

Texas State Parks to Allow Limited Overnight Camping Starting May 18

May 6, 2020

Media Contact: [TPWD News](#), Business Hours, 512-389-8030

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AUSTIN— As part of a broader effort to reopen Texas, Texas State Parks will resume limited overnight camping beginning May 18. This gradual reopening of overnight reservations will be limited at all Texas State Parks to varying degrees depending on individual park occupancy in order to align with safe business practices currently followed in Texas. Some existing reservations will be honored, but to prevent overcrowding, manage continued social distancing and safeguard public health, no new reservations can be made for now. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) will notify the public once new reservations can be booked.

“After careful consideration, we are taking this additional step towards returning to normal operations in our parks by resuming some overnight camping at Texas State Parks,” said Carter Smith, Executive Director of TPWD. “As overnight campers are welcomed back to their favorite natural spaces, our team will continue maintaining the cleanliness of frequently used facilities such as campsites, cabins and restrooms to ensure that visitors, volunteers and staff can continue to enjoy Texas State Parks safely.”

TPWD recommends visitors continue to adhere to local, state and federal travel restrictions and other guidance for safety and social distancing before traveling. Additionally, all visitors are required to pre-purchase and print day-use and overnight camping permits through the Texas State Parks Reservation System before traveling to a park. All reservations can be made online at **www.texasstateparks.org** or by calling 512-389-8900.

Existing social distancing standards and public health recommendations remain in effect including the recommendation to wear face coverings and bring one's own supply of hand sanitizer. State parks will also continue the requirement of a six-foot distance from individuals outside of their party, including the prohibition of the gathering of groups larger than five that are not part of the same family or household.

Visitors planning on coming to a state park are encouraged to bring all necessary provisions, such as hand sanitizer and face masks, with them in order to help local businesses have enough goods to properly serve their communities during this time. This will also help park staff have necessary supplies available for all guests during their stay.

Texas State Parks will continue to operate at a limited capacity. Operational changes still in effect at parks include the suspension of all transactions at parks, equipment rentals and in-person interpretive programs. All group-use facilities, visitor and nature centers, headquarters and other enclosed spaces where people congregate will also remain closed.

The continuation of overnight reservations and other facets of park operations will be subject to change and is dependent on current data, staffing levels and public health recommendations. Park visitors should check the **TPWD website** and **Texas State Parks Alert Map** regularly for the latest information.