

December 2018

DOES IT IMPACT HOME SALES?

Naples Area Board of REALTORS® is closely watching tourism activity to determine whether Florida's water quality issues impact home sales.

In October, tourism fell 1.8%, but pending sales of homes increased 17%.

While tourism helps people discover Naples, it does not appear to directly affect the housing market.

From January to October, tourism has gone up 2%. During this same time period, closed sales have increased 5%.

We encourage REALTOR® members to stay positive and focus on the facts about water quality and the many programs that provide both short- and long-term solutions.

Naples Area Board of REALTORS®

Water Quality Advisory



As the voice of REALTORS® in the Naples area, NABOR® has and will always advocate for action to reduce or eliminate any manmade or environmental threats to homeownership, property values and the living standards in Florida.

KEEPING OUR WATER CLEAN

Helpful Tips Homeowners Can Use To Reduce Water Contamination

Transitioning to a new home in Florida can be a challenge for a homeowner who migrated from a northern state. In addition to their first sighting of a Palmetto bug, homeowners that hail from a state where snow plows and windchill reports are common will need to become familiar with a whole new set of basic homeowner tips as they set up home in our subtropical climate.

As a REALTOR®, you are often their first point of contact and have a great opportunity to become a valuable resource and ally. This is a very important responsibility now more than ever as we continue to explore and implement solutions to Florida's water quality issues.

Possibly you've already been approached by a potential buyer who is concerned with media reports that paint an unflattering picture of our beaches, lakes and inland waterways.

The following homeowner tips can help Collier County reduce its "algae" footprint and improve its water quality for the benefit of all creatures that live near or in our local aquacultures.

Prescription Drug Disposal

It is estimated that at least half of all medications we bring home go unused. Numerous studies have found prescription drugs – like antibiotics, blood thinners, heart medications, hormones and opioids – are in just about every body of water that's near or used by humans.



This waste is changing the anatomy of our sea life. Discarded hormones are feminizing male fish. Researchers have found fish located near wastewater treatment plants have more female and intersex fish. Other research has found concentrated amounts of antidepressants in the brain tissue of fish downstream from wastewater treatment plants. Furthermore, ibuprofen is found to stimulate the growth of cyanobacteria and inhibit the growth of aquatic plants. See sidebar “Waste vs. Fresh” for local information.

Drug take-back programs can reduce water contamination from prescription and over-the-counter medications and their potential side effects on sealife. In Collier County, residents can dispose of medications responsibly at 12 locations through Operation Medicine Cabinet, a program by DrugFree Collier. Find a drop off center near you [HERE](#). If you are unable to discard medication using a drug take back program, please use the tips in the sidebar “Drain vs. Trash”.

Responsible Lawn Feeding

Lawns only need watering every five to seven days in the summer, and every 10 to 14 days in the winter. A heavy rain eliminates the need for watering for up to two weeks.

Application of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides must be very carefully applied around lakes, estuaries and any other waterways. The University of Florida Collier IFAS extension office recommends homeowners **maintain a buffer zone between where the granules land and the water's edge**. A zone of ten feet is recommended if no deflector shield is used. If the fertilizer applicator uses a deflector shield, delivery is easier to target, but there should still be a “no-go” buffer zone of three feet to prevent it from going into the water.

Too much nitrogen and phosphorous causes algae blooms that are detrimental to aquatic wildlife. Some insecticides, such as those used to kill chinch bugs, can actually kill fish.

To minimize run-off, carefully analyze how many pounds of fertilizer per 1000 sq. ft. should be applied and how many applications are needed to maintain the turf. The goal is to reduce the fertilizer and pesticide load on the environment, but still maintain a reasonable quality of turf. The Institute of Food and Agricultural Services recommends a fertilizer blend that contains slow release nitrogen and low levels of phosphorous.

Resources

- [DrugFree Collier - Medication Dropoff Locations](#)
- [Florida Department of Environmental Protection](#)
- [Collier County Watershed Management Plan](#)
- [Collier County Water Keepers](#)
- [Daily Red Tide Reports](#)

Waste vs. Fresh

Collier's Wastewater division provides reclaimed water (not for drinking) service to golf courses, parks, schools, residential and commercial areas.

According to Beth Johnssen, Director of Collier County's Inground Services Division/Public Utilities Department, “drinking water produced at our utility plants is compliant with the standards prescribed by the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection. We monitor for contaminants in the drinking water supply aquifers, of which none have been found.”

Drain vs. Trash

Flushing medications or washing them down a drain can have a long-lasting negative impact on aquatic ecosystems and water quality.

Medications thrown into the trash are incinerated or buried in landfills, which is preferable to drain or toilet disposal. If you put them in the trash, remove them from the packaging, crush them, and seal them in a plastic bag with some water or soda. Add sawdust, cat litter, coffee grounds, or some other unappealing material to the bag. Peel off any identifying personal information from pill bottles before you discard them.

Pump It

A neglected septic tank system can leak contaminants into groundwater and aquifers putting those who use water from nearby wells at risk for illness. Have your septic system inspected and pumped every 3 to 4 years.