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Mackinac State Historic Parks to Begin Phased Opening of Sites June 12

MACKINAW CITY, MICH. — Mackinac State Historic Parks is excited to begin welcoming guests to its historic sites and facilities starting June 12 with an increased emphasis on the health and safety of visitors and staff.

The first sites to open will be in Mackinaw City: Colonial Michilimackinac, the Colonial Michilimackinac Visitor's Center, and the Michilimackinac State Park restrooms will open Friday, June 12; Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse will open Saturday, June 13; Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park and the David A. Armour Visitor's Center will open Monday, June 15.

On Friday, June 19, MSHP will open its buildings and facilities on Mackinac Island. This includes: Fort Mackinac; The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum; Historic Downtown Mackinac (Benjamin Blacksmith Shop and the American Fur Company Store & Dr. Beaumont Museum); the Mackinac Island State Park Visitor's Center and restrooms; Mission Church; Bark Chapel; Fort Holmes Blockhouse; British Landing Nature Center and restrooms; Arch Rock restrooms; and the Station 256 Conference Room.

The Biddle House, featuring the Mackinac Island Native American Museum, will open at a later date in 2020 due to construction delays during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“We’re excited to get our historic sites open for the 2020 season and offer the world-class living history programs and activities for our guests,” said Phil Porter, Mackinac State Historic Parks Director. “We have developed, using our Visitor First philosophy, a set of guidelines that will safely welcome guests to our sites while allowing for a fun and educational time.”

The health and safety of the visitors and staff of Mackinac State Historic Parks remains a primary concern. To ensure that everyone visiting an MSHP site has an enjoyable experience, the following guidelines will be in place:

- Anyone that been in recent close contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19, are experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat at the time of visit, or have experienced symptoms such as a fever, lost of taste or smell, vomiting, diarrhea or fever in the 48 hours prior to arrival are asked to not enter any sites.
- A face mask is required at all indoor locations and
- A face mask is required at all outdoor locations when a safe social distance of six feet cannot be met.
- A safe distance of at least six feet between parties and staff.
- Hand sanitizing stations are located at key locations throughout the sites, and guests are encouraged to use them frequently.
- Regular hand washing is encouraged, as well as good respiratory etiquette such as sneezing into the elbow.
- The number of guests allowed inside some areas will be limited. Guests are encouraged to follow the guidelines posted at the entrance of each building.

To help ensure physical distancing and limited contact, MSHP has designated entrance and exits at visitors’ centers and within the historic sites. Traffic flow patterns have been identified, and signs will be posted. Plexiglass barriers have been erected at all admissions and sales counters, and electronic versions

of site maps and schedules of events are available. Guests are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance (mackinacparks.com), or to use credit or debit cards upon arrival to further limit contact.

While most tours and demonstrations will take place as originally scheduled, some have been suspended or moved to help ensure the safety of visitors and staff. They include:

- Colonial Michilimackinac
 - Scheduled indoor interpretive demonstrations have been suspended or moved outdoors for the season.
 - The Kid's Rendezvous Playground is closed until further notice.
 - Dress-up clothes have been removed for the season.
- Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse
 - Tower tours have been suspended for the 2020 season. A video version of the tour will play in the Barn.
 - Dress-up clothes have been removed for the season.
- Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park
 - The Adventure Tour has been suspended for the 2020 season.
 - The Forest Friends Play Area is closed until further notice.
 - The theater is closed until further notice.
 - Capacity will be enforced at Sawmill Demonstrations – this event will take place multiple times if needed to ensure everyone can experience it.
- Fort Mackinac
 - The theater is closed until further notice.
 - Dress-up clothes have been removed for the season.
 - Capacity limits will be enforced at the cannon platform
- The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum
 - The Kids' Art Studio has been suspended for the 2020 season.

- Historic Downtown Mackinac
 - The McGulpin House will remain closed during the 2020 season.

New tours and demonstrations have been added to many sites to help for the loss of some events, including more demonstrations of the Fog Signal Whistle at Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, and additional guided nature hikes at Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park. Up-to-date schedules of events can be found at the individual site home pages on mackinacparks.com.

A robust set of cleaning procedures have also been developed to enhance the sanitization of MSHP's historic sites. Designated staff members will rotate throughout each historic site throughout the day, with half-hour checks on high-touch areas in each site. Restrooms will be sanitized every hour after opening, with deeper cleanings in the late morning and mid-afternoon. More information on cleaning schedules can be found at mackinacparks.com/covid-19.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has canceled many major events scheduled for the 2020 season in celebration of the organization's 125th anniversary, including An American Picnic on July 4 and the Mackinac Parks: 125 Gala Celebration on July 25. However, many events will still take place, including Movies in the Fort on Mackinac Island and Movies by the Bridge in Mackinaw City, special guided hikes and rides on Mackinac Island, stargazing events at Fort Holmes, the Fort2Fort Five Mile Challenge in October, themed weekends and deep history dives at Colonial Michilimackinac, and many others. A detailed schedule of events can be found at mackinacparks.com/events-calendar.

Photos of the Mackinac State Historic Parks' sites are available upon request. A downloadable version of this release can be found [here](#). For further information call 231.436.4100 or email mackinacparks@michigan.gov.

Mackinac State Historic Parks, a family of living history museums and parks in northern Michigan's Straits of Mackinac, is an agency within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Its sites—which are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums—include Fort Mackinac, the Biddle House, The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, Historic Downtown Mackinac, and Mackinac Island State Park on Mackinac Island, and Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park and Michilimackinac State Park in Mackinaw City. Mackinac State Historic Parks is governed by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, established in 1895 to protect, preserve and present

the parks' rich historic and natural resources for the education and recreation of future generations. Visitor information is available at (231) 436-4100 or on the web at www.mackinacparks.com.

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