

MARK WILLIAMS  
COMMISSIONER

JEFF COWN  
DIRECTOR

**MEMORANDUM**

To: All Parks and Historic Sites Staff

From: Ellen Graham

Date: March 13, 2020

Subject: Programming in Parks During Coronavirus

Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites are open for business in all sites and we would like to be consistent across the state regarding program offerings. Since we are still open for business, we are still offering programs in our sites while using common sense and using these guidelines.

Regarding interpretive staff, the same guidelines apply to them as all other park staff. No employee should come to work with a fever, cough or sneeze and if staff are sick, they will need to stay home. If a program is planned and the interpretive staff is sick the site will need to make the decision to cover the program with other staff or cancel on a case by case basis.

Please use these guidelines for **All Park & Historic Site Programs**:

- We need to honor a social distancing of 6 feet between people and this should apply to park programs as well.
- When possible offer programs outside not in a small enclosed area. If planning new events, plan them outside.
- We should not offer programs for large groups (more than 50 people) inside in conference rooms, theaters, or classrooms.
- When inside programs are offered in museums, classrooms or theaters, do what you can to spread out the group and honor the 6-foot distancing. Set seats further apart, in theaters skip seats between participants when seating, if staffing allows, stagger start times or send groups in waves to split group sizes.
- It is ultimately up to the participant, parent/guardian to decide on their attendance to a program.
- When planning programs outside continue to honor the 6-foot distancing by spreading out in the grass or space seating in amphitheaters.
- At each program please discuss preventative techniques with audiences before every park program. [CDC Preventative Measures can be found online here.](#)

- If someone attends a program who is showing signs of being sick (coughing, sneezing, feverish), ask them politely to excuse themselves from the program and come back at a later date. If a fee was charged, offer refunds or return bookings to return at a later date.

**Large Special Events:** For more information refer to the [CDC guidelines here](#). At this time, we are not cancelling any large events however this may change at any time. Per the CDC Guidelines, *“Officials may ask you to modify, postpone, or cancel large events for the safety and well-being of your event staff, participants, and the community. The details of your emergency operations plan should be based on the size and duration of your events, demographics of the participants, complexity of your event operations, and type of on-site services and activities your event may offer.”*

We realize you have large races, Easter Egg Hunts, Festivals, Historic Reenactments, etc. already planned in the next few weeks. At this time, plan to host these programs within the guidelines listed above for all park programs.

**Marketing Programs on Social Media:** We need to be sensitive not to market our programs with any connection to the Coronavirus. The Marketing Unit is promoting that our sites are still open for business and we still encourage that you promote park programs online on the website and on social media. As you promote your programs you should not encourage people to get out of the house to come to the programs or make any statements to circumvent the quarantine or virus. For example, do NOT say “feeling cooped up because of the Coronavirus, come out to the park to enjoy a hike.”

**Outreach Programs:** Outreach programs are programs at other locations off park property such as libraries, schools, event centers, etc. Outreach programs should be discussed with Region Managers prior to proceeding. If there are concentrations of 250 people or more it may be discouraged to attend but would need to be decided on a case by case basis.

**High Risk Programs:** We will encourage canceling high-risk programs that would use touchable/tactile elements like a sensory awareness night hike, food related programs like Dutch-oven cooking, any camping programs that would utilize the old First Time Camper supplies (sleeping pads, chairs, etc.). These programs can be replaced with a different program that does not require touching or food.

**Shared Program Equipment:** Avoid using shared programming equipment such as binoculars, spotting scopes, compasses, GPS units, etc.

**Virtual Field Trips:** Consider offering an alternative group program if possible based on your location, Wi-Fi/cell service via FaceTime, Zoom and Skype (and now Teams). We have had a few sites who already implemented online field trips and if you have questions on how to get started with this please contact me.

**Online Resources:** You can continue to steer groups or students to the online portion of the [Junior Ranger program](#) and to the [online eBook](#).

As always please feel free to call or email me with any questions. Thank you.