

FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY COVID-19 RESPONSE
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Updated March 26, 2020 (3 p.m.)

PARKS, BUILDINGS & FACILITIES

Why did you close the parks?

This was a difficult decision and was made in response to Governor Ralph Northam's March 23 order as well as a determination that increased park usage had made it nearly impossible for our park visitors to social distance. We are monitoring the situation daily; parks and/or associated amenities will reopen as soon as we are able to do so.

How long is this closure in effect?

Governor Northam has instructed all recreational facilities closed through April 23, 2020. We continue to work with local health officials and look forward to reopening facilities as soon as it is safe to do so.

Are outdoor parks open?

Only trails are open. All other park facilities, including parking lots, are closed until further notice. Park hours for trails are dawn to dusk. Please observe social distancing.

Are any indoor facilities open?

All FCPA facilities are closed to the public.

Are park trails open?

Yes. Park trails are open. Trail hours are dawn to dusk. Please observe social distancing and respect others on trails that may at times be heavily used as we share the outdoors.

Can my family use the trails?

Families are welcome to use the trail in small groups. Please familiarize yourself with social distancing recommendations and leave enough space for others to pass.

Are parking lots open?

No. All parking lots on FCPA or Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority land are closed. Commuter lots or lots maintained by other jurisdictions are maintained by other entities; we do not have the authority to close those, nor do we know if they are open.

Where do I park to use the trails?

There are more than 330 miles of trails in Fairfax County. For assistance finding a trail near you, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/trails/trail-buddy>. We remind trail users to obey all parking regulations.

Are park entrances closed?

Where possible, park and facility entrances will be closed to vehicle traffic via gate or barricade. Pedestrians will be permitted to walk into the park to access trails.

What should I do if I see people using non-trail areas or equipment, not adhering to social distance requirements, illegally parked, etc.?

For non-emergencies, please call the Fairfax County Police Department at 703-691-2131. If you see an emergency, please call 911.

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Do outdoor parks have restrooms available?

No. Restrooms are closed and portable restrooms are currently locked and not being serviced.

Will trash be collected during the park closure?

Trash will be collected from trash cans along the trails, though we encourage you to take any trash with you.

Are garden plots open?

Garden plots are currently closed. We understand the need for gardeners to tend to their plants and crops and are monitoring the situation to determine best options.

Are boat ramps open?

FCPA boat ramps at Lake Accotink, Lake Fairfax, Burke Lake and Riverbend Park are closed. The public launch ramp on the lower end of Burke Lake is owned by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) and is designated for fishing use only. At this time, VDGIF's launch ramp and parking lot are open.

Can I fish from shore?

No. Fishing from shore is not allowed at this time in FCPA parks.

Is Kidwell Farm at Frying Pan Farm Park open?

No. Kidwell Farm and Frying Pan Farm Park are closed except for trails.

Are equestrian facilities open?

No. Equestrian facilities are closed. Equestrian trails are open.

Can my horse still use equestrian trails?

Yes. Trails designed as equestrian trails are still open for equestrian use. Equestrian rings are closed.

Are skate parks or pump tracks open?

No. Skate parks and pump tracks are closed.

Are playgrounds open?

No. All FCPA playgrounds are closed. FCPA playgrounds are closed even if they do not have caution tape up.

Are historic sites open?

All indoor historic buildings are closed. Hiking trails at historic sites remain open.

Are golf courses open?

No. Golf courses, practice facilities (bunkers and practice greens) and driving ranges are closed. Golf courses are not considered "trails" and are therefore not open for pedestrian use.

Are outdoor tennis/volleyball/basketball courts with lights available?

No. All sports courts in FCPA parks are closed.

Are synthetic fields open?

No. All playing fields in FCPA parks are closed.

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Can fields be used if fewer than 20 people, including attendees, are present?

No. All playing fields in FCPA parks are closed.

Is the parcourse at Burke Lake Park open for individual use?

No. Use of recreational amenities is currently prohibited.

Is the Huntley Meadows Park boardwalk open?

No. Increased crowds have made social distancing on the boardwalk difficult. The main entrance to the boardwalk is blocked and we ask that visitors stay off the boardwalk at this time.

Should volunteers report when buildings are closed to the public?

No. Volunteers should not report if the building in which they give time is closed.

Will construction projects continue in the parks?

Active construction and facility maintenance projects in the parks will continue as scheduled so as not to negatively impact park facilities.

Is Go Ape at South Run Park open?

No. Our partner, Go Ape, will not be able to open until all parks are re-opened.

Am I able to fly drones or geocache in parks?

No. These activities are currently prohibited. Park activity is limited to trail use only.

PROGRAMS

Are any park classes, workshops, Scout badges or preschool programs being held?

The Park Authority has canceled all programs and events through April 23.

Are classes that are held in the Fairfax County Public Schools or other facilities canceled?

Yes. All Park Authority classes at Fairfax County Public School locations have been canceled.

What is the status of spring break camp programs?

Spring break camps are canceled.

What is the status of summer camp and Rec-PAC programs?

Summer camps and Rec-PAC programs remain scheduled as planned. If there are changes or updates, we will contact registered participants and provide an update. New information will be posted on the Park Authority website at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxparks>, on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/fairfaxparks>, and on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/fairfaxparks/>

When will Farmers Markets open?

The opening date for Fairfax County Farmers Markets has not been determined.

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Is the Summer Entertainment Series still going to be held in parks?

The status of the Summer Entertainment Series and all summer concerts in parks has not yet been determined.

Will FCPA still host egg hunts?

All spring egg hunts are canceled.

Will FCPA still host the Earth Day 2020 event on April 25?

No. Earth Day Fairfax 2020 is canceled.

Will the poetry contest still be held?

Poetry contest entries are currently being processed for judging and we hope to announce winners by mid-April. While the poetry showcase for winners will not be held as scheduled, we hope to feature winners in a virtual format.

FEES AND REFUNDS

Will I receive a refund for my program registration (classes, workshop, scout badge, or preschool program)?

For programs that have been canceled, your household account will be credited the full registration amount or the number of meeting dates that cannot be made up. For programs that have not started, FCPA will delay start dates or shorten programs as possible—any meeting dates that cannot be made up will be refunded to your household account. If you wish to withdraw altogether, please email your request to ptonline@fairfaxcounty.gov. The Park Authority will refund/credit the remaining classes and waive the \$15 processing fee.

Will my RECenter pass be extended, or can I be refunded?

All RECenter memberships will be extended to account for any lost time when the center re-opens. If you would like your membership to remain on hold beyond the time the RECenter is closed or you wish to cancel your membership, please email your request to FCPARECenters@fairfaxcounty.gov. The Park Authority is waiving the \$15 processing fee and other restrictions at this time for membership refunds.

If I stay enrolled in classes or camps to hold my space, can I get a refund later if programs are canceled?

Yes. Refunds will be available if programs are canceled.

How do I get my refund to my credit card?

By default, refunds go to your household account, which you can use toward future purchases with the Park Authority. If you would like your household account to be paid out to a credit card, contact the registration unit at 703-222-4664.

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I have a refund question I can't find an answer to—where should I go?

Please email ptonline@fairfaxcounty.gov for assistance. Please include your name, confirmation number if available (from your receipt), type of activity/program, event/rental/membership/etc.

How long does it take for my refund to be processed?

Refunds may take 3-5 business days for processing.

How can I complete my scholarship registration?

Since facilities are closed to the public, scholarship processing is currently limited. Please contact ptonline@fairfaxcounty.gov for additional information.

RENTALS, RESERVATIONS AND PERMITS

I have a birthday party scheduled at a Park Authority facility. What should I do?

We will gladly reschedule your party to a new date, and we will waive any processing fees or other restrictions. If you would prefer a refund, please email ptonline@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Will I be able to hold my wedding/event at my rented site?

Not at this time. All rented sites are closed. All events are canceled/postponed until further notice. We will gladly reschedule your wedding/event, and we will waive any processing fees and other restrictions. If you would prefer a refund, please email HPRS@fairfaxcounty.gov.

I have a campground reservation at Lake Fairfax Park or Burke Lake. Can I still camp?

No. All rented sites are closed, and events are canceled/postponed. We will gladly reschedule your camping plans on a new date, and we will waive any processing fees and other restrictions. If you would prefer a refund, please email ptonline@fairfaxcounty.gov.

If I already have a rental at a shelter or picnic area, will it be honored or will I get a refund?

All existing rentals are canceled until further notice. We will gladly reschedule your rental to a new date, and we will waive any processing fees and other restrictions at this time. If you would prefer a refund, please email picnics@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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Can I rent picnic areas and/or shelters?

No. Picnic areas and shelters are closed and cannot be used at this time.

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PARK RESOURCES

Are animals and parks being cared for during the closure?

Yes. While the parks are closed to the public, park staff is working to properly care for all natural, cultural and historic resources in our parks, and to ensure that proper maintenance is being performed at indoor facilities (such as pools). We are taking care of the parks so they are ready for you when it is safe to reopen.

Does the Park Authority have any livestreams at the parks or resources for families at home?

We are working to find ways to keep individuals and families connected to our parks. We hope to begin making these park-related resources available soon. Please follow us on social media for the latest updates.

Are the Riverbend bluebells in bloom?

Bluebells are blooming across Fairfax County in late March/early April. We will post pictures from the parks and encourage you to look for them on local walks.

OTHER QUESTIONS

Are FOIA requests still being processed?

The delivery of physical mail to the Park Authority may be delayed due to safety precautions that Virginia has implemented to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. You may complete an online FOIA Request Form and submit to parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov. All inquiries may also be sent via email to parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov. For more info, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/virginia-freedom-information-act>.

How can I provide input on a Park Authority decision, program or process?

Public comment can always be submitted to parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.

If you have any additional questions, please contact the FCPA Public Information Office.

Email us at parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Call us at 703-324-8700.

Check the website for future announcements at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/>

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