

Visitors to Starved Rock for Memorial Day weekend should be alert for travel delays, possible parking closures

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UTICA, IL – With large crowds expected to visit Starved Rock State Park near Utica for the Memorial Day weekend, visitors are encouraged to monitor Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Facebook and Twitter feeds for updates on traffic delays and temporary parking closures at the park.

Temporary parking closures occurred last year at Starved Rock State Park during holiday and fall color weekends. While Illinois River flooding has limited access to parking at Starved Rock this spring, all lots are expected to be open for the Memorial Day weekend.

“We encourage motorists to be patient and follow directions from Illinois Conservation Police officers and park staff at and near Starved Rock during the busy holiday weekend,” said Rafael Gutierrez, chief of the IDNR Office of Law Enforcement. “We want everyone visiting Starved Rock and all of our Illinois state parks to enjoy themselves, but also to remember to follow park rules and regulations.”

Conservation Police will strictly enforce the following safety rules at Starved Rock:

- No possession of alcohol on trails year-round
- No alcohol allowed anywhere in the park Jan. 1 – May 31
- No hiking off trails
- No climbing rock walls and cliffs
- No swimming
- No defacing sandstone walls with paint or etchings
- No littering
- No being on trails after dark

All hikers at Starved Rock State Park should stay on designated trails. St. Peter Sandstone in Starved Rock can crumble and be slippery when wet.

When Starved Rock parking lots reach capacity, the park may be closed temporarily for safety reasons until parking becomes available. Motorists are reminded not to park along park roads or public highways as that may prevent emergency vehicles from getting through. Vehicles parked illegally will be towed at the owner’s expense.

Starved Rock Lodge guests and lodge restaurant guests with brunch reservations will be allowed to enter the park. Lodge parking will be restricted to lodge patrons with reservations.

To ease traffic congestion, motorists arriving from the east on Interstate 80 should consider taking an alternate route to the park. Travelers can exit at Ottawa, cross the Illinois River, and approach 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.

For updates, *visitors may check for information on park activities and possible temporary closures as they near the park by tuning to the Starved Rock radio station on 1610 AM. Visitors can also check for updates* via social media: Like the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on Facebook, and follow the IDNR on Twitter @IllinoisDNR.