



United States Department of Agriculture

## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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## Additional Shawnee National Forest Recreation Sites Closed

**Harrisburg, IL.** April 2, 2020 – In alignment with current federal, state and local guidance for social distancing and to ensure health and safety of its employees, visitors and volunteers, the Shawnee National Forest has temporarily shut down two of the most visited sites on the forest, Garden of the Gods Recreation Area and Bell Smith Springs Trailhead. This closure is in addition to the previously closed campgrounds and restrooms which included:

### Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District

- Johnson Creek Campground, Jackson County
- Pine Hills Campground, Union County

### Hidden Springs Ranger District

- Camp Cadiz Campground, Hardin County
- Pharaoh Campgrounds at Garden of the Gods, Saline County
- Pine Ridge Campground at Pounds Hollow, Gallatin County
- Tower Rock Campground, Hardin County

Other dispersed recreation opportunities, such as hiking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and dispersed camping on Shawnee National Forest remain available to the public. To protect public health and safety all visitors to the forest are encouraged to:

- Avoid visiting the forest if you are sick and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Follow CDC guidance on personal hygiene and social distancing before and during your visit to the forest.
- Take your trash with you when you leave. Trash overflowing the receptacles becomes litter and can be harmful to wildlife and attract predators.
- Please make arrangements to use the restroom before or after your visit to the forest. Unmanaged waste creates a health hazard for our employees and for other visitors.
- If an area is crowded, please search for a less occupied location. Also consider avoiding the forest during high-use periods.

The USDA Forest Service continues to assess and temporarily suspend access to recreation areas that attract large crowds and cannot meet social distancing guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Visitors to national forests are urged to take the precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For tips from the CDC on preventing illnesses like the coronavirus, go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html>. Information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture is available at: [www.usda.gov/coronavirus](http://www.usda.gov/coronavirus).

For up-to-date information on the Shawnee National Forest, visit [www.fs.usda.gov/shawnee](http://www.fs.usda.gov/shawnee).

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Forest Service