



Press Release

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Contact: Holly Kerns or Ashley McClay at (541) 523-0014 or pio@bakercounty.org

Snake River Area Order Changes

Today, Incident Commander Mark Bennett approved modifications to yesterday's order for the Snake River area. Based on input from the community, the order has been amended to prohibit camping and overnight use in public areas along the Snake River corridor between April 4-18. The order does not restrict camping on private property. Snake River Road will continue to be open to the public, and the corridor is open to day fishing.

County officials have received numerous complaints about visitors from outside the area disregarding existing recreation area closures and social distancing standards at sites along the river. Local residents have voiced concern about the increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 to the local community from visitors not following the existing standards for health and safety, and asked County officials to take action.

Baker County continues to have no confirmed cases of COVID-19.

The order states, "Baker County is a rural community possessed with limited emergency medical and healthcare capability, and is determined to follow medical guidance and do everything in our collective power to protect these vital community assets during a predicted surge of patients due to the COVID-19 pandemic."

Mark Bennett says, "The Commissioners heard helpful questions and concerns from the community about yesterday's order, and we appreciate the input. I've approved changes to address some of the concerns we heard while still emphasizing the need for social distancing as a measure to protect our communities, especially Richland, Halfway, Oxbow and Huntington. While the original intent was not to restrict local access to the river, some of the questions we received showed how additional flexibility in the language of the order was needed. We want to emphasize this order is temporary, and will be lifted when the situation allows recreation to continue and not put our residents at risk. Thank you to everyone for your patience as we work through this uncharted territory together and focus on taking care of each other."

Yesterday's order from the County Commissioners temporarily closed the Snake River Road from April 3 - 17, 2020. That order has now been modified.