

Ponds Working Group Update: July 2018

By Chuck Tierney, Chair

In the June Forum the Ponds Working Group asked long term owners to provide copies of photos showing trees planted around the edges of our ponds so we could try to establish how much erosion we may be experiencing around the edges of our ponds.

We thank the residents who responded – Judy Buffa, Joe Moy, Chuck Wilson and especially Fuad Nuwaysir for their help. The Working Group met on July 12th and concluded that we did not see any evidence of massive erosion around the edges of the ponds where photos were provided. However, we agreed that we should attempt to measure what, if any significant erosion we may be experiencing around our pond edges.

Therefore, we will ask our lake management contractor to install permanent plastic or metal stakes at key points around several of our larger ponds so we can actually measure any evidence of erosion. Further, to determine the value of aquatic plants in slowing pond edge erosion we would recommend installing aquatic plants near one side of such stakes to determine what effect they might have on the rate of erosion (if any).

Why this concern re pond edge erosion?

First, we need to focus on the purpose of our ponds. We may think of them as lakes, but their primary purpose is to serve as storm water retention ponds and thereby control the flow of storm water within our community. This purpose is required by several regulatory bodies, but primarily by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (known affectionately as SWIFTMUD). In fulfilling this primary purpose our interconnected system of ponds and the large reserve area surrounded by Stirling Falls Circle which then drains under Tuttle Ave. to the Pearce Canal seems well engineered and has well performed its purpose since our community was first developed in 2001.

A secondary purpose of the ponds is aesthetic and environmental. They enhance the appearance of the community (a benefit to us all) and provide habitat for wildlife.

At this point the focus of our Working Group is the main reason (storm water management) why we have our ponds. Thus, our first focus is on whether pond edge erosion may be a long-term issue. **If** erosion is significant we could be facing a need to dredge the lakes in the distant future and/or invest in measures to stabilize pond edges in the shorter term. There are also a very few areas where

there are specific pond bank problems that we must deal with. The Working Group will be providing recommendations to our Board on how to deal with these immediate issues.

The Ponds Working Group will keep our community informed via Board Meetings and future articles in the Falls Forum. All are invited to attend our meetings that will be noticed by Oded via email and on the Bulletin Board in the Clubhouse.