



# Year In Review: Ponds & Preserves Management Actions. Thanks For Your Continued Commitment & Support!

By Sue Remy, Ponds and Preserves Committee.

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It has been another unusual year – this time capped off by a visit from Hurricane Ian. We hope you and your family are safe and well. Reflecting on our ponds and preserves actions, great strides continue. Keeping our community's natural assets healthy and property values strong takes everyone's commitment and support. Your actions do make a difference and we thank you. We encourage you to keep updated on all P&P activities with articles in the *Woodlands Word* and our P&P website.

## RIVENDELL'S PRESERVES: Leave Them Alone. Enjoy The Wildlife.

For our Preserves, several important maintenance actions have helped keep our preserve areas healthy and vibrant. To reduce wildfire risk, ecological mowing keeps high-risk areas safer by removing accumulated vegetation litter and opening pathways. The mowing also keeps our wetlands healthy by preventing encroachment of trees and shrubs into these areas. Ongoing maintenance actions continue, such as removing invasive plants, clearing perimeter pathways, unblocking grates and weirs from debris, plus inspection and remediation of preserve incursions by homeowners. Leave wetland and upland preserves areas in their natural state. Let our wildlife friends thrive in these habitats.

Cattail overgrowth was also an issue addressed this year. Cattails can block outflow structures (part of our stormwater system) causing flooding. A large section of cattails in front of the outflow structure on Scherer Lake was removed and hauled away. Cattail growth will continue to be monitored and addressed as needed.



[Wildlife photos: B. Frank.]

## RIVENDELL'S PONDS & LAKES: More Shoreline Plantings to Control Erosion.



We continue to make good progress on our ponds to help control erosion. Our ponds' LMZs (Low-Maintenance Zones) are well established and demonstrated their anti-erosion function during the hurricane. LMZs and aquatic plants work together to create our "**Rivendell Natural Shorelines.**" This Spring, the P&P Committee conducted a pond-by-pond inspection to evaluate LMZs and plantings - noting some plants thriving, some sparse and other areas bare. Along with our consultant and plant experts, individual pond-planting strategies were created to form our game plan for plantings this year.

In mid-June, crews were busy installing shoreline plants in a massive effort to install over 18,000 plants. Following our pond-specific plans, several plant species were installed, including a few new types that grow better in our unique conditions. Shoreline aquatic plants have deep roots that stabilize the banks, keep soil in place, reduce wind-driven wave damage, and adapt to changing water levels. LMZs and plantings also soak up excess nutrients to reduce algae growth, improve water quality, and provide habitat cover and food sources for our wildlife friends. Even after Hurricane Ian, new plants seem to be growing. We are also seeing wildlife enjoying the shoreline vegetation. In October, we inspected pond plantings with our team to identify warranty plant replacement areas.



Rivendell is also grateful to have earned several important grants from the county and local groups to help with funding for pond shoreline aquatic plantings. These grants help us continue our pond management strategies while reducing costs to our community. As part of the grant program, we created "**Rivendell Wildlife Week**" – a semi-annual event asking residents to observe and track wildlife in Rivendell. We hope you are participating! Let's continue to create healthy habitats to attract even more wildlife friends.

**Your actions do make a difference!** When you drive, bike, or walk around the community, take pride in our ponds and preserves. Leave preserve and buffer areas alone. Enjoy our ponds. By keeping them healthy and vibrant, we enjoy our wildlife friends, improve our water quality, reduce flooding risk, and keep property values strong. Here's to another great year for residents and wildlife to thrive in Rivendell.