

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lee County to open beaches and Parks & Recreation sites

Fort Myers, FL, April 28, 2020 – Because of continued voluntary compliance and the community’s greater awareness for Centers for Disease Control guidelines, the county announced the re-opening of county parks and preserves including all beaches and beach access points, parking lots and free-standing bathrooms. Staff will be onsite to help encourage following the CDC guidelines, including social distancing. Parks and preserves will open with regular hours Wednesday, April 29.

This move, approved at an emergency Board of County Commissioners meeting today, is part of the county’s phased-in approach for residents while still observing the Governor’s Executive Order. Commissioners offered guidelines (see below) and stressed it is imperative that residents remain vigilant to continue to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The county beach sites include:

Beach Parks

- Bonita Beach Park
- Bowditch Point Park
- Bowman's Beach Park
- Causeway Islands
- Crescent Beach Family Park
- Little Hickory Island Beach Park
- Lynn Hall Memorial Beach Park
- San Carlos/Bunche Beach Preserve
- Turner Beach Park

Beach Accesses

- Alison Hagerup Beach Park
- Andy Rosse Lane Park
- Boca Grande Beach Accesses
- Bonita Beach Accesses
- Dog Beach Park
- Estero Islands Beach Accesses

The following amenities at all Lee County locations will remain closed:

- Playgrounds
- Pavilions
- Recreation centers
- Soccer, lacrosse and football fields
- Basketball courts
- Piers
- Splash pads and pools

Baseball and softball fields will re-open with caveats, including no league play and no access to dugouts or bleachers. These fields will be for groups of 10 or less who want to practice baseball or softball – but they will need to contact the Parks & Recreation supervisor listed on each landing page at www.leeparks.org for the individual site that has the field. Or people can call the Parks main phone number at 239-533-7275 for assistance.

Additional plans are in place for the reopening, including:

Staff will make hash marks on the walkways at high-use tennis and pickle ball courts and other areas to help guide the public of social distancing if there is a waiting line.

All dog parks will re-open with caveats. There will not be any seating areas provided. Patrons need to bring their own chairs; pre-established socially distanced spacing will be identified. Patrons must take chairs home when they leave.

All parking fees will go back into effect under this re-opening to help with congestion and turn over that occurs at high-use park sites with parking fees. Staff are assigned to clean parking pay machines.

Normal operating hours at all parks, preserves and beach-access sites will be observed.

The Lee County Sheriff's Office will assist with monitoring and educating the public at county beaches.

Announcements about future openings will be forthcoming; check www.leegov.com/covid-19 or Facebook Lee County Government.

The county is grateful to those in the community who have joined the "Take the Pledge" social media campaign to employ best practices to stop the spread of COVID-19. These practices include social distancing when away from home, staying home as much as possible, practicing proper handwashing techniques, refraining from gathering in groups of more than 10, and staying calm, kind and safe. Visit www.leegov.com/pledge.

County leaders continue to monitor data and work with partners Lee Health and the Florida Department of Health as it relates to the county's phased-in approach to re-opening more sites and resuming in-person services.

Recommended guidelines for the beaches and parks include:

- All individuals, when in public, should maximize physical distance from others, maintain a minimum of 6 feet
- Social settings of 10 people or more should be avoided, where appropriate distancing may not be practical
- Vulnerable individuals should continue to stay home
- Practice proper handwashing techniques, especially after touching frequently used surfaces
- Avoid touching your face
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Stay calm, stay kind, and stay safe.