



ORDER CLOSING WOOD COUNTY BEACHES DURING THE COVID-19 DISASTER

WHEREAS, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, issued a disaster proclamation on March 13, 2020, certifying under Section 418.014 of the Texas Government Code that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) poses an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is contagious and spreads through person-to-person contact, especially in group settings; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Dr. John Hellerstedt, has determined that COVID-19 represents a public health disaster within the meaning of Chapter 81 of the Texas Health and Safety Code; and

WHEREAS, on March 29, 2020, to avoid scenarios that could lead to hundreds of thousands of deaths, the President announced that, based on advice from Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Deborah Birx, the restrictive Social-Distancing Guidelines should extend through April 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Department of State Health Services Commissioner Dr. Hellerstedt and White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Dr. Birx say that the spread of COVID-19 can be reduced by minimizing social gatherings; and

WHEREAS, the “governor is responsible for meeting...the dangers to the state and people presented by disasters” under Section 418.011 of the Texas Government Code, and the legislature has given the governor broad authority to fulfill that responsibility; and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.1015, the County Judge “may exercise the powers granted to the governor under this chapter under an appropriate local scale,” and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.012, the “governor may issue executive orders...hav[ing] the force and effect of law;” and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.017(a), the “governor may use all available resources of state government and of political subdivisions that are reasonably necessary to cope with a disaster;” and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.018(c), the “governor may control ingress and egress to and from a disaster area and the movement of persons and the occupancy of premises in the area;” and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 418.108, Wood County Judge Lucy Hebron issued a Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency on March 20, 2020, due to a novel coronavirus now designated SARS-CoV2 which causes the disease COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2020, the Wood County Commissioners Court issued an Order Ratifying the Disaster Declaration for Public Health Emergency that affirmed the activation of the Wood County Emergency Management Plan and extends the Declaration of Local Disaster until the Governor of the State of Texas terminates the Texas Disaster Declaration issued on March 13, 2020; and,

WHEREAS, on March 31, 2020, Governor Abbott issued an Executive Order No. GA-14 relating to statewide continuity of essential services and activities during the COVID-19 disaster;

WHEREAS, on April 1, 2020, County Judge Lucy Hebron issued an Amended Order of Declaration of Local Disaster Due to Public Health Emergency for Wood County, Texas (Stay Home Stay Safe Order) in response to Governor Abbott’s Executive Order No. GA-14.

WHEREAS, as other social gathering places, such as bars and restaurants, have closed, social gatherings have increased on public beaches and parks despite the Governor and County Judge’s orders to avoid such activities; and

WHEREAS, on April 7, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott has directed the Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas Historical Commission to close all state parks and historical sites as part of the state’s efforts to strengthen social distancing practices and prevent gatherings of large groups of people; and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.173, failure to comply with any executive order issued during COVID-19 disaster is an offense punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000.00, confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days, or both fine and confinement.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Lucy Hebron, County Judge for Wood County, Texas, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas do hereby order the following:

Public beaches in Wood County are closed to the public and must be vacated, all beach access points in Wood County shall be closed, and ingress to beaches is prohibited.


For purposes of this Order, “Beaches” are defined as the land seaward of the line of vegetation on any county owned lakes in unincorporated Wood County, Texas. Consistent with Governor Abbott’s Executive Order GA-14, fishing and boating is still permitted throughout the County.

This Order is effective 12:01 a.m. on April 17, 2020, and continuing through April 24, 2020, subject to extension based on the status of COVID-19 in Texas and the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and the White House Coronavirus Task Force, and subject to the Commissioner's Court's further extension of the State of Local Disaster.

Violation of this Order shall be an offense punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000.00, confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days, or both fine and confinement. Violators may be subject to arrest.

Wood County must promptly provide copies of this Order by posting copies for public viewing in the same manner as publicly posted Commissioners' Court agendas.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I affix my signature this 16 day of April, 2020.



Lucy Hebron
Wood County Judge

Filed with the Wood County Clerk on April 16, 2020.