



# Stormwater Ponds in Your Neighborhood What you can do to help.

[Gateway Services CDD and Wetplan.org](#)

The stormwater ponds commonly referred to as lakes within your community were constructed to

capture and detain the water that runs off all of the lawns, streets and common areas. These ponds are designed to help improve water quality before it is discharged into the Six Mile Cypress Slough and eventually into Estero Bay.

Stormwater detention ponds reduce water pollution by natural plant processes, they also provide wildlife habitat and prevent downstream flooding. Stormwater ponds are the “kidneys” of your neighborhood. They collect and clean up the water that runs off lawns and streets. Ponds that have little to no shoreline vegetation or landscape buffers around the pond to take up (use) the nutrients that run off have greater issues with algae. This algae grows from the heavy loads of nutrients commonly found in fertilizers, the algae is feeding on the nutrients.

**The following are some ways you can be proactive in maintaining a healthy pond and improving water quality;**

**Algae Blooms;** Reduce or eliminate the use of fertilizer products on the lawn, prevent grass clippings from entering the pond. Plant native shoreline vegetation along the pond to use the nutrients. You should never dispose of pet waste in the pond, on the pond bank or into a storm drain. Don't feed the wildlife, birds, turtles and fish in the ponds are not helped by human food, it can actually make them very sick and unhealthy. Aeration installed in the pond helps to improve water movement and reduces the available nutrients available for algae growth. Instruct landscapers to not apply fertilizer within 10 feet of any water body or drainage swale.

**Exotic Invasive Aquatic Species;** Never release nonnative species, empty or clean aquariums in a body of water. Plants and animals that are not native to our ecosystem, such as hydrilla, tilapia, cichlids and snails can cause environmental damage by destroying plant and animal habitats. They damage native fisheries and clog pipes, some of these exotic invasive species can be detrimental to the pond banks when they dig holes and tunnels into the pond bank causing shoreline degradation and encourage bank erosion. Some species such as the Apple snail and carp eat desirable vegetation leaving no habitat or hiding places for young native fish.

**Human Pollution;** Street storm drains and catch basins discharge directly into nearby ponds and carry chemicals, soap, trash and litter and oils from the land and streets directly into the pond without being treated. Don't dump anything into the storm drains. Wash vehicles on the lawn (grass area) not the driveway or take it to a car wash to prevent soap and other cleaning chemicals from entering the waterways.

**Erosion & Silt Accumulation;** Water that flows over open bare soil transports soil directly into the ponds and causes erosion of the pond shoreline. Don't destroy natural vegetation on the pond shoreline this is the first line of defense against shoreline erosion. Check irrigation lines and sprinkler heads regularly, a broken irrigation line or sprinkler head can washout a large area in the pond bank in a very short time. When erosion and sediment occurs it can reduce the available water storage volume thus adding to the possibility of flooding in your neighborhood. Don't place leaves or



lawn debris on the storm drain on your street, when these flow into the water body they become organic muck on the bottom of the pond.