

Neighborhood Ponds: Good vs. Bad

GOOD: The pond below has a lot of varied shoreline vegetation that provides plenty of nutrient removal, erosion protection, and provides habitat for native wildlife, maintaining a healthy, balanced ecosystem.



BAD: This pond has very little shoreline vegetation to take up nutrients from stormwater runoff. Due to the lack of buffer around the pond, there is not much wild- life habitat to balance the ecosystem and very little stop- ping nutrients from entering the pond. This results in excessive algae growth.



MYTH	REALITY
Shoreline vegetation makes ponds unattractive and contribute to their deterioration.	Vegetation stabilizes shorelines, reduces nutrient loads, and provides important habitat for wildlife.
Healthy ponds host large populations of ducks.	Exotic ducks are the wildlife that usually choose to stay in one location and breed. Feeding them is illegal and it creates nutrient problems. Native birds are usually transient and do not stay long enough to create issues. Native wildlife is a good sign of pond health.
Dumping trash, pet waste and oil down storm drains is okay because it will go to the wastewater treatment plant.	Most storm drains empty to your neighborhood canal, stream, or pond. There is no sewer treatment of stormwater in Florida. It all goes to local waterways!
Stormwater ponds require no maintenance. The county or city would take care of it if it were needed.	Stormwater ponds are designed to clean stormwater and decrease local flooding. They do require maintenance at least a few times a year. Home-owners associations are required to maintain stormwater ponds. This is not a taxed service provided by municipalities.
Stormwater ponds are breeding grounds for mosquitoes and snakes.	Mosquitoes breed in pools of stagnant water such as birdbaths, gutters, flowerpots, etc. Well-designed stormwater ponds are not stagnant and do not contribute to the mosquito population.

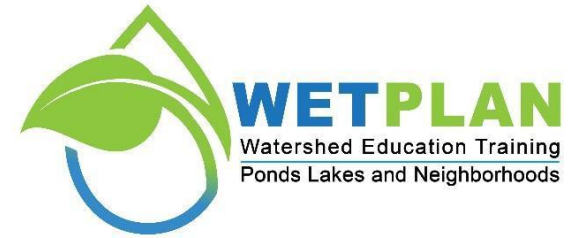
What is this pond in your neighborhood?

The pond or lake in your neighborhood is most likely a stormwater management pond. Stormwater ponds are man-made bodies of water that collect and store stormwater runoff. These ponds improve water quality before discharging to natural streams and control discharge rate. Stormwater ponds reduce pollution by natural plant processes, provide wildlife habitat, and reduce downstream flooding.

Stormwater ponds can be attractive if well maintained or can become eyesores if they are neglected or stripped of shoreline and bottom vegetation.

Stormwater management ponds are the “kidneys” of your neighborhood. They collect and cleanup the water that runs off yards and streets.

Here is what YOU can do to help your neighborhood stormwater pond...



Watershed Education & Training Ponds, Lakes & Neighborhoods

WETPLAN is an education program and free resource for anyone interested in improving and caring for their neighborhood lakes and ponds.

Learn more about ponds at:
www.wetplan.org

Contact us!
WETPLANinfo@gmail.com



WETPLAN Partners:
Lee County Department of Natural Resources

Florida Native Plant Society

Florida Gulf Coast University

Lee County Hyacinth Control District

The Chamber of Southwest Florida



PROBLEM

Nuisance Waterfowl

Algae Blooms

Erosion & Silt Accumulation

Snakes & Other Reptiles



Exotic Invasive Aquatic Species

Human Pollution

CAUSES/DESCRIPTION

Mowing vegetation to the edge of the water creates desirable habitat for Muscovy ducks. Feeding of waterfowl has negative effects in the environment



Fertilizers, grass clippings, and pet waste contain nitrogen and phosphorous that increase algae growth. Sun light stimulates algae growth.

Water flowing over bare soil transports soil directly into ponds and causes erosion and water pollution

Snakes and alligators are part of the natural fauna. Your neighborhood was built in their habitat, and they do not know where else to go!

Plants and animals that are not native to our ecosystem, such as hydrilla and tilapia, can cause environmental and economic harm by destroying plant and animal habitats, damaging native fisheries and clogging water intake and discharge pipes.

Most storm drains discharge directly into ponds or nearby streams and carry chemicals, soap, litter etc. from the land directly to the water without being treated.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

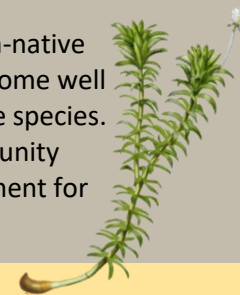
Contact Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission for assistance with removal and population control.
<http://myfwc.com/contact/nuisance-wildlife/> or 850-488-5878

Reduce the amount of nutrients entering the pond (i.e. fertilizers, pesticides, grass clippings, pet waste, etc.). Install aerators, balance fish populations, use a FDACS approved dye or any combination of these.

Plant vegetation and mulch to cover bare soil and help reduce soil erosion. When vegetative measures are not adequate, place rip-rap or other appropriate shoreline stabilization near the waterline with municipal approval.

Contact Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission for assistance with removal and population control or nuisance wildlife.
<http://myfwc.com/contact/nuisance-wildlife/> or 866-FWC-GATOR.

Physically remove non-native species before they become well established. Plant native species. Consult local Community Development Department for assistance.



Marking or stenciling storm drains reminds people not to put anything into storm drains. Contact the Household Hazardous Waste Facility to dispose of toxic chemicals: 239-477-1000.

PREVENTATIVE STEPS

Don't mow grass to the edge of the pond. Allow native vegetation (shrubs and grasses only) to grow 6 ft. from the edge of the pond. This allows for a natural buffer. Avoid feeding waterfowl.

Reduce or eliminate the use of fertilizer products on lawn. Prevent grass cuttings and pet waste from entering water. Reduce waterfowl population.

Avoid destroying natural vegetation (shrubs & grasses) near the water's edge. Seed and mulch any exposed soils. Reduce areas with steep slopes around stormwater ponds.



Assume snakes and alligators live in all water bodies in Florida and be cautious. Do not kill or harass them, as this is a jailable offense.

Never dump water, plants, fish, or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water. Contact Extension Services for assistance with planting projects.

Don't dump anything into storm drains. Wash vehicles on lawn not driveway or take to car wash to prevent soap from entering waterways. Properly dispose of chemicals and litter.