



Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District
359 Hiatt Drive, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida 33418
561-624-7830 · fax 561-624-7839

Contact: Joanna Cunningham
Community Information Specialist
561-624-7830 or joanna@npbcid.org

Why Are the Lakes Here?

Palm Beach Gardens, FL - October 17, 2006 – Many people have inquired as to whether or not it is safe to swim within the lakes of The Shores. The bigger question is to understand why they are there and the role that they have for all of the residents.

The lakes are part of a large stormwater management system, that accepts run-off from all of the property owners within the Shores - almost 341 acres including lots, roads, common areas and preserves. Although they are beautiful and very pristine to observe, a common sense approach when considering a swim in the lake is warranted. Stormwater is **NOT** processed, clean water, like the water from your tap. It does not go through a water treatment plant for filtering and cleansing. Stormwater is accumulated rain water that is directed into the lake system that includes anything on the site, including garbage, fertilizers and animal waste. The lakes are not treated like a swimming pool with chemicals to kill bacteria. When the lakes are treated, it is to address a specific problem such as bladderwort. Northern provided detailed information on bladderwort in an article last year..

Road runoff is also a contributing factor in stormwater inputs into the lake system. Oil and gasoline spillage from vehicles, eventually finds its way to a water source. Considering that the Shores has over 75 acres of roadways, it is a challenge to maintain acceptable water quality. In addition, homeowners who dump their lawn clippings, paints, oil and other products down storm drains assume that it goes into a water pipe. It does not. It goes into the stormwater system which in this case, is the lake system of the Shores. If you see you neighbor doing this, you should encourage them not to.

You may also report illegal dumping of such products to the NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) via local law enforcement or by calling the Solid Waste Authority.

The lake system is not meant to be a swimming pool. It is designed to have a specific function and purpose. It is part of a water management flow system that accepts storm and rain water run-off and acts as a conduit for floodwaters to drain out of the site. In doing so, the natural evolution, involves pollution, both natural and man-made materials that seep into the water. As a precaution, the Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District discourages swimming in the lakes.

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