations

The renter is responsible for informing guests about all policies and regulations. At the discretion of the Schmeeckle Reserve staff, any group that violates these policies or participates in behaviors that conflict with the mission of the Reserve will be removed from the premises without refund.

Dates and times of use:

The amphitheater may be rented year-round between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. The trails at Schmeeckle Reserve close at sunset, so use after dark is restricted to the amphitheater/visitor center area.

Damage/trash/cleanup policy:

The renter is responsible for all cleanup of the amphitheater and site. Schmeeckle has a carry in-carry out policy. Garbage/recycling cans will not be provided for the event, unless requested through UWSP On Point Catering. Any garbage generated during the event is the responsibility of the renter and must be removed from the Reserve. All equipment and decorations must be taken down prior to the reservation end time. If Schmeeckle staff determine that excessive cleanup or repairs are required after the event, the renter will be billed \$50 per hour for staff time, plus costs for any replacement or cleaning materials.

Public trail use:

Schmeeckle Reserve is a public conservancy area. The trails surrounding the amphitheater, woodchipped area, and visitor center must be kept open and clear for public use.

Vehicle access:

Vehicle access to the amphitheater is not allowed, except by Schmeeckle staff. Vehicles may be parked in the visitor center parking lot and overflow lot. A relatively flat, hard-packed crushed granite trail leads from the parking lot to the amphitheater. The distance is about 350 feet. We recommend that you bring along a cart or wheelbarrow with large wheels to haul materials between the lot and amphitheater. If vehicle access is essential, please contact Schmeeckle Reserve to discuss.

Parking policy:

Up to 15 vehicles may park in the Schmeeckle Reserve Visitor Center paved parking lot for an event. Other spaces must be left open for trail users and visitors. Space is available for an additional 50 vehicles in the gravel overflow lot to the east. Parking is not allowed along North Point Drive. If you expect more than 60 vehicles at your event, Schmeeckle staff will need to request that the City of Stevens Point open North Point Drive for street parking for an additional fee. If cars park along the road or other undesignated parking spots without prior approval, they may be ticketed by the police.

No pet policy:

Pets are not allowed in Schmeeckle Reserve due to sensitive wildlife population studies that are being conducted. Trained service dogs are allowed.

No alcohol policy:

Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in Schmeeckle Reserve, per university regulations. Exceptions may be made if alcohol is catered through the university's On Point Catering.

No smoking/tobacco/E-cigarette policy:

Smoking, tobacco use, and E-cigarettes are not allowed in Schmeeckle Reserve, including the parking lots. Schmeeckle is part of the UW-Stevens Point tobacco-free campus. The closest area where smoking is allowed would be along North Point Drive in the road right-of-way.

Decorations policy:

Decorations and other materials are not allowed to be attached or adhered to the amphitheater structure at any time. No nails, thumb tacks, staples, glue, tape, poster putty, etc. Decorations can be hung if there is no adhesion to the structure (wrapping lights or cloth around beams, free-standing arbor, etc.). Glitter, confetti, rice, etc. are not allowed due to cleanup issues and possible ingestion by wildlife. For specific questions, please contact Schmeeckle Reserve.

Signage policy:

Signs that appear to create an endorsement by Schmeeckle Reserve of a particular company, product, political candidate, or position regarding public policies are not allowed outside of the immediate rental space. Signs that contain obscene, indecent, profane, discriminatory, or exploitative material, or those that promote tobacco or alcoholic products, are not allowed in any space on campus. Free-standing or in-ground signage that specifically directs people to the event site may be installed temporarily during the event. Signs and other decorations (such as balloons, ribbons, etc.) cannot be attached to existing posts, fences, trees, or other structures. All signage must be removed at the end of the event.

Ceremonial release/send-off policy:

The ceremonial release of items such as balloons, sky lanterns, butterflies, or doves is not allowed in Schmeeckle at any time. Throwing glitter, confetti, birdseed, rice, paper airplanes, popcorn, etc. is also not allowed. These items cause cleanup issues and can lead to possible ingestion by wildlife.

No fireworks/sparklers/pyrotechnic policy:

No fireworks, sparklers, fountains, firecrackers, or other pyrotechnic/explosive items are allowed in Schmeeckle at any time.

Open flame/candle policy:

Open flames, such as tiki torches, oil lamps, and grills, are not allowed in Schmeeckle Reserve, except in designated areas such as the Menzel Pavilion. Small candles can be used in the amphitheater area if they are protected in a surrounding container that catches dripping wax, such as a glass jar or lantern.

Drone policy:

Drones/Unmanned Aircraft Systems are highly regulated over university property. Operation of a drone, including for photography, must be approved through the UW-Stevens Point Risk Management office prior to the event. Visit [www3.uwsp.edu/FO/Pages/Risk-Management--Drones--Unmanned-Aircraft-Systems-\(UAS\).aspx](http://www3.uwsp.edu/FO/Pages/Risk-Management--Drones--Unmanned-Aircraft-Systems-(UAS).aspx) for more information.

Noise/amplified music policy:

Schmeeckle Reserve is a natural area that visitors enjoy for its quietness and solitude. Amphitheater users must respect other visitors on the trails. If a sound system is used, its volume must be set at a level so that it cannot be heard more than 350 feet away, or the distance between the amphitheater and paved parking lot. Short music clips played as part of a ceremony are acceptable, but sustained amplified music (like that played during a dance) is not allowed.

Other rules and regulations:

Amphitheater users agree to abide by all other Schmeeckle Reserve rules and regulations. A full list can be viewed at www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/schmeeckle/Pages/visit/rules.aspx. If you have any questions, please contact Schmeeckle at 715-346-4992 or schmeeckle@uwsp.edu.

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point: Non-University Events Policies

1. Upon payment of reservation fee and return of this signed form, facilities are permanently reserved for the date of request for the undersigned party. Copies of facility reservations will be sent to the undersigned party after receipt of the above and will identify any applicable charges that will be billed after the event.
2. In the event that University buildings, property or facilities reserved for this event would be destroyed or substantially damaged by fire or other casualty; or in the event other circumstances render the fulfillment of this agreement impractical or impossible, the incurred charges will be voided. The undersigned person(s) hereby waives any claim for damages or compensation resulting from fire, casualty or other circumstances causing curtailment of this agreement.
3. The undersigned person(s) will be financially responsible for all damage to UWSP facilities and/or equipment caused by the reserving party or the guests associated with their event. The undersigned person(s) will also be responsible for removal of all personal materials prior to leaving at the completion of the event. If this is not done, charges will be assessed to the undersigned person(s) for additional labor to remove such materials.
4. The undersigned person(s) today and on all future dates, for themselves, their heirs, personal representatives or assigns, agree to defend, hold harmless, indemnify and release the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, and their officers, employees, agents, and volunteers, from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, or causes of action of any sort on account of damage to personal property, or personal injury, or death which may result from my participation in the above-listed agreement. This release includes claims based on the negligence of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, and their officers, employees, agents, and volunteers, but expressly does not include claims based on their intentional misconduct or gross negligence. BY AGREEING TO THIS CLAUSE, IT IS UNDERSTOOD BY THE SIGNEE THAT THEY ARE RELEASING CLAIMS AND GIVING UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO SUE.

Renter Agreement

The online Amphitheater Rental Application form has a checkbox that serves as a binding agreement between the renter and Schmeckle Reserve/University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

I have read the Amphitheater Rental Policies document. I understand and agree to abide by these policies. *

Read the document at https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/schmeckle/Pages/amphitheater/Schmeckle_amphitheater_rental_policies.pdf

Yes

By clicking the box, you are acknowledging that you read, understand, and agree to abide by all of the policies in this document regarding the reservation of the Pankowski Friends Amphitheater in Schmeeckle Reserve.

If you have questions or concerns about any of the policies, please contact Schmeeckle Reserve to discuss prior to filling out the rental application form.