



SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Sassafras Mountain Tower, Bald Rock closing today in response to COVID-19

Because large crowds were gathering at the Sassafras Mountain Tower and at Bald Rock Heritage Preserve, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources has made the decision to close the two Blue Ridge Escarpment destinations beginning today. "With a limited amount of space on top of Sassafras and Bald Rock, it is hard to practice social distancing when large numbers of people are using these sites," said Tom Swaynham, SCDNR assistant chief of wildlife. "We know how much people love Sassafras and Bald Rock, and how beautiful the view is at these scenic places. This was not an easy decision for

us to make, but in order to keep people safe and healthy, we need to close both the Sassafras tower and Bald Rock temporarily, until conditions improve." Sassafras Mountain, the highest point in South Carolina at 3,883 feet, is in northern Pickens County, and Bald Rock Heritage Preserve is in northern Greenville County, near Caesars Head State Park. Both sites are owned and managed by SCDNR. The remainder of the Jocassee Gorges property is open to public use, and officials ask users to follow recommended guidelines and executive orders on keeping people safe by practicing social distancing.

State parks closed through April

SENECA — All South Carolina state parks will close today through the end of April.

The advisory was issued to support the state's response to COVID-19.

"The closure is designed to keep visitors and employees as safe as possible by mitigating the spread of the coronavirus," a release on the state parks department website said.

Four state parks are located in Oconee County

— Devils Fork, Lake Hartwell, Oconee and Oconee Station.

All other Oconee County parks were closed indefinitely earlier this week.

People currently at campsites and cabins can remain through the duration of their reservation, as long as they adhere to social distancing recommendations.

All new reservation arrivals beginning today through April 30 will be canceled and refunded.

— The Journal staff