



## What is a Healthy Pond?

### How Rivendell's Pond Management Efforts Support Healthier Ponds.

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Our ponds and preserves are vital assets of our community. In fact, our natural resources are why many of us moved to Rivendell. Stormwater is the biggest contributor to water pollution in Florida. Wet detention ponds, including Rivendell's, are the most common method for stormwater management to reduce flooding and trap pollution before water heads downstream.

Maintenance of stormwater pond systems is critical to maintaining their benefits to our community and downstream waterways. As owners of a stormwater pond system, the entire community plays an important role in successful pond management. Shoreline erosion is visible on many Rivendell ponds. The P&P Committee is working to help control erosion using well-established best practices for healthy pond management.

### What is a Healthy Pond?

UF/IFAS says a healthy pond has five main features:

- A 3-to-10-foot-wide Buffer Zone (LMZ) with plants growing their maximum height and turfgrass trimmed to maintain 8-12 inches in height
- Florida native plants in and around the pond, covering 30-85% of the total pond area
- Diverse plants and animals supporting a balanced aquatic ecosystem
- Periphyton (microorganisms) allowed to grow for removal of harmful pollutants
- Limited stressors from surrounding roadways and yards



### What are the Major Causes of Shoreline Erosion?



Most stormwater ponds surrounded by homes have at least four major sources of shoreline damage creating different types of erosion, each of which can be controlled with buffer zones and plants.

- Wind-driven wave action
- Water level fluctuations between wet and dry seasons
- Downspouts from surrounding homes and sprinklers
- Man-made damage from heavy mowers & machinery

### What are Buffer Zones?

Buffer zones, (no-mow or **Low-Maintenance Zones (LMZs)**), are vegetated lands that are either natural or created to separate a waterbody from negative human and natural impacts. Buffer zones are a key feature for securing shorelines from erosion.

Sarasota County - UF/IFAS have identified qualities of **Good, Better, and Best buffer zones**. While still a work-in-progress, Rivendell's ponds are mostly "Good" and "Better" with efforts in place to help more become "Best." Proper management of the buffer zone around stormwater ponds can improve water quality, protect property, save a substantial amount of money, and benefit Florida wildlife. (Click here to read UF/IFAS' [Buffer Zones Fact Sheet](#).)



### Healthy Ponds and You!

The P&P Committee is working to assess the health of each of our ponds to create management strategies to address unique needs. Following these recommendations, a healthy pond starts with You!

- **Reduce negative inputs.** Limit fertilizer and irrigation. Keep grass clippings & landscape debris, pet waste, and irrigation water out of our ponds.
- **Support your pond's natural food web.** Allow native plants to thrive.
- **Protect the vegetated buffer zone.** Separate your yard from the water's edge with native and Florida-Friendly plants.
- **Manage invasive species.** Have contractors use an integrated pest management approach to manage invasive species. Reduce use of toxic herbicide & pesticide chemicals.