

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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NBMCA Opens Conservation Areas for Long Weekend

(North Bay, Ontario, May 15, 2020) All but one of North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority's conservation areas will be officially opened Saturday for passive use while a few amenities, such as washrooms, will remain closed.

While most conservation areas remain accessible year round, a few are gated and closed for the winter season. NBMCA typically opens those prior to the Victoria Day long weekend. This year, in light of COVID-19, NBMCA took into consideration provincial restrictions and today's announcement from the Province allowing the next steps in reopening.

"NBMCA has been following the recommendations of our local public health experts, keeping our trails open to promote health and wellness, while encouraging the public to respect physical distancing for our community's safety. Opening up the conservation areas which were closed for the winter gives people more opportunity to get out in nature in the spirit of the province's reopening framework," said NBMCA Chair Dave Mendicino.

"All of our conservation areas with the exception of Mattawa Island, will be open for passive trail use Saturday. Boat launches will be opened, the Papineau Lake dock will be installed in the near future while washrooms and beaches will remain closed for now," said Troy Storms, Manager of Lands and Stewardship.

Mattawa Island remains closed to limit access to the basketball court, beach and other amenities in that particular conservation area.

NBMCA has seen continued use of its trails over the last few months. The use has been increasing with the warmer weather, including at Laurier Woods Conservation Area in North Bay.

"The trails at Laurier Woods are being well used," said Fred Pinto, Chair of Friends of Laurier Woods which co-owns Laurier Woods with NBMCA.

"While people are enjoying the trails, we would like to remind them to maintain physical distancing, keep their dogs on leash, stay on the trails, and leave nature in its place by not picking and removing natural items such as tree bark and wild flowers," said Pinto.

NBMCA will continue to monitor the provincial phasing approach to opening up activities in the province and will consider opening washrooms and beaches in accordance with public health recommendations and provincial direction.

The North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA) was founded in 1972 by the Province of Ontario and the NBMCA's 10 member municipalities. A non-profit organization, the NBMCA works closely with the public to balance human needs with the environmental needs of the region's watershed. The NBMCA is one of 36 Conservation Authorities who are members of Conservation Ontario.

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