



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 21, 2020

Power Island Closed for Camping; Open for Day Visits

Traverse City, MI – During its regular monthly meeting, Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation commissioners made a difficult decision and passed a motion to close Power Island (including Bassett Island) campsites this year. Parks and Recreation’s anticipated revenue losses and lack of resources caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with high water levels preventing installation of the docks, resulted in the Commission’s action.

County Parks and Recreation Commission President Alisa Korn expressed gratitude for the efforts of the Parks and Recreation commissioners and staff. “I am so thankful for their care and concern to ensure that, as we move forward this season, a safe experience is offered to all of our park users. Unfortunately,” she said, “this includes tough decisions such as closing the Power Island campsites for the year.”

The measures taken by the commission and the department, according to Korn, are preventative. “Changes made now will be integral to preserving our county parks that we love so much for future enjoyment.”

Although the island is closed to overnight campers, day visits are permissible. “Hikers are welcome to use the trails, geocachers may continue their search for ‘treasure’, and picnickers may enjoy a meal, as long as they take their trash with them when they leave,” said Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation Director Kristine Erickson. Korn agrees. “Now more than ever, people are getting out to enjoy their parklands and spend time outdoors, and Power Island, one of the most unusual and infamous destinations in the region, is no exception.”

Anyone planning a trip to the island should prepare ahead of time. According to the Parks Director, restrooms are closed, the campsites cordoned off, and no drinking water is available. Erickson advises day visitors to take care of restroom needs beforehand, bring hand sanitizer and water, and “keep a safe distance from one another while appreciating this beautiful community asset.”

To ensure this county park remains clean and safe and that facilities there remain secure, a Parks and Recreation ranger will consistently monitor activity on both Power and Bassett Islands. Additionally, local law enforcement will conduct routine checks, as it does every summer.

Erickson says she remains “hopeful” that overnight camping will resume in summer 2021. Today, there are ten campsites, with five on each island. The original plan for 2020, she pointed out, was to close the five Bassett Island campsites due to high water levels preventing restroom maintenance, and to develop five new campsites on Power Island. The pandemic has delayed that project at least until next year.

Power Island is one of ten unique Grand Traverse County parks. With a rich history and one of the oldest geocaching sites in the nation, “the island,” composed of Power and Bassett Islands, features over 200 acres of diverse geography, three miles of waterfront with sandy beaches, and five miles of hiking trails.

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For more information, or to make a tentative reservation for 2021, call Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation at 231-922-4818.

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