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CREDIT/ATTRIBUTION: NPS/HFC

Example of an illustration for use in social media to encourage visitors to wear face masks.

NPS Communicators Should...

- Follow approved language, key messages, and guidance.
- Identify the park PIO, web manager, and social media manager (if they are not all the same person) and ensure that they are able to contact one another quickly to coordinate public messaging after it has been approved by park/regional leadership.
- Ensure they have access to the NPS/DOI network from home.
- Ensure they have access to edit their park website and social media platforms.
- Ensure their contact information is up to date in the [NPS Comms Contacts list\(link is external\)](#) so that WASO OComm and others can reach you.
- As much as possible, coordinate your communications with your operational partners –

concessioners, cooperating associations, youth service corps organizations, and your philanthropic partner (friends group). WASO OComm has shared talking points with park operational partners, concessionaires, and cooperating associations, youth programs via their WASO directorate leads.

Responding to Media Inquiries

- Regional and park staff with public information officer responsibilities should use the approved talking points below when responding to media and public inquiries.
- When responding to media, please CC your [regional communications office\(link is external\)](#) and the WASO Office of Communications at newsmedia@nps.gov.
- Inquiries from national outlets, regarding something not covered in the talking points, or referring to the NPS as a whole, should be sent to your regional communications office and WASO OComm at newsmedia@nps.gov.
- You can share the link to the public-facing [Public Health Update page](#) on NPS.gov in your responses to media and proactively on social media ([Facebook\(link is external\)](#) and [Twitter\(link is external\)](#)).

Communications-Related Quicklinks

- [Communications Community Homepage\(link is external\)](#) (InsideNPS)
- [NPS Digital Community Site\(link is external\)](#)
 - [Alerts Guide\(link is external\)](#)
 - [News Release Guide\(link is external\)](#)
- [NPS Comms and Regional Web Manager Contact List\(link is external\)](#)

Press Materials

Parks should regularly review their web alerts, current conditions pages, and any pinned social media posts to ensure the information accurately reflects current park operations. Most public notifications of changes in park operations, (i.e. a Visitor Center closure or reopening) can be made online without a press release. Press releases should be reserved for major park operation changes, such as a full closure or reopening and must be reviewed by WASO OComm. Parks should consult with their regional PIOs to determine appropriate communications outreach.

Major Changes in Park Access

Announcements about major changes to park operations, especially those from **“Group A” parks**, must be cleared by WASO OComm. Parks with operational approval to modify major changes to operations, such as a full park closure or reopening, must coordinate with their regional PIO to determine the best format for the announcements (web/social or press release).

To provide a clear picture of your park’s operations, any releases should indicate both open and closed areas of the park. Parks are encouraged to refer by link to the state/local guidance/orders visitors should be aware of. As that guidance is out of our lane and may change, we ask that parks only link to the guidance, not try to summarize it in our release. This helps keep the validity of news releases over time.

Talking Points and Messages for Media and Public Inquiries

General Questions on Current NPS Operations

The National Park Service continues to closely monitor and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local officials, park operations continue to adapt to changing conditions while maintaining public access, particularly outdoor spaces.

Park managers continue to examine each facility function and service provided to align with

local conditions.

Modifications to park operations are continually evaluated and adjusted on a park-by-park basis with the support of NPS and Department of the Interior (DOI) leadership. We continue to work closely with the NPS Office of Public Health using CDC guidance to ensure public areas and workspaces are safe and clean for visitors, employees, partners, and volunteers.

We ask the public to be our partner in recreating responsibly, by following CDC and state and local guidance, avoiding high risk activities, adopting social distancing practices and by wearing a face covering when social distancing cannot be maintained.

Recreating Responsibly & Visiting Parks Safely

The #RecreateResponsibly campaign includes two key sets of messages: how to plan your visit and how to act once you are in a park. OComm worked with numerous NPS programs and partners to develop and expand on the #RecreateResponsibly campaign. Parks are encouraged to use this messaging when they communicate with the public or media.

- [Public facing page](#) with Recreate Responsibly messaging
- [Messaging guidance on the Communications Community Site\(link is external\)](#)
- Recreate responsibly [graphics for public use](#)

Messaging

- We ask the public to be our partner in recreating responsibly, by adopting social distancing practices and by wearing a face covering when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Whether seeking wide-open spaces or exploring a historic urban neighborhood, we encourage visitors to follow the following recreate responsibly tips:
 - **Know before you go.** Visit [NPS.gov/findapark](https://www.nps.gov/findapark) for current park conditions and availability of restrooms and other facilities. Make a plan, follow the [10 Essentials](#), and if you are sick, stay home.
 - **Keep it close.** Follow the state and county orders governing the open status of the area you're considering visiting. The National Park Service is working closely with governors and state and local health departments as we increase access and

services across the National Park System.

- **Keep your distance.** Recreate with the people in your household. Give others plenty of room whether you are on a trail, at a boat launch, or in a parking lot. Follow the CDC social distancing guidelines for staying six feet away from others. Be prepared to cover your nose and mouth if you're near others.
- **Know your limits.** Postpone challenging hikes or trying new activities while first responders, parks, and communities continue to concentrate on responding to the pandemic.
- **Keep it with you.** If you brought it, take it with you. Trash pickup and restroom facilities will continue to be limited in many park areas. Follow Leave No Trace principles.
- **Keep it inclusive.** Be an active part of making our nation's parks and public lands safe and welcoming for all identities and abilities.
- **OPTIONAL:** The NPS conducts thousands of search and rescues servicewide each year, many of which could be avoided with visitors planning and making responsible decisions. During the ongoing health crisis, it's critical that we make wise choices to keep our national park rangers and first responders out of harm's way. Please follow these Recreate Responsibly tips to safely spend time outside.

Additional visitation messages

- The health and wellbeing of visitors and employees at national parks is our top priority. America's public lands belong to the American people, and throughout this pandemic the National Park Service and **[insert specific park]** have followed guidance from the **[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(link is external\)](#)**(CDC) and state and local public health authorities to adapt to changing conditions.
- We urge visitors to park only in designated areas, pack out everything you bring into a park, plan a visit at times other than busiest of the day, maintain social distance from other visitors, and if you encounter a crowded trail-head or overlook, seek another location to recreate.
- Visitors can **[find their virtual park!](#)** Explore national parks from the comfort of anywhere in the world through online galleries of photos, videos, webcams, podcasts, and sound recordings.
- The **[CDC has offered guidance\(link is external\)](#)** to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases while enjoying the outdoors.

Questions on enforcement of social distancing practices

Park rangers are on duty to uphold normal rules and regulations and assist visitors as needed. Some park concessionaires, such as lodging, food, and tour services, may require face coverings in their facilities. NPS and park partners and concessionaires have posted safety and informational signs **[insert locations and list other mitigation steps if any]** and continue to emphasize the need for individuals to follow the guidance. Notably, most visitors have been responsive and responsible in following the guidance.

If pressed

While we strongly encourage social distancing and the use of face coverings when social distancing cannot be maintained, the NPS will not take actions against individuals who do not wear cloth face coverings or adhere to the guidance. We have posted signs **[insert locations and list other mitigation steps if any]** and continue to emphasize the need for individuals to follow the guidance. Notably, most visitors have been responsive and responsible in following the guidance.

Questions on bringing back staff safely

This response was developed to help address questions about why some parks aren't reopening as fast as other local organizations/groups, etc.

The NPS continues to follow the latest CDC guidance for risk assessment, disease prevention, and protection in public spaces and workplaces. Park superintendents and managers are also making decisions to bring more employees back on-site using CDC, state and local recommendations as a guide. Superintendents and managers also account for the unique needs of their parks and the health and wellness of their staff. Therefore, resumption of park operations may take longer than other local organizations.

We ask the public to be our partner in adopting social distancing practices and help us continue to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Please check our website and social media for updates on park access.

Questions about impact to visitation

(As noted on the [NPS stats website](#), visitation data is delayed until further notice. If you have any questions about visitation statistics, please reach out to newsmedia@nps.gov and Jeffrey_Olson@nps.gov.)

Throughout this pandemic, public lands have provided Americans with space to recreate responsibly. Some parks report preliminary visitation data, which may reflect increases in visitation, while others - such as historic homes and buildings – may show decreases or no data at all yet. Those preliminary numbers are just early indicators of annual visitation and subject to analysis before being finalized at the end of the calendar year.

Traditionally, the NPS reports official visitation numbers, by park and servicewide, on an annual basis each spring. Most parks track recreational visits, but they are not counted on a daily basis in ways that can easily be extracted.

Additional information on how the NPS tracks visitation is available on [NPS.gov](#). The [NPS Stats database](#) provides additional data, reports, and highlights for individual parks and for past years.

Questions on the America the Beautiful (Interagency) Pass

The America the Beautiful - National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass (Interagency Pass) is valid for one year from the date of purchase (or valid for a lifetime if you purchased a Senior Lifetime Pass) and may be used by up to two people who have signed the back of the pass. Due to the unprecedented nature and unknown duration of the coronavirus pandemic, the Interagency Pass Program is not currently able to issue refunds or extend the passes. We do, however, recognize the difficult circumstances we are all experiencing. We are looking into possible solutions and will provide additional information [on our website](#).

Questions on confirmed COVID-19 cases in NPS employees and volunteers

It is our standing policy for the Washington Office of Communications to coordinate messaging that represents the NPS as a whole. Please continue to refer questions on employee matters related to COVID-19 to NewsMedia@nps.gov, which is regularly monitored.

Graphics

Posters, Signs, and Other Materials (courtesy of Harpers Ferry Center)

Think about your signs as part of your overall communications strategy. "[So You Need A Sign](#)" walks through some best practices and can help you think through your sign needs, **including use of signs provided by state and local authorities.**

The signs and materials below have been developed by Harpers Ferry Center for use in parks. We welcome your input about your park's specific needs. If you have ideas or questions, reach out to HFC_Si@nps.gov. (Note: DOI has also developed a [series of signs\(link is external\)](#) for DOI office buildings.)

How to Order Signs: HFC has revised the [ordering instructions\(link is external\)](#) for NPS materials using GPOExpress. It now includes information about using a new online catalog to order the HFC-designed materials below. Parks should also contact their operational/on-site partners to determine if they also need signs so that they can be included



CREDIT/ATTRIBUTION: NPS/HAVO

COVID-19 one-way directional sign at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

in their print order.

- **Safety Alert**

- English: [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [11x17\(link is external\)](#) | [24x36\(link is external\)](#) | [36x24\(link is external\)](#)
- Spanish: [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [11x17\(link is external\)](#) | [24x36\(link is external\)](#)
- Bilingual -- English/Spanish: [11x17\(link is external\)](#) | [36x24\(link is external\)](#)
- Bilingual -- English/Russian: [11x17\(link is external\)](#)
- Multilingual -- English/Japanese/Korean/Mandarin: [24x36\(link is external\)](#)

- **Building Closed**

- **Redirection**

- English: [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [8.5x14\(link is external\)](#) | [11x17\(link is external\)](#) | [24x36\(link is external\)](#)
- Spanish: [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [8.5x14\(link is external\)](#) | [11x17\(link is external\)](#) | [24x36\(link is external\)](#)

- **Safety Alert**

- English: [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [8.5x14\(link is external\)](#) | [11x17\(link is external\)](#) | [24x36\(link is external\)](#)
- Spanish: [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [8.5x14\(link is external\)](#) | [11x17\(link is external\)](#) | [24x36\(link is external\)](#)

- [Visitor Center Closed / Online Order Pick Up Only\(link is external\)](#)

- **Building Open Safety Alert**

- [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [11x17 \(Option 1\)\(link is external\)](#) | [11x17 \(Option 2\)\(link is external\)](#)

- **One-Way Directional Signs** (see also the directional floor stickers below)

- Enter: [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [24x36\(link is external\)](#)
- Do Not Enter: [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [24x36\(link is external\)](#)
- One Way Hiking: [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#)

- **Floor stickers**

- [Directional\(link is external\)](#) (one-way, etc)
- [Multiple Image Options -- 1st Edition\(link is external\)](#)

[Multiple Image Options -- 2nd Edition\(link is external\)](#)

- [Pride Edition\(link is external\)](#)
- [Basic Edition\(link is external\)](#) ([Basic Edition in meters\(link is external\)](#))
- Southwest Edition (now incorporated into the editions above)

• **Social Distancing Stickers for Seating Areas**

- [8"x8" stickers for benches, etc\(link is external\)](#)

• **Face Mask Posters and Social Media**

Graphics: HFC's Sign Program developed these illustrations as positive ways to encourage use of face coverings by visitors. The messages and designs for these illustrations were carefully vetted by DOI and NPS leadership, so the HFC Sign Program will not be able to take requests for customized designs. We encourage parks to use the designs provided, even if the animals depicted are not found in their site. As a national initiative, these images play on the association of wildlife with the NPS in general.

- **Posters:** The letter-size versions are easily printable on most printers and both the letter-size and poster sizes are available for ordering from GPOExpress. As this is a nationwide initiative, HFC encourages parks to get creative with placement and use of the posters and to utilize all six designs rather than selecting and repeating a single design. Because the poster versions of the face mask graphics use the NPS Arrowhead, they are only for use in and by parks.
 - [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#)
 - [24x32\(link is external\)](#)
- **Social Media Graphics:** These can be used individually in social media to encourage visitors to #RecreateResponsibly using the guidelines in the [Recreate Responsibly messaging](#). The files for these graphics are in the [NPGallery](#) and are



CREDIT/ATTRIBUTION: NPS/HFC

designed to be able to be used by partners as well.

- **Safe Distancing**

- Keep a Safe Distance

- Option 1 (with ranger hat): [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [11x17\(link is external\)](#) | [24x36\(link is external\)](#)

- Option 2 (no ranger hat): [8.5x11\(link is external\)](#) | [11x17\(link is external\)](#) | [24x36\(link is external\)](#)

- Entering Area with Limited Space

- [8.5x5.5\(link is external\)](#) | [8.5x11 \(link is external\)](#)

- [Ranger Safety / Maintain 6 foot distance\(link is external\)](#)

- [Campground Day Use\(link is external\)](#)

- **Customizable Signs**

- **Sign Design Toolkit:** This kit contains Illustrator and InDesign files with a variety of basic COVID-related sign symbols, elements, and approved messages to allow parks to customize signs for their needs. [zip file\(link is external\)](#) (10mb)

- **Building Closed / Redirect (templates):** These are Illustrator files.

- [11x17](#) | [8.5x11](#) | [8.5x14](#)

Infographics

- [NPGallery](#) - includes alt text for adding infographics to NPS.gov pages as an accordion under the image (see [Draw a Bison](#) infographic) or bookmark at the bottom of the webpage (see [Changes to Senior Pass](#) infographic)
- [NPS.gov](#) - for partners to use to download infographics
- **Social Distancing Tips for NPS Employees:** Visit the [Public Health Guidance page](#) for a downloadable and printable infographic with tips for NPS staff for interacting with the public while practicing social distancing.

Images

- [Coronavirus image](#) (jpg)
 - Public domain; as a matter of courtesy, when possible credit CDC/Alissa Eckert, MSMI; Dan Higgins, MAMS.
 - This illustration, created at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reveals ultrastructural morphology exhibited by coronaviruses. Note the spikes that

adorn the outer surface of the virus, which impart the look of a corona surrounding the virion, when viewed electron microscopically.

Digital Guidance (Web and Social Media)

Park Websites

(updated/added November 18)

An [NPS Public Health Update webpage](http://www.nps.gov/coronavirus) (short URL: www.nps.gov/coronavirus) contains information about the NPS response to COVID-19. WASO OComm maintains this page in collaboration with the NPS Office of Public Health; Office of Risk Management; and Division of Law Enforcement, Security, and Emergency Services and the Department of the Interior. It will be updated with the most current information about the NPS response to COVID-19. You are encouraged to link to that page in your communications about COVID-19.

Web authors should work with their park/office leadership to provide timely and accurate updates online to reflect these changing conditions:

1. [Post alerts](#) and press releases (see [media relations](#) above) on NPS.gov
2. [Provide detailed information about your park status on the Current Conditions page](#)
3. [Update operating hours and seasons in structured data](#)
4. [Share information on social media](#)

In addition to the tasks listed above, follow these best practices on your NPS.gov website:

- Following guidance from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), coronavirus-related content on NPS.gov should only provide public information about our response to the virus and guidance for the public about how they can engage with us safely. DHS guidance says: When posting information about the coronavirus to an agency website, agencies should remember to “stay in your lane” and only post agency-specific information – for everything else, link to authoritative sources (Coronavirus.gov, CDC.gov and USA.gov first, then others). While we provide occupational safety and health and other similar information on inside.nps.gov/coronavirus, that is an internal-

facing page for employees only, not the public.

- Do not modify the title or welcome text on your park homepage (see [homepage element guidance\(link is external\)](#)). That content is meant to be evergreen, as it is used in other places (such as the state pages and the API) that will seem out of context if it includes information about anniversaries, events, or unique situations, such as COVID-19. Your alert will call attention to the COVID-19 response, and you can also add a feature on the homepage linking to page with more information (e.g., Current Conditions).
- Review your homepage and popular trip-planning pages to make sure your content is current and matches the situation at your park. For example, remove features that advertise an upcoming (and now canceled) event or invite visitors to come to your (now closed) park.
- Delete canceled events from the [event calendar\(link is external\)](#). Add virtual events to the event calendar using the tag “virtual experience.”
- Ensure that any new content you add to your site follows all [accessibility requirements\(link is external\)](#).

1. Post Alerts on NPS.gov

You must post an alert on NPS.gov to notify visitors of changes in operations. A closure alert summarizing park status is required; an information alert may also be posted for program or event cancellations. In both cases, you should link to a webpage that has more detailed information about the situation (e.g., a news release or your Current Conditions page). Remember to use only NPS-approved language and key messages to explain the situation.

When creating alerts as detailed below, follow these best practices:

- Use the recommended alert titles listed below.
- Include sufficient information in either a news release or current conditions page (wherever you link to from your alert) that visitors can understand what is closed and what remains open. Do not tell users to click for more information; a “more” link will appear automatically when you add a URL.
- It is not necessary to post an alert notifying visitors that entrance fees are being suspended. If you choose to do so, create an information alert and use approved language (see talking points above).

- [See more about alert types and guidance for creating alerts\(link is external\).](#)

Sample Alerts

Temporary Park or Facility Closures In Response to Local Health Order (added November 18)

Alert Type: Closure

Title: Temporary suspension of indoor services due to COVID-19

Text (255-character limit): In support of the **[State or Public Health Office]**, **[indoor spaces and services/list of facilities]** are temporarily closed. **[Insert outdoor spaces that remain open]**.

Link: Current Conditions page with more details

<https://www.nps.gov/xxxx/planyourvisit/conditions.htm>

Change in Operations/Park Closure

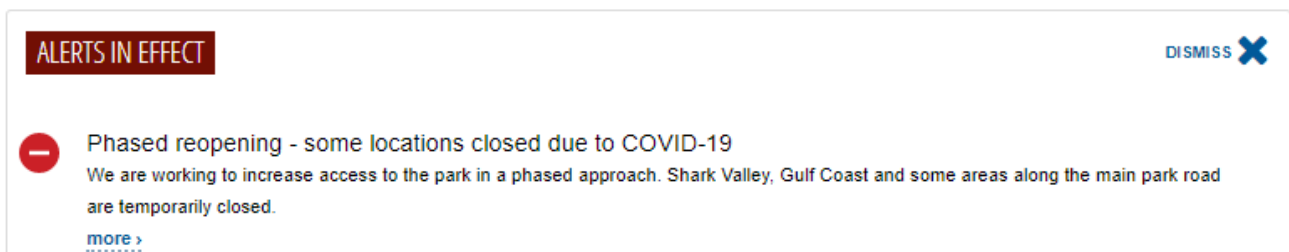
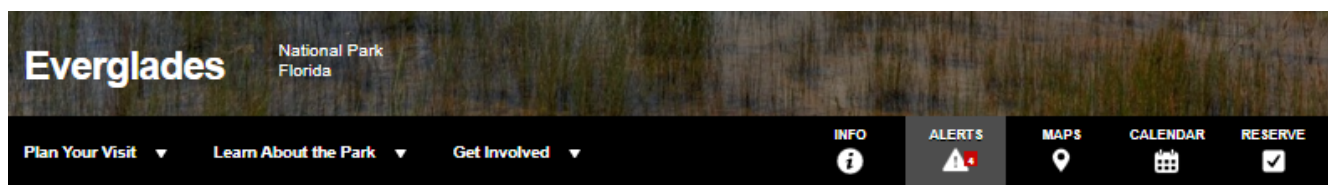
Alert Type: Closure

Title: Phased reopening – some locations closed due to COVID-19

Text (255-character limit): We are working to increase access to the park in a phased approach. **[Park Name]** or **[facility name]** is temporarily closed.

Link: news release or <https://www.nps.gov/xxxx/planyourvisit/conditions.htm>

See sample closure alert on the [Everglades NP website](#) and screenshot here:



Increased Recreational Access

Alert Type: Closure

Title: Phased reopening – some locations closed due to COVID-19

Text (255-character limit): We are working to increase access to the park in a phased approach. **[Name of facility/trail/park location]** is open. **[Name of facility/trail/park location]** remains closed.

Link: news release or <https://www.nps.gov/xxxx/planyourvisit/conditions.htm>

Program/Event Cancellations

Alert Type: Information

Title: **[Program/event name]** is cancelled.

Text (255-character limit): Following guidance from the CDC and state and local public health authorities, **[Program/event name]** is cancelled.

Link: news release or <https://www.nps.gov/xxxx/planyourvisit/conditions.htm>

2. Provide Detailed Information on Current Conditions Page

Post detailed information about your park’s current status on your current conditions page and link to that page from your alert. Recommended text includes: (updated November 18)

The National Park Service is working service-wide with federal, state, and local public health authorities to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and state and local public health authorities, access to **[park name]** is as follows:

Open: *[Insert open roads/trails/park grounds information]*

Closed: *[Insert closed roads/trails/facilities information]*

While the listed areas are accessible for visitors to enjoy, a return to full operations will continue to be phased, and services may be limited. When recreating, please follow local area health orders **[link to order]** and [recreate responsibly](#) by keeping social distance, wearing a face covering when social distance cannot be maintained, avoiding high risk activities, and staying home if you feel sick.

The [CDC has offered guidance\(link is external\)](#) to help people recreating in parks and open spaces prevent the spread of infectious diseases. We will continue to monitor all park

functions to ensure that visitors adhere to CDC guidance for mitigating risks associated with the transmission of COVID-19 and take any additional steps necessary to protect public health.

3. Update Operating Hours and Seasons in Structured Data

NOTE: Previous guidance suggested April 30 as an end date. Use state and local guidance to determine the end date for exceptions but remember to go back into the system and adjust that date as needed. If you are unsure, coordinate with your park or regional public information officer.

Background

- Parks indicate the hours they are open through the Structured Data System. Information is collected for park districts; a park as a whole; and various facilities (e.g., visitor centers, campgrounds).
- The system requires authors to indicate their “core” hours, and then they may create exceptions to those core hours (e.g., a visitor center may have core hours from May 1 to September 1, where it is open 8 am to 6 pm and then an “exception” running from September 1 to April 30 where that facility is closed).
- This information appears on the park’s basic information page (e.g., click on the Operating Hours & Seasons and Visitor Centers sections on [Denali’s basic info page](#)). Web authors can add it to other pages as well.

Recommendation

Parks that are closing facilities, districts, or some/all of their park, should update their structured data information to reflect these changes. The NPS.gov team recommends adding an exception for your park and each visitor center or campground that is closed.

Process

If you are unfamiliar with the data system, consider reading [the structured data system overview\(link is external\)](#) first and see the [guidance for adding/modifying operating hours and seasons\(link is external\)](#).

1. **Log into the Content Management System (CMS)** and proceed to the Structured Data System
2. Open the relevant record you need to edit (e.g., a particular visitor center or basic information about park districts/the entire park)
3. Go to the “Operating Hours & Seasons” panel for that record and click the “Exception” button
4. Click “Add New” to create a new exception
5. Fill out the fields accordingly:
 1. Exception Name – Name your exception “Closed Due to COVID-19”
 2. Description - Insert the appropriate date and your park name/facility in this text: “As of **[date closure began]**, **[XX park/facility]** is closed until further notice in accordance with CDC, state, and local public health guidance related to COVID-19.”
 3. Start / End Dates – Pick an appropriate start and end date. We recommend using state and local guidance to determine an end date for COVID-19 changes (see best practices below).
 4. Days – For each day of the week, indicate that you are closed in the “All Day” fields.
6. Save your changes and proceed to the next structured data record that needs to be edited, if you have more than one facility or district to adjust.

Best Practices

- Because exceptions must have an end date and you may not know the actual end date for your closure(s), we recommend using state and local guidance to determine the end date for COVID-19 changes. If you are unsure, coordinate with your park or regional public information officer. Remember to go in and adjust this date as new information becomes available.
- When your facility and/or park reopens, remember to delete the exception so the system displays the correct hours for your facility.
- Check whether you have any existing exceptions for your facilities. If you do, and they overlap temporally with your new COVID-19 exceptions, you may wish to delete them for now and recreate them after you no longer need a COVID-19 exception.

Sample Page Showing COVID-19 Closure

MURIE SCIENCE AND LEARNING CENTER >

The Murie Science and Learning Center promotes science and stewardship on behalf of national parks in northern Alaska. Murie is part of a national effort to increase scientific literacy by showcasing research from living laboratories like Denali National Park and Preserve.

The Murie Science and Learning Center is run by the National Park Service in partnership with Alaska Geographic and other organizations. The facility also serves as Denali's winter visitor center. It has limited hours in summer.

TODAY'S HOURS

FRIDAY
MAY 08, 2020

Closed

WINTER HOURS

Sun 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Mon 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Tue 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Wed 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Thu 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Fri 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Sat 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM

CLOSURES & SEASONAL EXCEPTIONS

HOLIDAYS

2020

	Date	Hours
New Year's Day	January 1	CLOSED
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 20	9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Washington's Birthday	February 17	9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Memorial Day	May 25	CLOSED
Independence Day	July 4	1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Labor Day	September 07	1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Columbus Day	October 12	9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Veteran's Day	November 11	9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Thanksgiving	November 26	CLOSED
Christmas Day	December 25	CLOSED

CLOSED DUE TO COVID-19
MARCH 17 - MAY 15

As of March 17, the Murie Science & Learning Center is closed until further notice in accordance with CDC, state, and local public health guidance related to COVID-19.

Sun: Closed Thu: Closed
 Mon: Closed Fri: Closed
 Tue: Closed Sat: Closed
 Wed: Closed

CLOSED IN SPRING
MAY 15 - MAY 31

The Murie Science and Learning Center is closed in late May.

Sun: Closed Thu: Closed
 Mon: Closed Fri: Closed
 Tue: Closed Sat: Closed
 Wed: Closed

LIMITED HOURS IN SUMMER
JUNE 2 - SEPTEMBER 17

The Murie Science and Learning Center is open each afternoon in summer for family programs. Activities with a science educator, starting at 1 pm, are for kids age 5 to 15, although anyone is welcome to stop by!

Sun: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Thu: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
 Mon: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Fri: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
 Tue: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Sat: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
 Wed: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

4. Share on Social Media

As always, you are encouraged to share/retweet posts from the NPS national social media accounts. In addition, parks are encouraged to share content that allows visitors to continue to enjoy their park online, such as webcams, virtual tours, photo galleries, apps, or other digital content (see more below). On your channels, post a notification of the change in operations and include a link to your NPS.gov website that provides more information.

Facebook: Following guidance from the CDC and recommendations from state and local public health authorities in consultation with NPS Public Health Service officers, XX park/facility/program is temporarily closed/cancelled as of XX. Updates will be posted to the park website and social media channels. **[Include link to park website]**

Best Practices

Visitors often turn to social media to get the most up to date information and to ask questions. Stay on top of your messages, mentions, and comments, to answer any questions and provide customer service. Most importantly, provide timely responses—the sooner, the better. Here are a few best practices to follow as you work on social media:

- Determine if a comment is asking a question, a statement, or requesting additional information.
- Correct misinformation where possible.
- Provide links to additional resources/information (park website, alert, etc.)
- Remember, First Amendment always prevails.
- Avoid deleting comments or blocking. If, for any reason, you need to delete a comment, you must preserve a record of it (screenshot), including the reason why it was deleted.
- Don't forget about accessibility. While social media services and device manufacturers offer a varying degree of support for accessibility, NPS social media managers should ensure they make their content as accessible as possible given the support presented by those services. DOI and NPS are currently working on additional guidance, but [resources and tips\(link is external\)](#) are available.
- More information
 - [NPS Comment Policy](#)
 - [General Social Media FAQs\(link is external\)](#)
 - [Spring Cleaning Guidance\(link is external\)](#)

Sample Posts

Temporary closure/restriction due to state/local orders **(added November 18)**

In support of the **[XX order issued by the State or Public Health Office]** and to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, **[park name]** will temporarily limit indoor services. Effective **[immediately/date]**, the **[indoor spaces and services/list of facilities]** are temporarily closed/limited until further notice.

[XX areas] will remain accessible.

The health and wellbeing of visitors and park employees remains our top priority. We

continue to work closely with the NPS Office of Public Health using CDC guidance to ensure public areas and workspaces are safe and clean for visitors, employees, partners, and volunteers. Our operations are continually evaluated and adjusted as necessary to ensure public health and safety. Updates on the park's operations will be posted on the park website and social media.

Social Distancing/Crowded Area Example Post

Parks are encouraged to share images of overcrowding to provide potential visitors a better idea of the current situation with the following text. [See example post\(link is external\)](#).

The health and safety of our visitors, employees, volunteers, and partners at **[park]** is our number one priority. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for this pandemic includes social distancing. We are concerned that current visitation patterns are not meeting current CDC guidance on social distancing. If you are coming to the park, please choose to visit areas that are not crowded to allow for adequate social distancing. ***[Insert park-specific locations]***

As services are limited, the National Park Service urges visitors to:

- Park only in designated areas.
- Pack out everything you bring into a park.
- Plan a visit at times other than busiest of the day.
- Maintain social distance from other visitors.
- If you encounter a crowded trail-head or overlook, go elsewhere.

We are closely monitoring COVID-19 with the federal, state, and local authorities. Outdoor spaces including ***[insert areas, trails, etc.]*** remain accessible and entrance-fee free to the public in accordance with the latest health guidance. The National Park Service encourages people who choose to visit open park areas during this pandemic to adhere to guidance from the CDC and state and local public health authorities to protect visitors, employees, and more vulnerable populations.

Sharing CDC Guidance and State/Local Orders Example Post

Following the latest public health guidance to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and reduce potential impacts to local communities, ***[insert park name]*** has limited services

available to the public. Some outdoor spaces remain accessible in accordance with the latest health guidance.

Please follow CDC guidance as well as **[Insert state or governor's order/directive, i.e.: Governor Hogan's Stay Home Directive]** in order to protect yourself and others. For **[insert state/city where order is in place]** these orders include, **[insert specific guidance on recreation, i.e.: maintaining social distance in public spaces and limiting gatherings to 10 or fewer people]**.

Park rangers remain on duty and normal regulations still apply. As services are limited and/or closed to the public, the National Park Service urges visitors to:

- Park only in designated areas
- Pack out everything you bring in
- Maintain 6 ft (2 m) social distance from others **[OPTIONAL based on local orders and limit gatherings to XX or less people, as ordered by [insert name of order]**
- Stay on marked trails
- Be prepared for limited, or no access, to restrooms and other facilities

Please check our current conditions page for the latest information.

Recreate Responsibly/Locally Example Post

See talking point above on recreating responsibly/staying local and [example post\(link is external\)](#).

Messages for Twitter

You can #HashtagAsAppropriate; see approved list below.

Message 1 – Limited services

Park grounds are accessible, but most services, including restrooms and many parking lots, are not available. See specific closures at **[park current conditions url]**

Message 2 – Practice social distancing

Maintain 6 ft (2 m) social distance from other visitors, wash your hands, and do not gather in groups. Find more tips at <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/news/public-health-update.htm>

Message 3 – Leave no Trace

If you visit, leave no trace. This means: take home everything you bring to the park and stay on trails. Learn more at <https://www.nps.gov/articles/leave-no-trace-seven-principles.htm>

Additional Considerations

Hashtags: #COVID19, #coronavirus,

#socialdistancing #wereallinthisogether #flattenthecurve #RecreateResponsibly

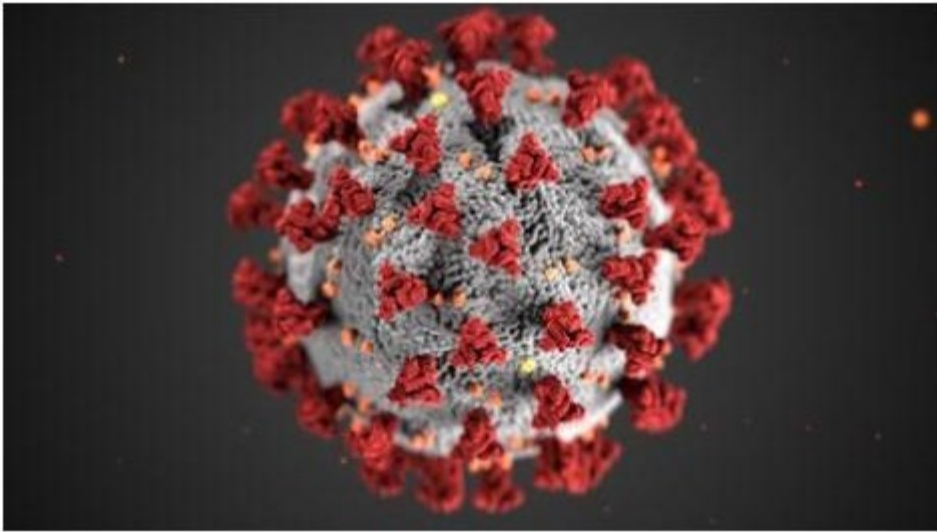
You may follow and retweet the following handles:

- Twitter: @CDCgov , @NatIParkService, @NPS_Press
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CDC>(link is external)
- Instagram: @CDCgov

Subject Sites and Organization Sites

If you need to communicate with your website audience about changes due to COVID-19, please do not edit the welcome text on your subject or organization site. This paragraph is intended to provide an introduction to your site, whether it's a compelling description of your subject or a description of what your office/program does. It should capture your audience and let them know what to expect—and it's used elsewhere on NPS.gov and in the NPS Data API—so adding non-evergreen information is simply not a best practice. Here are some alternatives to provide website visitors with the information they need:

- Add status updates to the relevant page on your site (e.g., if grant deadlines have been extended, add the information to the page that discusses the grant). This is where your target audience is mostly likely to be looking for this information anyway.
- Add status updates to your News page
- Create a "Status Update" page and add any pertinent information there
- Once you've added the content to your site, use the feature grid on your homepage to link to that page, using language similar to this but tailored to your situation:
 - Image: [Coronavirus image](#) (optional but recommended)
 - Title: COVID-19 Status Update
 - Description: The **[process/due date/etc.]** for **[grant applications/reporting/etc.]** has changed due to COVID-19. Learn more.
 - Link: **[URL of the relevant page or News or Status Update page]**



Info about COVID-19 for Park Partners ›

Partners who have operations in parks can get timely information about how the NPS response to COVID-19 impacts them.

Sample feature from the Partnerships subject site

Best Practices

- Use standard NPS.gov content management system (CMS) formatting styles—such as headers for headings (see [why bold is not a substitute for a heading\(link is external\)](#)) and bold or italics (sparingly!) for text emphasis. Do not be tempted to increase the size or change the color. Following standard styles in the CMS ensures accessibility and avoids issues such as insufficient contrast and lack of clarity for color-blind individuals.
- Consider using a [text call-out element\(link is external\)](#) to highlight status updates if you're adding that information to an existing page. Both the fact check call-out and the call-out with title can be used to call attention to an important detail without totally detracting from the other content on the page.
- If your audience includes operational partners (e.g., concessioners, youth service corps, cooperating associations, philanthropic organizations, etc.), consider linking to the [Public Health Information for the Park Partner Community page](#) as part of your status update.
- When the information is no longer needed and you have resumed normal operations, remember to remove the homepage feature and any added text from the News page or other relevant page and/or to delete any new pages.

Sharing Digital Content and Virtual Opportunities

Consider sharing or creating posts that encourage people to enjoy your park online, such as webcams, virtual tours, web content, photo galleries, distance learning opportunities, and apps. Keep in mind many families are looking for online activities for their school-age children. Check out [ideas for engaging virtual visitors on the Digital Community SharePoint site\(link is external\)](#).

Here are some examples:

- Daily 1:00 ET [virtual tour\(link is external\)](#) of the USS Constitution on Facebook Live
- [Virtual house tours\(link is external\)](#) at Ulysses S. Grant NHS
- [Videos\(link is external\)](#) from John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
- [Virtual tours](#) of Yellowstone National Park
- [Virtual hiking\(link is external\)](#) in the Great Smokies
- "[Outside Science / Inside Parks\(link is external\)](#)" post from Explore Nature (NRSS)

Virtual Passport Cancellations

Passport To Your National Parks, a member of the Eastern National family of brands, is helping "Extend the Experience" by offering virtual cancellations for national parks that are promoting online activities and experiences. Parks can send an email to Karen Wernick (KarenWernick@easternnational.org) with a park photo and a link to the park's virtual experience or activity to get on the schedule.

There has been lots of demand, so Karen has let us know that they are creating the cancellation images in batches and sending hi-res PNG files to park contacts as they are ready, usually within a few days. Regarding social media posts, it's taking their small team a little longer to get them posted on their channels, but they plan to eventually share all of them out to their audience over the next few weeks. In the meantime, they will share park posts if parks do their own promotions of the cancellation images.

Fire and Aviation Communications

[COVID-19 memos related to Aviation, Structural Fire, and Wildland Fire\(link is](#)

external)

Note: PIOs can discuss incident related COVID-19 issues, but if reporters ask questions about national COVID response, policy, or other COVID issues outside of the incident, they must work with their local PAO to have the responses approved through their communications chain of command.

Key Messages and Talking Points: COVID-19 and Wildland Fire Operations

National Interagency Fire Center, approved by DOI March 30, 2020

Key Messages

- The safety of the public and all wildland fire responders is always the number one priority for all wildland fire agencies.
- Currently, the Department of the Interior is taking the necessary steps to ensure its ability to deploy firefighters for wildfire response.
- DOI is actively assessing potential risks and developing plans to mitigate those risks as progress in the response to COVID-19 continues.
- While COVID-19 circumstances are rapidly evolving, and federal guidance continues to adapt with the situation, the wildland fire agencies are prepared for wildland fire activity and will be ready to respond during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Talking Points

(Updated July 9)

General COVID-19 Planning

- Our operational response has changed this year; however, we are continuing to execute an aggressive strategy for wildland fire management to protect people, property and communities.
- Experts throughout the wildland fire management community are coordinating to ensure wildland fire management operations are carried out in alignment with all public health guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to best limit firefighter exposure to COVID-19 without interruption to fighting wildfires safely and

effectively.

- The planning to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 is being informed by broader coordination within the wildland fire management community, including local, State, Tribal and Federal, partners, each of which plays a critical role in assessing risk and developing recommendations for how best to limit the exposure of firefighters to COVID-19 before, after and during operational periods.
- Taken together, the work of the numerous interagency groups involved in COVID-19 mitigation planning will provide the foundation for coordinated and effective wildfire response. This commitment across the wildland firefighting community is essential to achieving overall operational success and safeguarding the safety of firefighters and the public.

Operational Response

- Practical adjustments are being executed in our interagency operational response. Our priority remains safe, aggressive, initial and extended attack. Collectively, we will use aircraft and our ground-based assets to the fullest extent to reduce the duration of wildfires and curb the number of wildfires that are managed for resource purposes.
- DOI employs approximately 4,500 temporary seasonal, career seasonal and permanent employees. We will also have a complementary mix of firefighting aircraft, including access to 100 single engine airtankers, 370 helicopters, 18 scoopers and numerous other support aircraft.
- Wildland Fire Response Plans—WFRPs—have been developed for each geographic coordination area. The WFRPs advance strategic and tactical protocols to mitigate the potential impacts and exposure of firefighters to COVID-19 in order to maintain a continuity of operations for all aspects of wildfire response.
- The Medical and Public Health Advisory Team (MPHAT), an interagency group of medical health experts from DOI, USDA Forest Service and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state representatives is continuing to coordinate with local health officials to develop recommendations on medical and public health measures that are determined to be most effective at protecting firefighters.
- To date, MPHAT has established protocols for: screening for COVID-19; testing; use of personal protective equipment; and other public health practices essential to protecting firefighters and support staff on wildfire incidents.
 - MPHAT recently updated its testing protocols for firefighters and recommended

testing individuals with signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and testing individuals with recent known or suspected exposure to COVID-19.

- Practical mitigation measures on all wildfire incidents have been instituted to support social distancing, such as transitioning as many basecamp administrative functions as possible to virtual or telework status; designing multiple smaller camps populated with fewer firefighters; following CDC guidance on the use of facemasks in camps; and utilizing additional temporary facilities for crew quarters and staging for initial attack.
- Recommended guidance and protocols are continually reviewed and improved based on feedback from incident command and after action reviews.

Current Strategies and Guidance

- The Department of the Interior is actively involved in supporting the U.S. response to COVID-19 and will continue to collaborate with other federal agencies including the U.S. Forest Service, the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- The Department of the Interior and its partners will use the Pandemic Response and Preparedness Plan for the Federal Wildland Fire Agencies, which provides guidance to ensure the safety of all Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service employees involved in:
 - Routine fire assignments during a pandemic event, and
 - Activities for emergency responses to:
 - Avian influenza (AI),
 - Pandemics caused by other infectious disease agents
 - Other non-fire emergencies
 - This plan also serves to assist agency administrators/line officers, agency liaisons and incident management teams (IMT) when an infectious disease:
 - Has the potential to be introduced,
 - Is suspected, or
 - Is discovered in a wildland firefighting base camp, local community or workplace—and is thereby considered a threat to the health and safety of response personnel.
- Additionally, the Infectious Diseases Guidelines for Wildland Fire Incident Management Teams plan, developed by the National Wildland Fire Coordination Group Risk Management Committee's Emergency Medical Subcommittee, includes recommended

guidelines to be followed by an IMT when confronted with a potential infectious disease outbreak during a wildland fire response.

Area Command Teams Work to Reduce Risk

- To further ensure the highest degree of readiness, the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group has assigned three regional Area Command Teams to work with partners at all levels in the fire community to develop protocols for wildfire response in areas where there is known COVID-19 exposure.
- The protocols will be integrated into Wildland Fire Response Plans and will be available to all Incident Management Teams and fire units to help guide effective wildfire response.
- The Teams will also be working with and following guidance from federal, state, county and tribal health officials.
- These Area Command Teams are working directly with agency representatives; Geographic Area Coordination Groups (GACG); the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG); dispatch and coordination centers; local units; and federal, state and county health officials as appropriate to ensure thorough and current national response plans.
- Response plans will include procedures for potential wildland fire personnel infection, which will be led by the local State Health Department following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance and protocol.
- Additionally, the National Interagency Mobilization Guide provides a framework and protocols for potential situations, including the possibility for potential COVID-19 infection throughout a large percentage of the wildland firefighting workforce.
- Federal wildland fire agencies are also addressing mission essential training to ensure all wildland fire personnel are trained, qualified, and prepared for fire activity while limiting potential exposure situations.
- To keep firefighters and communities healthy and safe, all firefighters are asked to follow recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce the spread of illness.

Fuels Management

- Reducing wildfire risk through fuels management remains as an essential Department of the Interior activity.

- In addressing priority work, agencies are working to limit COVID-19 risks to ensure firefighter health and safety. They are also working through established frameworks to consider prescribed fire impacts, including potential prescribed fire smoke impacts on people who have contracted COVID-19 or who may be at risk.
- Some prescribed fire and fuels projects may need to be postponed as local wildland fire agencies readjust project strategies to fit the current situation and ensure public and wildland fire personnel safety.
- Last fiscal year (FY), DOI completed a total of 1.4 million acres of fuels management treatments, nearly double the benchmark required by E.O. 13855 on Reducing Wildfire Risk and the largest fuel reduction in 10 years.
- So far this FY, DOI has treated more than 752,000 acres. Even with the significant number of challenges associated with COVID-19, the total number of acres treated is above the ten-year-average for accomplishments by end of June.
- The use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) continues to be allowed for emergency situations related to protecting human health and safety, which includes wildfire prevention.

Wildfire Prevention

- The public plays a valuable role in preventing wildfires. On average, nationally, human-caused wildfires comprise 87 percent of all wildfire occurrences every year. Most of these fires can be prevented.
- Preventable wildfires threaten lives, property, and precious resources every year. Firefighters are needed more than ever to keep Americans safe, so please, do your part to prevent human-caused wildfires.

Recreation

- Be aware of local public safety area closures. Take extra precaution before venturing out and be careful with anything that could start a fire.
- Stay informed of current and predicted environmental conditions such as weather and drying vegetation. The National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook can be found on the National Interagency Coordination Center website at predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/.
- It is important to stay informed on how you can safely spend time outside. To keep

ourselves, our communities and our outdoor spaces safe and healthy during this time, please consider the Leave No Trace Center's recommendations: <https://lnt.org/>.

- Maintain your mechanical equipment. Many human-caused wildfires occur near roadways, communities and recreational areas, posing considerable public safety threats. Carry a fire extinguisher and know how to use it.
- Vehicle exhaust systems spark hundreds of wildfires each year when they contact dry vegetation. If possible, avoid driving on dry grass when fire danger is high and never park a vehicle on dry grass. If you are towing a trailer, make sure it is roadworthy with good tires, greased bearings, and no chains dragging.

Home Projects and Burning

- If you are burning fields, debris piles, or just having a campfire, remember these tips. Have enough water and people nearby to control the fire, avoid burning on dry, hot, windy days, and never leave any fire unattended.
- Take individual responsibility to reduce flammable material around homes and communities before a fire occurs to keep your property and firefighters safe.
- Running out of home improvement projects during this time? Consider making your property more resistant to wildfire.
- Increase your home's wildfire resistance by creating a buffer between your home and trees, shrubs, or other wildland areas. Not only does this space help slow or stop the spread of wildfire, it also provides a safe place for firefighters to defend your home if conditions allow. Learn more at www.firewise.org.
- Adhere to your state's outdoor burning guidance. Prior to burning, contact your local fire agency as smoke from open burning can cause unnecessary public health and safety concerns.
- Agency officials will review and adapt fire restrictions as needed based on the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local public health authorities.
- Fire restrictions may be extended or modified due to fire danger, as needed.
- Learn how to protect your home and keep your family safe when a wildfire threatens your community. Find tips and resources at: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/p52-wildland-urban-interface-fire-safety.htm>

Questions and Answers

- Q: If a person working on a fire tests positive for the coronavirus, will everyone that worked on the fire be quarantined? Or, if one person on a hand crew or engine crew not working on a fire tests positive, will that crew of two to twenty people be quarantined?
 - A: This would be determined by the local/State Health Department, following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Q: If a significant percentage of the firefighter workforce becomes unavailable due to the coronavirus, what steps will then be taken?
 - A: There are resource allocation procedures in place as part of the National Interagency Mobilization Guide to allocate wildland firefighting resources during personnel shortages and periods of above normal fire activity.
- Q: Wildland firefighters require annual training. How are the federal agencies handling wildland firefighter training while limiting COVID-19 spread potential?
 - A: The wildland fire agencies are using unique measures to ensure all wildland firefighters are trained, qualified, and prepared for fire activity. This includes implementing new training processes using a combination of online training opportunities and waiving annual classroom and group training exercises to limit spread potential and ensure social distancing.

DOI Approved Talking Points as of 3/24/2020

- Currently, the Department of the Interior is taking the necessary steps to ensure its ability to deploy firefighters for wildfire response. DOI is actively assessing potential risks and developing plans to mitigate those risk as progress in the response to COVID-19 continues.
- To keep firefighters and communities healthy and safe, all firefighters are asked to follow recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce the spread of illness. Additionally, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) has updated the NWCG Infectious Disease Guidelines for Incident Management Teams, which provides guidance for identifying and responding to infectious disease outbreaks among fire personnel at an Incident Command Post should the situation arise.
- To further ensure the highest degree of readiness, the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group has assigned three regional Area Command Teams to work with partners at all levels in the fire community to develop protocols for wildfire response in areas where there is known COVID-19 exposures. The protocols will be integrated into Wildland Fire Response Plans and will be available to all Incident Management Teams

and fire units to help guide effective wildfire response.

- Reducing wildfire risk through fuels management remains as an essential Department of the Interior activity. In addressing priority work, agencies are taking steps to limit the risks from COVID-19 to ensure the health and safety of firefighters. They are also taking action through established frameworks for consideration of impacts from prescribed fire, including the potential impact of smoke from prescribed fires on those who have contracted COVID-19 or who may be at risk.

Approved Media Responses

InsideClimate News Response – 4/8/2020

Has a policy been developed to respond to the coronavirus/COVID-19? / If so, what is the policy, when was it developed, who developed it and to whom was it shared?

- Yes. The Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture wildland fire agencies, along with their state and local partners, will use the [**Infectious Disease Guidelines for Wildland Fire Incident Management Teams plan\(link is external\)**](#). It was developed by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Emergency Medical Committee in 2010 and recently updated to reflect the COVID-19 pandemic and includes recommended guidelines to be followed by an IMT when confronted with a potential infectious disease outbreak during a wildland fire response.
- To further ensure the highest degree of readiness, the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) has assigned three Area Command Teams to work with partners at all levels in the fire community to develop protocols for wildfire response during the COVID-19 pandemic. The protocols will be integrated into Wildland Fire Response Plans and will be available to Geographic Areas, Incident Management Teams, and local units to help guide effective wildfire response. The Teams will also be working with and following guidance from federal, state, county and tribal health officials. Area Command Teams are working directly with NMAC and agency representatives; Geographic Area Coordination Groups (GACG); the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG); dispatch and coordination centers; local units; and federal, state and county health officials as appropriate to ensure thorough and current wildfire response plans are in place.

- Response plans will include procedures for potential wildland fire personnel infection, which will be led by the local State Health Department following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance and protocol.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, wildland fire agencies will alter many of their typical pre-season preparation and requirements to embrace best management practices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce employee exposure to COVID-19 community spread.
- To keep firefighters and communities healthy and safe, all firefighters are asked to follow recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce the spread of illness.

I saw in an article that the National Wildfire Coordinating Group has issued a new communicative disease directive that warns: “Wildland fire incident management activities create an ideal environment for the transmission of infectious diseases.” I’m not sure what that means. What situations do wildfire present that create that environment?

- Wildland fire incident management activities create an ideal environment for the transmission of infectious diseases: high-density living and working conditions, lack of access to and use of soap and sanitizers, and a transient workforce. These and other environmental and occupational factors (e.g., smoke, heat, plants, insects, fungus, fatigue, and physically demanding work) can increase the likelihood of disease transmission. In some situations, the number of symptomatic fire personnel and suspected cases can increase rapidly, resulting in an infectious disease outbreak on the incident.

<https://www.nwccg.gov/committees/emergency-medical-committee/infectious-disease-guidance>

Is the coronavirus then prompting other logistical challenges, such as hiring, for agencies that fight fires? What about sanitation and cleaning gear?

- We are continuing with our normal seasonal hiring of personnel and expediting onboarding requirements. This includes waiving of medical exams for returning employees and waiving the requirement for the Work Capacity Test and in-person refresher training.

- New employees will be required to complete a baseline medical examination. If clinics and doctor's offices are overwhelmed due to COVID-19, new employees will be granted provisional medical approval and complete exams when able.
- As leaders, we see challenges as opportunities, and the 2020 fire year is an opportunity to fully embrace core risk management principles and employ new decision support tools in ways we never have before. Here are just some of the steps we are considering:
 - hiring more seasonal employees than usual to help reduce risk; we are not slowing down on our seasonal hiring as firefighting is an essential area for our agencies;
 - focusing on aggressive initial attack to quickly contain fires while relying more on aviation and local resources;
 - social distancing by unit, without traditional fire camps and with quarantines both before and after fires;
 - deploying resources in a way that minimizes travel to other geographic areas;
 - where feasible, increasing technology use through virtual work to reduce the risk of exposure to the coronavirus;
 - setting up systems for screening, testing, quarantining, and tracking our firefighters;
 - tailoring the way we communicate and coordinate with our workforce, partners, cooperators, and the public to the novel risks we face this year; and
 - shifting our workloads to respond to COVID-19, protect the public, and safely manage wildland fire throughout the fire year.
- Crews will clean and disinfect frequently touched objects such as door handles on portable toilets, wash basins, showers, radios, and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe. Working with local public health officials, agencies will determine any additional control measures.

How are agencies preparing for a possible shortage of staff because coronavirus infections?

- We are hiring more seasonal employees than usual to help reduce risk; we are not slowing down on our seasonal hiring as firefighting is an essential area for our agencies.

What do you know about increased susceptibility of firefighting crews to serious illness from coronavirus because of exposure to wildfire smoke?

- We know environmental factors, including exposure to wildfire smoke can increase the likelihood of disease transmission. We anticipate using social distancing by unit, without

traditional fire camps and with quarantines both before and after fires as well as focusing on aggressive initial attack to quickly contain fires while relying more on aviation and local resources.

Wildfire Today Response – 4/3/2020

What is being done to prepare for how firefighting will change?

- The Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture wildland fire agencies, along with their state and local partners, will use the Infectious Disease Guidelines for Wildland Fire Incident Management Teams plan, developed by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Emergency Medical Committee, which includes recommended guidelines to be followed by an IMT when confronted with a potential infectious disease outbreak during a wildland fire response.
- To further ensure the highest degree of readiness, the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) has assigned three Area Command Teams to work with partners at all levels in the fire community to develop protocols for wildfire response during the COVID-19 pandemic. The protocols will be integrated into Wildland Fire Response Plans and will be available to Geographic Areas, Incident Management Teams, and local units to help guide effective wildfire response. The Teams will also be working with and following guidance from federal, state, county and tribal health officials. Area Command Teams are working directly with NMAC and agency representatives; Geographic Area Coordination Groups (GACG); the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG); dispatch and coordination centers; local units; and federal, state and county health officials as appropriate to ensure thorough and current wildfire response plans are in place.
- Response plans will include procedures for potential wildland fire personnel infection, which will be led by the local State Health Department following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance and protocol.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, wildland fire agencies will alter many of their typical pre-season preparation and requirements to embrace best management practices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce employee exposure to COVID-19 community spread.
- To keep firefighters and communities healthy and safe, all firefighters are asked to follow recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce the

spread of illness.

Will all firefighters be tested for the virus?

- Specific risk-based protocols for how we will respond will be developed at the field level by line officers and through the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group.

How will suppressing a wildfire change during the pandemic?

- As leaders, we see challenges as opportunities, and the 2020 fire year is an opportunity to fully embrace core risk management principles and employ new decision support tools in ways we never have before. Here are just some of the steps we are considering:
 - hiring more seasonal employees than usual to help reduce risk;
 - focusing on aggressive initial attack to quickly contain fires while relying more on aviation and local resources;
 - social distancing by unit, without traditional fire camps and with quarantines both before and after fires;
 - deploying resources in a way that minimizes travel to other geographic areas;
 - where feasible, increasing technology use through virtual work to reduce the risk of exposure to the coronavirus;
 - setting up systems for screening, testing, quarantining, and tracking our firefighters;
 - tailoring the way we communicate and coordinate with our workforce, partners, cooperators, and the public to the novel risks we face this year; and
 - shifting our workloads to respond to COVID-19, protect the public, and safely manage wildland fire throughout the fire year.

San Francisco Chronicle Response – 3/24/2020

Query: “I’m mostly looking at the U.S. Forest Service, which has suspended prescribed fire and postponed firefighter training. But since NPS oversees a good bit of property in California, I was hoping you could let me know if any of your programs are similarly affected. Specifically, I’d be interested in knowing about whether prescribed burns are still being done and whether hiring/training of fire personnel is being done.”

- The National Park Service is issuing guidance to the field that we will use all the treatment tools at our disposal, while adhering to the guidelines of the Centers for

Disease Control (CDC) for 6-foot distancing and gathering in groups of fewer than 10. In most cases, this will result in smaller scale prescribed fires, but also increased use of mechanical treatments around buildings to prepare for the coming fire season, as well as pile burning. These projects will be at the discretion of the local unit's superintendent given safety considerations from the CDC.

- We are continuing with our normal seasonal hiring of personnel and expediting onboarding requirements. This includes waiving of medical exams for returning employees and waiving the requirement for the Work Capacity Test and in-person refresher training.
- New employees will be required to complete a baseline medical examination. If clinics and doctor's offices are overwhelmed due to COVID-19, new employees will be granted provisional medical approval and complete exams when able.

Talking Points: NPS Aviation Practices During the COVID-19 Outbreak

- NPS is flying essential missions only for law enforcement, wildland fire response, search and rescue, medical response, and all-hazard emergency response. Updated risk assessments will be completed before each mission with consideration given for reduction in risk of virus transmission. Safety messages will include COVID-19 prevention methods using guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Only mandatory mission essential individuals will be allowed on aircrafts and seating will be staggered to ensure best separation where possible.
- Personnel will follow guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for personal protection and equipment and workplace sanitation. Personal protective equipment will not be shared, and social distancing will be practiced where practical.
- Aircraft, hangars, offices, and other facilities will be regularly supplied with adequate personal protective equipment, cleaning, and hygiene supplies.

Group A Parks

Acadia National Park

Arches National Park

Assateague Island National Seashore

Badlands National Park

Big Bend National Park
Biscayne National Park
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park
Blue Ridge Parkway
Bryce Canyon National Park
Canaveral National Seashore
Canyonlands National Park
Cape Cod National Seashore
Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Cape Lookout National Seashore
Capitol Reef National Park
Carlsbad Caverns National Park
Channel Islands National Park
Congaree National Park
Crater Lake National Park
Cumberland Island National Seashore
Cuyahoga Valley National Park
Death Valley National Park
Denali National Park
Devils Tower National Monument
Dry Tortugas National Park
Everglades National Park
Fire Island National Seashore
Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
Gateway Arch National Park
Gateway National Recreation Area
Gettysburg National Military Park
Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve
Glacier National Park
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Grand Canyon National Park
Grand Teton National Park
Great Basin National Park
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

Great Smoky Mountains National Park
Guadalupe Mountains National Park
Gulf Islands National Seashore
Haleakalā National Park
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park
Hot Springs National Park
Indiana Dunes National Park
Isle Royale National Park
Joshua Tree National Park
Katmai National Park and Preserve
Kenai Fjords National Park
Kobuk Valley National Park
Lake Clark National Park and Preserve
Lake Mead National Recreation Area
Lassen Volcanic National Park
Mammoth Cave National Park
Mesa Verde National Park
Mount Rainier National Park
Mount Rushmore National Memorial
National Mall and Memorial Parks
National Park of American Samoa
North Cascades National Park
Olympic National Park
Padre Island National Seashore
Pearl Harbor National Memorial
Petrified Forest National Park
Pinnacles National Park
Point Reyes National Seashore
Redwood National Park
Rocky Mountain National Park
Saguaro National Park
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Shenandoah National Park
Statue of Liberty National Monument
Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Virgin Islands National Park

Voyageurs National Park

Washington Monument

White Sands National Monument

Wind Cave National Park

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Yellowstone National Park

Yosemite National Park

Zion National Park

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