

DOG OWNER RESPONSIBILITY IN RIVER WILDERNESS

Owning a dog is a pleasure and a privilege, and it carries with it a responsibility both to the animal and to the neighborhood where you and your pet live. This letter is a summary of the Manatee County Animal Ordinance which took effect May 14, 2012. Please help give dog owners a good reputation in River Wilderness by following these Manatee County Ordinances.

Please care for your pets and manage them so they 1) are not an annoyance to others, 2) do not cause a health danger to people, and 3) do not cause harm to our environment:

Pet Waste

- Manatee County and River Wilderness *require pet owners to pick up after their animals on common property or the property of others* no matter how small the deposit may be. No one wants to step in or smell that "gift" your dog left behind. Your animal should not be allowed to wander on a fully extended leash onto someone's property to make a deposit. Your dog should be kept in close proximity to the street/sidewalk. Your neighbor will appreciate your courtesy.
- Dog waste is a potent pollutant both on land and in water. Dog waste thrown down drains or directly into our ponds is the equivalent of creating sewage in our neighborhoods.

Vaccinations and Licensing

- *Rabies vaccinations* are required for all dogs, cats and ferrets.
- A Manatee County *license tag* is required annually for dogs and cats, and your pet is required to wear them. (The tags are very valuable in returning lost pets. Having your pet "chipped" is another great aid in identifying a lost animal).

Control over Your Pet

- Dogs and cats are *not allowed to run at large* and must be on leashes. All animals must be under the physical control of the owner and it is respectful to keep the animal close to you.
- Manatee County actually dictates that leashes should be no longer than 8 feet in length when your dog or cat is off your own property.
- All dogs and cats must also be *under the direct control of the owner or custodian*

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while on the property of the owner or custodian. This means the dog or cat must be confined on the property by a fence (the ordinance does recognize invisible fences, provided they are in working order), chain, leash, or cord of sufficient strength to restrain the animal or the animal shall be attended and supervised by a competent person by hand or voice control when on the property of the owner or custodian or property the owner or custodian has the right to use.

- The ordinance to *control your animal includes barking*. You should not leave a barking dog outside or on your lanai. Continuous barking is not only unfair to your dog -- it is rude and annoying to the neighbors. Again, some of our houses are close and no neighbor enjoys listening to a barking dog.

Transport of Animals

- Animals are not allowed to be left in vehicles unattended. The extreme heat could kill your pet very quickly. Dogs love to ride in cars. Many dog owners use dog safety belts for protection or put them in a carrier for their safety. If you own a pickup truck, Manatee County dictates the animal must be restrained by 2 tethers attached to opposite sides of the truck or be in a carrier.

These ordinances likely sound like common sense to most of us, but some dog owners do not accept their responsibility. Please help to keep River Wilderness a good home where our pets are respected and respectful.

This summary uses much of the same language as the excellent letter sent as an aid to the community several years ago by Tammy Smith and Vicky Jenkins. It is meant as a reminder of the laws and an exhortation to meet our responsibilities.

Sincerely,

Dan Verreault
12182 Maple Ridge Drive
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