FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Update on McHenry County Conservation District Site and Programs

During these last weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, McHenry County Conservation District is lucky to have been able to stay open to provide all our residents an opportunity to get outdoors. Conservation District staff has worked hard to keep sites open so nature can uplift the spirits of our residents and offer moments of respite. We have been reminded of how much we value our open space and the ability to just go hike a trail!

The Conservation District will continue with the new normal this summer and making adjustments to operations and activities as things change. The Conservation District is cautiously and optimistically looking ahead and can provide our residents with current updates.

LATEST UPDATES:

- All Sites and Trails remain open as long as social distancing is practiced.
- Visitors Centers and Buildings remain closed.
- The Hollows Lake Atwood and Piscasaw/Beck’s Woods have reopened for fishing.
- Site Restrooms are now open.
- All Summer Special Events, First Friday Concerts, Day Camps and the August The Great Outdoors Beer Trail have been cancelled.
- Volunteer Activities are still on hold.
- Reduced fees for camping: Once the stay-at-home order is relaxed, Group Campgrounds will be offered as exclusive one-family use at a reduced rate. The number of individual campsites at Thomas Woods will be reduced to allow for ample distancing between sites.
- Summer Program offerings will be well thought out, kept small and intimate, with social and physical distancing measures in place. District staff will have a ‘cruise director’ for each program, to meet cars and direct parking. Participants will meet spread out, and disperse in staggered groups with individual leaders. Participants will wear a facemask according to current social guidelines. Registration is required and opens June 1st for residents; June 6th for non-residents.

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YES, SITES ARE OPEN
We have experienced a large increase in users to our sites. Let us offer a few reminders to help everyone have an enjoyable, positive and safe visit:

- **Bring** hand sanitizer, sunscreen, bug repellent, & drinking water.
- **Choose** sites less traveled – 34 sites are open to the public.
- **Visit** at off peak times – sites are open sunrise to sunset.
- **Know B4 U Go:** Check for Alerts and Site/Trail Closures
- **Prevent Theft:** Lock your car, keep valuables out of sight.
- **Stay** on marked, designated trails.
- **Pets:** Love them, leash them—AND please, clean up after them.

GO> BE HEALTHY> BE SAFE> SAVE LIVES.

- **Stay 6 Feet Apart** between people or family groups—while hiking, biking and at launches.
- **No Group Gatherings.** Follow physical distancing protocols.
- **Yield to Others.** Walk single-file where trails narrow.
- **Wash Your Hands.** Often. And clean touched surfaces.
- **Wear a Face Mask.** Protect yourself and others.
- **Stay Home.** If you are sick.

SUMMER LANDSCAPES MAGAZINE
Arriving in Mailboxes Week of May 25, the Summer issue includes special messaging on COVID-19 site openings, project updates, DIY outdoor adventure information for hiking, biking, fishing and camping, and special features on Grassland Bird Research and Headwater Streams and the value of protecting them. In addition we have highlighted a number of E-learning, webinars and at home activities (also available on our website) as well as a myriad of summer program offerings with social/physical distancing protocols in place for smaller, more intimate outings with our education staff.

ATTENTION TEACHERS! Free Field Studies & School Programs
Registration for Fall 2020 school programs begins May 13, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.
COVID-19 Update—Depending upon where things stand this fall in-person or virtual—We'll be there! Staff is working on a number of options to assist Teachers, from virtual Field Studies, live or prerecorded Zoom meetings or seminars. We will do our best to work together on presenting what best fits your classroom needs. Questions? Contact us at Education@MCCDistrict.org. Refer to the Environmental Education Opportunities Teachers’ Guide for the program's corresponding registration phone number. Offices are currently closed but we are monitoring phone calls.

Additional changes and new announcements may come in response to the circumstances as they arise. We will communicate as quickly as we can. The District’s website MCCDistrict.org is the best location for the most up to date information on site openings/closing – as well as our Facebook page @DiscoverMCCD. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and always keep your best interests, health and safety in mind.

McHenry County Conservation District currently manages over 25,590 acres of open space, which provides wildlife habitat preservation, educational opportunities and recreational amenities across 34 open sites for the citizens of McHenry County to enjoy.

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