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Washington County Parks remain open, park fees will be enforced

Washington County Parks remain open for residents to use during the Stay At Home order in Minnesota, and, with the full arrival of spring, the county will reinstate fees for park entrance. The fees were waived during the recent state of emergency. With the growing use of the parks with the warm weather, entrance fees of \$7 daily and \$30 annually will be reinstated. The parks have seen increased use in recent weeks, and it is becoming more difficult to manage the number of parks visitors. High usage has led to increased costs for maintenance by park staff and to ensure the safety of all visitors.

Before making the decision to reinstate the fees, the County Board reviewed advice from the citizen members who make up the county's Park and Open Space Advisory Commission.

Other changes in the county's parks operations previously approved by the County Board April 28 are:

- county swim beaches opening at Square Lake Park, Point Douglas Park, and Big Marine Park Reserve be delayed until June 15;
- the Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve Swim Pond will be closed for the 2020 season;
- rentals for parks pavilions, shelters, group campsites, and the Historic Courthouse will be cancelled through June 15; and
- county campgrounds at Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve and St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park will remain closed until May 21.

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The county will provide a full refund to anyone who has a site reserved that will now be impacted by this extended closure. Campground closures, cancellation of park rentals, and delays in beach openings could be extended based on safety parameters or operational considerations.