DNR Recreation Sites and Public Lands to Reopen May 5

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DNR partnering with REI on social media campaign to remind Washington residents to continue social distancing and recreating responsibly

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced that DNR-managed lands will reopen for public recreation on May 5. This will happen in conjunction with the reopening of lands managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington State Parks and Recreation.

The reopening will apply to state-managed parks, wildlife areas, recreation land, boat launches and natural areas. Camping and other overnight accommodations will remain closed. DNR recreation sites will be opened up as soon as possible beginning May 5. The public can find the latest information on site openings at **dnr.wa.gov/open.**

Reconnecting with Nature
"The people of Washington have made great sacrifices as we fight to slow the spread of COVID-19. One such sacrifice, felt profoundly by those who treasure the outdoors, was the closure of our public lands, state parks and recreation areas," said **Hilary Franz**, **Commissioner of Public Lands.** "Because of our shared sacrifice and the heroic work of our first responders, doctors, and nurses, we are able to reopen public lands. **Reconnecting people with nature is the first step of a long journey back to normalcy**.

"Reopening our public lands however, does not mean we can stop being vigilant in the fight against this virus. We all need to make sure we continue to do as much as we can to keep our families, our communities and our first responders healthy."

#RecreateResponsibly
Washington's diverse and enthusiastic community of outdoor recreationists will play a key role in ensuring that the public's return to state recreation areas and parks happens safely.

"We believe the move to responsibly reopen our public parks and access to recreation is a crucial step in the recovery process. The past few months have shown that people are yearning to step out into the fresh air. People everywhere are being reminded of the importance of time outdoors to their mental and physical health. So, we thank Washington State's leadership for beginning to reopen our parks and public lands," said **Eric Artz, CEO of REI-Co-op**.

"Washington's recreation community knows that keeping public lands open will depend on our collective commitment to social distancing and following responsible recreation guidelines. We will continue to work with state land managers and nonprofit organizations to promote responsible recreation so that Washington can serve as a model for the rest of the country."

To educate the public about the importance of continued social distancing, DNR and REI Co-op are partnering on the #RecreateResponsibly social media campaign, which will educate visitors about how to stay safe and healthy.

For example, visitors should bring handwashing supplies and personal protective equipment as some sites will have reduced or limited restroom facilities. People should also be prepared to change plans if their destination appears crowded or is not yet fully operational.

Tips to Recreate Responsibly
Plan Ahead - While many state-managed land destinations are open for day-use, other local and federal lands may still be closed. Pack your lunch and get gas before you go, don't make unnecessary stops to or from your destination. Do not carpool with people other than your immediate household. ***If you are sick stay home.***

Come Prepared - Visitors may find reduced or limited restroom services as staff begin the process to reopen facilities. Bring your own soap, water, hand sanitizer, and toilet paper with you. Be prepared to cover your nose and mouth if you find yourself near others with a mask or other facial covering.

Stay Close to Home - This is not the time to travel long distances to recreate. If your destination is crowded, be prepared to go somewhere else or come back at another time. Also, make sure to enjoy the outdoors with your immediate household members only. Recreation with those you don't live with creates new avenues for transmission.

Don't Take Unnecessary Risks - Health care workers and first responders are working really hard right now to keep us safe during this health crisis. This includes not attending or hosting gatherings like cookouts or barbeques.

Practice Physical Distancing and Good Hygiene - Keep six feet between you and those outside your immediate household. Launch one boat at a time to give others enough space to launch safely. Leave at least one parking space between your vehicle and the vehicle next to you. Wash your hands often and try not to touch your face. Practice good hygiene and bring your own water, soap, hand sanitizer, and facial covering with you. Be aware of any high-traffic surfaces and avoid them.

Leave No Trace - Take any garbage with you, including disposable gloves and masks. With facilities just reopening there may not be staff collecting trash, be respectful of our public lands and facilities.

Attachments

- #RecreateResponsibly infographic
- FAQ on the re-opening of public lands

About DNR Recreation
Led by the Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz, DNR manages 1,200 miles of trails and 160+ recreation sites in 3 million acres of state trust lands and 92 natural areas. DNR trust lands keep forests development-free, provide clean water, and generate revenue for public services and school construction.

About REI Co-op
REI is a specialty outdoor retailer, headquartered near Seattle. The nation's largest consumer co-op, REI is a growing community of more than 18 million members who expect and love the best quality gear, inspiring expert classes and trips, and outstanding customer service. REI has 162 stores in 39 states and the District of Columbia. To build on the infrastructure that makes life outside possible, REI invests millions annually in hundreds of local and national nonprofits that create access to—and steward—the outdoor places that inspire us all.

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