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(Neb)-Game And Parks Opening Up More Campsites

By: John Axtell Posted at: 05/20/2020 09:38 PM

LINCOLN - Nebraska Game and Parks is opening first-come, first-served camping Friday for all camping units at Smith Falls State Park near Valentine and 35 state recreation areas including Box Butte, Bridgeport, Walgren Lake, and Wildcat Hills.

Game and Parks Director Jim Douglas says camping will also reopen on wildlife management areas where it was allowed previous to the COVID-19 health emergency. Douglas says the idea is open up smaller areas that typically don't attract crowds.

Shower houses, designated swimming beaches, playgrounds, and park activities will remain closed, although a limited number of primitive restrooms will be available. Game and Parks regulations allow for up to 8 people per campsite.

Douglas says the limited reopening is prompted by overwhelming demand for camping opportunities, challenges in bringing additional park locations and campsites into the reservation system as planned, and public desire to camp even without normal facilities

Game and Parks currently allows just limited reservation-only RV camping at other state parks as part of its coronavirus response. Douglas thinks expanded camping may be offered in the near future at most of them, including Chadron, Fort Robinson, and Lake Minatare.

He says Game and Parks will cautiously phase in additional park services and amenities in coordination with health directives and advice from the state and local health departments.