DNR Reduces Amenities at State Parks, Recreation Areas and Trails

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To help carry out Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order and further protect public health and safety, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources is closing many amenities offered in state parks and recreation areas, effective now through at least April 13.

State parks and recreation areas currently remain open to provide residents with local opportunities to get outdoors; however, extensive travel should be minimal – and reserved only for essential needs – and effective social distancing (of at least 6 feet between yourself and another person) is required so that unsafe conditions do not develop and state-managed lands can remain open.

"We are doing everything possible to protect the health and safety of visitors and staff at state parks and recreation areas," said DNR Director Dan Eichinger. "No matter how people are choosing to get outdoors, it is critical that everyone follows the social distancing guidelines. If they don't, we will be forced to close public access to all state-managed lands."

Closures and reduction in services include:

- **Many park amenities have been closed** in order to minimize the chance of people gathering in groups and/or maximize the environment for effective social distancing. Current closures include, but are not limited to, concessions, playgrounds and play equipment, viewing platforms, fishing piers, GaGa ball bits, volleyball and basketball courts, designated dog areas, disc golf courses, radio-controlled flying fields, pump tracks, and picnic tables and shelters.

DNR COVID-19 Response

- **All bathroom buildings and vault toilets will be closed** in all state parks and recreation areas, including those at campgrounds, boating access sites, trailheads at state-designated trails, etc. People are encouraged to plan accordingly to avoid needing a restroom during a visit. **Note:** Over the next few days, vault toilets will be closing. Many locations, where

available, will be transitioning to portable toilets that will be cleaned by local vendors.

- **There will be minimal trash service available.** Visitors are encouraged to bring trash bags, if needed, to carry trash home and minimize litter.

- **No hand washing stations will be provided.** Please carry hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes containing at least 60% alcohol, as well as trash bags to carry out used wipes.

- Additionally, grooming of **snowmobile trails** (the season closes March 31) and grooming, brushing, grading and clearing of all **nonmotorized trails and ORV trails** are suspended until at least the end of the order. When out on any trail, be aware of surroundings, including the potential for washouts or debris. To report anything that could be a risk to other trail users, call 517-331-0111.

- For the duration of this order, the DNR is unable to reimburse trail sponsors or grant sponsors for any trail-related work.

Follow the DNR's COVID-19 response webpage for the latest closure information related to events, meetings and facilities, including campgrounds, harbors and other sites.

Executive order mandates social distancing; fines/penalties possible

To help uphold the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order, individuals must maintain a minimum of 6 feet between themselves and other people. Anyone not following the social distancing requirement may face misdemeanor violation/arrest penalties, including up to 90 days in jail and/or a fine up to $500.

Social distancing practices are a top priority for any time spent outside an individual's home or place of residence. They include:

- Go out only if you're feeling healthy.
- Keep at least 6 feet between yourself and another person.
- Long-distance travel is discouraged unless it is essential.
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. If those aren't available, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- When driving, keep windows slightly open to provide air flow.
- If the parking is full when attempting to visit a park, recreation area, boating access site or trailhead, leave and choose a different location.

DNR COVID-19 Response

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at **Michigan.gov/Coronavirus** and **CDC.gov/Coronavirus**.

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