

Area waters and campgrounds are finally reopening to public

By **JIM MATTHEWS**

www.OutdoorNewsService.com

A number of recreation areas and fishing waters opened this weekend and many more will be open in the next two weeks as agencies and the public learn how to deal with the Coronavirus outbreak that has disrupted outdoor activities for most people. But the process has not been smooth or seamless as government bureaucracies struggle to meet political mandates.

For example, Pyramid Enterprises, which operates the marina and tackle shop at Lake Pyramid in northern Los Angeles County, was told by the U.S. Forest Service on Wednesday this week they would be able to resume operation on Saturday with proper precautions. The staff was scrambling to get staffing together and safety equipment ready to go when the USFS walked that decision back on Thursday. The USFS said the reopening decision would be up to the Department of Water Resources. On Friday, the DWR said they were working on approval and trying to align it's reopening at Pyramid with state parks. Reopening would likely come "soon, most likely by next weekend."

The DWR also said it would also likely reopen the parking area at Quail Lake by next weekend for anglers and hikers that fish, bicycle, and hike around that lake.

As far as state parks, Lake Perris Recreation Area in western Riverside County opened this Saturday. The lake was open to boating and fishing, but shoreline swimming, personal motorized watercraft, and group gatherings were still not allowed. The swim beach would remained closed, and the lake would be limited

to 200 vessel launches per day, not counting kayaks, canoes, and float tubes, which are also allowed. The campground also remains closed.

More information is available on the Lake Perris website at www.parks.ca.gov/lakeperris. (Also in Riverside County, Lake Skinner and Diamond Valley Lake reopened May 2 to fishing and boating use with restrictions.)

While Lake Perris is now open, nearby state recreation area Lake Silverwood remains closed, but state officials hinted that it could reopen with similar restrictions as Lake Perris as early as this coming weekend.

Local national forests have also started phasing in reopening of roads and campgrounds to the public. The Angeles National Forest/National Monument had a "soft reopening" this weekend, but campgrounds and all other developed recreation areas remain closed. This is contrary to what some local television stations were reporting late this week. The "soft opening" means most trails, undeveloped parking areas, and roads will be open.

In the San Bernardino National Forest, many developed recreation sites will reopen beginning May 22, including many popular campgrounds. They include: Barton Flats Campground, Big Pine Flat Family Campground, Crab Flats

O.N.S
OUTDOOR NEWS SERVICE

Originally Published:
May 17, 2020

www.OutdoorNewsService.com

Family Campground, Dogwood Family Campground, Green Valley Family Campground, Hanna Flat Family Campground, Heart Bar Family Campground, Holcomb Valley Campground, Jenks Lake Day Use Area, North Shore Campground, Pineknot Family Campground, San Gorgonio Family Campground, Serrano Campground, South Fork Family Campground, and Wildhorse Equestrian Campground.

Meanwhile, closures of campgrounds and other recreation facilities in the Inyo National Forest have been extended through June 30, according to a new order issued on Friday, when the restrictions were originally set to expire. This closure apparently “can be rescinded as needed.”

For anglers, with the Eastern Sierra trout season set to open June 1 after being delayed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) at the request of Inyo and Mono county officials. This means that unless the USFS does rescind the order, no national forest campgrounds in those counties will be available to anglers. The public closure would even extend to popular fishing parking areas on Convict Lake, Hot Creek, and June Lake.

As of Friday, the Sequoia National Forest had not announced if it was extending the closure of

all campgrounds that was set to expire that day, and all of its recorded messages and websites continue to say the campgrounds along the Kern River and throughout the forest remain closed.

Trout fishing season, where not open year-around in Kern and Tulare counties, opened three weeks ago, but no campgrounds these upper elevation regions have been opened, yet.

The DFW also announced this week that it agreed to open trout fishing season in Alpine County this past Friday (May 15), after delaying the trout opener originally set to begin April 25. County officials asked the DFW to open the season this weekend rather than waiting until the June 1 date originally agreed to by officials. The Friday opening this week coincides with Alpine County’s soft opening of restaurants and other facilities.

Fishing waters currently open have been extremely crowded as families are fishing as one of the only recreation options available, especially with all youth and school sports on hold, and the temporary closure of all spectator sports, movie theatres, and recreation parks closed. Each new opening relieves the crush of activity on the handful of places that had never closed. The reopenings are long overdue and provide people a safe, healthy place to go. END