

# Pocket Gophers



The Board has confirmed with the HOA's pest control vendor All Florida Pest Control that pocket gophers are present in the common areas. **Pocket gophers** are a native wildlife species and they are **protected** by Florida Law.

## Information from the University of Florida IFAS Extension Polk County office (UF/IFAS Extension Polk County) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC):

- In open common area spaces, pocket gophers are seen as “assisting” the ecosystem through the “aeration” of the ground (the sand mounds) and by creating a habitat for other species.
- Pocket gophers move from place to place to find their food source (mostly tap roots, crown roots, fleshy rhizomes, bulbs, and tubers of a wide variety of plants in its natural environment); their food source thrives generally as a result of too much irrigation.
- According to FWC, pocket gophers may be considered a “nuisance” if they become too abundant or if their tunnels create an obvious danger to residents or property. Florida Statute 379 provides guidance to property owners relating to nuisance wildlife.
- According to UF/IFAS Extension Polk County, homeowner remediation methods that have no quantifiable research results and/or may do more harm to the ecosystem:
  - Moth balls: the chemicals in moth balls **harm** the water system and food sources for other predatory friendly species when used inappropriately. Mothball application to a yard or open outdoor area is not legal or effective as a control method.
  - All-natural repellents: Currently, there is no research or evidence to support effectiveness.
  - High-frequency underground sound emitting systems: there is no research or evidence to support effectiveness; however, there is some evidence that these types of systems may lead to pet hearing loss.

Homeowner Recommendations: Contact a licensed pest control company to understand remediation methods. If homeowners need assistance with irrigation recommendations for their lawn or landscaping, UF/IFAS Extension Polk County's Plant Clinic can answer questions. Call or email them at (863) 519-1057 or polkmg@ifas.ufl.edu.

HOA Board Decision for Pocket Gophers in Common Areas: After consultation with the above referenced professionals, the Board has decided to not treat or remove pocket gophers from the HOA's common areas. The Board will monitor the irrigation of these areas and reserves the right to address areas of concerns in common areas that become a nuisance in the future.

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## Additional Resources

- <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/edw/UW/UW08100.pdf>
- <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/marionco/2018/01/05/pocket-gopher/>
- <https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/mammals/land/pocket-gopher/>
- <https://myfwc.com/conservation/you-choose/wildlife/remove/>: “Complete eradication of a native species from a property is not recommended and is generally an ineffective method to address conflict.”