UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

A Message from our Superintendents

COVID-19 Update #7: Seasonal Campers at Pittock Conservation Area

May 22, 2020

Phased in Opening – Key Dates at Pittock Conservation Area

The UTRCA is pleased to announce the following phased in opening plan for our conservation areas. Please note that these dates are tentative and subject to change based on the state of the pandemic, provincial health orders, and government recommendations.

Milestone	Start Date - Pittock CA
Seasonal site set up and preparation begins, including raking and grass cutting (no vehicle access to campground)	May 23 During daylight hours
Gates open daily for vehicular access to campground for site preparation	May 29, 8 am – 4 pm
Boat launch/reservoir open to the public for small craft passive reservoir activities	June 1 at 8 am
Seasonal camper registration begins (process and fees to be announced by May 28)	June 1
Seasonal campground opens for season (restricted facilities)	June 8 at 8 am
Boat launch/reservoir open to the public for motorcraft	June 8 at 8 am

Opening seasonal camping with your safety in mind

Staff have been developing processes and procedures to ensure your safety and that of the staff. Our decisions will always continue to put safety first. The UTRCA has recognized from the start of the pandemic that access to outdoor space and activities is important to everyone's physical and mental health. We want to continue offering and expanding these opportunities but can do so only if deemed safe. Our operational procedures and regulations need to be changed, and we anticipate continuing to modify them throughout the season as the dynamics of the pandemic change.

Registering for the Season

Staff have identified the campsite registration procedure as part of the operation that has "multiple touch points" in terms of providing physical information such as ID, proof of insurance, and ownership. We want to minimize these touch points by completing much of the process electronically or over the phone prior to actually meeting face to face to sign the agreement.

Washroom & Shower Facilities

Under provincial direction, our washroom facilities will remain closed. This means campers will need to rely on facilities located within their own trailer. It is imperative that you confirm such facilities and collection tanks are in proper working order prior to starting to camp. If you do not have such facilities, you will not be permitted to camp.

Similar to washroom facilities, other common areas will remain closed, including the laundry facilities, swimming pools, and visitor pavilions and buildings. Areas such as park offices, gatehouses, and workshops will have controls in place to mitigate the risks associated with contact.

Reduced On Site Staffing

With the late start to the season and restrictions in place to keep everyone safe, changes have had to be made in how we staff our CAs. With the late start to the season, limited facilities and programs being offered, staffing numbers will be lower than usual. We will do our best to prevent this from impacting our level of service but we know it may. We ask for your patience if it does – staff will be doing the best they can under the circumstances.

Zero Tolerance

When Premier Ford announced that seasonal campgrounds are part of the first phase of reopening the Province, he stated very clearly that no business should open if they are not 100% ready to do so. The UTRCA is taking the time to make sure all of the proper precautions and training are in place and being communicated with our visitors.

Please keep in mind, although staff are excited to be able to slowly reopen the conservation areas, there is also anxiety and fear. It is imperative that you understand and respect that. Staff will be operating with zero tolerance this season and are supported by UTRCA management in doing so. Seasonal camping is a privilege and not a right; our ability to offer it relies on all campers doing their part to follow the rules, not only of the campground but of the recommendations pertaining to COVID-19.

Drinking Water & Hydro Hook-ups

Water systems are in the process of being brought on line and hydro risk management is being completed in time for opening. During a normal operating season, these tasks would have been completed prior to campers coming in to prepare for the season. It is imperative that you adhere to the following requirements:

- **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER PRIOR TO OPENING DAY** – signs are posted throughout the park.
- **DO NOT PLUG YOUR TRAILER IN OR HOOK UP WATER TAPS PRIOR TO OPENING DAY** – staff may need to do work at your service post and do not want to have to touch your hook-ups.
- If you see a tap running – **LEAVE IT ON** – staff are in the process of flushing the system.

More details to come!

Next week, staff are committed to providing you with specific details pertaining to fees, the registration process, facilities, services, etc. This will give you the opportunity to prepare for the season and better understand what it will look like.

2020 will be a camping season like no other … we hope

The pandemic has impacted the world in many different ways. In the last few months, our entire world has been changed and, in some cases, turned upside down. It has taken its toll on all of us and we just want to get back to "normal." But, as we have heard time and time again, we won't be going back to the way it was, we will be adapting to a new normal.

We anticipate changes and challenges throughout the upcoming season but we are so looking forward to seeing familiar faces, hearing laughter, and enjoying the smell of bacon on the campfire on a Sunday morning. Together, we can make your 2020 camping season an experience like no other!

Need to speak with park staff?

Please call the park directly and leave a message. Staff check these messages daily.

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

Stay informed about COVID-19 impacts on UTRCA programs and services.

- **fanshaweconservationarea.ca**
- **pittockconservationarea.ca**
- **wildwoodconservationarea.ca**