

Friends of the South Slopes

April 2020



Buttercups on Ridgeview Trail, MBPP

Box 28011 RPO East Kelowna, Kelowna BC V1W 4A6

<http://www.foss-kelowna.org>

info@foss-kelowna.org

BC Parks' Response to Covid-19 **(Dated Wed. April 8, 2020 and effective 8 a.m. PST** **This notice is issued under the Provincial Park Act**

BC Parks is immediately closing the entire BC Parks system, including all parks, protected areas, conservancies, recreation areas, and ecological reserves. All camping (front and backcountry) is now banned until May 31st, 2020. This action is being taken in response to the call for increased action to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the desire of the public to get outdoors, many parks have already experienced peak season levels of use that have resulted in overwhelmed parking lots, trails and trailheads, making physical distancing difficult, if not impossible in some locations. It has also resulted in damage to our facilities and the environment.

This closure is also necessary to ensure the continued health and safety of our visitors, employees, park operators and their staff, volunteers, and park contractors. By taking this action, we align with federal and provincial directives for people to stay home to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk. This temporary measure means public and vehicle access is prohibited until further notice. All trails, roads, day-use areas, beaches, lakes, boat launches, and backcountry areas are closed to the public. Park closures will be enforced through regular monitoring and patrols and anyone found in a closed park will be evicted and could face a \$115 fine.

In addition to the full system closure, the campground closure has been extended to May 31st, 2020. Full refunds will continue to be provided to those with existing reservations during this time. The

Discover Camping reservation system has been suspended for all new reservations. A public notice will be issued once facilities are reopened and the system is able to accept new reservations. BC Parks continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic closely and is following the recommendations set out by the Provincial Health Officer and the Minister of Health for decisions related to closure and reopening of parks and facilities.

Please continue to check the [BC Parks website](#) for updates.

BC Parks COVID-19 Questions and Answers: bcparks.ca/covid-19/questions-answers/

Media Release: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020ENV0014-000553>

For more COVID-19 information, visit the BC Centre for Disease Control: BCCDC: <http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

Provincial Health Officer and Ministry of Health News: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/ministries/health>

FOSS' Response to Closure of MBPP & OMPP:

FOSS is contacting BC Parks to express its understanding/general support for this directive while addressing several concerns including trail maintenance in MBPP & OMPP during this closure. FOSS trusts that the trails will be reopened at the earliest opportunity. We'll keep you updated!



Please be mindful of the 'Physically Distancing' order when you are recreating (and be certain the trail you are on or the park you are in is not closed) .

What Does This Closure Mean to FOSS' Trail Maintenance Projects?

FOSS contacted Geoff Popowich (Sr. Park Ranger, East Okanagan) to inquire as to whether FOSS projects could proceed during this closure and whether our Adopt a Trail volunteers could continue to maintain their 'adopted' trails. Geoff replied:

“Unfortunately the provincial park closure includes BC Parks volunteers. Please see the note attached that was sent out by the Assistant Deputy Minister. This evolving situation has put our Spring work plans on hold for the time being. Please spread the word that volunteer work within BC Parks are to be postponed, and volunteer access into the parks is currently restricted. “

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020ENV0019-000645>

So, to our awesome volunteers.....in compliance with the Province-wide closure of all Provincial Parks, FOSS is notifying you that NO trail maintenance is authorized by the FOSS board until further notice.

And the people stayed home

And people stayed home
and read books and listened
and rested and exercised
and made art and played
and learned new ways of being
and were still
and listened more deeply
someone meditated
someone prayed
someone danced
someone met their own shadow
and people started thinking differently---
And people healed...
And in the absence of people who lived in
ignorant ways
dangerous, mindless, and heartless....
The earth began to heal---
And when the danger ended
and people found themselves...
They grieved for the dead
and they made new choices
and dreamed of new visions
and created new ways to live
and heal the earth fully
just as they had been healed.

Author: Kitty O'Meara (Fact check: may have been inspired by an Italian poet!)



Deeper Creek Canyon, CN Trail
(Okanagan Mtn. Park) March 30, 2020



Golden Mile Trail (April 2, 2020)