

Please Help to Preserve our Lake Natural Landscape
(By Gary Leist and the Lake Committee)

The development of Lake Olympia began in the early 80's. It was envisioned as a community that would boast of a Lake with miles of shorelines. The lakes started out with 2 retention ponds in the front section, and our main lake that was developed from what originally was a swamp. Bulk-headed shorelines were installed on the main lake where they were needed, but the shore was kept in its natural state as much as possible.

Rules and regulations were established and added to the covenant and deed restrictions by Andrew Choy (original developer). Rules such as no gas engines on the lake, boat size restrictions, limitations on tree and vegetation destruction, were all defined in order to maintain a natural setting, protect the wetlands and prevent lake deterioration. Andrew's intent was to protect the lake and the environment within Lake Olympia and maintain a balance between humans and the abundant wildlife.

I moved into Lake Olympia in 1989. The lake was half the size it is today. Soon after I moved in, the back half of the lake which includes the marina section and Lake Shore Forest, was dug out. Within a few weeks enough rain fell and it felt like almost overnight our lake size had doubled. The deer were very plentiful on the peninsulas, which today are Flamingo and Jade Island. You could also occasionally spot a Bobcat.

Today, with all of the development that has happened in Lake Olympia and on the peninsulas, the deer are still abundant. There are a large number of alligators in the lake. Herons and other birds frequent the shore lines. Many of us feel lucky to live in a neighborhood, where we can observe such wildlife, and we have access to a Lake that when you are boating on it, makes you forget we live in a city.

Even though the majority of the residents recognize the value of our lakes, wildlife and landscape, I am always amazed by those who want to cut down trees, lake vegetation or have alligators removed. Currently, giant reeds protect most of our natural shorelines. These reeds help to protect the shoreline from erosion especially during the windy months. They also provide habitat for the birds. As people clear the vegetation along the natural shorelines, the health of the lake deteriorates. Without the natural vegetation, the shoreline turns into muddy patches that become littered with trash and encourage the growth of invasive weeds.

Recently it was observed on the natural shorelines that some residents have been destroying lake vegetation and mowing the shoreline behind their property lines. They know what they are doing is not allowed, because the company doing the work dropped the equipment and started to run when an approaching boat saw what was going on.

Why do people do this? There are plenty of other communities around here that don't have the natural setting we live in, so why buy in this community if you don't like the trees and seclusion you get with our lake front lots? If snakes and alligators scare you, then why buy on the lake?

The Lake Committee is very concerned about protecting the Lake and natural landscape within Lake Olympia, and therefore will be working with the MUD districts and LOCA lawyer to see what kind of penalties can be applied to these home owners who continue to ignore the rules that have been put in place to protect the lake and natural shoreline.

Here are some important rules to remember:

1. A dock can be constructed on your shoreline, but it must be approved by the Architect Control Committee. Vegetation can only be cleared 3 feet on each side of your dock. Rules for constructing a dock along with the application can be found at www.lakeolympia.org
2. Make sure you read your deed restrictions before you cut down trees. You can be required to replace trees that are removed that are larger than a certain diameter.
3. On the shoreline that is not bulk-headed, a wetland designation can exist. No vegetation can be cut below 1 foot along the undeveloped shorelines. No fill or dredging is allowed in these wetland areas. No Mechanized machinery is allowed in this area.
4. There are to be no boats longer than 18ft on the lake. Boats must be registered with LOCA.
5. Gas engines are not allowed on the lake except for the Lake Management Company. This includes both gas engines that are operating, and non-operating gas engines that are on a boat even though a electric trolling motor is running.
6. DO NOT feed the alligators. This is against the law and can make them aggressive towards humans. Parks and Wildlife can be contacted if you feel threatened by an alligator on your property and you think it should be removed.

If you are in doubt about what you can and can't do on your lake front lot, then please consult the Bylaws, Covenants and deed restrictions that are available on the web. The website is included below. You can also call our onsite property management office at 281-835-5992.

<http://www.lakeolympia.org/documents>

For question concerning the lake, feel free to call Gary Leist (Lake Committee) at 281-437-6035.

Thanks