



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 27, 2020

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Actions being Taken to Minimize the Risk of COVID-19 Spread at Public Parks**

Public parks have experienced an increase in use due to other social venues being closed.

The attached March 26, 2020 memorandum from the Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation (NRPR) Director identifies additional strategies being employed in the NRPR Department to assist in reducing the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus.

This includes increased disinfection strategies for restrooms and playgrounds as well as substantially increased public notification and signage regarding protocols to stop the spread of COVID-19 and to maintain adequate social distancing in parking lots, ramadas and other facilities within public parks.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: Jan Leshar, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
Dr. Bob England, Director, Health Department
City/Town Managers:
Mary Jacobs, Town Manager, Town of Oro Valley
Jamsheed Mehta, Town Manager, Town of Marana
Michael Ortega, Manager, City of Tucson
Kelly Udall, Town Manager, Town of Sahuarita
John Vidaurri, City Manager, City of South Tucson



MEMORANDUM

To: CH Huckelberry, County Administrator
Carmine DeBonis, Deputy County Administrator

Date: March 26, 2020

From: Chris Cawein, Director

Subject: Parks Facilities Use and Public Protection Strategies

Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation continues to examine our facilities and programs and makes reasonable and appropriate adjustments to how we operate during the COVID-19 pandemic as the situation continues to unfold.

As previously described, we have suspended most of our public interaction events and activities and closed most of our indoor public use facilities (particularly Community Centers) whereby we cannot continue to assure that guidelines to reduce potential disease transmission (i.e., social distancing) cannot be reasonably assured. Yet we continue to believe that maintaining our natural resource, urban and river parks, and the majority of amenities within those parks as open and accessible to the general public, is presently a reasonable and safe strategy. In fact, the issuance of Governor Ducey's Executive Order 2020-12 issued March 23, he listed parks facilities as "Essential" Services, thereby preventing them from closure.

NRPR-managed parks, trails and other facilities have been under increased and significant stress during this pandemic. With schools and many businesses closed, plus the fact that March brings superb weather, more people than ever are utilizing our parks, given the fact that many alternative venues, mostly indoors, are not presently available to them. Usage patterns have shifted away from organized events, groups, and activities to uses defined by smaller family/friend/individual usage. As indicated previously in our press release on March 19, NRPR has strongly encouraged those who continue to utilize our parks and facilities, to abide by federal, state and local disease prevention guidelines, including social distancing and avoidance of assembling into larger groups.

The increased usage of our parks, even though Pima County NRPR has nearly 250,000 acres of land in our Board-adopted park land inventory creates some challenges to continue to ensure that the public abides by the disease prevention guidelines. Many of our urban parks are located near the core or within the City of Tucson in more heavily populated areas of the community. This is a result of basic park planning and development considerations as to where parks should be sited, to serve fundamental local needs. And given their urban location, they are often relatively smaller facilities, when compared to the massive ranchland and natural resource park holdings. Therefore, usage density of these urban parks at times may create some challenges in abiding by the social distancing guidelines to reduce disease transmission.

We responded to this initial increase in park usage by printing and installing COVID-19 prevention posters (**Exhibit A**) at each of the 99 restrooms managed by NRPR at our parks facilities. That operation occurred on

March 13. Subsequently, smaller 8 ½ x 11 stickers, containing the same message that articulate precautions to help slow the spread of disease, were affixed to all playground structures within the NRPR park system (114 in total), on March 20-23. Our hope in all of our messaging has been to educate park users how they could do their part to slow the spread of disease, to use good hygiene and practice social distancing strategies recommended by various government health agencies.

Since the advent of this pandemic, staff have reported that many of the facilities within our parks (such as restrooms) are getting much more use (and abuse) and this is stressing those facilities. Toilet paper, soap, towels and other supplies have been regularly stolen (thus forcing limitations on what and how we stock materials), and graffiti and other forms of vandalism have increased (most likely due to schools being closed). Recently adopted strategies to allow additional pandemic leave and allowing broader use of leave time associated with the pandemic, have also resulted in reduction in staff who are normally responsible to maintain the parks. Therefore, the challenge of the situation is that parks are considered essential services, that schools and other facility closures are causing increased usage (and therefore stressors) of park facilities as other venues/outlets for public use are closing, but that adopted policies designed to be employee-friendly during these times are causing increased absence of staff and therefore stress on existing staff.

Given the increase in park use, NRPR is now evaluating additional measures in order to try to create a more healthful environment within our park system. This next stage involves adding additional disinfection steps to select “hard-surface” amenities (Restrooms, Playgrounds) within the Pima County Park system.

The strategy being employed by NRPR for the duration of this COVID-19 pandemic for the disinfection of restrooms and playground structures is as described below:

1. Define all parks in the NRPR system that have public use restrooms and playgrounds;
2. Define the facility usage – Heavy, Moderate, Light for each facility (**Exhibit B**);
3. Determine responsible Division in charge of the facilities listed;
4. Institute disinfection protocol
 - a. **Public Restrooms:**
 - i. Schedule: Typically completed by 7-8 AM.
 - ii. Frequency: Minimum once per day - for 7 days per week (Heavy use); for 4 days per week (Moderate use); for 2 days per week (Light use).
 - iii. Treatment protocol: Remove debris as needed, Clean/scrub as needed, Spray Disinfectant solution, let sit for 10 minutes (minimum), rinse, air dry.
 - iv. Treatment materials: Bleach solution (3%)
 - v. Application methods: Spray bottles, handheld pressure sprayer, backpack sprayer, power washer as needed.
 - vi. Surface treated: Minimum all surfaces within 6 foot reach of ground surface.
 - b. **Playgrounds:**
 - i. Schedule: Typically completed by 8 AM.
 - ii. Frequency: Minimum once per day - for 7 days per week (heavy use); for 4 days per week (moderate use); for 2 days per week (light use).
 - iii. Treatment protocol: Remove debris as needed, clean/scrub surfaces as needed, spray disinfectant solution, let air dry.
 - iv. Treatment materials: Quat disinfectant (Quaternary Ammonium Compound)
 - v. Application methods: Spray bottles, handheld pressure sprayer, backpack sprayer, power washer as needed.
 - vi. Surfaces Treated: Minimum all surfaces of play structures within likely reach of users.

NRPR has already begun to institute the disinfection protocol, as defined above, at our sites. Logistically, implementation of the protocol at the 213 sites requiring daily or periodic treatment that are spread around the County will be challenging due in particular to our limited weekend coverage from Parks staff. However, we are presently rescheduling some staff and examining repurposing some of our other staff, whose programs may be suspended, to assist in completing this disinfection protocol at some of the sites.

Although we recognize that any disinfection protocol for a public park facility is an imperfect solution, because we cannot guarantee that an infected person won't impact a facility immediately after the completion of the disinfection process, we believe that this is a reasonable and prudent step to reduce the potential for disease transmission from frequently utilized hard surfaces in our parks. Although facility closures could further reduce the potential for exposure, our ability to effectively "close" structures such as playgrounds is limited and porous. Restroom closures, while possible, would likely create additional and unintended health consequences for the general public and staff. With current staffing levels, closures can be avoided; however, if staff absences continue to rise, we will need to reexamine our protocol and make appropriate adjustments and those adjustments could include select closures of facilities with lower use.

Therefore, unless otherwise instructed, we will continue to advance the disinfection protocol at NRPR restrooms and playgrounds as described herein and begin immediately. Additionally, we will continue to recommend to park users via signage and other messaging techniques, the importance of social distancing, limited group size, and practicing good hygiene techniques in accordance with recommendations from federal state and local health authorities.

Exhibits

STOP THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

Please follow these guidelines to protect our community from the spread of COVID19, the coronavirus



Cover your cough or sneeze.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer. A lot.



Avoid touching your mouth and face!

Please stay home if you are sick.
FOR EMERGENCIES, CALL 911



We all need to do our part to stay healthy and protect the medically vulnerable during this outbreak.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Park Name	Playground Equipment	Restrooms	Usage
Agua Caliente Park	0	1	Heavy
Ajo Regional Park	0	4	Light
Ann Day Community Park	1	1	Heavy
Arthur Pack Regional Park	6	4	Heavy
Augie Acuna Los Ninos	3	1	Heavy
Brandi Fenton	2	4	Heavy
Branding Iron	1	0	Light
Canoa Preserve Park	0	1	Light
Canoa Ranch	0	1	CLOSED TO PUBLIC
Casas Adobes	1	1	Moderate
Catalina Neighborhood	2	1	Moderate
Catalina Regional Park	0	0	NA
Childrens Memorial	2	1	Heavy
Continental Community Center	3	1	Light
Curtis	2	1	Moderate
Dan Felix Memorial Park	0	1	Light
Denny Dunn	2	1	Moderate
Ebonee Marie Moody	4	1	Heavy
Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center	3	2	Light
ES Bud Walker	4	1	Moderate
Esmond Station Regional Park	0	0	NA
Feliz Paseos Park	0	1	Light
Flowing Wells	4	2	Heavy
Forrest Rickard	1	1	Light
George Mehl Family Foothills	1	2	Moderate
Lawrence	2	2	Moderate
Linda Vista	4	1	Heavy
McDonald	11	3	Heavy
Meadowbrook	3	1	Heavy
Mike Jacob Sports Park	1	7	Moderate
Mission Ridge Park	0	1	Moderate
Mt Lemmon Chuck Bowden Center	0	2	Moderate
Picture Rocks	6	1	Moderate
Pima Prickly Park	0	0	NA
Richardson	3	1	Heavy
Rillito Regional	1	4	Heavy
Rillito Vista	2	1	Light
Robles Ranch Community Center	3	2	Light
Southeast Regional Park	0	3	Light
Star Valley	11	1	Heavy
Summit Old Nogales	1	1	Moderate
Sunset Pointe	3	1	Moderate
Sweetwater Preserve	0	0	NA
Thomas Jay	4	2	Heavy
Ted Walker Park	0	1	Moderate
Three Points Veterans Memorial	6	1	Moderate
Tucson Mountain Park -Gilbert Ray Campground	0	4	Heavy
TMP -Gilbert Ray Campground - showerhouse and laundry	0	2	Light
Tucson Mountain Park -Gates Pass -vault	0	1	Moderate
Tucson Mountain Park - Juan Santa Cruz Picnic Area	0	1	Light
Tucson Mountain Park - Ironwood Picnic Areas - vault	0	2	Light
Vesey	2	1	Moderate
Wildwood	3	1	Heavy
Winston Reynolds Manzanita	5	3	Heavy
TOTAL	113	85	

River Park Name	Playground Equipment	Restrooms	Usage
RRP N La Cholla Bl to N La Canada Dr		1	Heavy
RRP I10 to N Shannon Rd		1	Heavy
RRP N 1st Av to N Campbell Av		1	Heavy
RRP N Dodge Bl to N Swan Rd (Paradise Falls)		1	Moderate
RRP N Dodge Bl to N Swan Rd		1	Moderate
RRP N Swan Rd to N Craycroft Rd		1	Heavy
PNTR 22nd to Golf Links Rd		1	Heavy
JULW Rita Rd to Kolb Rd		1	Moderate
JULW South Tucson to Paseo		1	Moderate
SCR South Ajo Hwy to Silverlake Paseo De Las Iglesias		1	Moderate
SCR South Congress St to Speedway	1	1	Moderate
SCR South Silverlake Rd to Congress St		1	Moderate
SCR South Irvington Rd to Ajo Hwy		1	Moderate
CDO Ina Rd to Magee Rd		1	Heavy
TOTAL	1	14	