

## **NH Attractions and Amusement Parks Presentation to the Governor's Economic Re-Opening Task Force Tuesday, May 5, 2020**

Good afternoon. My name is Charyl Reardon and I am the President of the White Mountains Attractions Association. Although I represent the seventeen White Mountains Attractions of New Hampshire, the presentation below is in reference to all New Hampshire Attractions and Recreation.

I understand you heard a broad approach to reopening Tourism Attractions last week, so I would like to use this time to outline in more detail a phased plan designed for the Task Force to consider in providing guidance for the reopening of attractions in the wake of COVID-19. Not all of these considerations will apply to each of the attractions; however, the information outlined is intended to help develop a plan that will work best for the attractions industry. The considerations are aimed to focus on medical science and operational expertise rather than general perceptions. We recognize that these considerations will change as best practices, government guidelines, and guidance from medical professionals evolve. It is also important to note that we understand the importance in addressing additional measures that will be needed to support community and consumer confidence and visitor responsibility.

In many areas of the State, the number of visitors is increasing weekly. The visitors are creating an unusual level of use on these outdoor areas that are currently accessible. If we begin this soft reopening with a number of our State's attractions, we will begin to relieve some of those pressure points like we have heard about in places like Franconia Notch State Park and the White Mountain National Forest. By offering controlled environments at many of our attractions with the recommended and proper physical distancing, sanitation and hygiene, our State's attractions can be an asset in our reopening.

In this presentation today you will hear the tourism community asking for the ability to have soft openings for those attractions and activities that are outdoors and that naturally provide for physical distancing requirements. Additionally, this will include appropriate state guidance that we've seen in the Universal Guidelines and in the State Park guidelines.

It is important to note the difference between attractions and other venues for mass gatherings such as sports arenas, movie theaters, and concerts:

1. Capacity can be reduced/managed to allow for appropriate social distancing.

2. Seating positions in rides and attractions are controlled by employees.
3. Exposure time is limited. Guests generally move throughout their experience and guests are not sitting in a single location, elbow-to-elbow, for an extended period of time.
4. A large percentage of attraction attendance is made up of family members and others who live in the same home and thus do not need to be physically distanced from each other.

We have been preparing a phased approach to reopening the various types of Attractions found throughout the state. We suggest that Phase One include natural parks such as Lost River and Polar Caves; outdoor centers such as bike and canoe & kayak rentals, stand-alone driving ranges and mini-golf courses; activities such as zip lines, scenic chairlift or gondola rides; and guided tours such as ATVs or Segways, *so long as they are family-groups only of no more than six people per group*. These groups can be sent out in intervals and easily maintain the social distancing that is protective and prescribed in multiple guidelines, and there would be time to sanitize surfaces in between groups. We recommend that these types of attractions follow the same guidelines that have been approved for New Hampshire State Parks, particularly the Flume Gorge, which is scheduled to be open to the public. We also recommend restricting admission to New Hampshire residents only in Phase One, as has been done with guidance for campgrounds and golf courses until such guidance has been relaxed to allow for out-of-state visitors.

It is the tourism community's hope that we'll continue to address the potential of adding more activities in a phase 2 and phase 3. This would include a phased opening of amusement parks such as Canobie Lake Park and StoryLand, who we expect would have a soft opening sometime in the coming month and a half, and continue to add capacity over the summer months. Phases 2 and 3 would also include activities such as cruises and trains.

As we have looked at these issues, we have tried to use the State's outlined format for other industries for consistency. Beginning with:

**Topline Considerations for Reopening:**

1. Allow healthy people to enjoy the facility and encourage the use of masks/face coverings for guests and staff.

2. Provide means to wash/sanitize hands frequently.
3. Manage density of people within the facility to keep people or family units that have been isolating together 6 feet (2 meters) apart.
4. Reduce touch areas where possible and sanitize high touch surfaces frequently.
5. Protect employees with various approaches, including barriers, protective coverings, and distancing.
6. Communicate with employees and guests effectively on how to prevent the spread of germs.

### **General Health and Safety**

1. Provide additional handwashing or hand sanitizer hygiene stations throughout facilities: on entry, in key walkways, at all attractions, in food and beverage locations, in merchandise shops, at attraction exits, etc. These should also be provided behind the scenes in maintenance areas, workshops, offices, and break areas.
2. Employees should wear masks/face coverings while on the job, especially those interacting with others. Guests will be encouraged to wear masks/face coverings as well.
3. Utilize touch-free/contactless payment options when possible, to reduce face-to-face purchase transactions, such as encouraging guests to purchase tickets online.
4. Place plexiglass or other types of barriers/hygiene screens between guests and staff who are in frequent, close interaction areas wherever practical to reduce contamination. Clean the barriers/hygiene screens regularly.
5. Proactively communicate guidelines and expectations for health and hygiene procedures and precautions in the front-of-house areas for guests and in the behind-the-scenes areas for employees, as well as through online channels in advance of guest arrival.

6. Limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Clearly mark physical distancing spaces/guidelines with floor markings, seat markings, or signs to make it easy for the guests to understand what is expected.

### **General Business Adaptations:**

1. Attraction capacity will be reduced to allow for appropriate physical distancing. The capacity would be calculated for an attraction based on the guest-acceptable 36-square-foot square or 28.3-square-foot circle per person in attractions, attraction queue lines, waiting areas, retail locations, and vehicle capacity will be adjusted to allow for 6 feet (2 meters) of physical distancing between individuals.
2. Signage will be posted throughout the property, including in parking lots, to encourage proper hand hygiene (i.e. limiting surface touches, the use of hand sanitizer stations) and to encourage visitors not to linger and maintain proper physical distancing of 6 feet.
3. Sanitize high-touch areas frequently. Those include: door handles, trash receptacle touchpoints, control equipment, phones, computers, office equipment, counters, elevator buttons, handrails, tables, seats, benches, high chairs, toilets, sink faucets and toilet handles, soap dispenser push plates, baby changing stations, ice scoops, refrigerator handles, towel dispenser handles, cleaning tools, counter tops, door knobs, light switches, sinks, queue rails, harnesses, restraints, ATM machines, dining surfaces, etc.
4. Guests will appreciate seeing employees cleaning and sanitizing within the attraction. Consider making them visible through their uniform or provide a special identity for the group, i.e. “the Clean Team” who are dedicated employees to cleaning/disinfecting restrooms frequently. They will also monitor/control restroom capacity to uphold physical distancing guidelines in those facilities.
5. Limiting Food and Beverage to “Grab and Go” in Phase 1 and as we move to Phase 2 and 3, we would follow Restaurant Guidelines outlined by the State of New Hampshire.

Thank you again for your time today and please know that the Attractions sector is prepared to meet this challenge and to give our communities and consumers confidence in our ability to safely welcome visitors. We appreciate the efforts of Governor Sununu to safeguard our communities throughout this crisis, and we are ready to work together to safely re-open our economy.

Sincerely,  
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