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Delaware News

DNREC to limit number of people allowed in state parks and wildlife areas, which may close for periods

Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (https://news.delaware.gov/category/dnrec/) | 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: Thursday, April 9, 2020

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Reminder: Bathrooms closed in public areas; out-of-state travelers must self-quarantine before visiting state properties

DOVER, Del. – The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/) announced today it will take steps when necessary to limit the numbers of visitors within state parks and wildlife areas, following crowding and public health concerns.

Starting Friday, April 10, administrators of parks and wildlife areas will recommend to DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin that vehicle access be limited at times when visitor usage is observed to be cause crowding and prevent safe social distancing. These limits will be implemented by DNREC's Natural Resources Police.

"As the days have gotten nicer and the stay-at-home period endures, we have been increasingly concerned to see the behavior of some visitors to our state parks and wildlife areas, with full parking lots and increasingly crowded trails," said Secretary Shawn Garvin. "Limiting the number of people when we see too much crowding will allow us to keep these public spaces open for individuals who need a break and fresh air, but to keep everyone safe."

DNREC provided the following tips and guidance for visiting parks and wildlife areas at this time:

- Parks or wildlife areas may be restricted, or areas may be closed if it is determined based on observation of parking lots or groupings of people that lack of responsible social distancing has become an issue.
- While parks and wildlife areas are large, many visitors use the same amenities. Visitors should try to spread out from others within these areas.
- Visitors to parks and wildlife areas are urged to limit the time of their visit so the overall number of people in each area is reduced.
- Consider visiting parks and wildlife areas in off-peak times. For overall visitation, sunnier and warmer days are more popular than cloudier or cooler ones. In many parks, visitors pick up mid-afternoon.
- Bathrooms remain closed in all parks and wildlife areas and at boat ramps.
- Beaches are closed except for exercise, dog-walking and some vehicle surf-fishing under restricted conditions.
- Out-of-state visitors must observe a 14-day quarantine before entering a park or wildlife area.
- Responsible social distancing practices should always be maintained, even while outside.
- All currently allowable activities are subject to change.

These provisions all come under the authority of the Governor's state of emergency declarations and have the force and effect of law. Any failure to comply with the provisions contained in a Declaration of a State of Emergency or any modification to a Declaration of the State of Emergency can constitute a criminal offense.

Anyone concerned about an individual or group in any state park or wildlife area may contact DNREC's Natural Resources Police via Tip411, DNREC's smartphone app, or by calling the 24-hour DNREC Dispatch Center at 302-739-4580. Tip411 allows the public to easily report concerns. The app is available for free download by searching DENRP via the Google Play Store or the iTunes App Store.

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

About DNREC

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. 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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(https://news.delaware.gov/2020/04/09/dnrec-to-limit-number-of-people-allowed-in-state-parks-and-wildlife-areas-which-may-close-for-periods/?print=pdf)

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