

# LACAWAC SANCTUARY COVID-19 RETURN TO RESEARCH PLAN

Lacawac Sanctuary is committed to facilitating scientific research and education. We are equally committed to providing a safe and respectful working and living environment to our researchers. COVID-19 is caused by a novel virus about which much remains to be learned. Lacawac is relying on state and federal recommendations to guide or decision making and to reduce the risk of infection and transmission at our site. We expect these recommendations to evolve as more is learned about this virus.

We ask that researchers respect each other's level of concern and anxiety regarding COVID-19. If at anytime you feel uncomfortable with the behavior of other researchers, visitors, or Lacawac staff in regards to COVID-19 risk, please notify the Lacawac DSR or president. We are indeed all in this together.

This return to research plan has been developed for visiting researchers and does not include recommendations for K-12 education, summer camps, public programs, or other users of Lacawac.

This return to research plan references Pennsylvania's phased re-opening strategy: <https://www.pa.gov/guides/responding-to-covid-19/#PhasedReopening>.

Individuals who meet any of the following criteria will not be allowed to work at Lacawac in any capacity:

- Under a quarantine or isolation order from a healthcare provider or government agency
- Traveled outside of the United States within the last 14 days
- Been in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 or who has a COVID-19 pending test result

## RED PHASE

The goal during RED phase will be to maintain long-term data collection as much as possible and to conduct the minimum amount of research needed to sustain ongoing projects. Research opportunities will be limited and Lacawac's research support capacity will be severely diminished. In compliance with PA regulations, Lacawac offices will be closed and staff will work from home whenever possible. Specific restrictions include:

- Lacawac will not house researchers on-site. All housing facilities are closed.
- The Kilham Environmental Laboratory and all Lacawac buildings will be closed to researchers.
- On-site research may be conducted at the discretion of the Lacawac DSR and President. On-site research will be considered if the following conditions are met:
  - Researchers follow all travel and field research restrictions mandated by their institutions.
  - Researchers work alone or with group members maintaining a distance of >6 feet apart.
  - Masks must be worn in the field if there is more than one person in the research group (in addition to social distancing). Researchers are responsible for providing their own masks. Masks are not required if an individual is working alone.
  - Researchers maintain a >6 foot distance between themselves and other on-site visitors.
- As all Lacawac facilities will be closed to researchers, Lacawac will not provide hand-sanitizer or any other cleaning/disinfecting products. Research is limited to outside work only.

- Lacawac staff will not be available for in-person meeting or field assistance. This includes the DSR, educational staff, administrative staff, and interns. Lacawac staff may be available via phone or on-line meetings.
- The DSR may be available to collect data, samples, or do lab analysis in lieu of the researchers. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

## **YELLOW PHASE**

Opportunities for research will remain limited during the YELLOW phase. The goal during this phase is to reduce the amount of contact between researchers while providing limited housing opportunities. Research groups are strongly advised to conduct the minimum amount of work necessary for their research and to send the minimum number of people required to complete this work. Specific restrictions include:

- Researchers must follow all travel and research restrictions mandated by their institutions.
- Research groups will interact with each other but will remain isolated as much as possible from other research groups, other visitors, and Lacawac staff.
- Research groups must consist of 3 or fewer people. Special considerations may be made for groups with couples or family members.
- Limited on-site housing will be available with the following restrictions:
  - Residence buildings will be thoroughly cleaned (with all kitchen and bathroom surfaces, light switches, and doorknobs disinfected) before a research group arrives.
  - Research groups will be housed separately from each other. Research groups will therefore have their own kitchen, bathrooms, and living areas. Lacawac can provide housing for a maximum of three research groups at a time. Reservations must be made in advance with the DSR.
  - Members of a research group will have their own bedrooms. Couples and/or family members may be allowed to share bedrooms.
  - Researchers must bring their own pillows, bed linens, and towels.
  - Members of a research group will share kitchen, bathrooms, and living spaces with each other.
  - Members of a research group should not enter the bedroom of another member of their own group or the housing facility of another research group.
  - Masks are not required inside the residence areas.
  - Common areas within residences must be cleaned frequently. Researchers are responsible for conducting the following cleaning regimen:
    - Kitchen counters, stovetop, tabletops, sink fixtures, and other high-touch surfaces in the common living areas. Disinfectant spray will be provided by Lacawac.
    - Bathroom sink fixtures, counter surfaces, and toilet seats will be disinfected after every use. Disinfecting spray will be provided by Lacawac.
  - Members within a research group are encouraged to practice risk-reducing behavior such as frequent handwashing, using separate serving dishes and utensils, avoiding close contact, etc.
  - Lacawac will provide hand soap and hand sanitizers in all residences.
- The Kilham Environmental Laboratory will be available for limited use and with the following restrictions:

- Only one research group can use the lab at a time. Scheduling will be arranged by the DSR.
- Masks must be worn at all times in the lab. Researchers are responsible for providing their own masks.
- All group members must immediately wash their hands upon entering the lab. Hand soap will be provided by Lacawac.
- Before leaving the lab the following cleaning regimen must be done:
  - all counters must be disinfected with 10% bleach solution or other disinfectant (provided by Lacawac).
  - “high-touch” surfaces of any instrument used must be disinfected (i.e. hood handle and sash, fridge door handles, water purifier nozzles, etc.). Lacawac will provide disinfecting spray.
  - Light switches, sink handles, and internal/external door knobs must be disinfected. Lacawac will provide disinfecting spray.
- All group members must wash their hands immediately before leaving the lab. Use paper towel to turn off water.
- Lacawac offices will remain closed. Researchers will NOT have access to the Visitor’s Center, bathrooms, or offices. Researchers will access the lab via the outside door only.
- Use of the washer and dryer in the Visitor’s Center will be by appointment only.
- Field work may be conducted on-site with the following restrictions:
  - Social distancing is not required among members of the same research group while conducting field, although group members are encouraged to be as socially distant as the research allows.
  - Masks are not required in the field but each research group is encouraged to develop their own mask policy that everyone in the group is comfortable with.
  - Research groups must stay at least 6 feet away from other Lacawac visitors, other research groups, and Lacawac staff.
  - Use of boats and other field equipment must be scheduled with the DSR to eliminate interaction between research groups.
  - Field equipment that is shared among research groups must be disinfected after use. Boat paddles must be disinfected after use.
- Research groups should not be coming in contact with other groups, visitors, or Lacawac staff.
- Researchers must report any of the following conditions to the DSR immediately:
  - Body temperature of more than 100.4°F.
  - Any symptoms associated with COVID-19 as defined by the CDC. Symptoms may include: Fever or chills, Cough, Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, Fatigue, Muscle or body aches, Headache, New loss of taste or smell, Sore throat, Congestion or runny nose, Nausea or vomiting, Diarrhea. This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19.
- On-site group meetings (e.g. lab meetings, grant reviews, writing workshops) that include participants from outside the research group are not allowed.

### **GREEN PHASE**

The goal during the GREEN phase is still to reduce the amount of contact between researchers and other Lacawac guests. Lacawac does not have the resources to clean public areas to the extent needed to relax

many of the YELLOW phase restrictions. Therefore, all restrictions and requirements described in the yellow phase remain in place with the following exceptions:

- Lacawac can provide on-site housing for a maximum of four research groups at a time. Two research groups may be housed in the lodge and will share a kitchen and living areas. Groups will be assigned a time to use the kitchen for meals.
- On-site group meetings (e.g. lab meetings, grant reviews, writing workshops) that include participants from outside the research group are permitted with the following restrictions:
  - The gathering is limited to 25 on-site participants.
  - Participants are seated 6 feet apart.
  - Participants wear masks (not provided by Lacawac).
  - The event is held outside whenever possible.
  - Any refreshments provided must be individually wrapped. No common serving dishes or shared serving utensils are allowed.
- Social interactions between research groups, Lacawac visitors, and Lacawac staff are allowed in outside venues only. Social distancing should be maintained and masks must be worn. Shared serving dishes and utensils are not allowed.

### **RESPONSE PLAN FOR SYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUALS**

In the case of a symptomatic individual, Lacawac will work in concert with the research group. Lacawac cannot provide quarantine so our priority will be to facilitate removing symptomatic individuals from campus while keeping them and others safe.

All research groups need to submit a written COVID-19 response strategy that is specific to their group. This document must include:

- A copy of any COVID-19 response plans developed by the researcher's institution (as pertaining to off-site research).
  - A chain of contact for each individual in case of
    - Mild symptoms
    - Severe symptoms
    - Hospitalization
- A designated person responsible for implementing the contact chain
- The location of all insurance and health information needed in case of hospitalization. Note that Lacawac does not need access to this information, we just need to know that the information is accessible to someone in the research group in case of emergency.
- Plans for immediate removal of symptomatic individuals from Lacawac. Lacawac does not have the capacity to quarantine individuals.

Researchers must inform the DSR immediately if they or a member of their group becomes symptomatic. An individual is considered symptomatic if they: Have a fever of 100.4 F or greater; Fever or chills, Cough, Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, Fatigue, Muscle or body aches, Headache, New loss of taste or smell, Sore throat, Congestion or runny nose, Nausea or vomiting, Diarrhea. This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as the CDC learns more about COVID-19.

Upon identifying a symptomatic individual, Lacawac's first priority is the health and safety of that individual and the members of their research group. The following steps will be taken:

- The symptomatic individual will be isolated from other group members. This may necessitate moving the individual or the other members of the group to a new residence. Every effort will be made to give the symptomatic individual a private bathroom.
- Lacawac staff will work with the individual, research group, listed contacts, and medical professionals to:
  - provide the individual with appropriate medical care
  - contact state and local health officials and provide any requested health or contact tracing information
  - obtain proper testing as recommended by medical professionals and state and local health officials
  - develop a plan for removing the individual from Lacawac to the best point of care
    - Lacawac is not able to provide long-term quarantine housing. Each individual must have a plan in place for leaving Lacawac if they become symptomatic (see above).
- Any living or work spaces used by the symptomatic individual will be secured and decontaminated as follows:
  - The space(s) will be closed with windows open and increased ventilation for at least 24 hours.
  - All surfaces and high-touch areas will be disinfected.
- Bedrooms vacated by symptomatic individuals will be treated as follows:
  - Bedrooms will be closed with windows open and increased ventilation for at least 24 hours.
  - High touch areas and surfaces will be disinfected.
  - Mattresses will be disinfected.
- All members of the symptomatic members research group must be quarantined in their residence for 2 weeks or until the symptomatic person receives a negative COVID test.
  - The location of this quarantine will be determined through discussions with the Lacawac DSR, Lacawac President, members of the research group, and institution contacts. If it is determined that the best location for quarantine is Lacawac, all members of the research group must remain inside the residence during the quarantine. They are not permitted to conduct field work or to use any of the Lacawac facilities.
- Lacawac will inform those who have been in close contact with symptomatic individuals as directed by state and local health officials.
- Symptomatic individuals may not return to Lacawac until 14 days have passed with no symptoms.

*Reviewed and approved on June 10, 2020 by:*

*Craig Lukatch, President*