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Lee Commissioners award contract for water quality project at Lakes Park

Fort Myers, FL, Sept. 3, 2024 – The Lee Board of County Commissioners voted Tuesday to award a contract to build a water treatment system to improve the quality of water flowing from Lakes Park into Hendry Creek south of Fort Myers.

This is the third in a series of water quality projects to be built at Lakes Park, 7330 Gladiolus Drive, and a continuation of the Board's commitment to water quality throughout the county.

The \$4.29 million project will build an alum treatment facility, including installing housing shelters, alum tank, pump, control panel and pipe network on lake bottom.

Based on water conditions, the treatment facility will add alum to the West Lake. The alum will bind with and settle out excess nutrients and algae. This will help remove about 3,300 pounds of nitrogen annually before it enters the Hendry Creek watershed. An additional benefit of this settling process is improved water clarity within the lake.

Excess water from Lakes Park discharges into the Hendry Creek West Branch and eventually flows into Estero Bay. The watershed of the West Branch includes the urbanized areas west of Summerlin Road and north of Lakes Park. Hendry Creek West Branch is a tributary to the Hendry Creek, which has a regulatory plan for total nitrogen and is currently subject to a State of Florida Basin Management Action Plan.

Lakes Park began as a man-made area where rock was quarried during the 1960s. The water comes from groundwater influx, surface water run-off and rainfall. The depth varies from a few inches to more than 20 feet. Water covers 158 acres of the 279-acre park.

Previous water quality projects at Lakes Park include:

- Littoral Zone Project - Littoral shelves were added with native plants to remove nutrients from the water.
- Water Quality Restoration Project – Rerouted the flow of run-off through a filter marsh to remove nutrients.

For more information on water quality projects throughout Lee County, go to leegov.com/water.

In other business Tuesday, the Lee Board of County Commissioners approved an agreement to continue cooperative work with U.S. Geological Survey to provide critical data for water resources modeling and assessment of flood conditions.

The agreement includes water resources data collection at 12 sites on various rivers and streams throughout Lee County and is for a one-year period beginning Oct. 1.

Lee County has contracted each year with the Geologic Survey since 1973. The total cost of the agreement is \$294,660, with Lee County cost share of \$212,541 and U.S. Geological Survey Cooperative matching \$82,119.

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