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**Lee County announced tentative reopening of Lakes Park post-New Year's
*Hurricane Ian recovery operation in park to cease; some park amenities will remain unavailable***

Fort Myers, FL, Dec. 21, 2022 – Lee County's Lakes Regional Park, which has been used for recovery operations since Hurricane Ian made landfall, will reopen to the public soon after the New Year's holiday weekend.

The tentative reopening date for the public is Monday, Jan. 9, however park patrons should confirm the reopening details at www.leeparks.org prior to visiting. Once open, some amenities, such as the water features, will remain closed for repairs.

The county has appreciated the public's patience as the popular park has been used by contractual employees for the Florida Division of Emergency Management and other responders who arrived in Lee County after the Sept. 28 Category 4 hurricane to assist in the community's recovery.

The 279-acre park with a 158-acre freshwater quarry lake is among the most visited of Lee County Parks & Recreation's sites, regarded by many as the "Central Park" of the county. Lakes Park began as a man-made area where rock was quarried during the 1960s. The park's water depths vary from a few inches to more than 20 feet. Lee County bought the property in 1978. In 1982, ground was broken and it was developed for recreational use with the official grand opening on April 21, 1984.

While residents and visitors await the reopening of Lakes Park, the county encourages them to visit a special GIS-based map that was created post-Ian. The landing page helps people better understand what's open, what's partially open and what remains closed. Find it under "Hurricane Ian Parks Progress Map" at www.leeparks.org.

Please note: Lee County beach parks remain closed. Debris in the water and buried in the sand at the water's edge creates a safety hazard. The county is working alongside state and federal agencies to clean and remove the debris so that beaches are safe for visitors. Parks & Recreation staff is dedicated to cleaning debris off beaches daily. As more debris washes ashore daily, the process is ongoing.

In addition to visiting www.leeparks.org for information, residents and visitors can also go to the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau site. Visit www.VisitFortMyers.com and click on "What's Open" for activities, locations and things to do. VCB also has a list of holiday events at the site.

For additional Hurricane Ian recovery information and other storm news, visit www.leegov.com/storm. To receive updates from Lee County Government, sign up for the newsletter here: www.leegov.com/resources/newsletters. Follow Lee County Government on Facebook, www.facebook.com/leecountyflbocc.