

## WHAT HAPPENED TO MY “LAKEFRONT” PROPERTY?

This information is being provided to explain to residents the purpose of the community “lakes” and how they were designed and intended to be incorporated into the community.

The “lakes” are engineered stormwater management ponds which are intended to treat and store runoff from houses, yards, and streets. The design of these ponds is based on the Southwest Florida Water Management District’s wet detention pond method, due to the shallow groundwater table conditions throughout the community. They are not natural lakes and are not typically “spring fed”. This is why it is recommended not to swim or eat the fish caught from these ponds, due to the pollutants draining into the ponds.

The design of the ponds start with an estimated seasonal high groundwater elevation, which is determined by soil borings prior to design. Basically, this groundwater elevation, is used as a basis of design for the pond, and is considered the highest possible natural groundwater condition that occurs during the peak of the rainy season (we refer to this as the wet season). The community typically receives approximately 50” of rainfall per year, with almost half occurring in three to four months in the summer time. This results in a reduction of rainfall throughout the rest of the year, with almost no rainfall occurring in two to three months in the spring (we refer to this as the dry season). The groundwater table naturally changes (up to several feet) between the wet season through the dry season, depending on rainfall and climate changes. This is why you see pond water levels change between September and May. It is a natural occurrence and is experienced throughout Florida. It is important to understand that each and every pond has its own individual design and characteristics which dictate its own fluctuation in water level.

Also, if you see aquatic vegetation growing in your pond, this is a good thing. The more aquatic plants available, results in better filtration of the pollutants and a better quality of water discharging into wetlands from the ponds. The wet detention design method, as mentioned above, is based on natural wetlands and how they function as a treatment system. So, over time the ponds will begin to look like the wetland systems that you also see throughout the community, except for the cypress trees which are typically not planted within stormwater ponds.

Ponds can be considered lakes and this is how lots adjacent to ponds got named “lakefront property”, but it is important to understand the difference between a stormwater pond and a natural lake. Hopefully this information is helpful in understanding this.