



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Appalachian National Scenic Trail - News Release – 03-30-2020

Appalachian National Scenic Trail is Closing All Overnight Shelters and Privies on Lands Administered by the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Park Office Until Further Notice

Effective immediately, the National Park Service is closing all overnight shelters (56 total) and privies (75 total) on land administered by the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Park Office in the states of VA (10 shelters, 12 privies), MD (1 shelter, 2 privies), PA (8 shelters, 6 privies), NJ (1 shelter, 1 privy), NY (5 shelters, 5 privies), CT (7 shelters, 16 privies), MA (1 shelter, 4 privies), and ME (22 shelters, 29 privies). These closures are consistent with and in concurrence of our state and non-profit partners. These modifications to operations are in support of federal, state, and local efforts to ensure the health and safety of our visitors, employees, volunteers, partners, and local communities. These closures will be in effect until further notice.

Virginia shelters covered by this closure: Johns Spring, Catawba Mtn, Campbell, Calf Mtn, Tom Floyd Wayside, Jim and Molly Denton, Whiskey Hollow, Rod Hollow, Sam Moore, David Lesser Memorial. All Shelters in Shenandoah remain closed under their park order.

Maryland Shelters covered by this order: Ed Garvey Shelter. All other shelters and campsites in Maryland remain closed under the state order. There is no place to legally spend the night on the AT in the state of Maryland.

Pennsylvania Shelters covered by this order: Alec Kennedy, Clarks Ferry, Peters Mtn, William Penn, 501, Windsor Furnace, Eckville, and George W. Outerbridge. All shelters in Michaux State Park plus Leroy Smith and Kirkridge remain closed under a separate state order.

New Jersey Shelters covered by this order: Pochuck Mtn Shelter. All other shelters in NJ remain closed under a separate state order.

New York shelters covered under this order: Wildcat, RPH, Morgan Stewart, Telephone Pioneers, and Wiley.

Connecticut shelters covered by this order: Ten Mile River, Mt. Algo, Stewart Hollow Brook, Pine Swamp Brook, Limestone Spring, Riga, and Brassie Brook.

Massachusetts shelters covered under this order: Upper Goose Pond. All other shelters and campsites in Massachusetts remain closed under a separate state order. There is no legal place to spend the night along the AT in Massachusetts.

Maine shelters that are covered under this order: Frye Notch, Hall Mtn, Bemis Mtn, Piazza Rock, Poplar Ridge, Spaulding Mtn, West Carry Pond, Pierce Pond, Pleasant Pond, Bald Mtn, Moxie Bald, Horseshoe Canyon, Leeman Brook, Wilson Valley, Chairback Gap, Carl A. Newhall, Logan Brook, East Branch (Pleasant River), Cooper Brook Falls, Potaywadjo Spring, Nahmakanta Stream, and Wadleigh Stream.

All shelters and privies will be closed to all use on Appalachian National Scenic Trail Park Office lands to implement the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), and local and state authorities to promote social distancing and sanitation standards to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Closing shelters will prevent trail users from congregating in close proximity to one another and encourage proper social distancing recommendations. Overnight trail users are encouraged to use a tent, and tent usage is authorized in the area surrounding the shelters. Closing of privies will prevent trail users from entering confined spaces where disease spreads without proper sanitation, and will discourage visitors from using facilities that do not meet cleanliness standards. With privies closed, hikers should dig a cat hole more than 200 feet from water sources and camping areas. The use of tents instead of shelters, and cat-holes for human waste disposal, is a reasonable mitigation to help protect our visitors.

The health and safety of our visitors, employees, volunteers, partners, and local communities is our number one priority. The CDC guidance for this pandemic includes social distancing. We are concerned that recent visitation patterns are in violation of CDC recommendations. While outdoor spaces remain accessible to the public in accordance with the latest health guidance, we urge visitors to practice social (physical) distancing and to avoid impacts on park resources.

- Stay at least six feet away from people outside your immediate household.
- When encountering another party on the Trail, step aside and give a six-foot right-of-way.
- Seek out areas that are not crowded to allow for adequate social distancing.
- If you encounter a crowded trailhead, go elsewhere.
- We urge visitors to continue to practice "Leave No Trace" principles, including pack-in and pack-out, to keep outdoor spaces safe and healthy.
- Consider staying closer to home to enjoy fresh air and outdoor activity. Many local neighborhoods are walkable or have trails nearby accessed by foot or bicycle.

We are closely monitoring COVID-19 with the federal, state, and local authorities. For updates, visit www.nps.gov/coronavirus

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