

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2020

**SOMERSET COUNTY PARK COMMISSION:
A REMINDER TO COMPLY WITH GOVERNOR MURPHY'S
REQUIREMENT TO ENGAGE IN SOCIAL DISTANCING IN PARKS**



**Somerset County
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For the hearing/speech impaired

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BRIDGEWATER, NJ – In the midst of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, the Somerset County Park Commission reminds all that its general use parks and trail systems are open for park patrons to get out and enjoy some very special outdoor spaces.

Specifically, Natirar Park in Far Hills and Peapack-Gladstone, Duke Island Park and North Branch Park in Bridgewater, East County Park in Warren, Colonial Park in Somerset, and Skillman Park in Montgomery are open. In addition, the trail systems located in Washington Valley Park in Bridgewater, the Sourland Mountain Preserve in Hillsborough and Montgomery, the Environmental Education Center at Lord Stirling Park in Basking Ridge, and the Little Brook Sanctuary in Bernardsville are open.

Please be advised that Natirar Park and the Sourland Mountain Preserve have been experiencing extremely heavy visitation, and thus, park patrons should strongly consider visiting other locations in order to avoid crowds and effectively engage in social distancing practices.

Over the course of the last two weeks, the Park Commission has taken proactive measures in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. While parks and trails are open, there is no access to bathrooms, entry onto playgrounds has been prohibited, and buildings have been closed to the public. Moreover, in an effort to ensure compliance with Governor Murphy's directive, the Commission encourages its patrons to follow best social distancing practices while engaging in outdoor activities including but not limited to the following:

- Make space for others on the trails. To protect yourself and other park visitors while on trails, visitors should warn other users of their presence when passing by. As others pass, step aside for them.
- Go solo – or with immediate family only. Please visit parks with family members from your household or for solo activities such as dog-walking or biking. Follow carry-in/carry-out guidelines by cleaning up after your pet and taking any trash home with you.
- Give yourself – and others – space. Do not gather in groups of 10 or more and maintain a six-foot distance from others at all times. If the recommended distance is not possible, go to another area of the park or visit the park another time.
- Go before you go. As park restrooms are closed, please use the restroom before visiting a park. Do not attempt to open bathroom or other facility doors, which are locked.
- Stay away from playground equipment and parks facilities. All playground equipment and all park buildings are closed to the public.
- Follow CDC and state health recommendations. Visit cdc.gov and covid19.nj.gov for the most recent recommendations to protect yourself and others from spreading COVID-19.

Barring further governmental directives prohibiting same, the Commission will endeavor to keep its parks and trail systems open so long as doing so does not facilitate non-compliance with Governor Murphy's Executive Orders. Should violations occur, the Commission will have no choice but to close its parks and trails. For this reason, the



Somerset County Park Commission strongly encourages all to heed the Governor's social distancing directives and practice them on its parks and trails.

Updates on cancellations and openings may be found at www.somersetcountyparks.org or by calling 908-722-1200.

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