

QUESTIONS ANSWERED ABOUT STORMWATER Ponds And Why We Need Them

By David Kramer, P.E.

Q: What are stormwater ponds and why do we need them?

A: A stormwater pond is designed to collect and manage runoff from rainwater. When rainwater lands on rooftops, parking lots, streets, driveways and other hard surfaces, the rainfall that doesn't soak into the ground (stormwater runoff) flows into your neighborhood stormwater pond through grates, pipes, shallow swales or ditches. Stormwater ponds are required for most new development (since the 1980s) and are specifically designed to help prevent flooding and remove pollutants from the water. Without these ponds, stormwater would carry pollutants like litter, motor oil, gasoline, fertilizers, pesticides, pet wastes, sediments and anything else that can float into nearby streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries or the Gulf of Mexico.

Q: Who is responsible for maintenance of stormwater ponds in my neighborhood?

A: Once the developer has completed construction of the roads and drainage system in a neighborhood, the property owner's association (or in some cases, a community development district (CDD)) is typically responsible for maintaining the neighborhood drainage system, including the stormwater ponds.

Q: Can I remove vegetation from my stormwater pond?

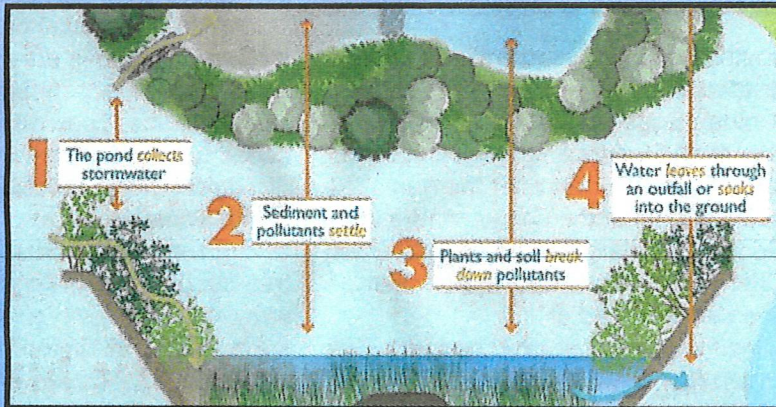
A: Many stormwater ponds are designed and required to include native aquatic vegetation. Native vegetation will filter polluted runoff, trap sediments, control the growth of nuisance vegetation and help make the pond aesthetically pleasing. Aquatic plants pump oxygen into the water and create a habitat by providing cover and nurseries for fish and other



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ponds. Removal of exotic, nuisance and excess vegetation is allowed. Just make sure to consult your association or CDD and the District before removing any significant amount of vegetation. The District recommends selective maintenance and removal by hand rather than mass removal of native wetland vegetation that becomes established in a stormwater pond. The District does not recommend cutting, mowing, using herbicides or introducing grass carp to remove native vegetation. Use only herbicides labeled for aquatic use, otherwise it may harm fish and other aquatic life, and it is prohibited by state and federal law.

Q: Is it OK to use stormwater ponds for recreational purposes such as fishing, swimming or kayaking?



A: Recreational use of stormwater ponds is potentially hazardous to your health and is not recommended. Stormwater ponds are designed to capture and retain stormwater runoff, which may contain many different types of pollution, including sediments, oils, greases, trash, nutrients, heavy metals, pesticides, herbicides and pathogens.

Q: What can residents do to help prevent pollution and flooding in stormwater ponds?

A: Never fill or obstruct stormwater ponds, swales and retention systems, as that will potentially keep the stormwater pond from working as designed. Don't dump excess oils and other chemicals from your home or yard waste, including grass clippings, into stormwater drains or ponds. Also, be