



Contact: Chuck Cuzzetto
253-888-0645
ccuzzetto@penmetparks.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PENMET PARKS BRACES FOR BUDGET IMPACTS

PenMet Parks tightens budget but ready to spring into action

GIG HARBOR, WA – Following the issuance of Governor Jay Inslee’s “Stay home, stay healthy” order, PenMet Parks had to make some quick adjustments to the ways parks and recreation opportunities are provided to the community. Following best practices provided by leading local and state authorities, PenMet Parks adjusted procedures to ensure the safety of our patrons and employees. The District has been prudent in reviewing impacts on our operating budgets and has placed cost-saving measures into effect to neutralize real and potential revenue losses. We have implemented a varied approach that includes hiring and spending freezes, tightening of expense budgets, temporary staffing reductions, and restrictions to external program funds. We understand the potential consequences these measures may cause both internally and externally, and will make every effort to restore, or assist in the provision of, our mission-led services.

To help in the fight against COVID-19 a variety of park amenities and recreation services were closed, postponed, or canceled. Our dedicated Recreation Team members were quick to pivot from the originally planned Egg Hunt in the park to a drive-up delivery service in the way of goodie bags filled with eggs and activities for at-home fun. Now, more than ever, we all realize that parks, trails, and recreation services play a vital role in our community’s health and well-being. PenMet Parks will remain steadfast in our efforts.

While trails and dog parks have remained open through the duration of the Governor’s ordinance, beach access has been closed to reduce the potential of large gatherings. Following the relaxing of the Governor’s restrictions, PenMet Parks will open beach access on May 5th, to include the following locations: Sunrise Beach, Narrow’s Beach, Tacoma DeMolay Sandspit Nature Preserve (aka Bella Bella Beach, Fox Island) and the Fox Island Pier. The District reminds visitors to recreate responsibly, and to keep in mind that crowds close parks. Please follow the recommended safe physical distancing practices issued by health authorities.

Reminders also include:

- Only visit a park or trail with those you have been quarantining with.
- Pack trash and belongings in, and pack them out.
- Go before you go. Use the restroom prior to your visit.
- Do not gather in groups. Maintain the recommended 6-foot distance, step aside if a person needs to pass. Keep in mind that crowds close parks.
- Allow others to spend time by limiting your time.
- Playgrounds, ballfields, bathrooms, and sport courts remain closed until further notice. Do not participate in organized training/practices.

PenMet Parks staff are working hard to plan alternative means to recreate for summer and fall. We are also working diligently to maintain parks to keep visitors safe, active and healthy.

We thank the community for their support to our District. We are all PenMet Parks and look forward to seeing you soon!

PenMet Parks Board of Commissioners

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