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## **SUMMIT METRO PARKS ANNOUNCES SUMMER 2020 COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Summit Metro Parks today announced its COVID-19 response plan for the remainder of the summer season, including operating status for public buildings, rentable lodges and shelters, park amenities and in-person programming. Parks and trails continue to remain open.

“It is an honor to offer more than 14,000 acres of clean, safe parks and trails for the community’s use and enjoyment through this public health emergency,” said Executive Director Lisa King. “While we are disappointed that we are unable to reopen some facilities this summer, we continue to make all decisions with the safety of our visitors and employees as our top priority.”

At the guidance of public health authorities, Summit Metro Parks has extended the cancellation of in-person public programs and the closure of public buildings and indoor rentable lodges through September 7. Summit Metro Parks will continue to closely monitor crowds at parks and trails, and may implement rolling parking restrictions and amenity closures to promote safe distancing.

Beginning July 6, the park district will reopen its rentable outdoor shelters to groups meeting Ohio’s maximum gathering limits (currently 10 or fewer people). As previously announced, the park district has also reopened camping, archery, community gardening, observation decks and fishing docks, in addition to lifting restrictions on the use of picnic tables, benches and grills.

Summit Metro Parks remains fully operational, with rangers and maintenance crews continuing to keep parks clean and safe, naturalists and biologists helping to deliver virtual programming, and the majority of administrative staff continuing to telework to serve the public while complying with social distancing requirements. At this time, facilities and amenities closed for public safety include:

- [F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm Visitors Center](#) (1828 Smith Rd., Akron)
- [Liberty Park Nature Center](#) (9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg)
- [Summit Lake Nature Center](#) (390 W. Crosier St., Akron)
- Administrative Offices Lobby (975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron)
- Volunteer Center (located at the Service Center on Sand Run Pkwy.)
- All rentable [lodges](#)
- Rentable outdoor [shelters](#) (opening July 6 for groups of 10 or fewer)
- Playgrounds and [nature play areas](#), exercise equipment and boat rentals
- [Swim lakes](#)
- [Some restrooms](#) to conserve supplies
- Drinking fountains
- Rolling parking limitations and amenity closures at busy locations to promote safe distancing

Summit Metro Parks urges everyone to stay home if sick or exhibiting symptoms, wash their hands before coming to the parks and maintain at least six feet from other visitors. The park district also reminds visitors to avoid congregating in parking lots or at points of interest and to bypass busy areas. Visitors are asked to carry their own water and hand sanitizer and if possible, to bring a trash bag to carry out their own trash.

The park district will continue to monitor guidance from health authorities in order to determine when and how it can safely reopen facilities, potentially increase gathering size limits and resume in-person programs. Through December 31, Summit Metro Parks is no longer accepting new lodge or shelter reservations and new special use permit application

approvals have been placed on hold. Those with existing reservations may contact the park district to reschedule or receive a refund.

All further decisions will be communicated to the public on an ongoing basis as the situation evolves. Please continue to [follow Summit Metro Parks online](#) for the latest information and [on Facebook for our “At Home in Nature” series](#) of videos and activities to remain connected to the outdoors during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

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Summit Metro Parks manages more than 14,000 acres, including 16 parks, several conservation areas and more than 150 miles of trails, with 22 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance averages 5 million visits. Visit us online at [summitmetroparks.org](http://summitmetroparks.org).

