NC DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Closed N.C. State Parks To Begin Phased Reopening May 9

RALEIGH

May 14, 2020

Following guidance from the Governor's office and the Department of Health and Human Services, North Carolina's state parks will increase recreational access and services beginning May 9. The Division of Parks and Recreation is working with state and local public health authorities to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and use a phased, collaborative approach to increase access to North Carolina State Parks in a systematic manner.

Beginning May 9, 29 state parks that were closed will reopen including most roads, trails, restrooms and some boat ramps. Some access areas may be closed, so visitors should check park webpages for details. Campgrounds, picnic shelters, swim areas, playgrounds, visitor centers, and other common gathering areas will remain closed during this phase.

The health and safety of employees, visitors, and residents of our state remain the highest priority as we move forward with easing restrictions at state parks. Park superintendents have examined each facility function and service provided to ensure those operations comply with public health guidance. Cleaning procedures effective for COVID-19 disinfection are established and staff are trained to disinfect restrooms and high-touch areas. Park staff have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to reduce the spread risk of COVID-19 as they interact with the public and clean restrooms and other areas.

"The importance of our parks and trails to North Carolinians has become quite apparent during this pandemic," said State Parks Director Dwayne Patterson. "While we look forward to welcoming visitors back to the parks that have been closed, we are approaching this phased reopening with safety in mind. As we balance the high visitation we expect with our responsibility to protect park staff and natural resources, we ask that everyone be respectful of park staff, other visitors, and the parks' natural areas."

A return to full operations will occur in phases. The current plan calls for reopening campgrounds in the second phase, and the third and final phase will include opening common areas and resuming educational activities and other programming.

To ensure health and safety, park visitors should follow the "Three W's" as outlined by the N.C. Dept. of Health and Human Services – wear a mask or cloth face covering; wait in line at least six feet away from others, and wash hands frequently. Visitors should also follow local health orders, maintain social distancing, bring hand sanitizer and reusable water bottles, avoid high-risk activities that could lead to calling first responders who are needed elsewhere during the pandemic, and practice Leave No Trace principles.

For more Covid-19 information, consult the DHHS website at https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/covid19/covid-19-guidance#phase-1-easing-of-restrictions [u7061146.ct.sendgrid.net] (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://u7061146.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=4tNED-2FM8iDZJQyQ53jATUS9dtt2KxREONhMOfWgHmm6mEnLpova0yVGMRj5DaP-2B-2BzxyKwVfmZgB4Hvl8q-2BmXFNn9yHEL3UuFI9GgAln-2BDgqzDiXoBCtxzuxcSs8uODAbfhvFiAZYxZorRXQl62Qg5A-3D-3DEi9R_A-2B-2BGe8eXvhja-2BYJD3YPzEy3uYsPpoMXnbK2ZVQHK5NvYYjUuVcd9qxwGm1WCjCxaMnjbgt7l9ir4eaz25PkUUIpQf7r5rmPOgKaX7sJnbYlFmJG4CCiexF1O2-2B7ca2F6pyae-2B6FiknrKi08oQbx9whiCt4TQEo-2FcnuNby3JFhDfBm2xenkXhYYUJGkZFZwJvHxrjjGjUPek2TVwsIzgeTma80SSgE-2BIDPaNpkV4L1-2Fq0qtWdG2sCYwwR2LGu2qAr1oA-2Fb8-2BMHukkJsiqEQ3s6R2r6ptDUtAckqK93RY1okWiWvv6YxydcsF4cNBJoPnwe825vrbbEKSsNw0Ecc3Pw7mvcRbbhqSEdCTDb1bj4m4-3D__;!!HYmSToo!JMpABGzh4XtYcg84XjV4YpetndquY2jLBubQRfnPEDdmoNY7CJM4jQFyxn3ug8CTbZbq$).

Park staff ask that visitors check the park webpage for detailed information before their visit rather than calling the park office. For the most up to date information about facility openings, service hours, and access, please visit the Division of Parks and Recreation's website at ncparks.gov/open [u7061146.ct.sendgrid.net] (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://u7061146.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=VnIC4pyKWBlZdl2xIfjF4HYwDzSW3mtYYZsyBsJF-2Ba4-3DGRLJ_A-2B-2BGe8eXvhja-2BYJD3YPzEy3uYsPpoMXnbK2ZVQHK5NvYYjUuVcd9qxwGm1WCjCxaMnjbgt7l9ir4eaz25PkUUIpQf7r5rmPOgKaX7sJnbYlFmJG4CCiexF1O2-2B7ca2F6pyae-2B6FiknrKi08oQbx9whiCt4TQEo-2FcnuNby3JFhDfBm2xenkXhYYUJGkZFZwJvHxrjjGjUPek2TVwsIzgeTsIZ84gu4xZvJGyaEHws1O389Av2UIB5V0tMInRLMQ9lxtP832QXr4MD-2FXeElYlHzS3ZTCQkyqMue-2B-2F8jmMRYhpHDhvEjODrOtHQXdfzPepVuQqxqMNKmAJ7k61RViTJs3tStLAfKtfgAgaEEdBA9yI-3D__;!!HYmSToo!JMpABGzh4XtYcg84XjV4YpetndquY2jLBubQRfnPEDdmoNY7CJM4jQFyxn3ug9_ZfaBR$).

https://www.ncdcr.gov/news/press-releases/2020/05/14/closed-nc-state-parks-begin-phased-reopening-may-9