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City closes playgrounds and sports courts to slow spread of COVID-19

Press Release Date:

Monday, March 23, 2020

 [An empty playground at Arnada Neighborhood Park in Vancouver](#)

In an evolving response to the COVID-19 outbreak and with guidance from Clark County Public Health and Community Services, Vancouver Parks and Recreation is closing all active recreation areas in city parks, including sports courts, playgrounds, picnic shelters and other areas where maintaining appropriate social distancing is difficult. The closure goes into effect immediately and will remain in place through April 30.

During this time, residents are encouraged to exercise and spend time outdoors at home whenever possible. Use of parks and trails should be limited and a distance of six feet or more must be maintained between people from different households at all times.

“As residents settle into new habits with work changes and school closures, we know that parks are a vital resource to help maintain physical and mental health,” said Vancouver Parks and Recreation Department Director Julie Hannon. “It’s important to remember that parks are not a safe haven from this virus and all residents need to be following public health recommendations on social distancing. Many people have not followed the initial guidelines we provided, so it is necessary to take more assertive action to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community.”

New park use guidelines:

- Active recreation areas are closed, including playgrounds, picnic shelters, basketball and tennis courts, barbecues, disc golf and horseshoe pits.
- City of Vancouver parks, trails and beaches are open; a distance of six feet or more must be maintained between people from different households at all times.
- Park restrooms remain open to help serve residents with limited access to restroom facilities.
- Pick-up games, picnics and gatherings of more than 10 people are not permitted.
- Lawn areas and sports fields are open for walking and other non-team activities only. Activities should be non-contact and played only with people from the same household.
- The Marine Park Boat Launch is open, but visitors must practice appropriate social distancing when parking and launching or retrieving their vessel. There is no fee collection at the boat launch through April 30.
- Swift Skate Park is closed.
- Columbia River and Esther Short Park water features will remain off through April 30. The structures are closed for climbing or sitting.

Practice National Recreation and Park Association recommendations for social distancing:

- Follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on personal hygiene prior to heading to parks and trails. Wash your hands, carry hand sanitizer, do not visit public spaces if you have symptoms, and cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Observe at all times CDC's minimum recommended social distancing of six feet from other people. Practice it and know what it looks like. Keep it as you walk, bike or hike.
- Bring a suitable trash bag. Leave no trash, take everything out to protect city workers.

For ongoing updates related to the city's response to novel coronavirus COVID-19, visit www.cityofvancouver.us/coronavirus.

MEDIA CONTACT:

[Melody Burton](#), Vancouver Parks and Recreation Marketing Manager
360-487-8306

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Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Vancouver Parks & Recreation
PO Box 1995
Vancouver, WA 98668-1995

Administrative Offices:

City Hall
415 W. Sixth St.
Vancouver, WA 98660

Email:

parksrec@cityofvancouver.us

Phone:

Main Line (Parks & Administration): 360-487-8311

Firstenburg Community Center: 360-487-7001

Luepke Senior Center: 360-487-7050

Marshall Community Center: 360-487-7100

For Maintenance Issues:

In City Parks: 360-487-8177

In County Parks: 360-397-2446

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