



Rivendell: 100+ Acres of Magnificent Wetland Preserves. Why are Wetlands Important? What Role Do They Play?

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[Woodlands Word – September 2023]

As you may know, Rivendell has about 115 acres of 14 Wetland and Upland Preserves. Along with our ponds, our preserves play a key role as part of our stormwater management system. Wetlands collect, store, and release water from rainfall, absorb excess nutrients, and provide vital habitats for flora and fauna. Plus, we homeowners benefit from their natural beauty and aesthetics. We love our wildlife! (Video still: G. Mruz.)



What Is A Wetland? To be classified as a wetland, an area of land must have water on the ground's surface or in the root zone for at least a portion of the growing season. This seasonal fluctuation of the water period (known as a hydroperiod), is continually affected by the weather, the season, water feeding into and draining from nearby streams, the surrounding watershed and other nearby bodies of water. An area can still be a wetland, even if it doesn't appear to be 'wet,' due to changing hydroperiods.



Why Are Wetlands So Important? In addition to their essential role to absorb water and excess nutrients, wetlands create a critical environment for a variety of wildlife. Wetlands offer an extensive, complex food chain that supports numerous species, including man. They provide vegetative cover for shelter and food, as well as nesting, spawning and nursery habitats. Migratory birds use wetlands as a stop-over. Although wetlands are most often associated with waterfowl and bird species, they also provide essential habitat for a wide variety of species: birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects - up to 45% of which are rare and endangered. [Source: UF/IFAS. Photo: Bob Frank]

How Can We Protect Our Wetlands? The high rate of wetland loss has contributed to the endangered status of many species. Human activities affect all functions of a wetland. All residents can help conserve and improve the quality of water to promote a healthy environment. Our HOA contracts with professional teams to help keep inflow/outflow structures clear and remove excess and nuisance vegetation.

You Can Help Too! Reduce chemical use on your lawn. Follow County fertilizer and irrigation rules. Keep sprinkler systems working properly. Install Florida-friendly plantings. Pick up after pets. Dispose properly of lawn clippings and yard debris. Be aware that any activity beyond your property line is considered an incursion. Do not plant, build, cut, or remove any vegetation, or deposit yard waste in protected areas. Incursions are monitored regularly and violations enforced. We are all responsible for keeping Rivendell's ponds and preserves healthy and vibrant for ourselves and our wildlife, as well as strong property values.



(Swallow-tailed Kite - AllAboutBirds.org)

Click here to visit the Ponds & Preserves website: www.rivendellcommunity.com/ponds.