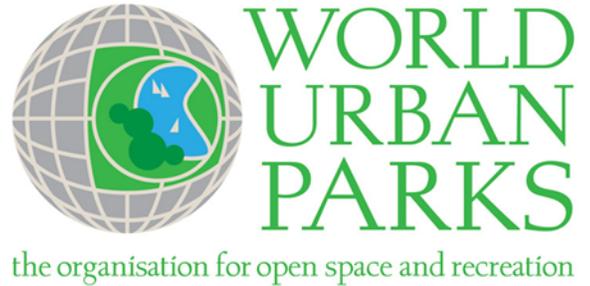


# A Statement from the Chair of World Urban Parks



#NatureNeverCloses

Concerns about the COVID-19 outbreak continue to grip our world. As an organization, World Urban Parks advocates and supports the power of parks, open spaces, and nature as essential resources for health and wellness. World Urban Parks understands that communities may have questions and concerns about visiting their local parks, trails or open spaces at this time.

The USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has flagged mental health as a top concern associated with the COVID-19 outbreak with the World Health Organization (WHO) addressing mental health considerations amongst the COVID-19 outbreak. We recognize that stay-at-home measures and physical distancing will likely take a toll on our mental health, especially during high-stress and anxiety-producing global public health emergencies. We also know from research documents how important parks, open space and nature are to provide that “nature fix” for human survival – providing opportunities for physical activity and regaining our emotional, psychological and mental balance all of which are critical to reducing stress and improving our physical and mental health.

We believe that many parks and trails, open spaces and nature can continue to be used in a safe manner that allows people to enjoy the mental and physical health benefits these spaces provide. **In all instances, we strongly recommend people follow Government directives and guidelines regarding the use of these spaces and recognize that these vary from community to community. \***

We encourage local jurisdictions to keep parks and trails and nature and open spaces accessible as long as it is safe to do so.

Our local parks and trails and open spaces and nature have always served as places where people can find respite and seek peace and restoration. During this time of uncertainty, these places are needed now more than ever. Our park and recreation professionals are working hard to maintain these spaces and keep them safe, accessible and benefiting our communities during these challenging times. We encourage government leaders to engage their park and recreation professionals in the decision-making process to ensure continued safe access to the critical parks and trails and open spaces and nature during this health crisis.

Let us all do our part to encourage the use of parks and trails and open spaces and nature in ways that respect each other, the public health guidance, and the treasured and critical spaces they are. Let us come together as an international parks and recreation community to show support of the essential role our sector has in the physical and mental wellbeing of all.

We invite you to sign on your support and participate in Parks Week – Parks for All #NatureNeverCloses (April 25 – May 3, 2020)

Our Thanks – This Statement has been adapted from the National Recreation and Park Association (USA) Joint Statement on Using Parks and Open Space While Maintaining Social Distancing.

\*Disclaimer: World Urban Parks encourages you all to adhere to the WHO directives and guidelines and we all practice physical-distancing and other critically important safety guidelines as stipulated by our governments.