

## Q: What happens to the water in our ponds?

A: Most of it flows into Little Sarasota Bay and, eventually, the Gulf of Mexico.

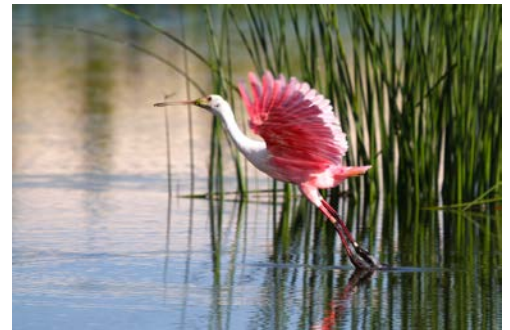
All of Palmer Ranch's lakes and ponds are a part of a connected, man-made stormwater management system that is designed to help prevent flooding and maintain the Bay's water quality.

- Most of it evaporates—about 74%.
- The remainder flows into the Bay. Almost 35% of the water in the Bay is from direct runoff.

Our stormwater runoff flows into two creeks: Catfish Creek, which enters Little Sarasota Bay near Vamo, and South Creek, which flows through Oscar Scherer State Park and empties into the Bay south of Blackburn Bridge. We're part of the Little Sarasota Bay watershed—one of seven watersheds in Sarasota County.

A few facts about our watershed:

- It's 44 square miles, with 36 named lakes and ponds and eight named creeks and canals feeding into Little Sarasota Bay.
- It's home to oysters, manatees, sea turtles, dolphins, many species of fish, waterfowl, hawks, bald eagles, osprey, and much more.
- It has a healthy population of sea grass—nurseries of the ocean that support fish and shellfish and serve as food for manatees and sea turtles.
- Its creeks contain too little dissolved oxygen and too much nitrogen and phosphorous.
- Catfish Creek carries the largest amount of water in our watershed, and almost half the pollution load.
- The two creeks our stormwater ponds drain into—Catfish Creek and South Creek—do not currently meet Florida water quality standards.



Roseate Spoonbill – Credit: Mark Vance

From fertilizing to applying pesticides to picking up pet waste (or not), many things we do every day affect our watershed. To learn more, visit: the Sarasota County Water Atlas at <https://www.sarasota.wateratlas.usf.edu> and enter "Little Sarasota Bay watershed" in the site's search bar.

*Written by the Palmer Ranch Watershed / Natural Assets Committee, a group dedicated to maintaining and improving our water, preserves, and common areas.*