



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2020

Status of Grand Traverse County Parks During "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order: Socially Distant Walking, Hiking, Running, and Exploring Encouraged

Traverse City, MI – In compliance with last week's Executive Order No. 2020-20, "Temporary restrictions on the use of places of public accommodation," issued by Governor Whitmer, and in consideration of President Trump's decision today to extend "social distancing" measures through April 30, Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation continues to take measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in its parks.

The "good news," according to County Parks and Recreation Director Kristine Erickson, "is that most of the County parks and their trails remain open to be enjoyed by all of those who practice social distancing while using them."

Erickson explained that some of the protective measures include closing the skate park, the playground, and basketball court at Civic Center Park. Signage has been posted at each facility stating it is unlawful to enter, and the non-emergency Central Dispatch telephone number is included for park patrons to report trespassing. The Civic Center building which houses Easling Pool and Howe Arena also has been closed for two weeks.

To further prevent the spread of the Coronavirus, restrooms at Civic Center Park, the Natural Education Reserve, Beitner Park, and the VASA Trailhead have been closed "until further notice." The restrooms at Medalie Park remain closed for the winter season. The portable restrooms at Maple Bay Park and Natural Area and Twin Lakes Park are seasonal, and unavailable until May or later.

Although certain facilities are closed, Erickson reminds county residents that "trails are open and fresh air is free" at Civic Center Park, the Natural Education Reserve and its trailheads, Beitner Park, the VASA Trail, Medalie Park, Twin Lakes Park, and Maple Bay Park and Natural Area. "Ultimately," said the Parks Director, "if we all keep a safe distance from one another while exploring our parks, then everyone will reap the health benefits."

Depending on whether the Governor's order to stay home and stay safe is extended, Power Island opens for camping on Memorial Day Weekend. Parks and Recreation continues to take reservations for Power Island camping and for events at Civic Center Park (Howe Arena, ball fields, pavilion, amphitheater, Twin Lakes Park (Gilbert Lodge, pavilion, dormitory, and two rental cabins for overnight stays), and Medalie Park (pavilion) properties as long as events are scheduled after mid-May 2020. Call 231-922-4818 or send a request through the County Parks and Recreation's web page: www.grandtraverse.org/parks.

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