



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Parking Restrictions, Tow Away Zones to be Enforced at Starved Rock, Matthiessen State Parks

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Following weeks of park closures due to reaching capacity and increased traffic and parking violations, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Conservation Police Officers are reminding visitors to Starved Rock State Park and Matthiessen State Park that No Parking and Tow Away zones both inside and outside of the parks will be enforced.

“Since Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks reopened last month, we’ve seen increased instances of illegal parking and amplified security concerns. We understand the desire to get out and take in some of Illinois’ most beautiful terrain, but we must keep safety top-of-mind,” said Captain Laura Petreikis, Illinois Conservation Police. “When visitors park in restricted areas or on the side of the road, and then walk down the middle of the road to get to the parks, it leads to additional traffic congestion, and unfortunately, hazards for first responders when responding to emergency situations inside the parks.”

Parking is not allowed in areas within the park that are not designated for parking. If individuals choose to park in prohibited areas, including on the sides of the roads surrounding the park or in construction zones, they risk having their vehicles towed at their own expense.

Currently, Starved Rock State Park’s south entrance on Illinois Rt. 71 and west entrance on Illinois Rt. 178 are open to the public. With increased traffic, and traffic back ups leading to congestion on state routes and Interstate 80, Conservation Police Officers are urging park visitors to utilize alternate routes when driving to the parks.

Visitors arriving from the east on Interstate 80 should consider exiting prior to Utica at Ottawa, crossing the Illinois River and approaching the park from the east on Illinois Rt. 71. Motorists also can exit southbound on Interstate 39 and take the Illinois Rt. 71 exit at Oglesby. Visitors also should have alternate plans if the park has reached capacity and has been temporarily closed when they arrive.

Temporary park closures are not new to Starved Rock or Matthiessen. The heaviest traffic congestion and likely times for park closures occur on weekend days between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., and visitors should keep that in mind when making plans to visit. If the parks are closed, there are many other great places to visit in northern Illinois:

- [Buffalo Rock State Park](#) – 10 miles east of Starved Rock State Park in Ottawa
- [Illini State Park](#) – 20 miles east of Starved Rock State Park in Marseilles
- [Shabbona Lake State Recreation Area](#) – 47 miles northeast of Starved Rock State Park, 70 miles west of Chicago, in Shabbona
- [Lowden State Park](#) – 100 miles west of Chicago in Oregon
- [Rock Cut State Park](#) – 85 miles west of Chicago in Loves Park
- [Castle Rock State Park](#) – 100 miles west of Chicago in Oregon
- [White Pines Forest State Park](#) – 100 miles west of Chicago in Mt. Morris

Visitors can monitor the status of Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks on Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Facebook pages and IDNR Twitter feeds. Additional information can be found on the [official Facebook page for Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks](#).

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