Gov. Evers Directs DNR to Close 40 State Parks, Forests, and Recreational Areas

MADISON – Gov. Tony Evers today directed the Department of Natural Resources to close several state parks to protect the health and safety of Wisconsinites.

Due to unprecedented crowds, litter, vandalism and out of an abundance of caution to protect public health and safety and help flatten the curve, the following Wisconsin State Parks, Forests and Recreational Areas will close at the end of the day Thurs., April 9, and will remain closed beginning Fri., April 10, until further notice:

**Northeast Region**
High Cliff State Park

**Southeast Region**
Big Foot Beach State Park, Harrington Beach State Park, Havenwoods State Forest, Kohler-Andrae State Park, Kettle Moraine State Forest Lapham Peak, Loew Lake, Mukwonago River, Northern Unit, Pike Lake, Southern Unit, Lakeshore State Park, and Richard Bong State Recreational Area

**South Central Region**

“I wanted to keep state parks open for the public to enjoy during this challenging time which is why outdoor activity is listed as an essential activity under the Safer at Home order,” said Gov. Tony Evers. “Unfortunately, growing difficulty with ensuring social distancing compliance, dwindling cleaning supplies and mounting trash are some of the challenges faced by our state parks staff. We have to address the
growing public health and safety concern and protect Wisconsinites.”

Despite waiving fees, closing state park offices, visitor centers, and non-essential buildings to help minimize the transmission of COVID-19 at parks, the situation has reached a point where public safety in the parks and surrounding communities takes precedence over keeping these locations open. If the public does not follow social distancing guidelines and vandalizes property, more state parks may have to close.

The public should follow simple steps to prevent illness and avoid exposure to this virus including:

- Avoid social gatherings with people of all ages (including playdates and sleepovers, parties, large family dinners, visitors in your home, non-essential workers in your house);
- Frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water;
- Covering coughs and sneezes;
- Avoiding touching your face; and
- Staying home.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and we encourage you and the public to frequently monitor the DHS website for updates, and to follow @DHSWI on Facebook and Twitter, or dhs.wi on Instagram. Additional information can be found on the CDC website.

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