

Schools

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less sick and spread the virus less than older students and adults," officials wrote. "Younger students also need more in-person instruction to build literacy and math skills critical for lifelong learning."

"Schools in remote and rural communities are less likely to contribute to the community spread of COVID-19 cases that cannot be traced and contained."

To have in-person instruction for K-3 or remote and rural students, the following conditions must be met:

- Fewer than 30 cases per 100,000 over seven days
- Test positivity of 5% or less over seven days
- COVID-19 is not actively spreading in the school community
- School districts are in compliance with sections 1-3 of Ready

Schools, Safe Learners Guidance

For districts doing in-person instruction, officials said they still need to create plans to switch to comprehensive distance learning should they need to again.

This should include training for staff and notification of the community, if one or both conditions are met:

- 20 or greater cases per 100,000 over seven days
- Test positivity of 7.5% or greater over seven days

All school districts must implement comprehensive distance learning if the following conditions are met:

- 30 or more cases per 100,000 over seven days
- Test positivity of 10% or greater over seven days

Brown said Tuesday that all options are still on the table when it comes to additional restrictions being put in place to stop the spread of the virus moving forward.

"Predictability is not part of this pandemic," said Jim Green, executive director of the Oregon School Boards Association.

"While it's extremely disappointing to weigh not reopening schools this September in some areas," he said, "we have to make hard decisions based on protecting the health of our students, our staffs and our communities."

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Families recently visiting one of the Silver Falls State Park viewpoints were able to maintain social distancing between groups. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY OREGON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT/PROVIDED

Outdoors

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forest again," Cross said. Ethically, people aren't supposed to create new campsites and there are laws limiting it, but trying to stop people in vast national forests is next to impossible, Cross said.

Another problem is that many visitors don't appear to have as much experience recreating in a national forest with limited facilities.

"We've seen a lot of issues with people not knowing how to bury poop, or use maps or even have the right footwear," Cross said. Rangers said trash was luring bears to campsites in some areas.

In addition to overflowing trash, parking is the other main concern statewide. Many trailheads and recreation sites are full by early af-

ternoon, leading to illegal parking that could block emergency vehicles.

"The best way to help is to come early, pick less crowded places and make sure to pack out all of your trash," Havel said. "It's strange time. Normally, with this level of use, we'd expand capacity at campgrounds and trailheads. But we can't do that right now."

Less experience leads to accidents

The rise in visitors has also led to an uptick of accidents in the outdoors.

In the last week alone, a 19-year-old died climbing Three Fingered Jack, an 18-year-old died swimming in the Willamette River and a 6-year-old died after being hit by a runaway jet-ski at Foster Lake.

In addition, search and rescue teams have conducted 10 rescues in two

months at Blue Pool, also known as Tamolitch Falls, on the McKenzie River Trail. The most recent rescue required a person airlifted to a hospital after jumping off the high cliffs and into the pool.

A lost hiker required an overnight search party last Friday in the Opal Creek area.

"We've seen an increase in rescues throughout the county and (are) asking the public to take precautions when visiting," the Linn County Sheriff's Office said in a news release.

Beyond accidents and crowding, the other elephant in the room is human-caused wildfires.

As Oregon dries out, and temperatures rise into the 100s, the forests will become increasingly ready to ignite, and with more people with less experience, the concern of a wayward cigarette or someone parking on grass that ignites increases, officials said.

A summer-long trend

The number of people in the forest is only expected to rise.

The virus is still spreading, leading Oregon Gov. Kate Brown to announce additional limits on gatherings and events. Many sports that begin practice in August will be delayed, and it's unclear how and when kids will return to school.

That means the outdoors will remain the last best place to find enjoy-



Agate Beach, like many reopened state parks, has seen overflowing garbage in recent weeks.

ment for many Oregonians.

But the outdoors will only remain a refuge as long as wildfires aren't roaring and people are doing their best to treat the land with respect.

'Know before you go'

To address the concerns due to crowding, the Forest Service sent out the following message:

1: Be prepared for large crowds and no parking. If you don't show up early parking may be limited.

We ask that you have a prepared alternative location before arriving. If illegally parked on the sides of the road, emergency vehicles won't be able to reach you in your time of need.

2: Bears are coming for your trash! Please pack out what you take in and clean up after yourself. Due to these challenging times, the Forest Service has limited services available.

3: Be safe by bringing and wearing proper gear. There are limited emergency services but in-

creased amounts of safety incidents are occurring.

4: Fire Awareness – Don't leave fire pits smoldering and unattended. Do not light fires where not allowed. Several fires have wildly escaped and expanded through the forests.

5: Check forest area availability through website, social media feeds or Forest Service Interactive Map.

Find him on Twitter at @ZachsORoutdoors.

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