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Alaska State Park campgrounds to open as weather, staffing allow

(Anchorage, AK) – As Alaska continues to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, Alaska State Parks plans to open state campgrounds as weather and staffing allow.

Alaska State Parks manages 76 campgrounds throughout the state, most of which begin opening mid-to-late May based on snowmelt levels, ease of access, and seasonal staffing levels.

“As Alaskans work hard to keep themselves and their neighbors safe during these challenging times, we’re fortunate to have one of the best systems of state parks in the nation,” said Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation Director Ricky Gease. “We are working hard to make sure Alaska State Parks remain available for visitors to enjoy safe, healthy outdoor recreational activities, and that requires us to follow a prudent schedule for park openings.”

While the impacts of COVID-19 have delayed seasonal staff hiring, state parks staff is working to have the campgrounds open as soon as possible. The division is also working closely with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services to develop COVID-19 guidelines for campground operations, which will be posted on the ASP website prior to any new openings.

Here are the Alaska State Parks units, by region, where campgrounds are now open:

- Chugach State Park -- Bird Creek
- Kenai/Prince William Sound -- Blueberry Lake State Recreation Site, Deep Creek State Recreation Area-North Scenic Overlook, Ninilchik State Recreation Area, Clam Gulch State Recreation Area, and Kenai River Special Management Area - Morgan’s Landing campground
- Kodiak -- Pasagshak State Recreation Site

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Public use cabins across the state continue to remain open, although users must continue to follow the Centers for Disease Control's social distancing and cleaning guidelines. Visitors should bring their own cleaning products to disinfect before and after use, as Alaska State Parks does not have staff resources to clean the cabins.

While state parks, trails and picnic areas continue to be open for public use, it is critical that Alaskans work together to continue practicing social distancing and proper hygiene habits, Gease said.

The Alaska State Parks website will be updated with new information as additional campgrounds are opened, and Alaskans are encouraged to consult this page when planning camping outings: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/open.htm>

With Alaska State Parks' summer staff not yet on the job, it is up to users to practice good stewardship to protect themselves, and all current and future fellow park users. That includes cleaning up after yourself, packing out whatever you pack in, bringing disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer with you to ensure bathroom facilities and picnic tables stay clean.

Alaska State Parks staff appreciate the continued support of park users, as we everyone works together to keep our parks open and safe. For updates, go to: www.alaskastateparks.org

CONTACT: Wendy Sailors, 907-529-7640, wendy.sailors@alaska.gov

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