

We Need Your Help to Protect Our Lakes

Did you know that in Pinellas County our stormdrains are NOT connected to treatment plants? All of our stormdrains flow into our 10 ponds, then to Tampa Bay, and then to the Gulf of Mexico, unfiltered. The purpose of our stormdrains and ponds is to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding.

We can have beautiful landscapes and improve pond water quality by making a few changes and being more aware of the runoff coming from our homes. We can reduce the pollution from our homes by reducing the excess nutrients from fertilizers and reclaimed water (specifically nitrogen and phosphorus), pesticides, pet waste, landscape debris, and other household factors by following Best Management Practices around your home and neighborhood.

Here are 4 simple ways you can help improve water quality:

1. **Follow the Sensible Sprinkler Program and use reclaimed water wisely.** If you or your Neighborhood uses a lawn care company, please let them know that we irrigate our lawns with reclaimed water supplied by the City of St. Petersburg. Reclaimed water is high in phosphorus and nitrogen levels, and in most cases our lawns do not need fertilizers that contain these nutrients. Overwatering makes landscapes pest and fungus-prone and adds to the stormwater runoff that pollutes our ponds. Water only when needed. Skip a week in the cooler months. Water only plants and not paved areas. If you have water flowing into the streets, gutters and drains, then you are using too much.
2. **Use Florida friendly landscaping.** Plant the right plant in the right place. Florida friendly landscaping requires less fertilizers, water and overall care...saving you time and money in the long run. Remember that our reclaimed water also has chlorides (salt) when picking out plants. Reclaimed water is a factor when picking out the right plants, along with shade and soil quality.
3. **Make sure your, or your neighborhood's, lawn care company is certified by Pinellas County.** This is a law and ensures that the company has been trained in Best Management Practices regarding proper lawn care and fertilizer use. All vendors who mow, blow, trim, or fertilize must show certification ID before entering our PBCA gate. If you maintain your own lawn or garden, please follow BMP guidelines on the Pinellas County Watershed Department website.
4. **Pick up after your pet.** Scoop the poop immediately or at least on a daily basis. Pet waste carries harmful fecal coliform bacteria and parasites which can cause serious illness in humans. Pet waste is also high in nitrogen and phosphorus which negatively affects our water quality.

Additional ways to keep our lakes clean:

- Wash vehicles at a commercial car wash. Commercial car wash businesses recycle water and keep the phosphates from entering our watersheds. If you wash your vehicles at home, wash over grass or gravel to prevent runoff and use as little of a **non-phosphate** soap as possible.

- Pool Maintenance : Never drain chlorinated water directly to the street or stormdrain. This is illegal. Drain water to vegetated areas such as lawns and gardens. DO NOT drain to roads, stormdrains or waterways!

Thank you!