

## Hiking protocol



Above: Santa Fe Trailhead parking is open. Photo by Steve Pate.

By Steve Pate

Hiking is recommended as an outdoor activity to maintain fitness, provided that hikers practice physical distancing. Hiking in the Tri-Lakes area has become even more popular due to the stay-at-home/safer-at-home order, so much so that the Town of Palmer Lake has banned all trailhead parking and street parking except for residents of Palmer Lake (commercial parking lots are exempt). Trailhead parking in Palmer Lake was closed due to extreme overcrowding that restricted emergency access and created additional hazards related to Palmer Lake's water supply. Trails are still open for hikers in the Tri-Lakes area.

Physical distancing does not hap-

pen automatically just because you are hiking. Some precautions to ensure physical distance should be taken. Here are guidelines suggested by experienced and knowledgeable hikers in our area:

- Go solo. If you feel uncomfortable hiking alone, try to make it only two. Three should be the absolute maximum. Practicing physical distancing on a trail becomes more difficult with each added person in your group. Local jurisdictions have the power, under the current state order, to close trails if things get crowded or physical distancing is not being practiced.
- Avoid popular trails during the popular hours—go early in the

morning or late afternoon. It's not a good idea to go alone on remote trails that you do not know without proper equipment and most especially as an inexperienced hiker.

- Anticipate social distancing when meeting someone on the trail. Don't just squeeze by on the trail—that is not social distancing. Stop and one of you move off of the trail at least 6 feet. Ten feet is even better. If you're hiking with someone, stay 6 to 10 feet away from your hiking partner and be aware of breathing in his/her air (unless you live in the same household).
- Try not to stop on a trail to have a conversation or change gear. Stopping on a trail invites social-distancing issues with others moving along the trail. Move off the trail for these stops.
- If someone is behind you, be aware of their pace. If they are faster, move 6 to 10 feet off the trail and let them pass. Consider waiting at least 30 seconds after they pass before re-entering the trail to allow droplets and exhaled aerosol to dissipate. People who are breathing hard, like runners, bikers, and hikers going up steep

inclines, broadcast their exhaled breaths much farther than usual.

- As recommended by the Coronavirus Task Force, bring a scarf, bandana, or mask to cover your nose and mouth, especially when encountering another person.
- And finally, what about dogs? Dogs are great companions for many hikers. Even some mountain bikers and equestrians bring along dogs. While dogs are still not permitted on the Palmer Lake Reservoir trail, it is permissible to bring dogs along in most Tri-Lakes areas so long as they are leashed. While no evidence has yet been shown that dogs carry and transmit COVID-19 or that the virus can survive long on fur, logic says that if someone who has the virus touches a dog and then someone else touches that dog, well, you get the idea. The solution is to keep dogs leashed, under control, and don't allow strangers to pet them.

For trail etiquette related to mountain bikes, hikers, and equestrians, see the Friends of Monument Preserve website at fomp.org.

Steve Pate can be contacted at [stevepate@ocn.me](mailto:stevepate@ocn.me).

## Our Community Notices

By Judy Barnes, Events Editor

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the information number for that event.

### Safer at Home's physical distancing rules

For up to date information on this changing situation, see <https://covid19.colorado.gov/blog/safer-at-home>. The goal is still for the general public to stay home unless it's absolutely necessary to go out. Certain businesses may open now but with strict precautions. It's a new level of safety that still includes keeping your distance, wearing a mask when in public, and limiting size of gatherings to less than ten people. The El Paso County Public Health Department still wants you to be Safer at Home.

### Community resources available during COVID-19 pandemic

The county's website, [www.elpasocounty-health.org/community-resources-0](http://www.elpasocounty-health.org/community-resources-0), has lists to help with basic needs, behavioral health resources, businesses, childcare resources for children and teens, health and wellness resources, and volunteer opportunities (local and immediate needs).

### Monument Police Department non-emergency email contact

Throughout the COVID-19 emergency Monument's police department is modifying procedures to reduce the spread of the virus. They will continue respond to calls on a priority basis and will do everything possible to deliver a high quality of service while minimizing the risk of community exposure. Please use [MPDCOVID-19@tomgov.org](mailto:MPDCOVID-19@tomgov.org) to contact police with non-emergency information.

### Silver Key senior citizen luncheons

Connections Café sites will have "grab and go" (prepared meals). A \$2.25 donation is requested. Please call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal. Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument on Wednesdays. If you qualify but are not yet enrolled for meals, phone 719-884-2300 or visit [www.silverkey.org](http://www.silverkey.org). The Food Pantry is implementing a "pick up only" model for clients. Mon.-Fri., noon-12:30 p.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Reserve & Ride is

temporarily limited to essential transportation needs only: strictly medical and food-related trips. Reservations are requested, phone 719-884-2300. For more information about senior services, visit [www.silverkey.org](http://www.silverkey.org).

### Monument Hill Kiwanis grants, apply by May 15

The Monument Hill Foundation, the charitable arm of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club, has an annual granting program. Grants are awarded to charities as defined by the IRS, to various qualifying youth activities, and to schools for various educational activities and scholarships. Applications will be accepted through **May 15**. The grant application is available at [monumenthill-foundation.org](http://monumenthill-foundation.org) (select "Apply for a Grant"). See ad on page 3.

### Trees 4 Tomorrow, ends soon

Trees 4 Tomorrow Program (T4T Program) is an innovative, green approach transplanting healthy trees from unmitigated properties to burn scar properties needing reforestation. Black Forest Together is now accepting requests for our 2020 Trees for Tomorrow program. This will be the last year that we are able to offer this program on this scale. Transplant days will be limited this year so the program will be on a first come, first served basis. Once demand drops or inventory runs out, this program will shut down for the year. To sign up, phone 719-368-0500 or visit the website, [www.blackforesttogether.org](http://www.blackforesttogether.org).

### Monument Hill Farmers Market

The Monument Indoor Market for March and April were canceled due to District 38 school closures. The outdoor market season could begin in May at Grace Best Elementary School, 66 Jefferson St., Monument, so watch the Facebook page for an opening date. For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/monumenthillfarmersmarket](http://www.facebook.com/monumenthillfarmersmarket). See ad on page 5.

### Monument's Memorial Day ceremony canceled

The Town of Monument sent notification that this year's Memorial Day Ceremony at the Monument Cemetery has been canceled. However, the town will post a video on its website and social media. If you or your organization would like to contribute by recording a short (no more than two minutes) video about the significance of Memorial Day, send the video to [mvandenhoek@tomgov.org](mailto:mvandenhoek@tomgov.org).

### Blood supplies need to be replenished; please help

Blood donors are needed at the Colorado Springs Blood Donation Center, 3670 Austin Bluffs Parkway, Suite 110, Colorado Springs. Do not donate if you are sick; Vitalant does not test for COVID-19. An appointment is required; book by phone or online: 303-363-2300 or 800-365-0006, opt. 2; [www.vitalant.org](http://www.vitalant.org)

### Local grocery stores offer senior shopping hours, ages 60+

During the COVID-19 pandemic, local stores have made some changes to their schedules: King Soopers is open for seniors only Mon., Wed., and Fri 7-8 a.m.; it closes at 8 p.m. Safeway opens for seniors Tue. & Thu., 7-9 a.m.; it closes at 8 p.m. Walmart opens for seniors Tue., 6-7 a.m.; it closes at 8:30 p.m.

### Help CASA help kids, just \$5 and a social media post

CASA of the Pikes Peak Region has launched its #Give5Challenge5 social media campaign for Child Abuse Prevention Month and invites the public to get involved to help local children.

It costs \$1,200 per year to provide a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer to an abused or neglected child within the child welfare system, and there usually are about 830 children in the Pikes Peak Region in need of one of these volunteers. As stay-at-home orders, school closures, and social distancing remain in place during COVID-19, CASA knows that children who are at risk for abuse and neglect are now even more vulnerable than they were two months ago. For this reason, CASA expects to see a rise in the number of Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers that will be needed for children in Colorado's Fourth Judicial District. Here is how people can help on Facebook or Instagram.

Facebook: CASA is challenging community members to follow @casapikespeak on Facebook and donate \$5 to CASA's Facebook Fundraiser. After donating, community members are encouraged to post about their donation using @CASAPikesPeak and #Give5Challenge5, and then tag five of their friends challenging them to also #Give5Challenge5.

Instagram: Community members can also get involved by following CASA on Instagram, donating through the nonprofit's Instagram profile, and posting in stories to

challenge five friends to #Give5Challenge5 for @CASAPikesPeak.

If the cycle of \$5 donations continues until 5,000 people have given, CASA of the Pikes Peak Region will receive \$25,000 in donations—enough to provide life-changing advocacy to 20 of the most vulnerable children in the Pikes Peak Region. Community members interested in getting involved with CASA in other capacities as volunteers, donors, or business partners, can learn more about the nonprofit at [www.casappr.org](http://www.casappr.org).

### Change a child's story, become a CASA volunteer

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) offers a volunteer opportunity like no other. As appointed representatives of the court, CASA volunteers are empowered to make a lifelong difference in the lives of abused and neglected children. To learn more, contact Uriko Stout, 447-9898 ext. 1060, [urikos@casappr.org](mailto:urikos@casappr.org); or visit [www.casappr.org](http://www.casappr.org).

### County parks, trails, and open spaces remain open for drop-in use

Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers, park headquarters, and county fairgrounds are temporarily closed to public access to combat COVID-19. Also closed are playgrounds, picnic pavilions, and park restrooms. County parks, trails, and open spaces remain open for drop-in use. Please enjoy the outdoors during this challenging time but practice social distancing. Refrain from using parks or trails if you are exhibiting symptoms. While on trails, warn other users of your presence as you pass, and step aside to let others pass. For more information, phone 719-520-7529, email to [parks@elpasoco.com](mailto:parks@elpasoco.com), or visit [elpasoco.com](http://elpasoco.com).

### Palmer Lake prohibits parking to visitors

The Town of Palmer Lake has issued an emergency ordinance prohibiting parking on all town streets, with the exception of Palmer Lake residents, and closing the parking area at the reservoir trailhead on Old Carriage Road during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Tri-Lakes Women's Club helps local vendors

The Tri-Lakes Women's Club will donate \$500 from its Charitable Events Emergency Reserve Fund to Tri-Lakes Cares to assist with increased need during the COVID-19 outbreak in Colorado. It specified that the