

# Oregon state parks extend closure, reservations canceled through end of May

Posted Apr 28, 2020



A hiker passes behind North Falls in Silver Falls State Park. The Canyon Trail passes behind the waterfall on the far eastern side of the park.

**By Jamie Hale | The Oregonian/OregonLive**

Oregon's state park system will likely remain closed through much of May, as officials keep parks closed to help stop the spread of the coronavirus.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department announced Tuesday evening that its system-wide closure will continue beyond May 8, the original end date for the closure established on March 22, when all park sites first closed to the public, though officials did not give a reopening date.

The parks department also canceled all overnight and day-use reservations through at least May 25. Officials said the department will eventually make a decision about reservations beyond that, but cautioned that "more cancellations are likely."

The decision comes a day after Washington's state park system announced it would partially reopen most of its state park sites on May 5, with the caveat that parks could close again should they become overcrowded.

Oregon state parks spokesman Chris Havel said Tuesday that Washington's reopening will not necessarily be a blueprint for Oregon state parks.

When Oregon parks do reopen to the public, they won't all open at once, Havel said. Instead, the department will make a decision for each park, based on staffing, supplies and whether the local community is prepared to handle an influx of visitors.

The plan is to begin by reopening day-use sites, followed by camping later on. Parks will technically be ready to begin opening in mid to late-May, Havel said, though that's not necessarily when they will actually reopen to the public.

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**COVID-19: For the latest information on COVID-19 in Oregon, visit the Oregon Health Authority.**

Interested in how we're handling COVID-19 in Oregon State Parks? For the latest updates, visit our **Frequently Asked Questions** web page.

## Feature Articles | COVID-19 Response: Parks closing



**Closed  
starting  
March 23**

04/28/2020

**Reviewed date: April 28, 5:00 p.m.**

**Updated: April 28, 5:00 p.m.**

We have made the difficult decision to close the entire state park system by March 23. No daytime or overnight visitors are permitted at any state park. **This does not affect the ocean shore.** We'll revisit that decision if people don't maintain 6' social distance and if cities/counties make a formal request through the state's Office of Emergency Management.

### **Read the closure announcement.**

The state park closure will be extended past May 8. There is no date for opening day-use at any state park. State park camping and day-use reservations have been cancelled from May 8 through and including May 25. We'll share the status of future reservations before May 25, but more cancellations are likely.

### **What? Why? Isn't this an overreaction?**

This is the hardest thing we've ever had to do. We'd hoped people would protect themselves, and more importantly, others by limiting their travel just to short trips to places with space. That didn't happen, and we understand why: people need to get out, and they need a little nature time to make this whole thing bearable.

But you're more important to us than our mission. Our local neighbors near each park – many of them small and rural – need our support and understanding. They and their health care systems (and grocery stores) don't need a few thousand extra people on their doorstep.

### **Can I get my tax dollars back since you are not operating?**

Oregon State Parks does not operate with any general fund tax dollars. Park operations are funded through three main sources: Lottery revenue, user fees, and a portion of RV registration proceeds.

## **So now what do I do? Sit around for a couple of months?**

Go out if it's important. Take a walk around your neighborhood where it's easier to avoid clumping up, if that's what you need. Please do not travel to any popular recreation hotspot. You might think, "Well, if everyone else stays home, that means I can go." This works only if we all do our part.

## **Cancellation policy**

Site fees will be refunded for any cancelled reservation through and including May 25, 2020. If your reservation is for after that date, we are not refunding those reservations at this time standard cancellation and refund policies apply.

Example: if you were due to stay five nights and only camped two before we closed, we'll refund the other three. If your entire stay was cancelled, we'll also refund the normally nonrefundable \$8 reservation fee. Example: if you have a four-night reservation starting tomorrow, we'll refund all those nights and the \$8 reservation fee.

We are processing these refunds as quickly as we can, but be patient. It may take a week or more. If you don't see your refund within 10 business days, please email [park.info@oregon.gov](mailto:park.info@oregon.gov) or call 800-551-6949, M-F, 8a-5p.

## **How about day-use parking permits?**

We'll automatically add time to all 12- and 24-month day-use parking permits after we resume normal operations. Example: if parks re-open in June, any 12-month parking permit purchased in March, April, or May would be valid through June 2021. (In this example, 24-month permits would be valid through June 2022.)

## **What about beaches?**

This decision doesn't currently affect the entire ocean shore, but it does close all state park-managed parking lots and beach accesses. Cities, counties, federal land managers, and businesses who manage accesses may follow suit. For example, the ocean shores within the North and South boundaries of the city of Seaside are closed. If you visit a beach, you may be approached by law enforcement to remind you of the Governor's order to limit travel and maintain social distance from people not in your family.

We have the authority to close the beach temporarily for health reasons. If people don't get the message that clumping up and overwhelming local areas is a bad idea, we'll have to revisit the decision to leave all beaches open.

Cities and counties can also request beaches closed within their boundaries with the state's Office of Emergency Management. We will honor requests approved by the OEM. Local law enforcement is primarily responsible for enforcing the closure. Such closures apply to all visitors, including locals and travelers. Please check before you go.

## **What about boat launches?**

All boat launches inside state parks are closed. If you take in from a launch outside the state park, please be advised that your take-out point inside a state park will not be accessible.

### **Why not let some people camp, but send others home?**

You mean, allow RVs, but only if they are totally self-contained and people promise to stay inside them? Or close big parks, but not small ones? Or close more popular sites but not more rural ones? The only thing harder than closing an entire park system is closing it to some, but not others.

We understand that some people rely on public camping, and routinely move from place to place. However, this decision is also about reducing the strain on rural communities. We encourage you to find a place to stay closer to an area that is better equipped to handle this health emergency.

Half-measures won't do, so this closure is system-wide.

### **Are RV dump stations staying open?**

When we close a park, we close the entire park, including dump stations. Commercial providers may still be open.

### **Can I just sneak in?**

Closed is closed. We lock restrooms, stop trash service, and it's not safe for you to go into a closed park. If we see you in a park, we'll ask you to leave. If you refuse, we can issue you a citation. If that's not persuasive enough, we can call law enforcement. We don't want to do that, and they don't need the hassle. Take a step back and understand this is temporary and driven by Oregon's state of emergency. Stay home, stay healthy, visit us online, and we'll see you on the other side.

### **What's the problem with a walk on a trail?**

A single person walking on a trail is fine. There are a few million people in the west who are thinking the same thing, and the next thing you know, people are parking alongside roads to get into a park. That's bad for you, it harms other people, and it puts stress on local businesses and health care systems.

### **What are the rangers doing? Why should they have access to the parks when the public cannot?**

Ranger work varies from park to park. Where we can, we are focusing on deferred maintenance projects, such as trail clean up, natural resource restoration, removing hazardous trees, fixing winter storm damage, repairs to water and electrical systems, crack sealing and painting, just to name a few.

### **Remember:**

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds at a time.
- Avoid touching your face.
- If you're sick with any ailment, stay home. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- When in public, maintain a social distance of at least six feet.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it away. If you don't have a tissue, use your elbow.
- Clean surfaces you touch regularly.
- **Follow the guidelines.**

**For other land management agencies and their updates, please visit:**

- **National Parks:** <https://www.nps.gov/state/or/index.htm>
- **US Forest Service:** <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/home/?cid=fseprd716206>
- **US Bureau of Land Management:** <https://www.blm.gov/oregon-washington/covid-access-restrictions>
- **US Army Corps of Engineers:** <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/>
- **US Fish and Wildlife Service:** <https://www.fws.gov/home/state-by-state-closures.html>
- **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife:** <https://myodfw.com/COVID-19>
- **Oregon Department of Forestry:** <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>
- **Oregon Recreation and Parks Association:** <https://www.orpa.org/page/covid19>
- **Idaho Power parks:** <https://www.idahopower.com/community-recreation/recreation/>
- **Portland General Electric parks:** [www.portlandgeneral.com/parks](http://www.portlandgeneral.com/parks)

# DO ✓

Enjoy the outdoor areas of your home.

Enjoy physical activities solo or with members of your household (e.g. walking, biking).

Have a virtual picnic with friends.

Open doors and windows to get fresh air.

Get things done at home (e.g. gardening, car washing).

# DON'T ✗

Don't participate in group sports.

Don't visit crowded or closed parks.

Don't attend social gatherings.

Don't go out if you're sick.

Don't travel.



**REMEMBER:** Keep a safe physical distance of at least six feet from people you do not live with and wash your hands regularly.

**KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, DO YOUR PART**

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**Respect the closures. Closed means closed.**

**Stay home. Save lives.**

**From:** Lisa Mittelsdorf <[LisaM@portofmorrow.com](mailto:LisaM@portofmorrow.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 28, 2020 4:00 PM  
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**Cc:** Justin Nelson <[jnelson@co.morrow.or.us](mailto:jnelson@co.morrow.or.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: meeting

Melissa,

We do not have a resolution ready to pass along, but the main items discussed and approved by the Port were as follows:

1. Exhibit A – existing EZ boundaries
2. Exhibit B – Map as developed by POM
3. Joint sponsorship of POM and MC, with voting consisting of POM - 2 members, MC - 2 members and that 2 members would be added from whichever City is influenced according to the map attached as Exhibit B.
- 4.

We were hoping that you would be taking action on Wednesday and we would have also scheduled a meeting the same day to move this discussion along.

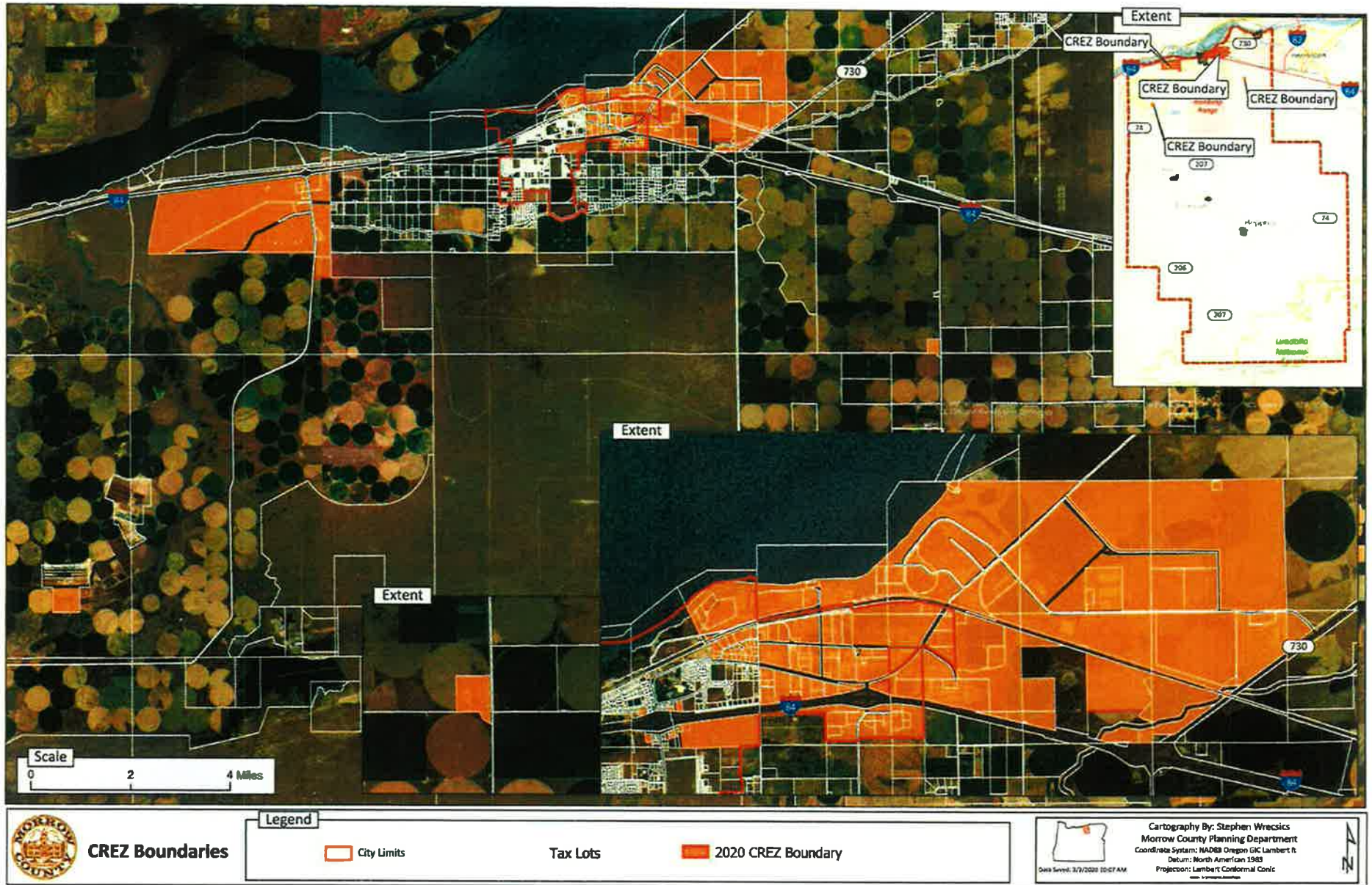
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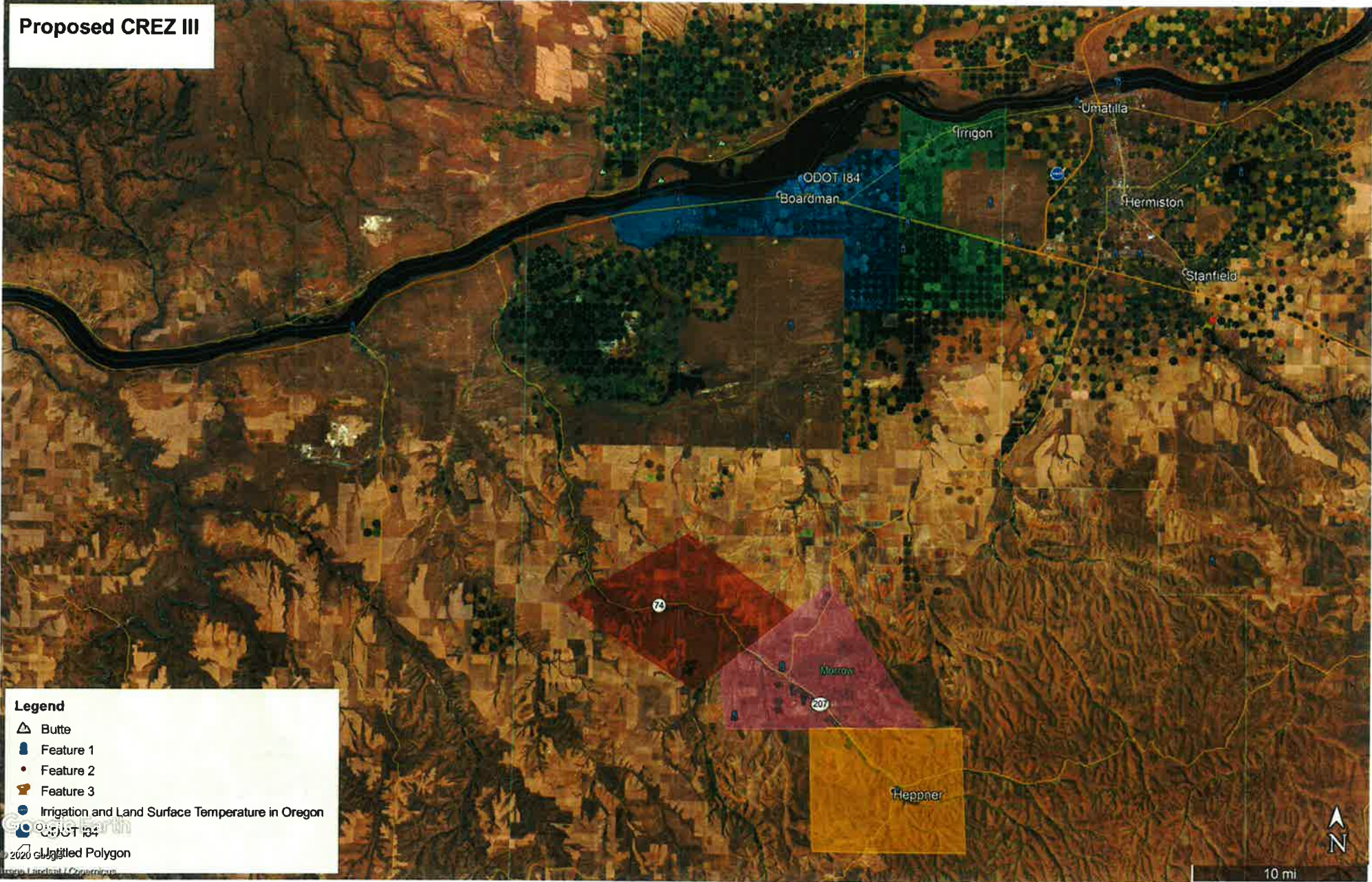


# Exhibit "A"





# Proposed CREZ III



## Legend

- △ Butte
- Feature 1
- Feature 2
- Feature 3
- Irrigation and Land Surface Temperature in Oregon

2020 Digitized Polygon

Map: LandSat / Copernicus

10 mi