

Texas State Parks Temporarily Close to the Public

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AUSTIN—At the direction of Gov. Greg Abbott, Texas State Parks will be closed to the public effective at the close of business Tuesday, April 7 in order to maintain the safest environment for visitors, volunteers and staff. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) will continue to stay current with the latest public health recommendations and will announce when a definite reopening date has been determined.

“Given the myriad of challenges and heightened risks of operating the parks at this time, we believe this is the best course of action right now in order to meet the health and safety expectations the state has set out for the citizens of Texas,” said Carter Smith, Executive Director of TPWD. “All state parks will remain temporarily closed until public health and safety conditions improve. During the closure, staff will continue to steward and care for the parks to ensure they can be immediately reopened to visitors at the appropriate time.”

Outdoor recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, biking, jogging, walking, hiking, wildlife viewing, and the like are essential activities for Texas citizens. TPWD will continue to do its part to actively encourage and promote these opportunities in ways that are safe and close to home, said Smith.

Through this trying time, TPWD has worked diligently to facilitate access to the outdoors across the state, including in the state park system, which hosted nearly 740,000 day and overnight visitors throughout the month of March.

Despite the implementation of increasingly restrictive visitor use measures to help minimize the transmission of COVID-19 at parks, TPWD has reached a point where public safety considerations of those in the parks, and in the surrounding communities, must take precedence over continued operations. Difficulty in ensuring compliance with social distancing, problems in maintaining adequate supplies and keeping park facilities sufficiently sanitized are only a few of the challenges encountered by state park staff.

While parks are closed to the public, staff will be working to help maintain the standard upkeep, maintenance, stewardship, and continued regular cleaning of site facilities.

The Texas State Parks Customer Service Center is currently working toward contacting customers with upcoming overnight reservations to reimburse stays booked through the reservation system. Group and facility reservations have been cancelled until April 30. Cancelled reservations will not be charged normal administrative fees.

Day passes purchased through the reservation system, not associated to the Texas State Parks Pass, will also be refunded without penalties. The Texas State Parks Customer Service Center will automatically process cancellations of both overnight and day-use reservations. If your reservation is impacted by a facility or park closure, a Customer Service Center agent will contact you – you do not need to contact us. We are contacting customers in order of arrival date and appreciate your patience.

Questions regarding state park reservations can be emailed to **customer.service@tpwd.texas.gov** and general park information can be found at **[TexasStateParks.org](https://www.texasstateparks.org)**.