

Lake Henry Estates Lakefront Homes Information

The Lake Henry Estates has approximately 20 homes on Sweetwater Way that back up to Lake Henry. There are a few unique issues we have determined are critical for you to understand to avoid confusion and disappointment in the future.

1. Located immediately behind the homes is Retention Pond #4. We lovingly call this “the moat”, but know it is very much a retention pond. This pond is designed to accept the roads’ runoff from this side of the whole Lake Henry Estates property. The idea is the oils and debris from the roads cannot go into Lake Henry. They drain to this pond and over time the water leaches back into the earth underneath Lake Henry Estates. It does not go directly into Lake Henry as the chemicals are considered pollutants and would spoil the lake. It is Lake Henry Estates responsibility to ensure Retention Pond #4 is well maintained.
2. Your own property essentially ends at the house-side of the retention pond. There is a stormwater easement along the edge of the pond. Understand if the stormwater system needs to be accessed in this area, LHE is within its rights to disrupt the property to access the stormwater system. As best we can tell from researched and oral history, this has not happened since Lake Henry Estates started in the early 1990’s.
3. The property on the lakeside of the retention pond belongs to Lake Henry Estates. Per an agreement with the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection, this area between the retention pond and the lake is a conservation area. No building, dumping, or clearing is allowed. Many homeowners have maintained this area by mowing or cutting back the natural growth. Note you are not allowed to plant anything in this area without approval from the Lake Henry Estates Board of Directors. The State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection has no problem with us removing non-indigenous plantings, but we cannot remove indigenous plantings. You are permitted to cut back the growth but not remove the roots.
4. On the house-side of the retention pond many homeowners have maintained a retention wall which essentially provides additional usable property for the homeowners. You are permitted to add or maintain the wall, but you must get permission from the LHE Architectural Committee. It does not require Polk County permits.
5. On the lakeside of the retention pond, imbedded in the dirt, is a retention wall (either wood or aluminum) maintained by Lake Henry Estates. You will see either a wooden board or aluminum “cap” running parallel with the retention pond, which is the top of the retention wall. This is Lake Henry Estates responsibility to maintain. This is part of the Retention Pond #4 and is not related to the lake front.
6. Over time, we have seen progressive erosion of the lake front “upland” or yard area due to varying water levels and severity of storms. We have asked the state if we are required to maintain the uplands area by stopping the erosion. Their response is we are not required to as erosion is natural. The Board of Directors at Lake Henry Estates has decided it is in the best interest of the community if we address the erosion issue as

eventually the shoreline will be against the Retention Pond wall. This will add pressure to the Retention Pond system, and we cannot allow this system to fail. As such, we have decided to proactively deter the progression of the erosion. The least invasive and lowest cost method is to invest in specific plantings which are designed for a watery environment and are known to prevent erosion. We are focusing on obtaining plantings which are approximately 2 feet tall or shorter to not obstruct your view of the lake.

7. As part of the maintenance of the retention pond, we are required to minimize the growth of plant life in the retention pond which would eventually diminish the effectiveness of the retention pond. We have a licensed professional weed management company spray the retention pond. We also sprayed along the lakefront to eliminate the invasive weeds.
8. We have an agreement with the State of Florida (State Lands Lease & Conservation Easement) which allows the homes with a grandfathered dock to continue to have them. If you do not have a dock in place, you are not allowed to install one. If you have a dock, you can maintain it, including replacing it in the same footprint as approved in the state lands lease for these structures. Please do not allow your dock to fall into disrepair as there is the risk the State of Florida will disqualify you from replacing the dock.
9. When it is time to work on your dock, you are required to submit a request to the Lake Henry Estates Architectural Committee. This is the approving body for such repairs. Know your dock is limited in width to approximately 4 feet. You are not allowed to extend your existing dock as the current length and width are limited by the permit which Lake Henry Estates has with the State of Florida.
10. As you can see, a house on the lakefront has significant limitations due to the retention pond, the conservation easement and lakefront erosion. It is recommended that you include this information on your mandatory disclosure form when it is time to sell your home.