

# Kawartha Lakes pushes back opening parks, conservation areas closed

*Sarah Sobanski*

If you've been waiting for parks and play spaces to open in Kawartha Lakes — you'll have to wait a little longer during COVID-19.

The city has announced all amenities within parks are closed until further notice. This includes playgrounds, sports fields and courts, skateparks, picnic areas, outdoor exercise equipment and washroom facilities.

“We recognize as the weather starts to get nice people are going to want to get out and get a little fresh air,” Mayor Andy Letham said in a press conference March 26. He said city staff wouldn't be available to maintain park amenities.

“We have a lot of parks across the city. They're not going to be the best idea to be climbing on, some of the play structures, because we're not going to be available to keep them clean or open them.”

The mayor said he didn't see “anything wrong” with people going for walks in parks as long as they were practicing social distancing. Park spaces will remain open.

“We're not necessarily closing off open spaces in that regard, but I think the play structure, and washrooms, and things like that because of the lack of proper cleaning will have to be closed.”

Kawartha Conservation recently announced the closure of all conservation areas within the conservation's watershed including Ken Reid Conservation Area, the off-leash dog park, Windy Ridge Conservation Area, Pigeon River Headwaters, Fleetwood Creek and Durham East Cross Forest.

“These are not decisions we make lightly or easily,” Kawartha Conservation CAO Mark Majchrowski [said in a press release by the conservation](#).

“These decisions were made out of an abundance of caution and to support the calls and direction from our municipal partners, along with the federal and provincial levels of government asking for people to stay home.”

According to the release Kawartha Conservation staff will work remotely to continue to maintain critical services including flood forecasting and monitoring.