Want to adopt your community pond?

First you have to learn the functions of your pond. Read the “Welcome to the Florida Lakes and Ponds Guide”. Then you can get started.

Form a group of people who live in the pond’s drainage area. Include everyone who has an interest, not just people who live on the pond. Write things down. Start a mailing or email list. A history of drainage activities will be invaluable in later pond improvements and maintenance.

List the problems. Clogged storm drains, pet waste, litter, and leaking oil from vehicles are issues that concern everyone in the neighborhood. The pond itself may have algae blooms, nuisance vegetation, eroding banks and problem animals.

Gather information about your pond and its watershed. This can include: Names and contact information for your pond group, An aerial photograph of your neighborhood, Site or drainage plans, Location of pond outfalls, drainage pipes, drop boxes and other structures, Maintenance records for herbicide treatments, grass carp, plant removal, Homeowner association covenants or deed restrictions, Local government contacts for road maintenance, mosquito control, etc. Use the Pinellas County Water Atlas [www.pinellas.wateratlas.org](http://www.pinellas.wateratlas.org) and the Pinellas County geographical information systems website [http://gis.pinellascounty.org/](http://gis.pinellascounty.org/) to acquire aerials and landownership information.

List possible solutions. What you would like the pond to look like? Listen to all ideas, then reach consensus on what can be accomplished by the pond group. Solutions can include quarterly neighborhood meetings, storm drain marking (free materials provided by Pinellas County Water Resources Section), plantings, nuisance vegetation removal, pond cleanup days, grants, and general neighborhood cleanups. Bring in facilitators such as your municipality stormwater department staff to help.

Write a management plan. This plan can include: Pond history, Pond group members, Pond maintenance schedule, Budget, Pollution prevention and education program, Aquatic vegetation enhancement, Algae control, and Fish and wildlife objectives.

Implement your plan. Group members should be assigned specific tasks. Set deadlines. Contact local government agencies for educational material and technical guidance. Ask for meeting speakers or leaders for pond walks. Include any landscape and pond maintenance companies that are involved in your neighborhood.