



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Great Smoky Mountains
National Park

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Great Smoky Mountains News Release

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Park Closes to Support Regional COVID-19 Prevention Efforts

Great Smoky Mountains National Park officials announced that all park areas, except the Foothills Parkway and the Spur, will close at noon on Tuesday, March 24 through Monday, April 6, in a continuing effort to support federal, state, and local efforts to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The park will continue to assess changing conditions in our region and work with local communities to extend or terminate closures, as appropriate to ensure the health and safety of our visitors, employees, volunteers, partners, and local residents.

All access to the park, including trails and roads, will temporarily close in alignment with efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 across the region. This includes Executive Order 117 issued by NC Governor Roy Cooper, Executive Order 17 issued by TN Governor Bill Lee, Executive Order 6 issued by Principal Chief Richard Sneed of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, Graham County travel restrictions, Pigeon Forge, TN Safe-at-Home Advisory, and requests to close or partially close the park received from Swain County, Sevier County, and Bryson City, NC.

Despite park efforts over the last week to comply with the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) guidance for social distancing, approximately 30,000 people entered the park daily resulting in congested conditions at popular locations such as Laurel Falls, Newfound Gap, and Cades Cove. Visitors from across the country have flocked to the area due to Spring Break, wildflowers, and warm weather conditions. This two-week park closure allows the park to support local efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

During the closure period, visitors can experience the park using digital tools including our social media platforms and website where near real-time views can be seen via park webcams at

<https://www.nps.gov/grsm/learn/photosmultimedia/webcams.htm>. Park rangers can still help answer questions via email or phone during business hours at (865) 436-1291, (828) 506-8620, or [GRSM Smokies Information@nps.gov](mailto:GRSM_Smokies_Information@nps.gov). The NPS is working with federal, state, and local authorities to closely monitor COVID-19 and adjusting measures to control its spread. We will notify the public as we are able to resume operations and will provide updates on our website at www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/conditions.htm and social media.

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