Joint news release // Oregon Parks and Recreation Department // Oregon Department of Transportation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Release date: March 27, 2020

Recreation areas closed for travelers and locals alike

Salem, Ore – Many of the state's top federal, state, and local recreation areas are closed to all use following Governor Kate Brown's Executive Order on Monday, March 23 that prohibits all non-essential travel. Oregon has reached a critical moment in the COVID-19 health emergency when limiting contact between people will save lives and flatten the infection curve.

All state parks, parts of national forests, and some city recreation areas shuttered their doors over the past week to reduce crowds and discourage travel. The closures also affect local use, and land management authorities acknowledge this will be frustrating. With parks and other public lands closed, safety-related services like restrooms are closed and trash collection is suspended, increasing the risk of injury when a person visits in violation of the closure. Local health care professionals are focused on using resources to prepare for COVID-19 care and cannot afford to spend limited time and resources on people injured during recreational activities. All use, whether originating locally or not, is prohibited in a closed park.

The closures do not yet affect the ocean beaches, though all state and many federal and local access points are closed. If problems arise with people traveling unnecessarily or congregating there, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department will reconsider that decision.

Some travel is necessary, and state highway rest areas are open for travel-related needs. Some parks also serve as rest areas, and while nearly all are available for rest area-type functions, they are closed to recreation. Some rest areas may have reduced service or may be difficult to access. Parks that attract too many people seeking recreation rather than rest area services will be closed to all service. A map of state highway rest areas is available at TripCheck.com.

People are encouraged to exercise as close to home as possible, including backyards and neighborhoods where social distancing is easier to maintain.

Stay home, save lives.

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