

UPCAI – Ponds Management

Background

The ponds in University Park are part of a “surface water management system” that is regulated by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and Manatee County. This includes:

- 49 ponds and structures, including outflow barriers/weirs and inter-connecting pipes.
- Storm water drainage system, including drains, swales, culverts, pipes.
- Outflows to the Braden River, Philippi Creek and Cedar Creek (Palm Aire)

Our ponds are man-made and their primary purpose is storm water management (flood management). Their perceived natural beauty and use for irrigation are secondary to this.

- SWFWMD provides government direction on all matters relating to the ponds including holding capacity, withdrawal points, and natural filtration.
- SWFWMD permits are required (renewed every few years) for all ponds
- The littoral planting in many of our ponds was approved, as a filtration medium, over 10 years ago by SWFWMD in lieu of the former underdrain filtration system.

Responsibilities in UP

1. UPCA Master Association (not Neighborhoods) is responsible for all of the surface water management system in University Park.
 - UPCA contracts with Aquatic Systems Inc (ASI) for the necessary aquatic management & treatment of the ponds – as it thinks best, to meet the pond’s functional objectives and SWFWMD requirements.
2. Homeowners & Neighborhoods are not permitted to:
 - Plant their own littoral plantings, nor treat plants growing in/by the ponds - whether by the bulkheads, on littoral shelves or by the pondside.
 - Change the pond drainage water levels (weirs), which are set by SWFWMD and managed by the Property Manager.
3. Where for aesthetic reasons individual homeowners or Neighborhoods request thinning of specified pond plants, this will be carried out by UPCA (subject to ASI, Property Manager and Architectural Committee approval) at the initial cost of the requesting homeowners or neighborhood.
 - It is unlikely that UPCA will agree to any broad removal of such plants, but controlled thinning will be considered on written application in the property management system.
 - After such thinning, ASI will generally maintain & control the plants, at UPCA cost, close to the thinned-down level.

Representations

Residents fronting Pond #9 in Richmond Park/Langley Park were approved in 2015 for the removal of migrated littoral plants in front of their residential property and for the continued maintenance, at individual resident cost, to keep those areas clear of growth if they so desire. This is an excellent example of pond management meeting resident needs in coordination with ASI and with SWFWMD consent.