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DNREC announces changes to operations in response to COVID-19

Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (https://news.delaware.gov/category/dnrec/) | Division of Climate, Coastal, & Energy (https://news.delaware.gov/category/dnrec/energy-and-climate/) | Division of Fish and Wildlife (https://news.delaware.gov/category/dnrec/fish-and-wildlife/) | Division of Parks and Recreation (https://news.delaware.gov/category/dnrec/division-of-parks-and-recreation/) | Date Posted: Tuesday, March 17, 2020

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Parks, wildlife areas open with no entrance fees until April 30,
but park and wildlife buildings, centers closed to public;
Fishing, hunting, boating licenses, park and conservation passes sales moved online

DOVER, Del. – The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/) continues to focus on taking a proactive and preventative approach to keep communities and employees safe in the midst of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, while maintaining operations and services as best as possible.

To encourage Delawareans to be active outdoors and to provide space for activity during the coronavirus period, no fees will be charged or passes required for entrance to Delaware State Parks (https://www.destateparks.com/) and state wildlife areas, effective immediately until April 30.

“Times are challenging and options are few, and this is an opportunity for Delawareans to experience our amazing parks and wildlife areas, to embrace nature while we maintain social distance from each other,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin. “Hopefully, people will enjoy them enough that they will want to keep coming back long after coronavirus has passed, so we encourage people to buy a state park or wildlife conservation area pass online to use for the rest of the season and to support park and wildlife area operations.”

- State parks and wildlife areas are open, and no entrance fees will be charged from now until April 30. All state park campsite, cabins, bathhouses, cottages continue to be open at this time. Buildings such as park and wildlife area offices and nature centers will close after the end of the day Tuesday, and programs and tours are canceled. Anyone visiting a park or wildlife area is encouraged to engage in responsible social

distancing practices, avoiding groupings of people. People can find parks (https://destateparks.com/FindPark) and wildlife areas (http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/fw/Hunting/Pages/WildlifeAreaMaps.aspx) listed online.

- As of Wednesday morning, sales of fishing licenses, hunting licenses conservation passes for vehicle access to wildlife areas and boat registrations will occur online only (https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/licenses-registrations/) or at any third-party vendors that remain open, instead of in person at DNREC's Dover office. Annual park passes good for the entire season and surf fishing tags (https://destateparks.com/Know/PassesTagsFees) should also be purchased online only or at any third-party agents instead of at park offices or in the Dover office; purchased park passes will be mailed before April 30. The Department has provided convenient links to these resources on its homepage, available at dnrec.delaware.gov (http://dnrec.delaware.gov).

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- Commercial fishing license sales will continue at the Department's main office in Dover by appointment only. Call 302-739-9916 to make an appointment.
- Applications and information provided for well, septic, air, water and other permits are being accepted by email, mail and phone, reducing direct interchange of documents.
- Hearings for permits, regulations and appeals are being moved to phone or video for public access. Details on how to access any hearings will be posted with the official hearing notices (https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/public-hearings/).

Most Department-related events and programs, including tours, trainings and special events have been postponed, including the Junior Solar Sprint competition for middle-school students at Delaware Technical Community College's Dover campus April 2, the volunteer training April 4 for the annual horseshoe crab spawning survey and the "Make a Splash" water education event for elementary students at the St. Jones Reserve April 7. Specific information about the status of any events is available on the online events calendar (https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/public-meeting-calendars/), parks program calendar (https://www.destateparks.com/Programs) and social media pages, Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/DNREC/) and Twitter (https://twitter.com/YourDNREC).

The Department remains open. Many office-based employees are working from home and remote locations or relocating within offices to create distance among individuals. Adjustments are being made to procedures for many parks, wildlife and field personnel to reduce interactions among employees and with the public.

For the latest information on COVID-19 in Delaware, visit de.gov/coronavirus (http://de.gov/coronavirus).

The **Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control** protects and manages the state's natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. The Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy uses science, education, policy development and incentives to address Delaware's climate, energy and coastal challenges. For more information, visit the website (https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/) and connect with @DNREC on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/DNREC), Twitter (https://twitter.com/YourDNREC) or LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/company/dnrec/).

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