**United States Department of Agriculture**

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#  **News Release**

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**Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Allowing Dispersed Camping and Campfires; Visitors Urged to be Safe this Memorial Day Weekend**

**Rhinelander, WI - May 21, 2020** – Effective today, the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest will be open for dispersed camping and campfires, lifting the campfire ban across much of the Forest. Fire and campfire restrictions will remain in place for Forest Service lands in Langlade and Oconto counties due to the July 2019 blowdown. Please visit our website at [www.fs.usda.gov/CNNF](http://www.fs.usda.gov/CNNF) for complete details and listings of what’s open.

In addition to dispersed camping, Forest Service staff are working to install boat docks at boat landings prior to the holiday weekend. Boat landings (except for some within closed campgrounds) and all trails and trailheads are open across the Forest.

While some recreation areas are open, they will not be maintained, nor will any associated facilities be available such as restrooms or garbage receptacles. The Forest is working with trail partners to address imminent hazards on trails and will be doing required maintenance only while we work through the risks associated with additional field work.

“We will need all of our recreation volunteers and partners help when the time comes and will be working with everyone to determine the best path forward to safely do this work in response to the pandemic,” said Paul Strong, Forest Supervisor on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

Recognizing that many Americans will head outdoors to visit their national forests and grasslands, the Forest Service’s priority remains on ensuring the safety for the public and our employees and volunteers.

Campgrounds, picnic areas and beaches will remain closed on the National Forest in alignment with federal and state guidelines and restrictions.

Decisions to reopen sites hinge on health and safety considerations, as reflected in the Center for Disease Control and state and local guidance. In alignment with this, the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest will be canceling reservations at campgrounds through June 14. If circumstances change regarding the reopening of campgrounds prior to June 14, reservable sites may be available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

“While we understand there may be some excitement to return to these recreation areas, they will remain closed at this time,” says Strong. “We ask that visitors please continue to follow local, state and federal guidelines on staying safe and practice good hygiene and social distancing wherever they choose to visit those areas that are open.”

Visitors are asked to stay as local as possible when choosing a site to visit and to pack out everything they bring, especially trash. Visitors are also urged to take the precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) along with local health and safety guidance. For tips from the CDC on preventing illnesses like the coronavirus, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html>.

Responsible recreation will help expand access to facilities, services and other opportunities. Certain services may still be unavailable, so visitors are asked to plan accordingly and to remain flexible.

Contact information for the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest is available online at [www.fs.usda.gov/CNNF](http://www.fs.usda.gov/CNNF).

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