

# City of Sidney Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Duane Gaier**

937-498-8105

[dgaier@sidneyoh.com](mailto:dgaier@sidneyoh.com)

DATE: 04/28/2020

“The COVID-19 pandemic has not only taken a toll on the local economy, but it will also have an impact on the city’s Parks and Recreation Department and its programs this year,” shared Parks and Recreation Director Duane Gaier.

“The only summer recreation program being offered this year will be the food program. Since school was not in session to deliver the recreation program brochures and currently we are not aware of when the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) will lift the restrictions on the social gathering of more than 10 persons, no recreation programs were developed and the brochures were not printed. If the restrictions were to be lifted, we plan to promote a scaled down recreation program at the food sites,” Gaier added.

All league activity at city facilities was previously postponed until May 15. Those activities will remain postponed until the ODH restrictions on social gatherings have been lifted.

Gaier continued, “Tawawa Park is scheduled to open to vehicular traffic at 10:00 am on May 1. Park patrons will notice some differences at the park. First, the play areas will remain closed until the ODH lifts the closure orders. Second, all but two picnic tables will be removed from the shelters until ODH rules allow gatherings. In addition, the city will not new accept shelter reservations until the ODH orders permit mass gatherings. Those with current reservations will be notified two weeks prior if their existing reservation is cancelled. Parks staff will maintain the existing reservations in the event that there is a change in the rules for public gatherings. Use of shelters will be on a first come-first served basis.”

Earlier this month it was announced that the Sidney Waterpark would remain closed for the 2020 season.

Despite all the cancellations and closures, residents are encouraged to continue using city parks for individual recreational activities. The ODH has developed the following checklist for safe use of recreation areas:

- Do not visit parks if you are sick or were recently exposed to COVID-19.
- Visit parks that are close to your home, refraining from travel that requires you to stop along the way or be in close contact with others.
- Check with the park in advance to be sure you know which areas or services are open, such as bathroom facilities, and bring what you need with you.
- If a parking lot is full, move on. Do not park in grass or on roadways.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Bring hand sanitizer to use if soap and water are not available.
- Even when outdoors, stay at least 6 feet away from others (social distancing). Do not visit crowded parks or crowded areas where you cannot stay at least 6 feet away from others at all times.
- Do not gather in groups.
- Share trails. Warn others of your presence as you pass; step aside to let others pass.
- Do not use playgrounds, which have been ordered closed in Ohio.
- Do not participate in organized or group activities or sports.
- Review guidance from the National Recreation and Park Association.