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**Lee County to open more Parks & Recreation sites and amenities**

Fort Myers, FL, May 19, 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 pools, playgrounds, pavilions, courts, multi-purpose fields (soccer/lacrosse/football), fishing piers and splash pads beginning Friday, May 22. Staff will be onsite to help encourage following the CDC guidelines, including social distancing.

This move, approved at a regularly scheduled Board of County Commissioners meeting today, is part of the county's phased-in approach for residents while still observing guidelines (see below). Parks staff have placed additional signs advising of CDC guidelines at all sites.

Commissioners stressed it is imperative that residents remain vigilant to continue to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Commissioners reopened hiking trails April 22; on April 29, the county reopened beaches, parking lots, most outdoor spaces at parks and freestanding bathrooms.

Additional details about the reopenings set for the coming weekend:

- Staff will only allow 25 patrons into the pool at the top of every hour for 45 minutes to ensure social distancing and allow for physical exercise only.
- Pools will be open Tuesday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for laps and fitness only. Indoor showers and changing rooms will not be available at this time.
- Youth swim teams will be able to practice under USA swimming's guidelines.
- Multi-purpose fields (soccer, lacrosse and football) will reopen with no league play, benches or bleachers.
- Activities on the multi-purpose fields will be restricted to groups of 10 or fewer to practice; some fields will need to be reserved and scheduled and some will be on first-come first-serve basis. Contact the Parks & Recreation supervisor listed on each landing page at [www.leeparks.org](http://www.leeparks.org) for the individual site that has the field. Or call the Parks main phone number at 239-533-7275 for assistance.
- Parks Staff will continue to clean frequently at all sites and educate the public on social distancing and CDC guidelines.
- Normal operating hours at all parks, preserves and beach-access sites will be observed.
- Camping at Caloosahatchee Regional Park also will resume Friday.

The Lee County Sheriff's Office will continue to assist with monitoring and educating the public at county beaches during the three-day Memorial Day weekend.

Recreation centers remain closed at this time.

Lee County Parks & Recreation summer camp plans continue to be finalized; camp will begin June 15. At this time, no new registration is being accepted. Parks staff booked about 4,000 camp reservations when the 2020 camp registration opened in February.

Announcements about camp, county operations and other information will be forthcoming; check [www.leegov.com/covid-19](http://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. The video for the Pledge has recently been refreshed. 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](http://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 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.