

The Lakes

In The Lakes of Coppell Addition, the lakes are the focal point of the neighborhoods. There are many unique conditions and characteristics for these lakes that do not exist in most residential neighborhoods with lakes. In most subdivisions, the ponds and lakes are built on a creek area and water fills the lakes from rainwater flowing through those areas and from street drains. That often means the water in those ponds has flowed in from areas above the neighborhood. That also results in no control regarding what flows into the lakes from upstream. If there is no rain in hot summer months, the lake levels often become low and must be filled with water from deep wells. The pumping cost becomes a large financial obligation that must be paid by the residents. That is not the situation in The Lakes of Coppell.

The Lakes of Coppell were built in an area with no water flow entering from areas outside the subdivision. The lakes were excavated in an area that has a ample water available about 13 to 15 feet below the surface. Because the lakes were excavated to a depth of 18 to 20 feet deep, ground water seeps into the area and maintains the lakes at an almost constant level throughout the year. All streets in the Lakes of Coppell have storm drains that also collect water from the streets and the water flows into the lakes. Heavy rains may result in temporary high water levels that recede after several hours. All excess water entering the lakes from the storm drains flows through the lakes and leaves the property through the channel between Basilwood Dr. and Gibbs Crossing. The water is collected into Denton Creek that begins at the Grapevine Lake Dam and meanders west to east through the northern portion of Coppell. The Creek forms the eastern border of Lakes of Coppell HOA. The large woody area adjacent to the creek allows storm water to spread out in the Denton Creek floodplain thereby preventing flooding in the neighborhoods.

The subdivision encompasses about 500 surface acres. The lakes comprise 21.3 surface acres. The retaining walls around all the lakes result in better water quality because most shallow water areas are eliminated. That results in less noxious aquatic algae and weeds. Less noxious aquatic vegetation results in less costs to control the vegetation. The walls also serve to ensure minimum shallow water that could harbor mosquitoes and other disease causing organisms. Mosquitoes do not reproduce in areas that offer no protection for their larvae. Wave action throughout the lakes results from prevailing winds and from the floating fountains strategically located throughout the lakes. The water movement makes it impossible for mosquito larvae to survive. Lower mosquito populations mean less probability that West Nile Virus and similar diseases could infect residents.

Over the years, the lakes have been stocked with fish and many residents have also released fish into the ponds upon returning from personal fishing trips. The following species of fish are present in the lakes: Largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill sunfish, green sunfish, minnows, gambusia (mosquito fish), channel catfish, and gizzard

shad. Most turtles seen in the lakes are classified as red-ear sliders. They will eat sick fish but generally are herbivores (consume vegetation).

The fish in the lakes are a valuable resource that is under utilized by residents. Fishing from shoreline in the common areas is available to all HOA residents. All residents can use small boats for fishing and enjoying the lakes. Access points for boats are available in the common areas. **No motors of any type are allowed on the boats using the lakes.**

In 1998, catfish were stocked in the lakes and a very successful kid fishing event was conducted. In 2010, additional channel catfish were stocked in "McArthur" Lake for a community fishing event.

All fishing in the lakes is "catch and release only".

The large blue/gray birds often observed in or around the lake are Great Blue Herons. They frequent ponds and lakes to feed on fish. They are migratory birds and are protected by Federal law. Please do not harass or molest those birds. Many species of ducks stop at the lakes each fall. Most ducks observed in the fall and winter are migratory and are not year round residents. Some mallards remain all year. Feeding bread, chips, etc. to ducks can be detrimental to their health. The ducks become dependent on the "free" food but vitamin deficiencies make them more likely to become infected with parasites and disease. Please do not feed the waterfowl.

What can you do to help?

To maintain quality conditions in the lakes there are several things residents can do. Lawn fertilizers, if improperly applied, result in excess nutrients reaching the lake. These nutrients increase the growth rate for noxious algae and pondweeds and also increase odors associated with the ponds. Make sure your lawn maintenance company does not allow fertilizer to go into the lake. Never apply fertilizer when a high probability for rain exists. The rain will wash the fertilizer into the storm drains or directly into the lakes. Your lawn quality will not get the required nutrients and the lakes will become more fertile.

Similar care should be exercised when applying herbicides and fungicides to common areas and lawns. Insecticides such as fire ant bait should not be applied prior to an expected rain. Although most herbicides are not toxic to fish, fungicides and insecticides are highly toxic to fish. Even small amounts entering the lakes could result in a fish kill.

The HOA pays a contractor to pick up trash and debris from the lakes. Most trash items originate from wind blown items from the trash and recycle bins. If residents secure those items left out for pickup, the amount of trash in the lakes will decrease. Other items that must be removed from the lakes periodically include grass clippings, pruned tree and

shrub limbs, and leaves. Please do not throw these items into the lakes. They decay and increase the nutrient levels in the lakes. The small branches provide attachment space and allow algae to grow near the surface.

Grass and ground cover growing along the rear property boundary for residents adjacent to the lake should not be allowed to grow outside the fence line and cover the walls around the lake. These areas harbor snakes, adult mosquitoes, wasps, etc. Keeping the wall from vegetation will reduce habitat for those species and eliminate leaves, etc. from entering the water.

About the Author

Bill Wingo has a MS degree in fisheries biology. He is the owner of Magnolia Fisheries, Inc. and Lone Star Fountains, Inc. Headquartered in Coppell, Texas, these companies specialize in maintaining ponds and lakes in HOAs, city parks, golf courses, and commercial real estate. Prior to starting Magnolia Fisheries in 1988, Bill was a fisheries biologist for the Mississippi Parks and Wildlife Department. He is certified by the American Fisheries Society as a Fisheries Scientist. Bill began maintaining the lakes at Lakes of Coppell HOA in 1996.

