

# **THE STERLING RIDGE LAKEFRONT PROPERTY OWNERS MANUAL**



*GRAPHIC DESIGN BY LLOYD B. KANTER, BOARD MEMBER*

Congratulations on your purchase of lakefront property in Sterling Ridge. We hope you will enjoy life in our community.

In order for you to get the most out of owning a home on a lake, we have prepared this guide which should address some of your questions and concerns, and as well, provide you with valuable information.

## WHAT ARE THESE BODIES OF WATER?

Actually, these bodies of water are not lakes at all. As in most new developments, these retention ponds were designed and man-made during the construction of Sterling Ridge. These ponds were put here to collect storm water runoff. The rainwater which runs off our lawns and streets goes down the gratings and into our lakes.

One of the main reasons we have a Homeowners Association at all (of which you are a member) is that the St. Johns River Water Management District does not wish to maintain these bodies of water. The state therefore has mandated that Homeowners Associations bear this responsibility.

## WHO IS SUPPOSED TO DO WHAT?

Your homeowners association is to bear the responsibility for treating these retention ponds with chemicals (more on this later). We have a contract with an organization that performs this function for us.

This company is not under contract to pick up garbage from the water, or maintain property down to the water's edge. This is the responsibility of the homeowner.

## WATER CLARITY

As mentioned earlier, the water in these lakes comes from storm water run off. Therefore, for most of the year, this water is stagnant. Several varieties of weeds and algae thrive in this environment, and this is why the lakes must be treated on a monthly basis. Chemicals are put into the water to inhibit this growth.

Without realizing it, some of the things we do on a routine basis actually create more problems for our lake water clarity. The weeds and algae in the water are plants. Any chemical we use to make our lawns green will also help the plant life in the lakes flourish. The nitrogen and other chemicals in our fertilizers provide the nutrients for growth of weeds and algae in the lakes.

When you maintain your lawn, you should keep fertilizer at least 10 feet away from the edges of the pond. The retention ponds are built with sloping edges, and fertilizer you place on your lawn will run down to the untreated area, and hopefully, not reach the water's edge. The same goes for pesticides. They will not promote algae growth, but will kill the fish in your pond. If pesticide is applied directly before a rainstorm, the chances increase of it running into the water, and a fish kill will result.

## GRASS CLIPPINGS

Grass clippings and other yard debris must not go in the ponds. Most fertilizers are of the time release variety, and grass clippings contain these same nutrients. If they are put into the water or down the storm drains (where they will go into the lakes) you will be promoting algae and weed growth.

Have your yard service remove or bag these grass clippings near the edge of the water. To



make matters worse, decaying material carries with it a higher nutrient value, which will promote algae and weed growth.

## DO NOT BLOCK THE OUTFLOWS

The ponds are designed with a purpose - to collect and filter runoff. This includes lawn waste, oil and mechanical lubricants from driveways and roads, and waste blown into the lake from an upset garbage can.

If the "starting level" of the lake is higher than designed before a major rainfall, the lake cannot function properly, and contaminated water will run off and enter the St. Johns River - or even worse, flood your house.

For this reason, you must not tamper with the outflows. If you have one in your yard, please check it periodically for debris. If you can remove it, please do so. If not, contact Sterling Ridge Homeowners Association at our Voice Mail number, 220-8500, and we will make arrangements for the problem to be handled.

## LITTLE SWIMMERS

Since our lakes are filled with storm water runoff, we certainly do not recommend any swimming or boating in the water. But we DO want fish to swim there, especially the ones we place there.

Every year or so, your association places Triploid Grass Carp into our lakes. This is a fish that is regulated by the Fish and Game Commission. They are strictly vegetarian and will not affect game fish. These carp eat the weeds and other decaying materials in the pond.

They cost us a lot of money to put there, so if you are fishing in our lakes and catch one, please throw it back - they are there for a reason. They are a complimentary biological control to the chemicals we add to the water. Please do not feed these fish. They are there to eat weeds.

## LAKE ACCESS

In some cases, it will be necessary for our contractor to launch a boat in order to properly treat a lake. If at all possible, please cooperate with their efforts. They will do the best they can to not damage your lawn in the process.

If any of your sod is damaged as a result of their crossing your property with a boat, please contact us, and we can have the sod replaced. Remember, if you prohibit access, the contractor will not be able to perform the job they are paid to do, and the clarity of our water will suffer.

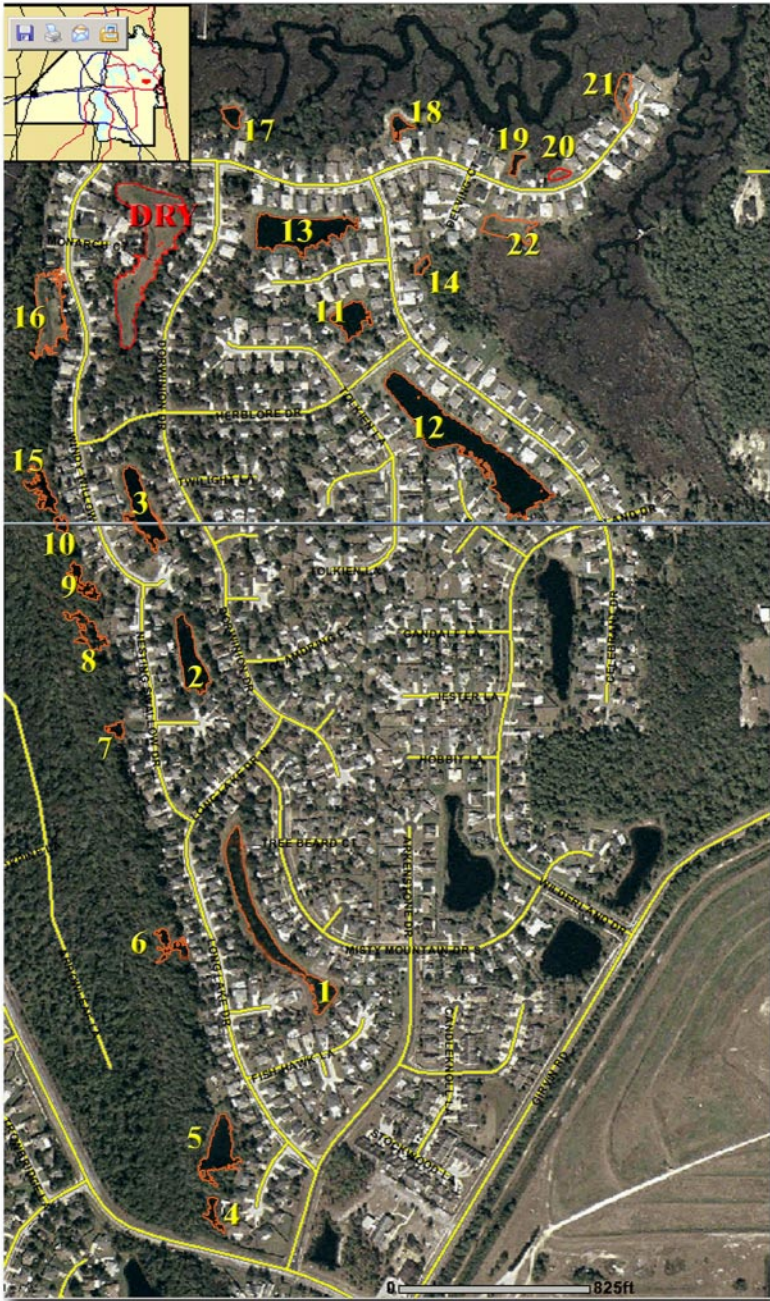
## COMMUNICATION

We have a board member who is the designated contact with our lakes contractor. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Sterling Ridge Homeowners Association at our Voice Mail number, 220-8500, and your concern will be directed to our lake specialist, and he will contact our contractor directly.

If you think your lake is not being treated or there is a water clarity problem, please do not hesitate to call us. Left unresolved, plant growth can accelerate rapidly, and then it will take much longer to get things back under control.

If you follow the recommendations in this guide, you will be helping your association and all your neighbors in Sterling Ridge enjoy a better quality of life. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.





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