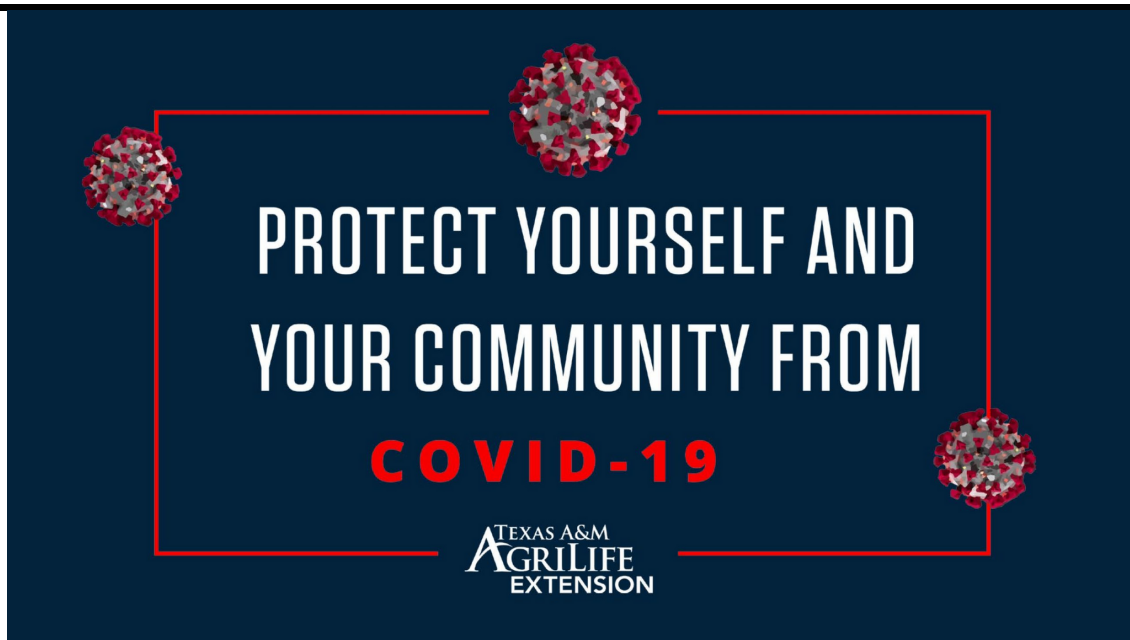


WOW-E

A MONTHLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020



WOW-E UPDATE: MOVING FORWARD

Although the economy is slowly beginning to open up, COVID-19 is still a huge problem the world is facing. We will continue to share resources on best practices during COVID-19 as well as funding opportunities to help your COVID-19 efforts. Find them in our newsletter, on our social media accounts, and on our website (see last page for details).

We understand these are still incredibly difficult times. Priorities have shifted in light of COVID-19. However, for those wanting to move forward on their WoW-E projects, we are ready to help.

Our specialists will begin holding office hours where you can call or zoom with them. Our Project Manager, Valerie Juaregui, will send an email in the next few weeks with more details. We understand moving these projects forward virtually will be challenging, but we are ready to work with you on creative solutions. Please feel free to reach out to us with WoW-E or COVID-19 related questions at anytime.

Kelsey Coats
Extension Assistant- Project Outreach PSE
kcoats@tamu.edu

AGRILIFE EXTENSION RURAL COMMUNITIES BLOG HIGHLIGHT: CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION, COVID-19 5/19/2029 BY:REBEKKA DUDENSING

Clearly, this is a difficult time, and many people are truly struggling with health and economic concerns. This morning I read an article calling the current situation “the worst downturn in generations – one with no bottom in sight.” I’ve lost my radar for hyperbole amid the recent news of doom and disaster, but I don’t think the author intended hyperbole. Most of the article wasn’t really news: the idea that economic downturns disproportionately affect young and relatively less skilled workers is established in the economic literature. The raw data on unemployment by age and education show a similar story without all the reading. The article’s concluding discussion of changing political leanings didn’t really feel like news either.

This pretty much sums up why I’ve gone to less frequent COVID updates. There are a lot of unknowns, and they are being reported with a lot of conjecture and outright opinion designed to induce discomfort and uneasiness—one might say doom and gloom. The news is mixed. For the most part, things are still not great, obviously. But the President Thomas Barkin of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond said the economy has likely bottomed, although the rate of recovery is yet to be determined. Fed chairman Jerome Powell admitted economic recovery could take more than a year, and that a vaccine would play an important role in facilitating economic confidence and recovery.

[Click here to finish reading on the Rural Communities Blog.](#)



OFFICE HOURS ARE COMING

We will be sending out instructions on how to sign up for office hours for those interested. Stay tuned!

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS
Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.

6 ft

cdc.gov/coronavirus

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Ideas Reaffirmed During COVID-19

The Need for a Stronger More Sustainable Food System Remains

Food Systems were a problem before COVID-19, but those problems have been highlighted during COVID-19. Hudspeth County does not have a grocery store. Residents either have to drive to El Paso in the neighboring county or to Van Horn, in their other neighboring county. Prior to COVID-19 they had a supplier bringing some produce to their gas station. However, when COVID-19 began that supplier could no longer come from El Paso. They had to find a new supplier during a pandemic. The El Paso Food Bank has been able to continue bringing food to their Food Pantry once a month. The Sierra Blanca Community Coalition knows the challenges they're facing to a sustainable food system. The coalition began seeking Agrilife technical assistance for aquaponics in November 2019 and COVID-19 has only reaffirmed their decision to pursue the project.

A Commissioner in Starr County saw grocery stores struggling to keep food stocked and residents struggling to get food, so he partnered with the South Texas Food Bank to get food relief. Social distancing measures were taken; residents remained in their cars as volunteers put relief bags in their trunks.

Although the United States has one of the most abundant and accessible food systems in the world, it has always had vulnerabilities. COVID-19 has put a spotlight on those vulnerabilities. Texas A&M's seventh episode of "COVID-19 The Texas A&M System Responds" provides more commentary. [Click here to watch.](#)



Photo taken at a Chevron station in Sierra Blanca, TX.



Photo sent by Starr County Agrilife Extension agent of orchard at RT Barrera Elementary.

Ideas Reaffirmed During COVID-19 (Continued)

Physical Activity and Places to be Active Remains a Priority

With stay at home orders in place and only essential businesses allowed to open, the outdoors have been a refuge for people tired of staying inside. People are visiting parks and walking and biking on streets more frequently, however it is important to remember to socially distance while doing it. People are looking to the outdoors for exercise, to improve their mental health, or simply for a change in scenery. Regardless of the reason, COVID-19 highlights the need for user friendly public space. The National Recreation and Park Society is surveying park professionals about how parks and recreation departments are helping during COVID-19 and increased park usage. Click here to read about their findings.

In Sierra Blanca, Texas, local Hudspeth Agrilife Extension staff has observed an increase in park users at Sierra Blanca Public Park. Not only has the park seen an increase in use, but people have also been walking along streets. In some areas where people are walking, there are fast moving vehicles exiting a highway making it feel less safe for pedestrians. As a result, coalition members and local Extension staff have recognized a possible need for vertical delineators along roads in some places. Sierra Blanca Community Coalition started a walkability project in November. As they move forward, they will consider additional walkability measures they might not have seen a need for before COVID-19.

NRPA PARK PULSE
Parks Are Essential, Especially During a Health Crisis

83% of adults find exercising at local parks, trails and open spaces essential to maintaining their mental and physical health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WALKING **JOGGING** **HIKING** **BIKING**

59% of respondents say it is very or extremely essential to exercise in parks and green spaces to relieve stress and remain healthy during this crisis.

Numerous studies show there are physical and mental health benefits to spending time in green spaces. Local parks, trails and open spaces have recently become even more of a respite from stress. In March 2020, NRPA released a joint statement about using parks and open spaces while maintaining physical distancing. To date, more than 1,000 groups nationwide have signed on to voice support of the safe use of parks during this crisis. Visit www.nrpa.org/Coronavirus for more information.

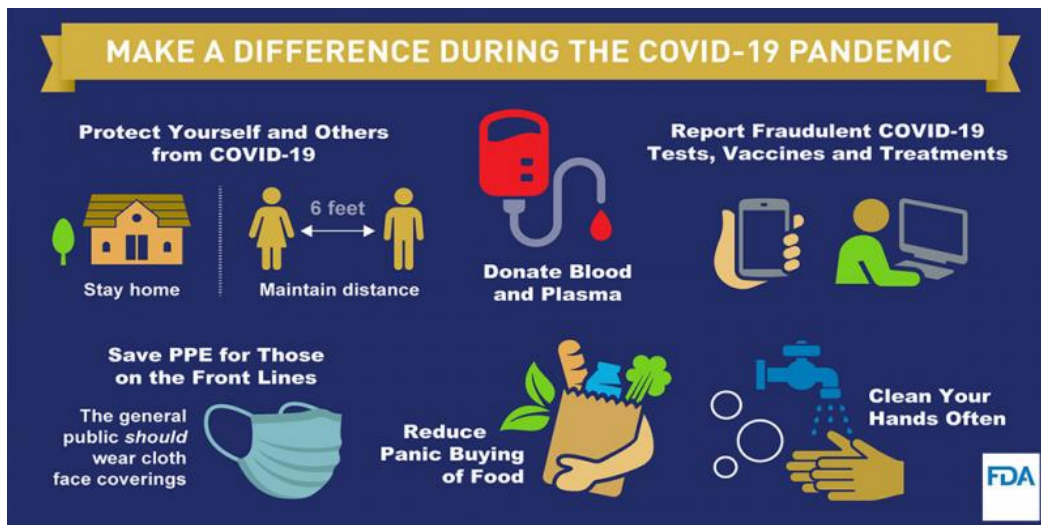
Each month, through a poll of 1,000 U.S. residents focused on park and recreation issues, NRPA Park Pulse helps tell the park and recreation story. Questions span from the serious to the more lighthearted. The survey was conducted by Wakefield Research (www.wakefieldresearch.com).

Visit nrpa.org/ParkPulse for more information.

NRPA National Recreation and Park Association
Because everyone deserves a great park



COVID-19 Resources



CARES Act: Implications for Farmers and Ranchers

Texas A&M Agrilife Extension is providing free online training to go over Phase 3 of the CARES Act and how it applies to Texas agriculture producers. It covers available support for agricultural producers, details of each lending provision, and how you can apply for assistance. Click below to learn more.

[CARES Act: Implications for Farmers and Ranchers](#)

Food Planning During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Shopping for groceries during a pandemic is stressful. People are understandably stocking up so they don't have to go back to the store anytime soon. However we have to be careful not to hoard so there is enough for everyone else. Click below to get tips on what to buy, how much to buy, and more from USDA's Choose My Plate.

[Choose My Plate COVID-19 Shopping Tips](#)

COVID-19 Social Media Toolkits

Is your organization having trouble coming up with how to share best practices as stay at home orders are lifted? The FDA and the CDC have come out with COVID-19 social media toolkits. They have videos and infographics in multiple languages with posts for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter about . Click the links below to learn more.

[FDA Social Media Tool Kit](#)

[CDC Social Media Toolkit](#)

Guidelines Socially Distanced Physical Activity

Although gyms are slowly beginning to open, people can still get a great workout from home. The CDC launched a new webpage with guidelines on how to be active while remaining socially distanced. For further guidance, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has answered many common questions regarding physical activity during social distancing. Click below to learn more.

[CDC Physical Activity While Social Distancing Guidelines](#)

[Staying Physically Active and Socially Distanced Questions and Answers](#)

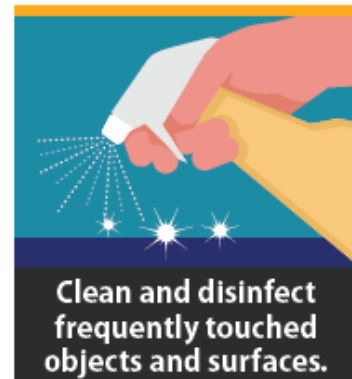
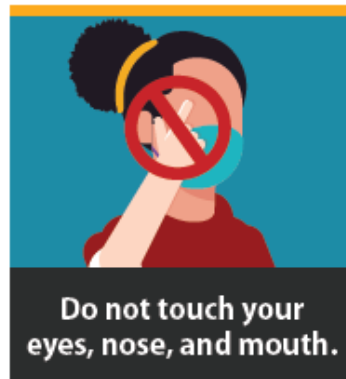
CDC Considerations for Travelers

Although staying at home is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting sick, some trips are unavoidable. The CDC has things to consider before you travel and how to best protect yourself and others as you travel. Click below to learn more.

[CDC Travel Considerations](#)

Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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