



WILLOW WALK CDD | MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Stormwater Ponds, Wetlands, and Easements

This information is provided to answer frequently asked questions about the stormwater ponds located within the Willow Walk community. A unit of local special-purpose government called a “community development district” or “CDD” operates and maintains the public improvements, including the stormwater ponds and wetland areas, some of which are also designated as conservation areas, within the community. The Willow Walk CDD requests your help to ensure that we are good stewards of our resources to ensure the beauty and functionality of our community for years to come.



What is the purpose of the stormwater ponds and wetlands? The stormwater ponds are designed to manage the runoff from rainfall by preventing flooding and removing pollutants from the water before they can drain into the groundwater. The wetlands preserve natural areas to promote proper drainage and flood control.

Who is responsible for maintenance? After the ponds are constructed, they are turned over to the CDD for operation and maintenance pursuant to a permit from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). The CDD maintains the stormwater ponds and wetland/conservation areas in accordance with permit requirements.



What does maintenance entail? The CDD employs various professionals, including an engineer, aquatic maintenance professionals, and landscaping professionals, to ensure the stormwater ponds and wetland/conservation areas remain in compliance with applicable permits. You may see these professionals treating the pond water with chemicals, maintaining the shoreline vegetation, taking water samples, evaluating the pond banks, and undertaking other activities. From time to time, more extensive work, such as pond bank restoration, may be needed. SWFWMD permits strictly protect vegetation in the wetland areas, conservation areas, and along pond banks. Clearing is prohibited except in very narrow circumstances, such as removing invasive species.



Easements

Homeowners should be aware that some lots have easements along their edges to allow the CDD to access its property and provide essential maintenance such as stormwater pond treatments or landscape maintenance. Although the lot is owned by the individual homeowner, an easement is a **legal right** that allows the CDD to use the property for these purposes.

How do I know if my property has an easement? Homeowners should consult the applicable plat and survey for their property. When in doubt, contact the District Manager using the contact info below.

What does this mean for me? Homeowners should take care NOT to obstruct easements by installing fences, patios, pools, or other encroachments. Doing so may prevent the CDD from accessing the ponds for essential maintenance and may result in fines from the SWFWMD. You will be responsible for the cost of moving your obstruction if the CDD needs to use its easement areas for access.

What if the HOA approved my application? The HOA may approve aesthetics but cannot grant a variance to permit encroachments in CDD easements or onto CDD property, because the legal right belongs to the CDD.

What if my neighbor has an open easement? Homeowners cannot obstruct easements even if other access points exist, because doing so may result in overburdening the remaining easements.

What if I install a gate? In some cases, gates do not remedy the issue because they are not wide enough to allow the necessary maintenance equipment through and contractors require unobstructed access.

Prohibited Actions



- Do not drink the water in the stormwater ponds. It has been treated with chemicals and is not safe for consumption.
- Do not remove vegetation from CDD property, especially around the water's edge or in wetlands. The vegetation helps stabilize the banks, prevent flooding, and in some cases is required by permit.
- Do not allow pool runoff or gutter discharge to create erosion on pond banks, wetland areas, or conservation areas.
- Do not throw grass clippings, yard debris, trash, or any foreign substance into the ponds, wetlands, or conservation areas.
- Do not block access to CDD easements or make changes to CDD property. The CDD may take legal action to enforce its rights, and you may be held responsible for any fines or costs incurred as a result of the blockage or change.

For more information on stormwater ponds in general, please visit the website for the Southwest Florida Water Management District at <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/>. For more information about the CDD's operations and maintenance, or to report an issue, please contact the District Manager.



Website:
<https://www.willowwalkcdd.org/>



Contact:
813-533-2950



Email:
TNielsen@rizzetta.com

Note that any correspondence to District Staff may constitute a public record and that under Florida law, e-mail addresses are public records. If you do not want your e-mail address released in response to a public records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or mail.