



**HILARY S. FRANZ**  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS



**Public safety is the number one concern for DNR and that is why staying home is the best way to combat the COVID-19 outbreak.**

**Stay Home.  
Save Lives.**

# Recreation & Public Access Closure Frequently Asked Questions

## **DNR Will Be Closing Public Access to State Lands to Keep Everyone Safe During the COVID-19 Outbreak**

### **How long is this closure?**

For about 5 weeks, from Thursday, March 26 through Monday, May 4. During this period, DNR will assess the situation to evaluate whether lands will remain closed past May 4.

### **Does this apply to all DNR Managed Lands?**

Yes, this applies to all DNR managed lands, which include trailheads, trails, roads, free flight launch sites, campgrounds, water access sites, day-use areas, and dispersed recreation (camping, off-trail hiking, hunting, target shooting, etc.)

### **Why is the closure necessary?**

The decision to close is a difficult one. Recreation provides physical and mental health benefits. Unfortunately, too many people were not following recent safety guidelines while out on our landscapes. At this time, it is extremely important that we follow the direction of scientists and doctors to stay home except for essential needs.

### **Isn't being out in the wilderness safer than being elsewhere?**

In some ways, yes, but other people also think so. When everyone heads to their favorite recreation area, suddenly people are parking together, sharing facilities, passing on the trail. Closing access is a significant step, but it's necessary and temporary. The sooner people follow stay home direction, the sooner we can welcome folks back.

### **Why is camping closed?**

Campgrounds bring people together and that is why we cherish outdoor adventure. However, this creates a potentially unsafe setting. Visitors stay for days at a time, cook and eat in close proximity, share restroom facilities, and have limited resources for following disinfection and hand washing recommendations.

We weighed many scenarios, and came to the conclusion that the most effective course is to fully close camping for now. We recognize that this will create additional challenges for some people, however, it is imperative that we take action to limit risk and exposure for everyone.

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# Frequently Asked Questions Continued

## **How will this be enforced?**

We take this closure seriously and expect the public to also. Ultimately, we are counting on people to do the right thing and comply. It is important that we all abide by this closure to protect the safety of everyone. Our enforcement staff will be patrolling our landscapes. If you are found on state land, our staff will provide information about the closure and ask you to leave. Citations can be issued to individuals who refuse to leave.

## **Does this apply to commercial activities?**

No. Consistent with the Governor's order, essential business functions of DNR will continue on state lands. That includes timber harvests, which support the manufacture and distribution of forest products, and our agriculture lands that support our food supply. Social distancing will be adhered to by these workers, and any non-essential elements will be done via telework or suspended.

**Stay Home. Save Lives.**