



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County Parks' Pools to Remain Closed This Summer

County of San Luis Obispo Parks & Recreation has decided to keep pools closed this summer due to COVID-19 restrictions and the unknown timeline for when public pools may be able to operate safely across the State of California.

"This is not a decision we take lightly," said County Parks Director Nick Franco. "We realize the significant impact this has on a number of families throughout our county."

County Parks operates pools in San Miguel, Shandon, Templeton, Cayucos, and Cambria as well as at Santa Margarita Lake and Coastal Dunes RV Park. These pools normally operate between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. Public pools are not permitted to open under the current Stage 2 guidelines. Gradual reopening is expected for pools that can limit the number of people to maintain physical distancing and safely occupy the space in and around the pool. This may work well for pools designed for lap swimming or other larger pools. However, the County Parks' pools are relatively small and are more about community pool recreation rather than lap swimming or other uses that make physical distancing easier.

Additionally, County Parks would need to hire and train lifeguards as they do every year, but with the unknown date of when pools may be able to open, recruiting, hiring, and training has been on hold until a potential opening date was known. That date is still not known.

County Parks is certainly not alone in making this decision. The National Recreation and Parks Association recently surveyed park agencies and found only 5 percent plan to operate pools at a nearly normal level, 18 percent with significant modifications such as temperature screening and occupancy limits, and 31 percent have already decided to not open at all this summer. The remainder of agencies are waiting for additional guidance before making a final decision.

"We had to consider our need to move forward with some degree of certainty this summer," Franco said. "And we are making this decision now so staff can concentrate on the other COVID-19 response duties associated with camping, beach use, picnic areas and other operational restrictions that are in place and take considerable staff time. We certainly expect to be able to return to our normal pool operations next summer."

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