



## A Message from our Superintendents

# COVID-19 Update #2: Seasonal Campers

April 2, 2020

We have received many questions after announcing last week that the opening of our conservation areas will be delayed. This update addresses some of those questions and will help you plan your summer.

### Why is the season delayed?

The Provincial Government ordered the mandatory closure of all non-essential workplaces for 2 weeks commencing at midnight March 24, in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep people home. On March 31, the Province extended the Declaration of Emergency and associated emergency measures, including the closure of non-essential workplaces and restrictions on social gatherings, until April 13.

Although some UTRCA programs and services are deemed essential (e.g., flood control, flow augmentation, drinking water systems), recreation is not. Staff cannot be on site to prepare for the season, which puts us behind in the operations. The decision to delay the 2020 season was not easy to make, but was necessary due to the circumstances.

### When will the campgrounds open?

It is not yet possible to set an opening date. We are monitoring the situation and taking our cues from the local health units as well as the municipal, provincial and federal governments. The challenges we are all facing are unprecedented and changing daily. We will continue to keep you updated with changes and decisions.

### Is the reservoir opening delayed as well?

Yes, all UTRCA recreational facilities, events, programs and services are delayed this year, including access to the reservoirs.

### Will the 2020 fees be adjusted to reflect the shorter season?

Yes, staff are reviewing all of the fees and will make changes to adapt to the shorter season length. This includes the docking system at Wildwood CA.

### When will fees be due?

We recognize that this is a difficult time from a financial perspective, and everyone is feeling the impact of this virus. Once staff have set the new opening date and the modified fee schedule, they will determine a time frame for payment.

### Will we be able to pay in installments?

No, unfortunately fees will still be due in a lump sum at the time of registering.

### Can we walk in and check our trailer?

Similar to past years, you are encouraged to walk in and check on your trailers during daylight hours. Gates are not open to vehicle traffic. With the days becoming longer and warmer, we are seeing more people visit our areas. Please maintain safe physical distancing of at least 2 metres apart from each other, and do not gather in groups.

We remind everyone that Conservation Area regulations still apply and violating them will result in your 2020 reservation being cancelled. Having a campfire or staying at the campsite between dusk and dawn are strictly prohibited.

### **The Provincial Government announced new stipulations that apply to recreation areas. How are we impacted?**

On March 31, the Province announced the following:

“Green spaces in parks, trails, ravines and conservation areas that aren’t otherwise closed would remain open for walkthrough access, but individuals must maintain the safe physical distance of at least two metres apart from others. Ontario’s provincial parks and conservation reserves remain closed.”

As long as people maintain physical distance from each other, the UTRCA is permitted to allow foot traffic into the CAs. If the Provincial Government changes that directive, no one will be permitted in the CAs and staff will be required to enforce this.

### **Will staff be in the park between now and when the park opens?**

Staff are completing property checks, monitoring drinking water systems, and undertaking dam operations as required, but their availability is limited.

If you are talking with a staff person in a vehicle, please respect physical distance requirements.

### **Will there be changes in operations to help protect people from COVID-19 and prevent the re-emergence of the virus?**

The UTRCA wants to ensure the safety of staff and visitors. Discussions are underway on operational measures and changes that need to be put in place before the parks open. It is understood that things will not go back to normal overnight and adjustments will need to be made.

We are currently evaluating how to set up seasonal camper registration so that campers can provide information and payment while protecting everyone’s health. Because each of our parks is set up differently, this process may be different at each CA.

Once again, directives from the government, including restrictions on gathering sizes, will impact how we proceed.

### **What if I need to speak with park staff?**

This is one thing that hasn’t changed; please call the park directly and leave a message. Staff are checking these messages daily.

- Fanshawe CA: 519-951-6181 ext 367
- Pittock CA: 519-539-5088 ext 1
- Wildwood CA: 519-284-2292 ext 1434

### **How else can I keep informed about COVID-19 impacts on UTRCA programs and services?**

- [www.fanshaweconservationarea.ca](http://www.fanshaweconservationarea.ca)
- [www.pittockconservationarea.ca](http://www.pittockconservationarea.ca)
- [www.wildwoodconservationarea.ca](http://www.wildwoodconservationarea.ca)

### **Stay Informed about COVID-19**

It’s important to get your information from reputable sources and not rely on hearsay or rumour. Here are some good sources:

- [Government of Canada](http://www.government.ca)
- [Province of Ontario](http://www.ontario.ca)
- Your local Health Unit is an excellent source for information on local impacts and actions.
- Call or visit [Telehealth Ontario](http://www.telehealthontario.ca) (1-866-797-0000) for specific health concerns about COVID-19.