



# On Our Pond

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



Volume 6, No 2

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

Spring 2000

## Activities Update

### Pond Walks:

- Lake Morley Terrace
- Sun City Center
- North Pond

### Education

#### Meetings:

- Country Crossings
- Twin Branch Acres

#### Cleanups:

- Boyette Springs
- Country Crossings
- Palmer's Pond
- Stewart Manor
- Carrollwood Meadows
- Crest Pond
- The Cove
- Trucious Pond

#### Plantings:

- Stewart Manor
- Northdale
- Twin Branch Acres

#### Workdays:

- Bristol Green
- Ventana
- Cumberland Estates

## Restoration: It's what Adopt-A-Pond is all about!



Stonecreek Pond, clean and planted. Restoration, beautification, and improved water quality, that's what Adopt-A-Pond is all about. You can do this with your pond and we can help. Find out how in this special issue.

*See article on page 5*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### On Our Pond

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|  |        |
|--|--------|
| The 109 <sup>th</sup> Ave Ecosystem..... | page 2 |
| We Got to Get In .....                   | page 2 |
| Adopt-A-Pond Application .....           | page 3 |
| Is Adopt-A-Pond for You .....            | page 5 |
| The Man in the Machine .....             | page 5 |
| Adopt-A-Pond criteria.....               | page 6 |
| Websites to check out .....              | page 6 |
| Pond Sampling Results .....              | page 6 |

## The 109<sup>th</sup> Avenue Ecosystem: *What our ponds could be*

By Tom Hutchinson

It's a cool, moist dawn at the edge of a still pool. The pond may be quiet, but it's brimming with life. A small fish is hunting. A slider turtle surfaces for air. Whirligig beetles describe endless circles on the water's mirrored surface. The bald cypresses are well into their springtime growth spurt.

You might suppose you're at a rural wetland pool, or perhaps a small upland lake. In fact, you are visiting a storm water detention area in Tampa, just north of 109<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The 109<sup>th</sup> Ave ecosystem is a far cry from older detention ponds. These are, by and large, mere holes in the ground dug simply as catchments for rain runoff. Few resources were used to design them to be anything but more or less lifeless pits. In the dry season, they offer nothing but dust, stands of weeds, or thick green algae. In wet summers they are dark holes full of unsanitary runoff. Properly planned systems, such as the 109<sup>th</sup> Ave complex, are light years away from such blights.



The west part of the pond is relatively shallow, and ordinarily dry early in the year. The east portion is much deeper, and usually holds considerable amounts of water year round. Three clumps of medium-sized oak trees were left intact when the pond was dug. These constitute small islands, which increase the diversity of life in the complex. If some of the trees die, the island will continue to add to the vigor of the ecosystem.

Mallards, teal, and coots are frequent inhabitants. Herons, ibises, and anhingas can also be seen in the pool from time to time, especially when the water is high. Garter snakes occupy the higher wooded areas. Leopard frogs, green tree frogs, and salamanders occupy the shady spots in the pond's banks. And there are established populations of snapping, mud, and slider turtles.

As the sun rises, an apparently natural lake becomes more evident. Various biotic communities interact and function just as they do in a lake environment that has existed for thousands of years. The lake still carries out its task of retaining and cleaning storm water. While it does this, it acts as a beautiful, complete wetland ecosystem.



### **We Got to Get In!**

#### ***A crucial issue for Adopt-A-Pond Projects***

This may seem like a no-brainer, but it often comes up in our attempts to help people clean up their ponds. A lot of times houses are built so close together that we can't get our equipment through. Other times landscaping or fences block an area that would otherwise be wide enough. Sometimes the designated access points are even built over. Remember since Adopt-A-Pond is a voluntary program, it is up to the neighbors and the pond representative to see that the pond meets eligibility requirements and access is one of 'em. We want to help, and we do what we can, but when it comes down to it, we just got to get in!

## Get in on the program!

### *It's easy and here's how*

Got a pond? Got weeds? Is the water dirty? Wish you could live on a healthy body of water full of life and vigor? Well, Adopt-A-Pond can help! If you're interested in pond ecology and enjoy the rewards of working toward something with very visible results, then our program is for you! Here's how it works!

Contact us for more information and set up a Pond Walk. A biologist with our program will come out and walk around the pond with you and your neighbors. He will help you decide what needs to be done and the best way to go about it.



Fill out the application and collect signatures from neighbors who may be interested. Send it to us, and we'll review it to make sure that your pond qualifies (see criteria on page 6).

If your pond has more undesirable vegetation than your group can remove on their own, we can schedule a clean-up with our Schaeff excavator to give your group a jump on the clean-up process. Keep in mind that the machine does have limitations and it's very expensive to operate, so if there isn't a justifiable need for the machine, we won't be able to use it. Next, you organize a work day to get the pond ready for planting.

When you're ready call us to schedule your planting. We'll meet with your group to talk about the plants and the ecology of the pond. Then we'll order your plants and come back out to show your group how to plant them.

Where you go from there is up to you. Your group can work out a management plan using our easy workbook. This ensures that your stormwater pond remains a healthy and functioning ecosystem for years to come. And as long as you keep in touch with us, we'll do what we can to help you.

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## The Man in the Machine

### *Getting to know our Equipment Operator Doug*



Last issue we introduced our new excavator. But this machine would be useless without the expertise of a trained operator. That's where our man Doug comes in. He's spent the past several months learning the ins and outs of this particular type of machine. Before he came to Adopt-A-Pond, Doug worked in wetland maintenance, so he has a good knowledge of pond plants and knows just how to manage them.

So what's a day like in a 10 ton pond machine? Well, Doug says he gets to see a lot of wildlife and talks with a lot of the pond residents. He likes to answer questions and wants homeowners to know that he is there to assist them in their cleanup process as much as he can. Sometimes this means he has to cross through a few yards, but he is always careful to minimize damage. He says most residents are understanding and don't find the machine to be a problem.

Keep an eye out, you may see our Schaeff in a pond near you, and when you do you can be sure that Doug will be in the driver seat working to give our pond groups a boost toward their goal of cleaner water and better ponds.

Pre sorted  
First-Class Mail  
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Permit No 2411

**Adopt-A-Pond Criteria**

1. The pond must be owned by the county, or privately owned with one or more drainage easements dedicated to Hillsborough County.
2. No wetland or protected conservation areas are allowed in the program.
3. Adopt-A-Pond may not be used to satisfy permit conditions for the Southwest Florida Water Management District.
4. The pond group must submit an Adopt-A-Pond application AND demonstrate a commitment to fully participate in the program and maintain their pond.
5. Access to the pond must be available for county crews and equipment.

**Don' t Forget the Drains**  
The storm drains flow to your pond! Remind people that only rain goes down the drain with our free **Storm Drain Marking kits.**  
Call: 272-5912 x3612

**Visit these Websites!**

- Watershed Excursion: <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/watershed/index.htm>  
Water Resources for Tampa, Florida: <http://www-tampa.er.usgs.gov/>  
Hillsborough County Lake Atlas: <http://www.lakeatlas.usf.edu>  
Hillsborough County Website: <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org>  
Hillsborough Co. Cooperative Extension Service: <http://gnv.ifas.ufl.edu/~hillsboro/>

**Pond Sampling Results**

This quarter we've received a lot of results. Thanks groups, keep up the good work! Remember that monitoring is the best way to know what's going on in your pond.

| NAME                        | pH  | Nitrate | Ammonia | Phosphate | Turbidity | DO |
|-----------------------------|-----|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|----|
| Pfalzer, Logan Gate Village | 8.5 | 0.2     | 0.3     | 0.2       | 15        | 12 |
| Mirror Lake, Laurel Woods   | 7.4 | 0.1     | 0.1     | 0         | 22        | 10 |
| UBA, Riverview              | 8.5 | 0.1     | 0       | 0.2       | 50        | 12 |
| Gnarled Oak, Windmere       | 7.0 | 0       | --      | 0         | 15        | 7  |
| McGarvey                    | 7.5 |         | <2      | <1        | <10       |    |