

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020

**SOMERSET COUNTY PARK COMMISSION  
CANCELLATION OF EVENTS, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES  
THROUGH THE BALANCE OF 2020 DUE TO COVID-19 IMPACTS**



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BRIDGEWATER, NJ – The Somerset County Park Commission announces the cancellation of the great majority of its events, programs, and activities for the balance of 2020 due to the financial and health impacts of COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

The welfare of employees and patrons and uncertainties associated with the pandemic's long-term fallouts such as the required closure of the Commission's revenue-producing golf facilities, the necessity for social distancing, the predictability of demand for events and programs, and the impact to the Commission's operating budget all underlie the Commission's pronouncement.

The Commission generates a significant amount of the revenue needed to operate active/special use parks, maintain general use parks, and provide programming throughout its system from golf revenue. With its golf facilities now closed due to the COVID-19 emergency, the Commission must take severe steps to ensure its financial well-being.

"The decision to cancel some really unique experiences that have been enjoyed by Somerset County residents for decades has not been made lightly, but without the significant revenue that we are able to generate from golf fees, depending on how long our golf courses remain closed, we will have a budget gap to fill that puts the maintenance of our other park facilities at risk." said Park Commission President Mark Caliguire. "Given the unparalleled global circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and the utmost concern for the safety and well-being of our staff members, the thousands of acres of parks and open space that we steward, and those individuals who contribute to our programs, the Commission wholeheartedly believes that this is the best course for the remainder of the year."

Among others, event cancellations include the Rose Day Festival at the Rudolf W. van der Goot Rose Garden at Colonial Park; the Independence Day Fireworks at North Branch Park; the Summer Concert Series at Duke Island Park; the 1770's Festival at Lord Stirling Park; and the Holiday Festival at Lord Stirling Stable.

Programming (including camps, clinics and lessons) for the remainder of the year has been cancelled at the Environmental Education Center in Basking Ridge, the Lord Stirling Stable in Basking Ridge, the Green Knoll Tennis Center in Bridgewater, and the Therapeutic Recreation Program in Bridgewater. The Warrenbrook Pool in Warren and the Putting Course, Paddle Boats, and Spray Park at Colonial Park in Franklin will remain closed for the season.

When the closure imposed by Executive Order Number 118 has been lifted, the Park Commission plans to open its golf courses. The Commission's Golf Management Division has been planning for the implementation of measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. A decision has been made, however, to cancel the junior golf program.



“This terrible pandemic has affected so many individuals, families, and organizations. The Somerset County Park Commission is no exception,” said Park Commission Secretary-Director Geoff Soriano. “Our golf facilities are the Commission’s financial lifeline as revenue generated from golf helps to fund much of our other departmental programming. The loss of golf revenue for the better part of March and April has severely compromised the Park Commission’s functionality, and we are optimistically awaiting the day when we can open our first tees to our loyal golfing patrons. We’ve put a plan in place and will be ready to pivot if circumstances change either for the better or the worse,” Soriano said.

Updates on cancellations and openings may be found at [www.somersetcountyparks.org](http://www.somersetcountyparks.org) or by calling 908-722-1200.

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