



BY THE WATER'S EDGE

A guide to keeping IslandWalk's ponds clean, clear and thriving.

Much of the beauty and value of IslandWalk comes from its ponds. They account for 30% of the value of your home. Careful stewardship will keep our ponds healthy and your investment sound.

- Our “lakes” are really detention ponds. Most of the water they accumulate is from rain, though there is also some run-off from ponds in communities north and east of IslandWalk, and out-flow to the south and west, as is required by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.
- IslandWalk's 30 storm water detention ponds hold 170 acres of water and feature 90,000 feet of shoreline, equivalent to 18-1/8 miles.
- 300 storm drains on our streets empty into the ponds. Anything that goes down the drains affects the health of our community's vital ecosystem and eventually that of the gulf as well.

**Only rain should go down
the drains.**

Ownership in IslandWalk commits you to “Practices of Careful Landscape Design and Maintenance” that prevent contamination of surface water. Mismanagement leads to:

- Unclean water, which requires extensive, costly remediation.
- Shore bank erosion, which is extremely expensive to repair. The costs come out of your pocket.
- Death of shore bank plantings (littorals), which help retard erosion and add to the health of the fish and natural bacteria that keep our water clean.
- And in the worst case, pond draining and dredging, to remove hazardous contaminants; unwanted expense no one wants.

Damage to our ponds can be prevented if you take the right steps.

When washing your roof and walls

- Make sure you or the vendors you select **do not dump excess cleaning solutions** into the storm drains.
- Be sure that cleaning solutions do not contain heavy metals or other toxic chemicals. Check the labels on products you buy. Let vendors know you want to use safe products.
- Assure that spray from cleaning is not directed toward the lakes.

When cleaning carpets and upholstery

- Require that vendors **do not** dispose of cleaning solutions down storm drains. They should be carried off the property. General **liquid** cleaning products can be disposed of by flushing them down the toilet.

When painting interiors or exteriors

- Take left-over paint to the Collier County waste center at 9950 Goodlette-Frank Road (between Vanderbilt Beach Road and Immokalee Blvd.) For information, go to their website: www.Colliergov.net.
- Never pour paint down your inside drains or the storm drains.
- When washing your car use a non-phosphate soap.

When maintaining your yard

- Trim the oak tree behind your home. **Leaf and seed debris contaminates the water system.** By keeping your oak well-trimmed you help to maintain healthy ponds.



- Sweep sidewalks and street curbs. Collect leaves and other tree debris in lawn bags for collection by Waste Management. **Never wash tree debris down the storm drains.**

- Pick up trash around your property

Bottles, paper, pet waste or plastics and other debris should never be washed down the storm drains. They can contaminate the water as they degrade, and if they do not degrade, they just sink to the pond bottoms. Please remember, our ponds are not garbage receptacles.

When dealing with house pets

- **Do not leave dog waste uncollected. Bag it and place it in your garbage can for twice-weekly pickup. Scooping the poop is the law!**

*Remember that “poo-lution” (dog waste to those who have never heard the term before) is a major cause of water contamination. In Collier County, **nearly two tons of dog waste is left on the ground every day** by negligent owners. **This includes waste in your own back yard. Do not let pet waste stay on the ground.** When it rains, improperly discarded waste washes down our storm drains and seeps into the water table beneath our lawns.*

Dog waste has a higher concentration of phosphorous than that of cows or other domestic animals. As dog waste decomposes in our waterways, it adds bacteria, parasites and unwanted nutrients which use up much of the dissolved oxygen in the water. This lack of oxygen is a major contributor to fish kill and algae bloom and significantly impairs the water quality of our ponds and waterways.

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When draining your pool

- Never drain pool water directly into our ponds. *Pool water should be dechlorinated before draining and then allowed to percolate to the ground whenever possible.*

Before draining your pool for cleaning or repairs, refer to the Collier County dewatering protocol by visiting www.Collier.gov/Net or call 239-252-2502 for more information.

Do not feed the wildlife

- **This IslandWalk rule applies to all wildlife.** The muscovy ducks are a particularly invasive species. Their excrement acts like fertilizer and creates bacterium that destroys water quality. Refrain from feeding them and other wildlife (which can be subject to a fine.) Other wildlife have plenty to eat without our help.



This pamphlet was produced by the IslandWalk Lakes Committee to help our residents understand how best to keep IslandWalk’s ponds and waterways pristine and beautiful for years to come. For further information, or to volunteer your time to this important effort, contact any member of the Lakes Committee.