

Parks opening on Saturday

4/30/2020

The Governor has decided to open State Parks this Saturday. He has left it to Counties and Towns to decide on their own what to do with parks under their jurisdiction. The County will be opening Colonial park. Some of the restrictions are as below. The county will limit access to Colonial Park by placing guards at the entrance who will meter cars going in and out in batches of 25.

I do not have the information on how the State will limit access but the Governor has said available parking must be limited at all State Parks and Forests at 50% of the maximum capacity at one time, and visitors shall be prohibited from parking in undesignated areas ...

Franklin Twp will open all its parks as well. Some will have limited parking (Middlebush for one). Others already have small parking lots and are dozens to hundreds of acres so there is opportunity for people to follow social distancing. The restrictions of our parks will follow those of paragraph 2 of the excerpt of EO 133 (below).

Please follow social distancing. Please wear a mask when near others.

I will not comment on the wisdom of the State Parks opening. I will say the timing caught me by surprise. I am concerned about social distancing on the very popular canal path.

My editorial comment is directed towards the opening of our local parks.

Google defines **Kobayashi Maru** as a training exercise in the fictional Star Trek universe designed to test the character of Starfleet Academy cadets in a **no-win scenario**. No matter what the cadet does there will be a bad outcome.

Opening of the Twp Parks is a Kobayashi Maru. Given the Governor has opened State Parks, people will go to them in numbers. If we don't open our parks, people who would have gone to our parks will go to the State Parks, thus increasing the density of people in the State Parks and leading to more infections. If we do open our parks, I fear people will not properly social distance in our park thus infections will increase. **Kobayashi Maru.**

Opening our parks will dilute the overall person density. So, given the circumstances I think we should open the parks.

If you go, I recommend going when there seem to be relatively few people there. Wear a mask. Social distance. Assume everyone else there is infected and can infect you. And that you might be infected and can pass it on to others. I guarantee unless you go when few others are there, you will pass an asymptomatic carrier.

Will I be going, no.

Excerpt of Executive order 133. Other restrictions apply. I have not covered golf because each golf course will handle social distancing. I will say it's by reservation only. So call ahead.

1. All State Parks and Forests shall open to the public to engage in the following passive recreational activities in which social distancing can be readily achieved:

- a. Fishing;
- b. Hunting;
- c. Boating;
- d. Canoeing;
- e. Hiking;
- f. Walking;
- g. Running or jogging;
- h. Biking;
- i. Birding; and
- j. Horseback riding.

2. The following shall remain closed to the public at all State Parks and Forests:

- a. Picnic areas;
- b. Playgrounds;
- c. Exercise stations and equipment;
- d. Chartered watercraft services and rentals;
- e. Swimming;
- f. Pavilions;
- g. Restrooms; and
- h. Other buildings or facilities, including, but not limited to, visitor centers, interpretive centers, and interior historical sites.

3. The following recommendations and policies shall apply to all State Parks and Forests:

- a. Employees and visitors should wear cloth face coverings while in the State Park or Forest in all settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, except where doing so would inhibit that individual's health or where the individual is under two years of age;
- b. Available parking must be limited at all State Parks and Forests at 50% of the maximum capacity at one time, and visitors shall be prohibited from parking in undesignated areas, including in roadways and other undesignated areas;
- c. No picnicking shall be allowed, including on picnic blankets in signed picnic areas, and no picnic blankets, chairs, coolers, and other such personal property shall be carried into any State Parks and Forests;

d. Consistent with Paragraph 3 of Executive Order No. 107 (2020), visitors must practice social distancing and stay six feet apart whenever practicable, excluding immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners;

e. No organized or contact activities or sports shall be allowed.

Please be careful. PK