COVID-19 Response & FAQs

To our supporters and families,

With the health and safety top of mind for our employees, the youth and families we serve, and the general public, Camp Fire Minnesota is taking steps to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Our leadership team continues to regularly review and follow advisement from MN Department of Health and other government agencies. Ultimately, we find our core values guiding us through the evolving and uncertain situation with COVID-19.

“Can-do Collaboration” and innovating as a team as we work remotely to continue serving our youth, families and educators with new distance learning resources.

“Fostering Youth & Community” to make decisions that are in the best interest of our staff, families we serve, and the broader community as we cancel and adjust programs, events, meetings, etc.

“Love of Nature” is our reminder to practice and encourage each other to be attentive to self-care and manage stress. Follow our social media for activities and ideas for outdoor time – all while practicing proper hygiene and distancing precautions.

We hope that the FAQs below help answer some of your initial questions, please reach-out with additional questions.

FAQs

Is the Camp Fire Minnesota office open?
Our physical office in St. Louis Park is closed until further notice with all staff working remotely weekdays 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

• Please note, we are closed on Fridays for the month of June.
• Contact staff directly during business hours – you can find staff contact info online: www.campfiremn.org/admin-staff. Please note, we will not have the capability to transfer calls; staff will continue to answer their direct dial lines.
• Please be patient with our response time during this period of working remotely. We will do our best to respond within a day.

Who do I contact with general questions during this time?
For general questions please email info@campfiremn.org or call our main line (612) 235-7284.

Who do I contact with camp program questions during this time?
The best way is to email info@campfiremn.org or call our main line (612) 235-7284.

Are in-person youth programs being held?
Distance learning (“My Nature Connection”) curriculum, activities and videos for educators and parents is in development and shared as available. Follow our social media or visit https://campfiremn.org/mynatureconnection for resources.

All in-person programming is cancelled at this time. This includes:

• Summer camp (the full season)
• Outdoor Play Day (July 3)
• Family Camp
• Spring Break camp (March 23-27)

• In-class Environmental Education
• Out-of-school Time (housing and school-based)
• Teen Outdoor Leaders (April 7 + May 1-3 retreat)
Summer Camp

Why was summer camp cancelled?

We are an American Camp Association (ACA) accredited camp. We follow best practices to ensure the safety, health and well-being of our campers and staff. We did not make this decision lightly. We took available guidance from the CDC, ACA, and MN Department of Health, to explore how to provide a safe environment for campers, families, and staff. Our campers’ safety is our top priority – this year and every year. We assessed every aspect of camp. Yet, the need for strict distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at this time simply cannot be maintained in camp programs.

What happens to the fees I paid toward camp?

Families will receive an email regarding next steps. If you did not receive an email please email info@campfiremn.org.

We know how important Tanadoona is to you and your camper. Like you, keeping Tanadoona a thriving green space for all youth is our top priority. Support from our passionate Tanadoona community is needed as we face financial challenges stemming from COVID-19. If you need to cancel your summer camp registration, we invite you to help as you’re able.

- If you are in a position to donate all or a portion of your camp fee, please consider doing so. All donations are tax-deductible.
- Alternatively, consider holding your payment as a credit toward a future camp program (this credit does not expire).
- We will gladly issue refunds if that is what best serves your family at this time.

You can always reach us at info@campfiremn.org. We look forward to your future participation in our programs.

Can you guarantee my camper a spot next year?

We are looking into how we can approach this to ensure equitable registration for next year. We cannot make any guarantees at this time, but trust that we too want every camper who was registered to be able to attend in 2021.

Please make sure you are on our email list for summer camp updates. If you’re not sure, you can sign-up here.

Will you reconsider Day Camp cancellation since Gov. Walz stated day camps can operate?

On May 13 we announced the cancellation of our 2020 summer camp program due to COVID-19. This was a difficult and carefully thought out decision.

We have great respect for Governor Walz and the team at the state guiding us through COVID-19 response. Gov. Walz’s executive order (20-56) on May 13 citing summer day camps as critical business that can operate, however does not change our position.

Although we would love to be able to offer camp, multiple factors contributed to our decision to cancel. Among these reasons is adhering social distancing guidelines. According to CDC’s childcare guidance and MN's outdoor recreation guidelines we must adapt practices to allow social distancing. The need for social distancing between groups of youth to prevent the spread of COVID-19 simply cannot be maintained in our day camp programs – even with a reduced program capacity.

We cherish the fun, adventurous and care-free camp experience for our youth. This decision is based on the safety of our campers and staff. While it is truly heartbreaking that we are cancelling summer camp for the first time in 96 years we want everyone, our camp families, campers, and staff, to always feel they are in a safe and healthy environment. We look forward to being together again soon.

We appreciate your understanding and continued support. We cannot wait to continue in-person programming again. It is our organizational mission and our staffs’ personal passions.
In the short-term, we are looking into how to open up Tanadoona for family-units to visit and explore nature on their own (in alignment with state guidelines) this summer - stay tuned!

Beyond COVID-19 we maintain our vision for expanding year-round programs at Tanadoona to serve 10,000 youth and for advancing equity and inclusion in nature through our Nature Immersion Program with schools and new Fellowship program.

What is the status of event rentals at Camp Bluewater and Tanadoona through the summer and end of year?
We continue to monitor updates from the State. Please contact Emily Peterson, Business Dev & Sales Manager, to discuss your event and questions specific to your reservation: emilyp@campfiremn.org

What is the status of Camp Fire Minnesota community events?
We deeply value the opportunity to connect our supporters to the impact and value of nature-based learning and environmental educations programs for Minnesota youth, and will be making appropriate adjustments to upcoming events.

We are following the guidelines from the CDC to cancel/postpone all events of 50 people or more through mid-May as well as MN Department of Health distancing guidelines. We will reach out directly to registered guests of each affected event.

Events currently affected:
- Coffee with Camp Fire fundraiser (rescheduled to July 21)
- Tanadoona Community & Dining Center Ribbon Cutting (postponed, date to be announced later)
- Meet the Counselors + Tanadoona Tours (cancelled)
- Community Partner Celebration – Annual Meeting (in-person cancelled, will be released in an online platform)

What if I have questions about event cancellations?
Visit our Upcoming Events page for the most up-to-date event information, cancellations or adjustments. Please email info@campfiremn.org with additional questions or concerns.

In the spirit of our core values, we want to share our sincere gratitude for families and donors who are reaching out to share your concern and dedication to our team and programs.

We are facing significant financial challenges. Cancelled fundraisers and cancelled programs due to COVID-19 are taking a toll. In this uncertain time, we are thankful for your continued support of our mission and the youth we serve. Please consider supporting support us with a donation.

Thank you,
Camp Fire Minnesota