



## What is Stormwater? Why is it Important?

By the Rivendell Pond & Preserves Committee

[Woodlands Word - May 2021]

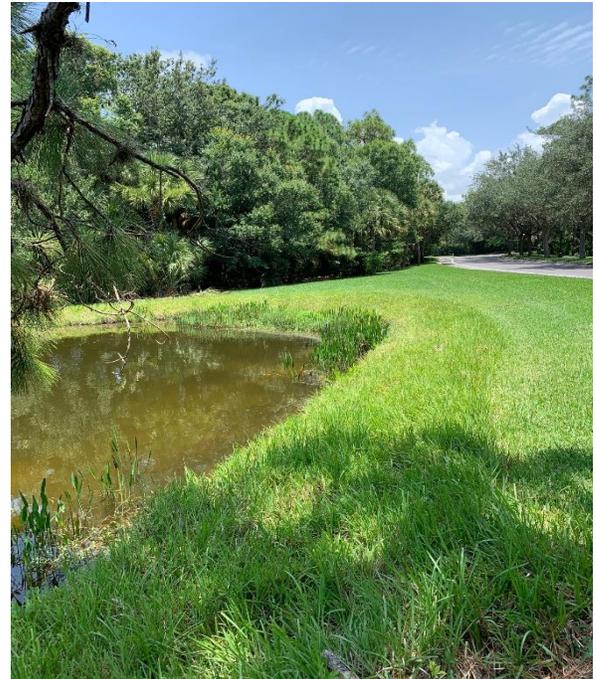
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We can all be proud of our growing **Rivendell Natural Shorelines**, with LMZs and native aquatic plantings that help control erosion, filter excess nutrients, and improve our water quality. Our ponds are all interconnected and flow through our community into South Creek and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico. What we do in our own yard and community directly affects the health of our entire Bay watershed. For residents new to our community or folks seeking a refresher course, let's learn more about the importance of Stormwater and how it impacts our water quality.

**What is stormwater?** Stormwater is rain that falls on our yards, streets, parking lots, and buildings and then flows into the stormdrain system or runs directly into a pond, lake or stream.

**What is a Stormdrain?** Stormdrains are openings along curbs, streets and in parking lots. Rainwater enters Stormdrains and flows into nearby ponds and lakes via the storm-sewer system, eventually making its way to the Gulf. Stormdrain water does not go into a treatment facility (unlike household wastewater). Pollutants in this water can flow directly into our ponds and reduce water quality.

**What is a Stormwater System?** Stormwater systems are a tool for managing runoff from rain. Rivendell has “**detention**” ponds designed to allow material to settle and be absorbed, removing pollutants before draining into the groundwater. LMZs and aquatic plants around the perimeter play a vital role helping to filter and absorb sediment in stormwater runoff.



**How does Stormwater get Polluted?** Every time it rains, the runoff washes anything in its path; soil particles, grass clipping, leaves, pesticides, fertilizers, oil, paint, pet waste, etc. into local ponds, lakes and the Gulf. Please limit the types of products you use around your yard that could hurt our waters and bays.

**Could We Be Harming Our Waters?** Especially this time of year, wind inevitably blows some debris into the ponds. However, homeowners and their landscapers should be careful not to let grass clippings, leaves and other yard debris get into our ponds – by mowers, leaf blowers, or manually. Ponds are not a receptacle for these materials - the stormwater system is not designed to manage this excess waste which can reduce its functionality, harming water quality.

**How Can Residents Help? “Only Rain down the Drain!”** Please help us keep the stormdrains free of debris to ensure the stormwater flows and filters properly. Follow Sarasota County's guidelines for proper fertilizer and irrigation. Enjoy the beautiful wildlife and appreciate the important role our stormwater ponds play. **Your actions do make a difference!**



***PLEASE! Do not allow Grass Clippings, Leaves or Any Yard Debris to get into our Ponds. Our Ponds are not Waste Receptacles.***