

# Hunter Nation: Calls on Gov. Evers to reopen public lands

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On April 9, 2020, at the direction of the state's governor, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources closed 40 of the state's public parks, forests and recreational areas including 10s of thousands of acres that had been previously open to hunting, fishing, hiking and other outdoor pursuits.

Hunter Nation CEO, Luke Hilgemann responded, "Rather than rushing to close the parks due to increased activity, Governor Evers should work with local groups including hunt clubs, conservation groups and others who I'm sure would be willing and able to help maintain these vital public resources during this time."

"Hunter Nation is committed to preserving and protecting the rights of American hunters and outdoor enthusiasts. We won't stand by and watch bad decisions like this go unchallenged. We have established an online petition at [HunterNation.org](http://HunterNation.org) to allow citizens to easily add their voice to our call to open these public lands." Hilgemann added. "Closing down all of these areas will also significantly limit the ability of the hundreds of thousands of hunters who take to Wisconsin's woods, waters and wild lands every year to pursue their passion for the outdoors - an activity that is, at its core, America's most traditional form of "social distancing."

Head of the Wisconsin chapter of Hunter Nation, Tyler Ruhland said, "Closing Wisconsin public lands to hunting does nothing to mitigate the spread of Covid-19. This is a very direct infringement on our constitutional right to hunt. With our Spring turkey season just days away this is a direct attack on Wisconsin's hunters, especially thousands of young hunters who rely on access to public lands. The Governor must reverse course and keep public hunting land open.

Hunter Nation founder, Keith Mark echoed that sentiment, "At a time when the

Department of the Interior and many states have waived admission fees into national and state parks to encourage Americans to practice social distancing on land owned by 'We the People', these decisions to ban access is confusing, at best. To me, it's not about social distancing, but more an anti-hunting measure."

Hilgemann concluded by adding, "The public has not been made aware of any request by the DNR to close these parks. We've been shown no reports or science that backs up a decision like this. This is purely a political decision that is being made in a vacuum inside the walls of bureaucracy in Madison to pander to the fear mongers and elitists who don't support our outdoor lifestyle anyway. In the end, this knee-jerk decision hurts families and good folks who depend on wild game for precious protein."