



On Our Pond

A NEWSLETTER FOR CLEANER WATER & BETTER POND ENVIRONMENTS



Volume 8 No 1 Adopt-A-Pond is sponsored by Hillsborough County, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and YOU! Spring 2002

ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Pond Walks

- 49th Ave
- Wayne Rd
- Kensington Woods
- Oak Cluster
- Heron Park Place

Education Meetings

- Learning Gate Env. Magnet School
- Caloosa Creek
- Hope Park

Cleanups

- Hope Park
- Temple Terrace Woods
- Cole Logan
- Shadowcrest

Plantings

- 12 Oaks Smaller
- Foxridge
- Carrollwood Cove
- River Close
- Villager Place
- Hope Park

'TIS THE SEASON OF FESTIVALS AND EVENTS



At this time of year there's just no shortage of festivals and gatherings. But hey, that's okay we **LOVE** doing events. If you haven't seen us somewhere, you're just not trying! To see some highlights from our many festive adventures check out **Out on the Town** on **page 3**

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Illegal Dumping	page 2
Tag Your Drains	page 2
Out on the Town	page 3
Take a Walk with Us	page 3
The Next Big Thing	page 4
Watershed Atlas	page 4
Phosphate	page 5
LaMP Talk Seminars	page 5
Websites	page 6
Pond Sampling	page 6

ILLEGAL DUMPING- Dang! I just cleaned that!



By Martin Montalvo

We've all seen it, the unsightly trash that persistently seems to accumulate in our stormwater ponds and conservation areas. Where does it all come from, and how do you keep it out !!!

Most often this trash and other assorted items are the result of illegal dumping. Some people seem to view our ponds as a cheap and convenient place to dump their unwanted items. What they don't realize is, illegal dumping has the potential of harming us all. Improperly disposed materials can contain hazardous substances that may be introduced into our water supply. Other items, such as old chairs, shopping carts, and tires, while not toxic, diminish the amount of storage capacity in our ponds. This translates into a

smaller amount of water that can be stored during a major storm. Other forms of dumping include the discharge of water or other liquids into ponds, conservation areas or directly into the stormwater drainage system.

So what can each of us do to prevent dumping within our ponds and other environmentally sensitive areas? The first step is, "practice what we preach." Dispose of our trash in the appropriate manner. Hillsborough County Solid Waste (272-5680) performs household chemical collections twice a month at select locations within the county. Items such as car tires and batteries can be disposed of at the nearest county landfill.

What can you do if you see others dumping? If the dumping is actively occurring contact your local law enforcement agency, **at no time should you confront the individual**. Then document the incident by taking photos or video of the activity or immediately following it. Once you've documented the dumping contact the appropriate County department. The Solid Waste Department can initiate an investigation. Additionally, the Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission (272-5788) can investigate dumping that occurs within certain ponds and conservation areas. Remember illegal dumping affects us all.

TAG YOUR DRAINS It's not only a good idea...

Many of you have already done it, some of you may have seen them around. But as the new season opens up, we want to let you all know that marking your stormdrains is easy, available, and a great way to spread the word about keeping our stormwater clean. Adopt-A-Pond can send you a kit with everything you'll need. We use custom designed PVC markers that are attractive and easy to apply. These bright blue markers are sure to catch the attention of potential polluters as well as the average person on the street. What's more, our new design bears the Hillsborough County Stormwater Ordinance number, letting people know that anything going down those drains beside stormwater is not only pollution, but illegal.



Our kit contains enough markers to do all the drains in your area, special curb glue, and door hangers to let people know what's going on. These kits are available to anyone in Hillsborough County and it's the perfect program for kids, or students looking for a community service project. What's more, **we sponsor big events!** So if your school, youth group, or volunteer organization is interested, let us know, we'll help you promote it. And for all the Adopt-A-Pond groups out there; remember, it's not only a good idea, it's part of your program agreement, so if you haven't marked your drains yet contact us today!

OUT ON THE TOWN

This time of year we're all over the place!

Every spring Adopt-A-Pond has the pleasure of attending all kinds of festivals and events. These events let us get out, meet people, and have a lot of fun. Our display is always popular, not to mention our stacks of giveaways. And of course, who doesn't notice a 6 foot glittering fish!

Officer Snook has a blast mingling with everyone from greyhounds (that's right the dogs) to local bands. He even gets in a little dancing from time to time! But the best part is that we get to meet people from every walk of life and talk about what's been going on.

Plus we exhibitors get to see what others are doing in the area. I'm often pleasantly surprised to find out about a program that I didn't even know existed.

So next time you hear about an event come on out. We'd love to see you!



Checking out the info at USF Earth Day.



Abe & Ivis helping out at the booth.



Officer Snook showing off at Lowry Park Earth Day.

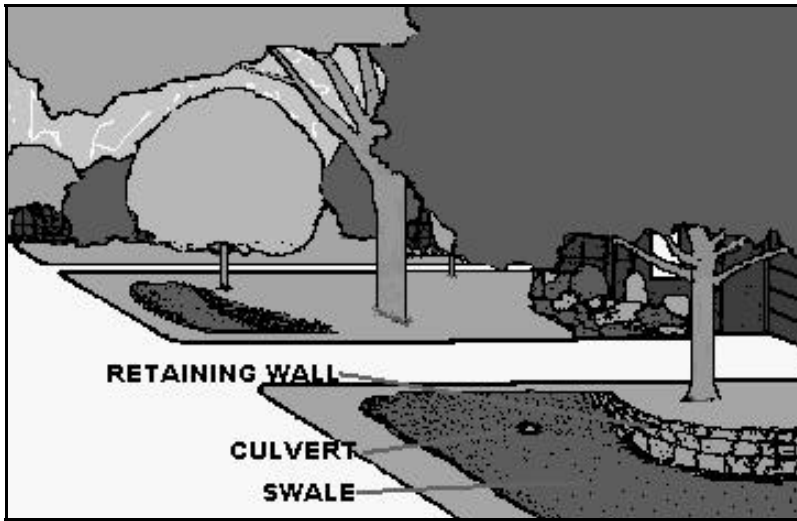
ANNUAL LAKE POND AND STREAM SEMINAR

Last year we had a great turn out, but many people said they didn't know about it, so here's the first announcement. On Friday, September 20 from 6pm-9pm at the Florida Aquarium we'll be hosting our annual Lake, Pond, & Stream Seminar. This event is free for your enjoyment, so come on out and learn about what's going on in the area. We'll have guest speakers, live music, and you'll have plenty of opportunity to mingle with other pond groups and environmental volunteers... and as always the Aquarium exhibits will be open, it's quite an experience at night! Keep your eyes open for more information as the date approaches.

TAKE A WALK WITH US- Pond Walks are back in session



Wondering what you could do with your pond? Not sure where to start? Need a way to get your neighbors interested, or reenergize that older Pond Group? Then try a Pond Walk! This is a free service to residents of Hillsborough County. We'll send out a volunteer biologist to walk the pond with you and your neighbors. They'll answer questions, identify plants, and give you an idea about where you'll need to start. Our biologists are all environmental professionals from agencies in this area and they volunteer their time to help you get a better understanding of your pond and what it takes to manage it. Pond Walks are available Monday-Thursday from 8:00am-7:30pm from April-October. Most of them take place in the evening around 6:30 so everyone has time to get off work and come out. We'll even send you a packet with announcements to pass out to the neighbors. To schedule a Pond Walk in your area call **272-5912**.



The Next Big Thing

New trends in Stormwater Management

Information adapted from: *Stormwater Paradigms* by Andy Reese

Stormwater management has always focused on one main thing, moving excess stormwater out of our way. But over time, there have been lots of changes in the concepts that govern how we solve problems, that is to say the paradigms have shifted. These paradigms have evolved from strictly getting rid of water to our current system of comprehensive management and pollution prevention. And I'm sure it hasn't seen its final form. So what's in store for the future, and what should we know?

Well there's increasing use of a new concept that does away with ponds like ours all together. This idea incorporates very small scale, almost invisible stormwater management that is blended into the overall landscape of our developments. Rather than one big pond that everyone lives around, yards contain shallow swales and little rain gardens that let water puddle and percolate. In higher flow areas we get underdrains and infiltration systems. The idea being that instead of ponding it, we'll slow it down enough to let it trickle away. This is great because we don't have the huge weedy projects like you guys are familiar with, and developers get some extra lots to sell. Not to mention this enables us to better mimic natural hydrology and preserve a more natural setting. Sounds good, right? Well maybe. The problem is that we have no central system. That means each person has to be responsible for maintaining their own little piece. And since the pieces are so subtle, they're easy to ignore. For example, as shallow swales grow grass, they start to fill in. Eventually that small dip in the yard is flat and the rain runs straight into the house or street. Fixing it means digging up your yard. Now this isn't to say it's a bad concept, as long as people understand the system and how to take care of it. But I doubt we'll ever do away with our ponds all together. Perhaps a combination of these approaches is best. Regardless, I think we're going to see a decline in the ignorant homeowner, replaced by knowledgeable residents who understand the larger picture and maintain a connection with natural functions and services. And you know what? This isn't new... prior to the large suburban bloom of last century, most people HAD to be this way because there WAS no infrastructure. So empowered residents using natural methods to create a safe, beautiful, & healthy residential environment... hmm, now where have I seen that before?

THE WATERSHED ATLAS

New, Improved, and better looking

We're proud to announce that the brand new Hillsborough County Watershed Atlas is now online. Some of you may be familiar with the Lake Atlas that has been available for several years, but now it's been expanded and has a whole new look. This site features information on all the major watersheds in Hillsborough County. You can find everything from searchable aerial photos of your area, to scientific data on waterbodies in the county. There's even a function that automatically generates graphs of the information for you. Plus there's a big section on education where you can find links and documents to help you learn about watershed management. This site has already won awards for its design and content, and it's not even finished yet. In the future you can expect to see a question and answer forum, FAQ, and Adopt-A-Pond forms and information... Yes that's right, the Adopt-A-Pond webpages will finally become a reality as part of the watershed atlas. But most importantly, this website will be used to help manage and maintain our valuable water resources.

The atlas was developed by The USF Florida Center for Community Design Research in cooperation with Hillsborough County and SWFWMD. Check it out and let us know what you think.

The address is www.hillsborough.waterratlas.org



WATER QUALITY- phosphate

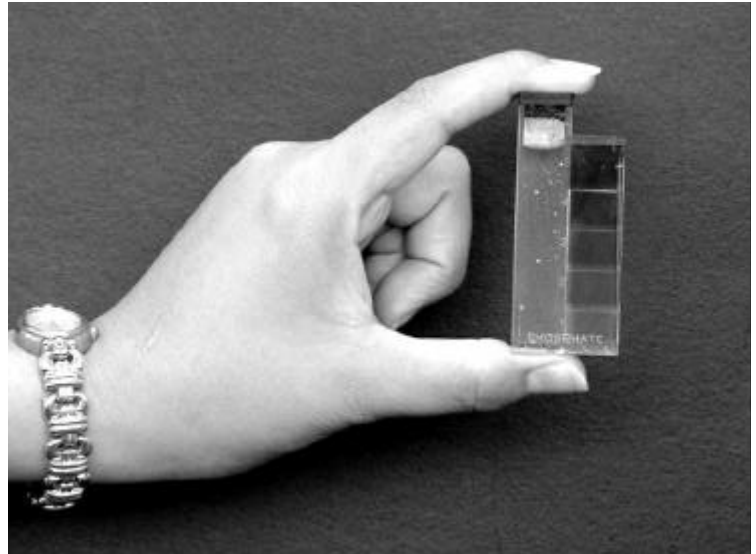
This quarter we'll take a look at phosphate. Phosphate is actually a form of phosphorous. Since phosphorous usually occurs in phosphate form, this is what we test for. You may recognize phosphates as a component of complete fertilizers. When you read the label, for example 16-4-8, the second number always represents the amount of phosphoric acid, in this case 4%.

Phosphorous is one of the major nutrients needed for plant growth, hence the reason it's in fertilizer. In the case of our ponds, this nutrient is often in short supply. When a necessary item for growth is not as plentiful as the others, this item becomes the **limiting factor**, or the thing that plant growth depends on. Think of it as a recipe. If you have enough ingredients to make several cakes, but only have enough eggs for one, you simply can't make more than one cake¹. Now to translate this to our pond situation, algae is most often limited by phosphorous. So the more phosphates you read in your pond, the more chance of algae growth you have. And we all know that algae can lead to fish kills and the green cloudy water that we hate to look at.

Now our ponds are designed to catch these nutrients before they get to a natural waterbody, so they'll always be high in nutrients and very productive (growing lots of plants). But we can cut the inputs by landscaping with Florida plants, using fertilizer appropriately, and teaching others in the area to do the same. Remember that even houses away from the pond can contribute nutrients through the stormdrains.

To learn more about interpreting your test results see the **Sampling** section on **page 6**.

¹ Illustration taken from "A Lake Management Primer for Non-Scientists" by Donald D. Moores, Pinellas County Dept. of Env. Mgt., 1998



LAMP TALK SEMINAR SERIES

More to do for the summer

Every month from August through May, the Hillsborough County Lake Management Program (LaMP) presents the LaMP Talk seminar series. LaMP Talk is part of the environmental education program of LaMP. These free seminars are open to the public and consist of a 45 minute presentation by a guest speaker, followed by a question and answer session. Topics cover a range of issues related to lakes, ponds, rivers and any other subjects dealing with water quality.

The 2001 series featured topics such as: minimum flows and levels for lakes and rivers, the role of plants in lakes and ponds, rules and regulations, lake management plans, and lake protection strategies. Guest speakers come from both the public and private sector and have a lot of hands on

experience in their field.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month and alternate between the **Keystone Civic Center** located on Gunn Highway, and **Nye Park** located on Sunset Boulevard. Meetings always begin at **7:00 pm** and end at **8:30 pm**. We would like to invite you to come and be part of another exciting year of our program. For more information, please contact Carlos Fernandes, program coordinator at **(813) 307-1824** or email fernandesc@hillsboroughcounty.org in order to be included on the mail list.

