

# Stormwater Management Systems?

W H A T A R E T H E Y ?

In the early 1980s the Florida Legislature recognized the pollution potential of stormwater runoff and passed legislation requiring treatment of stormwater discharges. Today, the responsibility for permitting stormwater management systems rests with the water management districts. Constructed by developers, the responsibility for maintaining these systems often falls to a homeowner association. As a homeowner, you may have questions about these systems, such as: "What are they?" "What do they do?" "What activities are prohibited?" "What's ok?" and finally, "How can I help?"

Wet Pond



*For more information, contact Resource Management at the District office nearest you:*

**Phone Numbers For:**

**Baker, Bradford, Clay Duval, Nassau and St. Johns**  
(904) 730-6270

**Alachua, Flagler and Putnam**  
(904) 329-4500

**Lake, Marion, Orange, Polk, Volusia and Seminole**  
(407) 897-4300

**Brevard, Indian River, Okeechobee and Osceola**  
(407) 984-4940



This brochure was produced with the assistance of the St. Johns River Water Management District's Division of Public Information to inform the public about stormwater runoff and what the homeowner can do to help.

**St. Johns River Water Management District**

P.O. Box 1429  
Palatka, FL 32178-1429

# JH Homeowner's Guide to Stormwater Runoff



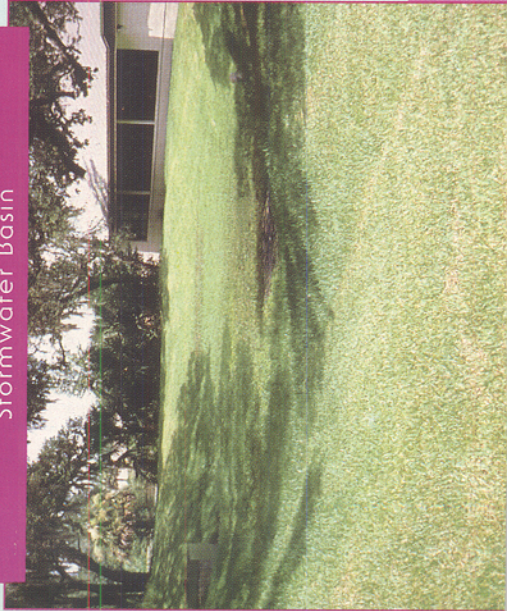
**Stormwater runoff** is rainwater which drains from surfaces, often acquiring a variety of pollutants on the way. It eventually ends up in lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands or stormwater management systems.

Stormwater management systems come in a variety of shapes, sizes and forms. They may be permanently wet (a pond or lake) or dry except following storm events (such as vegetated swales or basins). The most common and effective system is a wet pond. Some have filters, others do not, and they may include wetland plants, swales, berms and buffers. The permit issued for your development provides the specific details of your system.

Regardless of their shape or size, all stormwater management systems are designed to provide drainage of stormwater from property and trap a variety of stormwater pollutants that would otherwise work their way into wetlands, rivers, lakes and streams. Pollutants include nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen (fertilizers), pesticides, herbicides and household cleaners; as well as oil, grease and metals.

Your stormwater management system has been designed and constructed in accordance with specific criteria to assure that it functions properly.

Stormwater Basin



**Here are a few DON'Ts to keep in mind:**

❗ **Don't swim in these ponds or eat fish caught in them.** Stormwater ponds are pollution treatment systems that trap pollutants.

❗ **Don't fill or bulkhead stormwater ponds.**

These ponds are designed and constructed to the appropriate size.

❗ **Don't dump waste oil, chemicals or yard trash in the ponds or inlets.**

Take them to an appropriate disposal site.

**Here are some ideas to help protect the environment:**

❗ **Do use pond water to irrigate your lawn.**

This serves several purposes. It recycles nutrients, so you will fertilize less frequently. It saves drinking water supplies, benefits water quality and saves on your water and fertilizer bills.

❗ **Do plant trees.**

If your system is wet, plant trees around the perimeter of the pond. If dry, plant them around the edge or in the system. Trees help shade the area, absorb nutrients and lower the water table.

Stormwater swale



❗ **Do consider Xeriscape methods for landscaping.** Xeriscape helps water conservation through use of drought resistant plants. By selecting the "right" plants for your yard you can dramatically reduce the amount of water used for irrigation, chemicals used for pest control and fertilizer used for growth.

Call the District at 1-800-RALLY-22 and ask for a free Xeriscape (pronounced zera-scape) Plant Guide.

❗ **Do consider using the minimum amount of fertilizer necessary to maintain a healthy lawn.**

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) recommends using a complete fertilizer in March and September as a minimum program. This can result in less mowing, less thatch buildup, fewer irrigation requirements and fewer insect and disease problems. Further, it will reduce the nutrient loading to the ponds and result in fewer problems with algal blooms (green pond scum) and noxious weed growth. Fertilize when storm events are not forecast to reduce nutrients washing into the system.

❗ **Do help keep wastes out of your pond.**

The greater the amount of fecal wastes being washed into the pond, the greater the risk of water-borne disease. Waterfront homeowners should remove pet wastes from their lawn and avoid feeding waterfowl.

❗ **Do maintain your Surface Water Management System**

To function properly your system must be maintained. A copy of your Homeowners Association's operation and maintenance permit, plans, and maintenance guidelines have been provided to your association representative. They contain the details of your surface water management system and should answer any specific questions you have. If, after reviewing these documents, you still have questions, call your closest District office.