

DCNR Announces Plan for Reopening Some State Park, Forest Facilities

Harrisburg, PA – Today, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn announced a phased reopening of state park and forest facilities in keeping with Governor Wolf's direction to ensure that Pennsylvanians have opportunities to safely enjoy outdoor recreation as a way to maintain positive physical and mental health.

"As the weather turns warmer, DCNR anticipates even greater numbers of people will be looking for opportunities to be outdoors – to connect with nature and exercise for good health," Dunn said. "As staffing allows and with the appropriate protocols in place to ensure safety, we are working to reopen our state parks and forests so that Pennsylvanians can realize all of the benefits associated with being outdoors."

The schedule for reopening state park and forest facilities is:

- The three public golf courses in the system at Caledonia and Evansburg state parks and Michaux State Forest are authorized to be open to the public starting on May 1. They are operated by private concessions.
- At least one restroom in day use areas and in marinas at state parks and forests statewide will be open to the public on May 8. This is consistent with CDC guidance related to park and recreation area operations. Additional cleaning protocols are in place. Users should practice social distancing.
- All nine marinas in state parks will be open to the public on May 8, or their typical designated opening date. This is in addition to shoreline mooring sites at all state parks.
- State park and forest facilities including offices, campgrounds, and the Nature Inn at Bald Eagle in the [counties in the yellow phase](#) will be open to the public on May 15. Cabins in these areas will not open until June 12, to allow returning staff the ability to thoroughly clean them and prepare them for use. Campgrounds and cabins in all other state parks will remain closed.

With the exception of one restroom in each day use area and marina, all state park and forest facilities outside of the counties in the yellow phase will remain closed until changes are made consistent with Governor Wolf's guidelines for reopening. The public can still access DCNR trails, lakes, rivers, streams, forests, roads, and parking areas statewide for recreation.

All playgrounds, nature play areas, interpretive centers, amphitheaters, and group camping facilities statewide will remain closed indefinitely. Swimming beaches statewide will be closed until June 6.

All programs, events, and large gatherings at state parks and forests in counties that are designated red are cancelled through June 15. Based on availability, organizers will have the option to reschedule later in the year. No new reservations for these activities are being taken.

In counties designated yellow, any events with more than 25 people will be cancelled. If the event is under 25 people and outdoors it will be allowed to occur, however any indoor events will be cancelled.

Consistent with Governor Wolf's guidelines for reopening, facilities such as pavilions will only be available for groups under 25 and will be on a first come first serve basis. Picnic tables in state parks will be dispersed to allow room to spread out and avoid crowds. Campsites and cabins should only be used by members living in the same household as part of COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

People who live in areas still under stay-at-home orders should not travel long distances for outdoor recreation, and instead should look for opportunities close to home. Pennsylvania has 6,000 local parks and more than 12,000 miles of trails available (check first to make sure they are open, as some local parks are closed).

Visitors can help keep state parks and forest lands safe by following these practices:

- Avoid crowded parking lots and trailheads
- Bring a bag and either carry out your trash or dispose of it properly
- Clean up after pets
- Avoid activities that put you at greater risk of injury, so you don't require a trip to the emergency room

To help avoid exposure to COVID-19 and protect others, and still enjoy the outdoors:

- Don't hike or recreate in groups – go with those under the same roof, and adhere to social distancing (stay 6 feet apart)
- Wear a mask
- Take hand sanitizer with you and use it regularly
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, and nose
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with a tissue or flexed elbow
- If you are sick, stay home

Pennsylvania has 121 state parks, and 20 forest districts.

Information about state parks and forests is available on the [DCNR website](#). Updates also are being provided on DCNR's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.