When to Dredge and Rejuvenate Baywood Meadows's 2 Storm Water Retention Ponds

All storm water retention ponds throughout the Florida Peninsula have something in common with all living organisms on Earth. As soon as an organism is born, hatched or sprung from the soil, it begins to die. Artificial ponds also begin to die and return to the natural state they originally existed as soon as the real estate development crews depart from the new property. The first step in developing a property in the Florida Peninsula is to locate the natural low spots within the development tract's boundaries and dig there to create retention ponds. The local developers know that they have to receive a permit from the Southwest Florida Water Management District or, "Swift Mud." The permit will state how deep below the water line the floor of the pond should be. The time to dredge the pond is when ten percent of the depth has been lost due to silting. In reality, the owners of most maturing properties start thinking about dredging when they see the first islands appear. As the islands continue to grow, the owners start to consider, more seriously, the inevitable expense of having to dredge. The biggest reason to dredge is to remove a layer of muck on top of the original floor of the pond. The muck is full of contaminants, especially copper and a few other "heavy metals." All the contaminants, like copper and motor oil washing down from nearby pavements, poison the fish. People fishing in any artificial pond should not eat their catches. A healthy pond is not crystal clear, like a chlorinated swimming pool. Periodic dredging also removes unwanted shrubs and trees. The margin around the pond should not be grass, but another type of ground cover that does not require cutting or artificial fertilizer. Many objects thrown into a pond may be regarded as waste to the residents, but most of them provide nutrients for toxic algae. The speaker, Mr. Jim Moll, says that an example of toxic algae is blue-green algae. An outdated term for blue-green algae is cyanobacteria. Grass clippings, pet poop, broken tree branches, grass fertilizer (especially fertilizer applied outside the growing season), leaves, and reclaimed water used for irrigation are among the many contaminants that may cause an algae bloom. Jim Moll claimed that even chlorine is a nutrient for toxic algae. A more environmental-friendly way to control algae blooms is using a harmless water dye. Dark colored pond water inhibits the growth of some underwater plants. The rainwater that hits the roofs of buildings and washes down the downspouts should be diverted onto the grassy lawn, instead of being channeled onto the pavement an eventually ending up in a pond carrying more motor oil and other contaminants from the roads. The first few feet from the downspout discharge could be covered with a strip of larger-size, smooth pebbles to inhibit erosion. An invasive plant species that has become a nuisance along the shores of some ponds and nature lakes is the Brazilian Pepper, related to poison ivy. The pond along Baywood Meadows Drive is labeled "Fern Lake" on one or two maps in the Condo Docs. It also has been labeled as "Main Lake." The lake behind the duplex and quad – plex villas at 12211 and 12225 Environmental Drive is labeled "Model Centers Lakes." Wallace Associates, the developer of Baywood Meadows, built the two residential villas in 1981 and called them the Model Centers. These first two building were to be shown to medical doctors and other investors to give them an ideal of what Baywood Meadows will look like after they fund the building phases of the development. Baywood Meadows owns only a bite out of the pond behind the swimming pool. The rest of it is on Forest Pointe property. All Board members can go to the monthly CONA meetings for free, because I convince the Board to exchange my $15 individual member for a $40 group membership. The next meeting is on the third Wednesday in February.