



Hillsborough County
Florida

On Our Pond

**A NEWSLETTER FOR CLEANER WATER &
BETTER POND ENVIRONMENTS**



Volume 6, No 4

Adopt-A-Pond is sponsored by Hillsborough County,
the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and
YOU!

Fall
2000

Activities Update

Pond Walks:

- W Kirby St
- W Marquette Ave
- Sylvia Ln
- Crestfield Dr
- Lakeville Dr
- Selah Ranch Ln
- Rails Rd
- Walker Rd
- Deepbrook Dr
- Hidden Shadow Dr
- Lake Kell Ct
- Deer Lake Dr
- Merry Ln

Education Meetings:

- Edgewater Village
- Logan Place
- Hounds Run
- Bloomingdale
- Villager Place
- John Knox Village

Cleanups:

- University Village

Plantings:

- Carrollwood Meadows
- Bath Pond
- Palmer's Pond
- Edgewater Village
- Bloomingdale

The Annual Pond Seminar—A Big Success!



Chuck Cichra of the University of Florida spoke on several topics at the seminar on November 4th. Here he discusses oxygen cycles and fish. Take a look at the article on page 3 for more on the event and some pictures. Look close, you may see someone you know.

See article on page 3

On Our Pond

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The Ecological Communities of Hillsborough County: Slough

The in-between community



Taken from the Delaney Creek Watershed Management Plan

Sloughs are generally found within other large habitat types and can vary greatly in size. They are primarily long and narrow, and serve as connecting ways between wetlands.

This community is associated with nearly level land and coarse, somewhat poorly drained soils. The plants and animals can vary greatly within this habitat depending on the communities the slough runs through. If this community is forested, the edge of the slough is lined with cypress or slash pine. If a shrub layer exists, buttonbush, waxmyrtle or Saint Johnswort will generally dominate it. The groundcover may consist of pickerelweed, dwarf sundew, meadowbeauties, milkworts, and yellow-eyed

grass. However, grasses and sedges generally dominate with species such as maidencane, switchgrasses, threeawns, spikerushes, beakrushes, and flatsedges.

Many animals can be found in sloughs that are typical of the surrounding habitats. Typical animals include white-tailed deer, marsh rabbit, cotton rat, armadillo and raccoon. The herbaceous habitats, in particular, will be important feeding areas for long-legged wading birds such as herons, egrets, ibis, wood stork and roseate spoonbill. In terms of reptiles and amphibians, these areas are important as well. For many of the small treefrogs and salamanders, a relatively predator-, or at least fish-, free environment can be found in the sloughs that completely dry up at some point in the year, typically the winter.

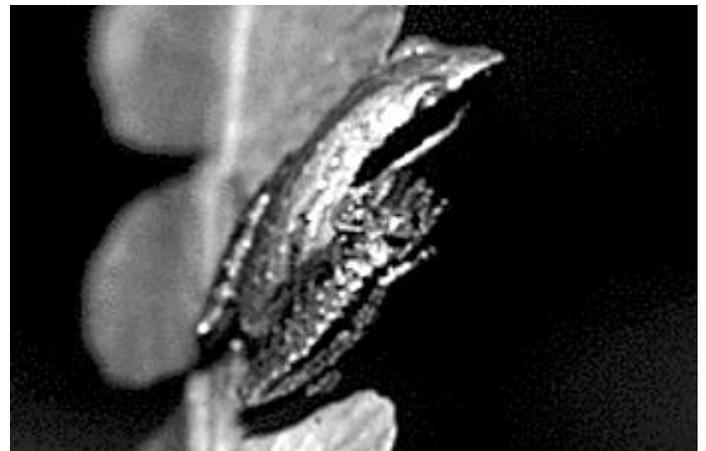
Hillsborough County Household Chemical Collections from 9am-3pm. **Saturday, December 2** at **9805 Sheldon Rd** in the Northwest county. And **Saturday, December 9** at **626 Golf & Sea Blvd** in the South county. Materials accepted include paints, automotive products, household cleaners, and pool chemicals. For more information on what's accepted call **272-5680**.

Little Grass Frog

I thought that was a cricket!

By Kelly Holland

One of the slough's most interesting animals is also one of the tiniest. The Little Grass Frog is not only North America's smallest frog, but also its smallest land vertebrate. At a whopping 0.5 to 0.75 inches long, some grasshoppers are larger. A full-grown frog can easily sit on a dime. Although fairly common, it is rarely seen due to its size and nocturnal habits. It's a treefrog, as can be seen from its padded toes, but it rarely climbs higher than a foot or two above the ground among the grasses, rushes and sedges found in its habitat.



One reason this frog prefers grassy areas such as sloughs is because these types of wetlands dry up for some portion of the year, preventing fish from becoming established. This allows their eggs to develop in a relatively predator-free environment. The frog's color can range from green to brown or tan to red or pinkish. They can be identified by the dark line that passes through the eye and down the side of the body. Below this line is a white stripe that extends from the front of the eye to behind the ear. There is usually a dark triangle on top of the head. Its call has been described as an insect-like high-pitched *set-see, set-see* that many people cannot hear. This is reflected in one of its scientific names, *Psuedacris*, which comes from Greek - *psuedes* (false) and *acris* (locust or cricket). So next time you are out in a grassy wetland, don't be too quick to label all those little hoppy things at your feet as grasshoppers.

The Annual Fall Pond Seminar



Every year we hold the Adopt-A Pond Seminar in the fall as the growing season winds down. It gives us all an opportunity to get together with other pond groups and learn some useful tips and information about our ponds. We bring in speakers to talk to us about topics that we've heard from our groups through the year, as well as some fun pond activities. This year, Kelly Holland, a biologist with us in the Stormwater section, and a contributing writer for this newsletter,

told us about all kinds of birds that may use our ponds at all times throughout the year. Cecil Brockinton and Jim Walthers, two of our Pond Walk biologists told us about some more plant choices in their session on aquascaping with native plants. And Chuck Cichra from the University of Florida gave us the deal on aerators, and some help identifying those pond fish we just can't ever figure out.

We also gave out lots of good stuff like wildflower seeds for those ever-eroding banks and materials to make a homemade lake rake. In the packets we gave out, there was a lot of info on the speakers and their topics as well as a new item to the Adopt-A-Pond catalog—a waterproof field inspection notebook so we can do



those

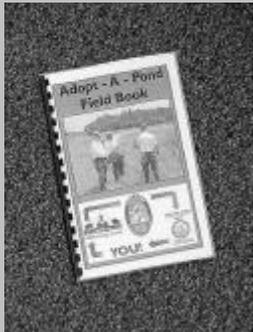
maintenance surveys without soggy paper.



Afterwards, everyone who wanted them could take their choice of some free 3-gallon popash trees donated by the Hillsborough County Environmental Land Acquisition Program (ELAP) (Thanks Guys!)

All in all, I think the day went very well and everyone had a great time. If you missed out on it this year keep

your eyes out for next year. We'll be back again with more to help you manage your stormwater and get the most out of your pond environment.



Adopt-A-Pond Field Books

Field inspections are a crucial part of any management plan. Without them, there's no way of telling what needs to be done, and what is working. Our new field book is made with waterproof paper and contains a year's worth of preprinted surveys modeled after those used by County mitigation specialists. Just take a walk and fill in the sheet. If you would like to receive one of the Field Inspection books like we offered at the seminar, contact me at mcgee@hillsboroughcounty.org or call 272-5912 x3633.

We Want to Hear from You!

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of those people who keep in touch and faithfully send us reports every quarter. We love to hear from our groups, to find out how things are going, and to learn any new ideas you may have come up with. We need these reports to help us track our group activities all over the county and as documentation that our program is effective. We try to keep up with our groups as best we can, but remember that Adopt-A-Pond is a voluntary program, we only facilitate it. This means it's up to our groups to keep in contact with us. So thanks again to all of you who send us reports & pictures, who write, email, and call with questions and updates. Because the more we know, the more we can help.

Adopt-A-Pond Goes Electronic

Well we want to, but what do you think?

Adopt-A-Pond would like to assess the benefits of offering more of our services over the internet. There is a wealth of information and services we could offer quickly and universally to all of our group members. Things



like workday reports, pond sampling, and plant order requests could easily be done electronically. We might even consider creating a forum or list server where our groups could read responses to questions that are submitted to us. But first we need to know if you'd use it. Please take the time to complete this survey and return it to us. Feel free to tell us what you want to see, Adopt-A-Pond is your program and we welcome your input.

Please cut the survey off on the line and mail to:

Adopt-A-Pond Internet Survey
 Public Works/ Stormwater Management
 P.O. Box 1110
 Tampa, FL 33601-1110

Cut here ↗

1. What's your name? _____
2. Do you currently have e-mail? Yes No
 If yes include e-mail address: _____
3. Do you currently use the internet? Yes No
4. If Adopt-A-Pond were available on the internet would you:
 Communicate more Communicate less No change
5. How helpful would an Adopt-A-Pond forum or list server be to you?
 Very Helpful Somewhat helpful No help
6. What would you most like to see on the internet from Adopt-A-Pond?

Butterfly Gardening

It's easy, fun and everyone benefits

Many of us in Adopt-A-Pond understand the importance and value of wildlife habitat. We welcome the animals that begin to call our yards and ponds home. And what animal would be more welcome than the beautiful butterfly as it drifts from plant to plant like a floating flower itself. These gentle creatures add color and vitality to our gardens as they spread pollen and float along in the blank spaces between our plants. And few creatures are easier to attract to our landscape. Their habitat requirements are simple and easy to provide. Basically there are two types of plants that butterflies need to survive, these are nectar plants for food and host plants on which to lay their eggs. All of these plants flower and can be obtained at area nurseries without a problem.



Some nectar plants include: **Pentas, Butterfly bush, Lantana, Firebush, Goldenrod, Porterweed, Black-eyed Susans, Golden Dewdrop, and even citrus trees.**

Some of the host plants include: **Cassia, Sassafras, Passionvine, milkweed, Mistletoe, Water Hyssop, and trees like oak, wax myrtle, sweet bay, and tulip tree.**

If you'd like to add a little extra to your garden, you can install a butterfly watering station. Butterflies can't drink from standing water, so these easily constructed containers allow the butterflies to sip water from the small spaces between sand and rocks (*brochures offered on this page contain details on watering stations*).

Butterfly gardening can add beauty and life to your yard and pond habitat as well as providing vital living space in a place where habitat loss is a constant and increasing threat. For more information on butterfly gardening and attractive plants refer to the wildlife/ habitat section of your Adopt-A-Pond Notebook or contact your local nursery.

Source: The Green Thumb Guide vol.156, June 2000 Published by Carroll's Nursery Inc. St. Petersburg, FL.

Want to know more?

Request a free copy of "Butterfly Gardening in Central Florida" (4 page) or "Planting a Refuge for Wildlife" (33 page color). Leave your request at 272-7021 x3633.

Integrated Pest Management

It really works... naturally.



As most of our groups know, it is always easier to use natural services to our advantage. That's why we continually try to give you information on simple and safe techniques that save money, improve our health and the health of the environment, and in the long run reduce work. Integrated Pest Management, or IPM, is an example of these techniques. Using natural services and smart planning, IPM works to control pests on your plants and in your yard.

Like Adopt-A-Pond, it starts with a little understanding of the processes going on in your yard. A healthy plant is always more able to fend off disease and pests than a struggling one, so try to use plants that suit the growing area. If you have a plant that is constantly plagued, try replacing it with something else. Natives will generally be a safe bet since they're naturally adapted to this area. Secondly, we can control

pests by allowing the "good" insects to do their job. Only 1% of all insects are harmful to plants, so many of the bugs you find may be beneficial by feeding on harmful insects or providing some other service. It takes a little time to learn what is and isn't good, but it's worth it in the long run.

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Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners
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IPM (Cont'd from page 5)

Thirdly, don't overdo anything. Water, fertilizer and other chemicals can all lead to problems when used in excess. If you have a problem, be sure to properly identify it before treating, misidentification can cost you in treatments that won't work. And finally use the least toxic methods of control. Good planning and careful inspection can do most of the work followed by handpicking, pruning, and spraying with things like soap or water. If you have to go with something stronger consult a qualified nursery or your cooperative extension for advice about the least toxic products and apply only what is necessary. Remember that control is the operative word, just like in our ponds. We don't need to stress over every little problem as long as it is at a manageable level.

Visit these Websites!

- Cooperative Extension Service: <http://hillsborough.extension.ufl.edu/>
- IPM of Florida: <http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~FAIRSWEB/IPM/IMPFL/IMPFL.HTM>
- Butterfly Gardening In Florida: <http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/landscap/btrfly.htm>
- Hillsborough County Lake Atlas: <http://www.lakeatlas.usf.edu>
- Hillsborough County Website: <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org>

Pond Sampling Results

Water levels are dropping. Watch for concentrations of nutrients to rise. There was a decrease in turbidity over the last quarter for most ponds. Are you noticing trends in your pond cycles?

NAME	pH	Nitrate	Ammonia	Phosphate	Turbidity	DO
Pfalzer, Logan Gate Village	7.5	0.1	0.2	0.1	30	9
Mirror Lake, Laurel Woods	7.2	0.1	1.0	0.3	50	8
WBA, Riverview	6.5	0	0.2	0.1	10	5
Gnarled Oak, Windmere	7.5	0	--	0	20	7
Dowdell Middle School	6	0	1	0.2		4