



THE LAKE FOREST *News*

SUMMER 2026



OFFICIAL *Newsletter* OF LAKE FOREST

Social Committee

A Meet and Greet Ice Cream Social was held on June 18th at the Clubhouse to welcome our new Property Manager - Riley Harding

We will be having a Lunch and Learn on July 11th at 11:30am at the clubhouse. This presentation is designed to provide general information about available end-of-life planning options, including common practices, considerations, and resources to help residents better understand their choices between burial and cremation services.

This is an informational session only and is intended to support residents who may be planning ahead or seeking clarity on available options in a relaxed, educational setting.

Save the date if you're interested and see you there!

Celebrate the 4th of July — Our Nation's 250th Birthday!



This year's Independence Day is especially meaningful as we celebrate the 250th birthday of the United States! It's a perfect time to gather with family, enjoy summer tradi-

tions, and take part in some of the great local festivities happening across the Tampa Bay area.

Family-friendly celebrations nearby include:

Liberty by the Bay (Downtown Tampa / Riverwalk)

- **Location:** Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park and downtown Riverwalk
- **Time:** 4:00 PM – 9:30 PM, Friday, July 4, 2026
- **Highlights:** Live entertainment, food vendors, family activities, a patriotic boat parade, a 250-drone light show, and a fireworks finale over the Hillsborough River

Temple Terrace Celebration

- Community parade in the morning (around 10:00 AM) along residential routes near the Temple Terrace Golf & Country Club
- Evening festival and fireworks show beginning around 9:15 PM

Lutz Celebration

- **Date:** Friday, July 4, 2026
- **Time:** Parade begins around **10:00 AM**
- **Location:** Lutz Lake Fern Road area / Lutz community center corridor
- **Includes** typical small-town features like floats, veterans groups, and local organizations
- **Morning Fun Run (before parade):** 5K + 1-mile family run starts early morning at Lutz Civic Center

Wishing all residents a safe, joyful, and memorable Independence Day as we celebrate 250 years of freedom!





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Amy Herrick
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Vice President - Vivian Deluca
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Lake Forest Property Management
Riley Harding
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813-972-1800

Office Hours: 10am - 3pm
Pool Hours: Dawn to Dusk
Lake Forest Homeowner's Assoc.
Website: condo.cincwebaxis.com

TECO Bill Reduction Coming in August

Residential and small business customers will see a reduction in electric bills beginning August 1, with savings appearing on September bills based on August usage. Rates are expected to decrease by approximately \$20 per 1,000 kWh used, or about 11%–12% overall.

For many households, this will result in meaningful monthly savings—approximately \$40 for homes using 2,000 kWh and up to \$60 for homes using 3,000 kWh.

This reduction is the result of the completion of a temporary storm recovery charge that supported restoration efforts following recent hurricanes.

Curb Dumping – Not in Our Community

- Placing furniture, mattresses, or other bulky items at the curb without proper scheduling can result in fines, pest issues, and additional cleanup costs for the community.
- Items should only be placed at the curb in accordance with county rules or approved pickup arrangements.
- The HOA provides donation and dumpster events twice a year; residents are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities when available.
- Proper disposal options include:
 - Scheduling a bulky item pickup through Hillsborough County Solid Waste (fees may apply) at (813) 272-5680 or SolidWaste@HCFL.gov
 - Using county disposal facilities and annual drop-off allowances
 - Donating usable items to organizations such as Salvation Army, Good Will or Habitat for Humanity
 - Using licensed junk removal services where appropriate

Wildlife Spotlight: Atala butterfly and Coontie

The Atala butterfly is a striking native Florida species known for its dark wings with bright blue markings. It relies exclusively on the coontie plant (*Zamia integrifolia*) as its host plant, meaning it lays its eggs and its caterpillars feed only on this native species.

The Atala butterfly was once thought to be extinct in the 1930s due to habitat loss and the decline of coontie, but a surviving colony was later discovered in the Miami area. Conservation efforts have since helped restore its presence in parts of the state.

Both the Atala butterfly and coontie are native to Florida. Coontie grows well in the Tampa area and thrives in full to partial sun, making it a low-maintenance, landscape-friendly native plant.

Take a closer look at the coontie along Tall Tree Drive and you may see the caterpillars in action!



Behind the Scenes: How the Lake & Landscape Committee Serves Our Community

Our community's lakes, trees, and landscaped areas play an important role in the beauty, character, and enjoyment of Lake Forest. The Lake and Landscape Committee serves as a liaison between residents, the Board of Directors, and our contractors to help maintain and enhance these shared spaces. Below are several key initiatives and priorities the committee is working on to keep our community attractive, safe, and well-maintained.

Adopt-a-Pond & Tree Grant

Through Hillsborough County's Adopt-a-Pond and Tree Grant programs, Lake Forest has received funding to enhance our community with new aquatic plants and trees. These additions will help beautify our lakes and common areas while enhancing the overall appearance of the neighborhood. Due to ongoing drought conditions, the county has temporarily delayed the plant acquisition process; however, we anticipate the plantings will take place in late June or July.

Dead, Dying, and Hazardous Trees

Maintaining a healthy and safe tree canopy is an important responsibility for our community. The HOA is currently evaluating and addressing trees and large limbs that may pose a risk to residents, property, and common areas.

Many residents are aware of the large oak limb that fell on Mother's Day, temporarily blocking Pine Glen Circle. In addition, several other tree failures have occurred throughout the community, resulting in property damage and highlighting the need for a proactive approach to tree management.

The Lake and Landscape Committee is working with the Board and our contractors to identify dead, declining, or structurally compromised trees and develop a plan to address potential hazards while preserving the beauty and character of our community. This effort includes evaluating trees in common areas, monitoring high-risk limbs, and prioritizing maintenance where safety concerns exist.

Front Entry and Median Shrub Replacement

The HOA is currently seeking bids to replace shrubs in the front entry and median areas that were impacted by the February freeze. While some plantings have recovered, others did not survive and will need to be replaced.

To ensure longer term resilience and help manage project costs, the new landscaping plan will focus on cold-tolerant plant varieties and appropriately sized, younger plantings that can establish and thrive in our community's conditions.

Townhome Landscaping Standards Review

The Board and Landscape Committee is currently reviewing the history and current status of townhome landscaping guidelines to better understand how standards have evolved over time and where clarification may be needed.

The committee is gathering information on past and current landscaping practices in the townhome areas, including general maintenance standards, planting practices, and how landscaping has been managed around buildings, fences, and HOA-maintained areas over time.

Residents with historical knowledge, relevant information, or an interest in participating in this effort are encouraged to contact the Lake and Landscape Committee directly.





FRIDAY is main trash day (Recycling, Regular pickup & yard trimmings)

Leave bagged yard trimmings at curb near garbage bins. Boxes need to be broken down to fit inside the recycle bin. Do NOT leave any furniture, mattresses, or over-sized boxes out. The city will not take anything that doesn't fit in your garbage container. **Tuesday is only regular trash bin.** Don't forget to put away your trash bins!

Considering Native Landscaping for Your Yard

Native plants are naturally adapted to Tampa's heat, rainfall patterns, and soil conditions. As a result, they typically require less irrigation, fewer chemicals, and less ongoing maintenance while also supporting birds, butterflies, and other beneficial wildlife. By contrast, some popular ornamental trees—while visually appealing—can become problematic over time.

A good example is the golden rain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*). This fast-growing ornamental is known for its bright yellow summer flowers, but in Florida landscapes it often behaves as a nuisance species. It produces large quantities of seed pods that germinate easily, leading to volunteer seedlings throughout lawns, garden beds, and neighboring properties. It can also spread into unmanaged areas and create ongoing maintenance concerns for homeowners.

To avoid planting nuisance-prone ornamentals like the golden rain tree consider instead reliable native alternatives that perform well in our region.

Recommended options include:

- Chickasaw Plum (*Prunus angustifolia*) – seasonal flowers and wildlife-friendly fruit
- Simpson's Stopper (*Myrcianthes fragrans*) – evergreen structure with fragrant blooms
- Dahoon Holly (*Ilex cassine*) – attractive berries and year-round screening value
- Gumbo Limbo (*Bursera simaruba*) – shade, resilience, and unique visual character

Selecting the right plants today helps reduce maintenance issues, supports local ecosystems, and preserves the long-term beauty and value of our Tampa community.

Plant Nurseries with Florida native options:

- Little Red Wagon 4113 W Henderson Blvd, Tampa, FL 33629
- Wilcox Nursery 2615 E Lake Ave, Largo, FL 33771
- Crosscreek Environmental 111 61st St E, Palmetto, FL 34221



Golden Rain Tree Non-Native



Chickasaw Plum Native

**PLEASE
DO NOT FEED
THE WILDLIFE**

Please be aware of your surroundings and use caution when approaching any of the lakes' edges since alligators may be present. Stay at least 30 feet away, especially when walking with small dogs or children. Pay attention to the posted warning signs. **Do not feed the wildlife!**

Newsletter:

Sarah Johnson – Spbrennan@gmail.com.
Please email me with any ideas, articles, and/or neighborhood photos you would like to submit for the next newsletter.