



## MEETING NOTES

### **JOINT WRPA AND ORPA COVID-19 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

#### **Exploring Risk Management/Safety Interventions & Mitigations for Aquatics Indoor Pools**

\* Outdoor Pools \* Aquatic Parks \* Open Water/Beaches \* Splash Pads \* Water features/Foundations  
Thursday, June 11th 2:30pm – 4pm Via Zoom Meeting

**Co-Hosts** ORPA Administration Section President: Ross Hoover, Director, City of Tualatin Parks and Recreation, OR Pete Mayer, Deputy Executive Director, Metro Parks Tacoma, WA

**Aquatics Facilitators** ORPA Aquatics Section President: Rejeana Pancake, Aquatics Supervisor, Willamalane Park & Rec District, OR WRPA Aquatics Network Chair: Mark Feeney, Recreation Coordinator, City of Mountlake Terrace, WA Rachel Drury, Aquatics Manager, City of Covington, WA

**Public Health Guests** Brett Sherry, Program Manager, Public Pool and Tourist Facility Program, Oregon Health Authority Jun Naotsuka, Program Manager, Water Recreation, Washington State Department of Health

*Notes prepared by Emily Young, Administrative Coordinator, City of Everett (WA) Parks and Community Services*

#### **Welcome (Pete & Ross):**

Gratitude goes out to all of those who were able to join in on this important discussion and to our multilevel partners, health officials, and the representatives from the Governor's office.

#### **Roundtable Topics with Q&A:**

##### **I. State Recovery Frameworks & Aquatics**

###### **a. Oregon Health Authority- Phase 2 Re-opening Guidance- Pools & Sport Courts (Brett and Rejeana)**

Brett and Rejeana were able to share perspective from their phasing and reopening guidance in Oregon. They shared that many individual counties have interpreted the guidelines differently and are implementing practices differently. In Lane County they are operating on an interpretation of the guidance which defines capacity based on square footage and possible distancing options. They are not operating on max occupancy of 50-people per space. The guidelines for pool reopening's are stricter than for other public services. The variance in interpretation of guidance is based on separate health department guidance per area. Pools and spas were not included in the openings in Phase I for Oregon. Depending on case count, counties can apply to the state to open these facilities. Families in pool areas can be closer than 6- feet but this would be impossible to monitor/manage from a facilitation standpoint. Brett and Rejeana are working on a FAQ's page to post on their website. Most of Oregon is moving

towards Phase II except Multnomah County with isn't even in Phase I currently. The FAQ's page will address all water facilities including splash and spray parks.

Washington State began the phased reopening plan at a Phase I while Oregon began at a Phase 0, so there are differences in the plans organization from state to state. In March all water facilities were closes with the Governor's "Stay at Home, Stay Healthy" order. Typically, pools are regulated by the Department of Health. On May 18<sup>th</sup>, the DOH's first guidance came out. In Washington state the amount of people allowed to gather ranged from zero in Phase I, to five in Phase 2. Agencies have asked many clarifying questions and refined guidance since this first issuance; refined guidance comes out this week. Both guidance links will be made available.

**b. Washington State Department of Health- promising practices (Jun and Rachel)**

Department of Health Representative Jun Naotsuka was able to discuss current guidance and regulations. The initial understanding of pool operations was that they would not be possible until Phase III in Washington State. The current requirements to open a pool facility is to operate at less than 50% of regular visitor capacity, and/or allow up to 50-people per facility. Large facilities can work with local health department to come up with a reasonable number outside of the 50-person limit. The most important regulation is for people to maintain 6-feet distances from others except in the instances where individuals are from the same household. The Governor released guidance on Tuesday outlining specifics on small aquatics classes and swim lessons. Many more questions than answers were produced when this additional guidance came out. The DOH is currently working on a document specific to capacity. They are trying to eliminate the implicit contradictions between a.) 50% of regular visitor capacity, b.) 50 people per area, and c.) the amount of people who can accurately social distance given 6-foot spacing availability.

**II. Adapting operations/programming (Mark and Rajeara) a. Programs on hold until further guidance**

Discussion was raised regarding the ways in which WRPA and ORPA can work to funnel aquatics questions to state departments, the DOH, and important decision makers. Jon Snyder, representative of the Washington State Governor's Office, would like our agencies to be the source in determining where clarification is needed and where guidance doesn't exist. He believes that hearing the challenges from our personnel who are working in these circumstances every day will be helpful. Jon stated that it is likely that we well be "building the ship as we sail it".

Lifeguard training and emergency rescue standards/regulations were largely discussed. WRPA put forward a guidance document depicting how to operate lifeguard training amidst COVID19. This document is currently under review by Washington Labor and Industries Department. There is much controversy in the projected opening of pool spaces given the lack of creation of acceptable standards in which the lifeguards, who run the facilities, can receive mandated training. Social distancing can be maintained across some of the trainings by providing virtual classes, but other training requirements such as active rescue training and emergency rescue require actual human contact. It was discussed that current guidance, while contradictory, covers both adult and minor employees. It was questioned how pools facilities can be slated for future openings when lifeguards cannot meet training requirements due to current contact restrictions. There is a WAC standard in place that requires lifeguards to train, with actual human contact, each month. Due to the closures of pool facilities for the past several months, no lifeguards are authorized to guard. Agencies who are training lifeguards have received some sort of local

variance (approval) from their health department to do so. Discussion was made regarding the importance of awaiting the determination of this proposed guidance from Labor and Industries. If we move forward too soon we will be out of compliance with the Governor's orders.

Swim lessons have not been addressed in Oregon yet while Swim lessons in Washington are not allowed if you cannot physically distance. Looking forward into Phase III it may be possible to bring back some small swim lessons by teaching parents how to hold kids and facilitate lessons without child/instructor contact. Older kids can be taught with the instructor outside of the pool. The difficulty may lie in the middle level participants who can't be held by a parent but still need an instructor to assist them in pool. Most facilities are understanding that large open swim situations won't be possible in Phase III. Instead agencies will opt for a regulated lap swim, and some fitness classes.

When considering COVID19 safe plans, agencies can ask for a safety plan and require that the team/contactors to abide by it, this way the liability for use is not all on the park's entity. Modified payment options and reduced touch points are also operational considerations in the reopening of pools to come. There is a desire to know what guidance will be issued for open water spaces. However, guidance might not be considered for open water spaces because these types of areas aren't regulated in the same manner as pools are by state agencies. Washington State law does include regulations specific to open water. Additionally, the Governor's safe start plan includes a specific reference to beaches. Current DOH guidance in Phase II is encouraging social distancing at beaches and only five people per group enforced/regulated by owner of the specific beach area. Recreation immunity considerations for unguarded beaches and open water are under discussion.

### **III. Employee & Patron Safety Roundtable (Mark and Rajana) a. Preparing staff mentally b. Face coverings/PPE, social distancing c. Showers and Locker Rooms d. Pandemic policy implementation & compliance**

The necessity to amend emergency action plans to allow for COVID19 safe procedures was emphasized. It is important to move ahead with training in order to have employees trained at the proper level. Labor law, risk, and liability management are under consideration currently regarding aquatic facilities and services. The consideration of operational sustainability will also be important. Agencies need to evaluate service procedures if operations open but then are required to close again due to an increase in case counts. Creative solutions to staying in operation will be paramount as park agencies move forward.

### **IV. Communications & Messaging re: open & closed facilities (Mark and Rajana) a. Messaging & channels b. Community outreach/engagement c. Water safety education strategies & drowning prevention**

Water safety education should still be on the forefront of agencies minds at this time. People will recreate in the water whether these water sources are facilitated by our agencies or not. A large increase in drowning numbers have been seen recently. COVID19 has closed many of the resources which individuals typically utilize for water safety education. It is important that our agencies continue to offer these services in new and creative ways to the public. Also important is that agencies keep drowning prevention measures going. Keeping pools closed and not providing training has implications towards people swimming elsewhere without training and these instances can become life threatening. Water safety messaging through Facebook and other social media sources will be important sources of

communication. As the summer, and warmer weather, progress these communication tools will be even more important as the community want/need for water recreation increases.

### **Wrap-up/Next Steps**

#### **a. Follow-up call & focused agenda**

- The current Governor's guidance outlines the restriction of shower use in aquatic facilities, but WAC requires shower use. The Governor's guidance supersedes the WAC regulation.
- Questions were raised regarding swim team operations and the ability for swim teams to practice based on United States Swimming guidelines instead of State guidelines. This would allow more than one swimmer per lane. Other questions include the following:
  - Is it the intention of the Governor's Order to allow for lifeguards to practice and perform rescues (and we just need to work out the details)?
  - What types of lessons are allowable within the small group?
  - Are instructors able to directly interact with participants or must they maintain social distance?
  - Can aquatic therapist have direct contact with patrons in the water?
  - Can we receive more clarification on capacity, swim lesson social distancing, and lifeguarding/operation of beaches? *\*Most of other states do not group Open Water Lifeguards with Pools/Rec but with Fire/Rescue/SAR*
  - What/when are agencies planning to open spray parks? In Phase III or Phase IV? What protocols will be in place?
  - Will we be required to have staff monitoring the locker rooms to ensure people are complying with social distancing?
  - Are agencies considering a reduction in fees for their teams who cannot have full services?
  - Is parental consent required to check the temperature of minors?

### **Meeting Adjourned 4:00pm**

### **Updated Resources**

#### **STATE OF WASHINGTON**

State Department of Health Representative: Jun Naotsuka [jun.naotsuka@doh.wa.gov](mailto:jun.naotsuka@doh.wa.gov)

- Washington State Governor's Office Guidance for Mini Golf/Putt Putt/**Pools**-  
<https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19%20Modified%20Phase%201%20Mini%20Golf%20Putt%20Putt%20and%20Water%20Recreation.pdf>
- Reopening of Water Facilities Guidance  
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/ReopeningWaterRecreationFacilitiesCOVID19.pdf>

#### **STATE OF OREGON**

Oregon Health Authority Representative: Brett Sherry [brett.w.sherry@state.or.us](mailto:brett.w.sherry@state.or.us)

- Oregon Pool/Spa Guidance  
<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2351C.pdf>
- Oregon Health Authority- Phase Two Reopening Guidance for Pools, Spa Pools and Sports Courts  
<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2351C.pdf>
- Oregon Health Authority Phase 2 Pool Guidance:  
<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le2351C.pdf>

### **BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA**

- Guidelines for Reopening BC's Pools & Waterfronts  
[https://www.lifesaving.bc.ca/Areas/Admin/Content/images/DashboardFilePdfUpload/DashboardFilePdf/Dashboard\\_5154001\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Reopening\\_BC's\\_Pools\\_and\\_Waterfronts\\_-\\_May\\_19,\\_2020.pdf](https://www.lifesaving.bc.ca/Areas/Admin/Content/images/DashboardFilePdfUpload/DashboardFilePdf/Dashboard_5154001_Guidelines_for_Reopening_BC's_Pools_and_Waterfronts_-_May_19,_2020.pdf)

### **AMERICAN RED CROSS**

Red Cross Contact [Tatyana.kiselyov@redcross.org](mailto:Tatyana.kiselyov@redcross.org)

- Red Cross - On the water safety site <https://www.redcross.org/watersafety>, we have images for:  
•Circle of Drowning Prevention •Chain of Drowning Survival •Water Safety Tips •5 skills to save your life in the water To Download: •At the bottom of the website there is a section for “download and share” where you can download these <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/teach-water-safety/whale-tales-resources?fbclid=IwAR3s3LBHDcr0rLYAHS29veReNs3MhL6Fm3RXeAnzguD95xyYdCG4m7d3sW4>
- American Red Cross Water Safety/Lifeguard Training <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/coronavirus-information>
- Swim Safety: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/water-safety/swim-safety.html>

### **OTHER**

- NRPA Aquatics <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/aquatics/>
- General COVID-19 Guidelines Aquatic Venues and Programs  
[https://files.secure.website/wscfus/10315773/26230915/covid-19-facility-guidelines-2020final.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1NSHjnnikyBCWjDU9dqfBk-WC5N\\_BJfBbX1zd8eTCd4HXRevpBjvmrN3M](https://files.secure.website/wscfus/10315773/26230915/covid-19-facility-guidelines-2020final.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1NSHjnnikyBCWjDU9dqfBk-WC5N_BJfBbX1zd8eTCd4HXRevpBjvmrN3M)
- North Texas Aquatics <https://www.northtexasaquatics.com/>
- Star Guard Elite <http://www.starguardelite.com/>
- Jeff Ellis and Associates <https://jellis.com/>