



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, Nov. 3, 2023

DEM REOPENS RECREATIONAL AREAS IN GLOCESTER AFTER COLD WEATHER REDUCES RISK OF MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASE

PROVIDENCE, RI – Due to the first hard freeze occurring in most of Rhode Island this week, the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) today announced the reopening of state-owned recreational properties it manages in Glocester that were temporarily closed to lessen the risk of visitors and staff being bitten by mosquitoes potentially carrying Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). The rescission of the emergency operation order originally signed on September 13 by DEM Director Terry Gray reopens the following properties as of November 2:



Durfee Hill Management Area in Glocester.

- George Washington State Campground and Bowdish State Boat Ramp (which will resume regular off-season operations)
- George Washington Management Area
- Pulaski State Park and Recreational Area
- Durfee Hill Management Area

“Encouraging people to get outside and enjoy the outdoors is a core value at DEM. We’re glad we can reopen these areas to visitors now that the risk of mosquito-borne disease has greatly subsided,” said Director Gray. “Mosquito surveillance efforts, conducted jointly by DEM and the Rhode Island Department of Health, are critical tools that help to identify hot spots for EEE and prevent serious illness.”

The properties are now following regular operations. Pheasant stocking for the 2023-2024 hunting season at Durfee Hill Management Area will resume this weekend. Please check DEM’s [pheasant stocking webpage](#) for timely updates on stocking locations. Durfee Hill Management Area and George Washington

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Management Area will also be open for deer hunting. [Hunters are reminded to bring harvested deer to check stations at the opening of muzzleloader and shotgun seasons.](#) For more information on seasons, bag limits, zones, and regulations, visit the [Rhode Island Hunting and Trapping 2023-2024 Regulation Guide](#) and [Rhode Island Outdoors](#) to purchase a hunting license.

The now rescinded order described EEE as “an imminent peril to public health, safety, and welfare (that) justifies the temporary closure” of the properties. The temporary closure occurred after detections of positive EEE mosquito samples in Glocester and surrounding areas this season. A hard frost, which is meteorologically defined as three straight hours below 32 degrees, kills most adult mosquitoes. Its timing varies across Rhode Island. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), most areas of Rhode Island, except for areas of Newport and Block Island, experienced the first hard frost November 1-2.

Humans can only contract these diseases through a bite from an infected mosquito. Although extremely rare in humans, EEE is very serious and has a much higher human mortality rate than West Nile Virus (WNV). Approximately 30% of people with EEE die, and many survivors have ongoing neurological problems. Unlike WNV, which is prevalent in Rhode Island every year, EEE risk is variable, changing from year to year. For more information on EEE and ways to prevent it, please visit health.ri.gov/eee.

REMINDER: All users of Wildlife Management Areas and Undeveloped State Parks are required to wear at least 200 square inches of solid, fluorescent orange during the hunting season from the second Saturday in September until the end of May. Covering or clothing consisting of 500 square inches of blaze orange is required during the shotgun deer season in December. For more details, visit dem.ri.gov/orange.

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