



MEDIA RELEASE

San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 2, 2020

San Juan County State Parks to Open for Day Use on May 5th

On April 27th, Governor Inslee announced a May 5th partial opening of some outdoor recreation activities. Included in his action was an opening of many State Parks across Washington for day use activities. However, he held off on announcing any opening of San Juan County State Parks, pending support from San Juan County decision makers.

On April 29th, the San Juan County Board of Health discussed the issue and granted that support. On May 2nd, State Parks officially announced that all State Parks in San Juan County will open on May 5th for day use only. Full details are available on the Washington State Parks website: <https://parks.state.wa.us/1177/Novel-Coronavirus---COVID-19>.

Said San Juan County Council and Board of Health member Bill Watson, "This is not a full re-opening. There's no camping. No large gatherings. And until non-essential travel is allowed in Washington, people shouldn't be coming from off-island to visit our State Parks. The real focus here is to let local residents enjoy all of our public lands in San Juan County."

San Juan County Land Bank, National Historic Park, BLM, and other public lands in San Juan County have been open throughout, and will remain so.

Local State Parks staff have developed a plan to manage park usage that maximizes safety. Details range from closing off the tower at the top of Mt. Constitution in Moran State Park to developing enhanced maintenance protocols for servicing restrooms.

While this is a small step forward, it is an adjustment in the right direction. Above all, it is a chance for residents to utilize local public lands in ways that are thoughtful, safe, and respectful of social distancing guidelines.

State Parks have issued the following guidelines and restrictions to address the opening, these should apply to use of all public lands within San Juan County:

BEFORE YOU GO:

Opt for day trips close to home. Overnight stays are not permitted.

Recreate with immediate household members only. Recreation with those outside of your household creates new avenues for virus transmission.

Come prepared. Visitors may find reduced or limited restroom services as staff begin the process to reopen facilities. You are advised to bring your own soap, water, hand sanitizer and toilet paper, as well as a mask or bandana to cover your nose and mouth.

Enjoy the outdoors when healthy. If you have symptoms of fever, coughing or shortness of breath, save your outdoor adventure for another day.

WHEN YOU GET THERE:

Avoid crowds. Be prepared to go somewhere else or come back another time if your destination looks crowded.

Practice physical distancing. Keep 6 feet between you and those outside your immediate household. Leave at least one parking space between your vehicle and the vehicle next to you.

Wash your hands often. Keep up on personal hygiene and bring your own water, soap and hand sanitizer with you.

Pack out what you pack in. Take any garbage with you, including disposable gloves and masks.