

Sen. Cowles: Reopening of State Parks a Promising Step

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GREEN BAY- Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay), Chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy, released the following statement after the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) [announced](#) that 34 of the 40 previously closed Wisconsin State Park System Properties will reopen this Friday, May 1st:

“As the days get longer and temperatures get warmer, and with the general inland fishing season about to get underway, there’s no question that Wisconsinites want to get out of their house and safely enjoy some time outdoors. Shortly after the decision to close 40 State Park System properties, I spoke with DNR Secretary Cole about this decision. While I shared many of his concerns, I strongly encouraged him to search for innovative ways to keep the remaining State Parks open and to reopen those that were closed while implementing measures to protect public health while still promoting outdoor recreation. Among other suggestions, I offered the solution of creating a quota for the state parks that were closed so that they could reopen safely.

“I am pleased to see that my comments and the input of thousands of Wisconsinites were accepted. Today, the Governor announced the reopening of 34 of these 40 properties with admission fees reinstated. In addition, some parks have restricted hours, predetermined capacity limits at some properties including High Cliff, and other restrictions to limit the potential for the virus to spread in State Parks.

“Sunshine and fresh air aren’t only important for our physical health, but also our mental wellbeing. This decision isn’t only in the best interest of Wisconsin residents, but it is also the latest sign that Wisconsin is beginning to turn the dial towards a reasonable, yet timely loosening of restrictions.

“While I am pleased with the overall decision, questions remain on the limitations put in place. Primarily, how the closure of all bathrooms will impact visitor experiences. I would also like to see additional information on how the quota system will be implemented, communicated, and enforced.”

As Wisconsinites continue to enjoy outdoor recreation with increased opportunities to explore some of Wisconsin’s most pristine landscapes, Senator Cowles reminds residents to not only take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but to ‘fight the bite’ from ticks and mosquitos with these prevention steps from the [Department of Health Services](#).