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Lake County Forest Preserves COVID-19 Updates

Now that the state is moving into Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois plan on Friday, June 26, the [Lake County Forest Preserves](#) is providing updated information on amenities and facilities that are currently open or closed due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns.

"We want to keep preserve users informed of the changes we're making to various aspects of our operations as we all transition to the next phase of the state's reopening plan together," President of the Lake County Forest Preserves Angelo Kyle said.

"We also want to stress the importance of visitors continuing to adhere to trail courtesy rules and being vigilant in following public safety and health guidelines while using the preserves in order to help protect themselves and others from the spread of COVID-19," Executive Director Ty Kovach said. "We are thankful to preserve users for following safety and social distancing rules during this historic time and for helping to keep the preserves clean as staffing levels are lower than usual. Because of the public's diligence in following the guidelines and caring for the land, we have been able to keep most of the preserves open since the beginning of the stay-at-home order," Kovach said.

What's open and available:

- Preserves are open 6:30 am to sunset, daily. If a parking lot is full, use this [interactive trail map](#) to find another nearby preserve.
- 51 of the 83 public restrooms are open. Face masks are required to be worn in restrooms where more than one toilet is present. Bring your own alcohol-based hand sanitizer

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- daily. The map outlines which preserve resources are open. [LCFPD.org/resources](#).
- The [General Offices](#) in Libertyville is open weekdays, 8 am to 4:30 pm, and the [Operations and Public Safety Facility](#) in Lake Villa is open weekdays, 6:30 am to 3 pm. Plexiglass has been installed for additional safety. Bring your own alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60 percent alcohol) and face coverings.
 - The [model aircraft field](#) at Van Patten Woods in Wadsworth is open and [permits](#) are available for purchase.
 - All five off-leash dog exercise areas are open with some operational restrictions. Review [safety guidelines](#) at [LCFPD.org/dogs](#). Access is limited to annual [permit holders](#) only.
 - An array of virtual nature and history programs, summer camps, school field trips, and digital resources are available. Browse all [virtual education offerings](#) and [register online](#). Follow along on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @LCFPD for more educational resources, webinars and videos.
 - All [golf courses](#) are open with some operational restrictions. View all golf guidelines [here](#).
 - [Fishing](#) is permitted at many lakes and ponds in forest preserves throughout Lake County as long as safe social distancing is practiced.
 - The [marina and public boat launch](#) at Fox River Forest Preserve in Port Barrington are open. All other buildings at the preserve remain closed.
 - Des Plaines River [canoe launches](#) are open.
 - [Boat launches](#) are open at Van Patten Woods in Wadsworth, Grant Woods in Ingleside, and Hastings Lake in Lake Villa.
 - [Greenbelt Cultural Center](#) in North Chicago is booking events for 2021.

What's closed or canceled:

- Most public buildings, visitor centers, playgrounds and drinking fountains are closed.
- In-person programs, summer camps and special events are canceled.
- The Bess Bower Dunn Museum in Libertyville is closed. A future reopening date is undetermined.
- Youth group camping areas are closed.
- Picnic shelter rentals and open area reservations are canceled.
- Banquet and facility rentals at Independence Grove in Libertyville, Greenbelt Cultural Center, and ThunderHawk Golf Club in Beach Park are canceled for 2020.
- Special use permits for third-party events held within the preserves are canceled.
- Golf outings are canceled for the season.
- All summer concerts at Independence Grove and Greenbelt Cultural Center are canceled.
- The beach and marina at Independence Grove are closed for the 2020 season.

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“Forest preserves and trails have been beneficial to so many people during these difficult times. The preserves offer 206 miles of trails to support physical health, and beautiful views and vast open spaces to restore mental health and well-being. People are rediscovering the value of being outside in nature and are utilizing the preserves and trails more than ever before,” said Kyle.

Since mid-March, records have been set for forest preserve usage. “Overall visitation in May was 18% greater than the busiest summer weekend in any of the previous four years,” said John Nelson, director of operations and infrastructure. “Daily average visitation in April was 60% greater than the busiest summer weekend in any of the previous four years,” he said.

Though preserve and trail use has increased during the pandemic, revenues have decreased due to the many cancellations and closures. “Losses are coming from a variety of areas,” Kovach said. Concerts, beach, marina, facility rentals and other activities at Independence Grove have been canceled. All in-person programs, summer camps and special events have been canceled. There are fewer permit sales for special use areas. And, the Dunn Museum remains closed, he said. “We are also losing revenue from catering, concessions and equipment rentals at Independence Grove, and from the cancelation of banquets, meetings and outings at the Greenbelt Cultural Center and a few of our golf courses,” he said. “At this point in time, we are estimating a total loss of about \$1 million as a result of the pandemic,” Kovach said.

Before heading out

For all details on what’s open or closed due to COVID-19 concerns, visit [LCFPD.org/COVID-19-Updates](https://www.lcforestpreserves.org/COVID-19-Updates).

For preserve trail and underpass closures due to seasonal flooding and related trail repair projects, check [this interactive map](#). Public access is restricted at closed trails and underpasses. Please follow signage, and use caution around closures, construction or detour zones.

Bring the outside in by following the [Lake County Forest Preservers](#) (@LCFPD) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) for inspiration.

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Courtesy of Chip Williams

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Excellence is in our Nature

As principal guardian of Lake County's open space and natural areas since 1958, we set the standard in nature and historic preservation, and in outdoor recreation and education. Acknowledged as a regional and national leader, we protect nearly 31,000 acres of natural land and are the second-largest Forest Preserve District in Illinois.

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