Loving the outdoors, TOO MUCH

Population of the outdoors sometimes harms nature

By Carol Kang
The Herald Times

Getting away while staying closer to home is the mantra for many people across Indiana as Hoosiers deal with rules on vacation plans and ways to enjoy the outdoors.

Many are discovering escapes in natural areas, local city parks and national forests, that offer hiking, camping, fishing and trails. But as more people use those areas, the noise and train noise on trails often increases. It’s led some agencies to create signage to explain to those with social anxiety and even close some areas during times of higher use.

While the Hoosier National Forest website notes mental and emotional health is one reason people are expanding their national forests, it also offers suggestions for how people can recreate responsibly, telling people to stay closer to nature, stay feet apart from others, avoid crowds.

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A group of dogs is seen in the Robinson Reservoir Nature Preserve, one of the more popular Monroe County natural preserves.

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COVID-19 testing, cases rise in county

Officials urge residents to only get tests if needed

By Emily Emberger
The Herald Times

As cases of COVID-19 increase in Monroe County, the Monroe County Health Department has stressed that individuals should only receive tests if necessary. Privacy Caselli, Monroe County Health Department administrative, has urged people to not get tested for COVID-19 for the sake of being tested. In order to save resources and testing supplies, which health officials say are and remain low, Caselli has advised that people only get tested when exposed to coronavirus, the signs of which include a fever, cough and sometimes symptoms.

“Testing may be problematic in that everyone can’t just get a test when you want it, and it’s not recommended that everyone get a test for the sake of testing,” Caselli said Friday. “We are seeing with those two factors that have occurred in other states: we’ve seen a demand on testing supplies. According to the Indiana State Department of Health, we’ve seen requests for testing going up. We’ve seen an increase in the number of cases in the county.

Mayor’s $2M recovery plan debated by council

By Emily Emberger
The Herald Times

A large recovery initiative proposed by Bloomington’s mayor got its first round of public discussion last week.

Wednesday, the Bloomington City Council discussed draft plans for a $2 million package of economic initiatives, including nearly $200,000 for a new round of social services grants given by the council each year.

These appropriations are part of Mayor John Hamilton’s new Recovery Priorities Initiative. Hamilton’s approach, given July 14, the current $2 million is the table for appropriations in part of an overall $2 million in spending over the next two years for public health, racial justice, economic development and projects addressing climate change as well as basic city operations. The money comes from the city’s reserve, of which the mayor and city controller Jeff Underwood say the city has four months’ worth. The Government Finance Officers Association’s advice to municipalities is to have at least two to three months’ worth. Part of the goal is to also end 2022 with these amounts reserved.

As Hamilton argued in his speech and to the council Wednesday, reserves are to be used in an emergency, something which less-government spending fits.

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COVID-19 PANDEMIC
MONROE COUNTY NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TESTS</th>
<th>CASES</th>
<th>DEATHS</th>
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<td>13,185</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>29</td>
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COVID-19 in area counties: Boone (1,147 tests, 45 cases, 1 death), Boone (264 tests, 391 cases, 36 deaths), Lawrence (12,071 tests, 227 cases, 12 deaths), Morgan (737 tests, 31 cases, 0 deaths). Over 2,345 tests, 72 cases, 1 death. Last updated news Saturday from the Indiana State Department of Health. Cases are positive test results listed by county of residence, not necessarily where March, at total patients. Probable indiana deaths (no date listed) COVID-19 in contributing proportionate to total cases 2,686 deaths.

STATEWIDE: 690,274 TESTS | 61,520 CASES | 2,686 DEATHS