

**HARMONY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES  
RECOMMENDATIONS, GUIDELINES, AND GOALS  
CONCERNING COMPANION ANIMALS, HABITAT, AND WILDLIFE**

***I. STATEMENT OF GENERAL INTENT***

The overall goal of Harmony is to promote the peaceful coexistence of human and animal residents within the community while striking a balance between the preservation, use and enjoyment of Harmony's natural areas. Underlying these objectives are the values of fostering a respect for the land, protection of wildlife and sensible use and enjoyment of Harmony's abundant natural and manmade amenities by its residents. Animals are treasured members of the Harmony community. Promoting the bonds between people and all animals, safeguarding the welfare of animals within the community, and serving as a model to other communities for the humane treatment of all animals are guiding principles of Harmony.

***II. HARMONY AND ITS ENVIRONMENT***

Harmony incorporates natural and human-built environments that blend in ways designed to enhance the relationships between humans and animals and maximize the benefits of their peaceful coexistence. While retaining natural areas, Harmony is part of a human-dominated landscape where human actions profoundly affect the welfare of wild animals. This document seeks to articulate a philosophy that allows natural elements to persist unimpeded by humans and minimizes the circumstances that lead to conflict between humans and wildlife. Harmony's stewardship concept involves balancing hands-off and hands-on approaches.

In relation to wildlife and to the environment in which they live, the goals of the Harmony community are:

- To promote an understanding of how connected humans are to wildlife and the surrounding environment.
- To foster tolerance, respect, and understanding of all living things.
- To provide opportunities for Harmony residents to view, hear, and interact with local flora and fauna in an ecologically and environmentally friendly way.
- To create and provide educational activities which will foster a community-wide land ethic and promote future land stewardship.

To meet these goals, the following sections detail activities that are regulated on a community-wide basis.

***III. GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

**A.) TREATMENT OF WILD ANIMALS**

- 1.) Other than as provided for herein, wild animals should not be purposely, intentionally, or recklessly injured or harmed. Causing injury or harm to an animal includes, but is not limited to, the purposeful destruction of active nesting sites or other habitat critical to the survival of an individual.
- 2.) Do not feed wild mammals, other than squirrels, except on an emergency basis as determined by the Committee. Feeding native and migratory songbird species is allowed in moderation. Feeding should not lead to conflicts between animals and humans.
- 3.) In instances of human/wildlife conflicts, all such conflicts should be resolved using nonlethal means, unless extraordinary and immediate circumstances pose a risk to the health, safety or welfare of humans or companion animals.
- 4.) Keep children and pets away from pond edges, and assume all ponds may have alligators in them. Always use caution around pond edges for this reason.

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- 5.) Alligators are an important part of Florida's landscape and play a valuable role in the ecology of our state's wetlands. Alligators are predators and help keep other aquatic animal populations in balance. Most alligators, if left alone, will not become a threat and can be enjoyed from a safe distance in their natural setting – they are generally afraid of people – and resting on the bank of a pond or swimming in one is not nuisance alligator behavior. In many cases, if left alone, these alligators will eventually move on to areas away from people. A [nuisance alligator](#) is one that approaches people or pets or is not afraid of them, so is a danger, and the larger the alligator the more dangerous these behaviors are. When someone calls FWC to report an alligator as a nuisance, a trapper comes and removes the alligator and, in most cases, the alligator is killed and processed for its hide and meat. If you call in an alligator as a nuisance gator, it will very likely to be killed.

**B.) ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

- 1.) Do not use avicides (chemicals registered to kill birds) or predacides (chemicals registered to kill predatory animals).
- 2.) Chemical pesticides should be used and disposed of according to label and in a manner to protect wildlife. Disposal or spillage of hazardous materials, chemicals, and residue-producing antibacterial agents is prohibited.
- 3.) The planting or cultivation of known invasive, non-native plants is prohibited. This includes areas both inside and outside homeowners' properties. Reference to standards set forth by Osceola County, Florida may be referred to as a source of information to aid in the identification of such plants, but should not be the sole source of such information. Examples of invasive, non-native plants include, but are not limited to, air potato, camphor tree, Old World climbing fern, Chinaberry, giant sensitive plant, Chinese tallow, Brazilian pepper-tree, Melaleuca, and Australian Pine. The Florida Exotic Pest Council provides a complete list of such species at <http://www.fleppc.org/> and identification aides are available from the University of Florida's Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants at <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/>. However, no tree or shrub that contains a bird nest with eggs or dependent young or mammal's den with dependent young may be removed before those young have fledged or matured to self- sufficiency except when compelling safety issues mandate so.
- 4.) Waste motor oil, anti-freeze, and other hazardous materials should be collected for proper disposal and should under no circumstances be drained onto the ground or any paved area or allowed to enter either the stormwater or wastewater collection systems.
- 5.) All residential outdoor home and yard lighting should, to the maximal extent practicable, be of low intensity and conform to "dark sky" standards of downward projected "full-cut off" illumination to shield light from emitting upwards toward the open sky or surrounding natural areas. Mercury vapor and metal halide lights are prohibited. Motion and timer controlled light switches are encouraged.
- 6.) To prevent dangerous wildfires and the unnecessary generation of smoke, the open burning of leaves, yard wastes or materials of any kind is prohibited, except for small fire pits of 3' or less in diameter especially designed to contain small fires.
- 7.) Residential activity on lots adjoining natural or designed wildlife corridors and preserve areas should not encroach into such features as a result of vegetation removal, mowing, or other landscaping practices.

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C.) COMPANION ANIMALS

- 1.) Understand that owners are held liable for all damage to public property and common areas caused by their domestic animals and those of their tenants, guests, and invitees.
- 2.) Residents are responsible and liable for the control, management, and humane care of their animals so as not to cause a nuisance or disturbance to the community or risks to the health, safety, or welfare of people, animals, wildlife, and natural habitat.
- 3.) Unwanted domestic animals, including fish and birds, should not be released into the Harmony environment, but should be offered for adoption or brought to Osceola County Animal Services (407) 742-8000.
- 4.) Domestic animals should not be confined to restrictive crates or cages for any unreasonable length of time and should not be left unattended within private property for any unreasonable length of time as this may be considered negligent and cause a disturbance including persistent vocalization by barking. Dogs and cats need adequate shelter from rain, intense heat or cold, and should always have adequate nutrition, fresh drinking water, and regular and substantial human interaction.
- 5.) Outdoor shelters must protect pets from inclement weather and should be kept free of waste, well ventilated, and allow for drainage of any accumulation of moisture. Outdoor shelters should be one and one-half the length of the dog and be of sufficient height that the dog is able to stand with its head erect, ears up, and not touching the roof of the shelter.
- 6.) Dogs should not be left unattended in a yard for more than two hours.
- 7.) No domestic animal should be allowed to roam free off a resident's property. Cats must be on a harness with attached leash. Dogs must wear a collar or harness with attached leash and be able to be controlled around other pets and people.
- 8.) All domestic animals in heat should not be off-leash at any time in any public area including any dog park areas until one week following the end of the heat cycle and should be inaccessible to all other animals and not be left outdoors.
- 9.) All pet owners must pick up their pet's solid waste and dispose of it in the provided doggie pot containers or in their own waste containers.
- 10.) Pet food should not be left outdoors after dark so as not to attract wild animals to the residential areas.
- 11.) Residents should not encourage the presence of un-owned, feral, or wild species by feeding them, intentionally or unintentionally (such unsecured trash cans or pet food).

***NOTE: Residents, tenants, guests, and invitees should comply with these guidelines and recommendations, as well as all Laws regarding wild animals including, but not limited to, the laws of the State of Florida, the Osceola County Code, and any applicable zoning ordinances, which prohibit or limit hunting, trapping, killing, harming, attracting, or feeding wildlife, hybridizing or keeping hybridized animals, use of chemicals according to applicable laws and regulations, and the proper and regular vaccination of companion animals.***