

Getting To Know Your Stormwater Pond

Stormwater ponds are common across Sarasota County, and you likely have at least one in your own community. These ponds play the important role of collecting stormwater from the surrounding area. Getting to know your stormwater pond is the first step in understanding your system's management needs.

We can help.

Our “Neighborhood Best Practices” program provides tips and techniques on protecting our local waterways, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™, preserves, efficient irrigation, wildlife, creating community gardens, composting initiatives, and much more. Register online at tiny.cc/ufsaraext_nbp to make a difference in your neighborhood.

The Purpose of Stormwater Ponds

Flood Control

Rain not absorbed when it falls on a surface begins to flow, forming runoff. Stormwater ponds serve as an area to collect and hold this runoff, which often enters the pond through storm drains. By providing a collection area for stormwater, these ponds help control local flooding associated with heavy rains.



Credit: Canva

Pollutant Removal

The water collected in a stormwater pond remains there for some time before being released to downstream waters. While contained, sediment and other particulates begin to settle out of the runoff. Aquatic plants can help remove from the water some excess nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, before the water reaches local streams, canals, or bays.

Scenic Views

Stormwater ponds maintained to include a diversity of aquatic plants can provide needed habitat for local wildlife. Many residents enjoy watching wading birds hunt for food among the aquatic plants in their community's stormwater pond.



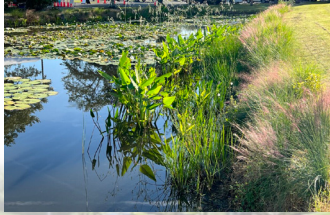
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Elements of Stormwater Ponds

Littoral zone

The littoral zone is the shallow portion of a pond where the water meets the land. This area is often 5 feet deep or less, sloping downward toward the center of the pond. Because of its relatively shallow average depth, this zone allows for the growth of native aquatic plants. In a stormwater pond, these aquatic plants can help remove excess nutrients, provide habitat for wildlife, and protect shorelines from erosive wave energy.



Buffer zone

A buffer zone is a vegetated area next to a pond that requires little upkeep and reduces impacts to the pond. Experts suggest a 6-foot buffer zone around stormwater ponds, and local codes bar applying fertilizer within 10 feet of such ponds. The deep roots of tall grasses, native shrubs, and wildflowers in buffer zones help stabilize soil along banks. Buffer zones can help keep heavy lawn equipment away from steep or unstable banks.



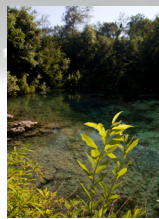
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Outflow



A pond's outflow structure allows water to exit the pond once it reaches a specific level. Your pond's outflow should be free of blockages, debris, and obstructive growth.

Algae



Algae is a natural part of the aquatic ecosystem. Having some algae in your pond is normal and should be expected, but algae that grows to cover most of a pond's surface may suggest an imbalanced system.

Inflow



The inflow structure directs water into the pond. It is important to keep the inflow clear and unobstructed to allow for proper stormwater management.

Learn more "Neighborhood Best Practices"

- Register here: tiny.cc/ufsaraext_nbp
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- Find more information at our websites: sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasota and scgov.net/extension



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