



Year In Review: Ponds & Preserves Management Actions Thank You For Your Continued Commitment & Support! By the Ponds and Preserves Committee.

[Woodlands Word – November 2023]



We are going through another unusual year weatherwise. Sarasota County is experiencing a severe drought without its usual Summer rainy season which has negatively affected water levels in our ponds. Bare spots on pond banks and stressed plants are visible. Until rain becomes more frequent, any planting is postponed. While positive actions continue in our ponds and preserves, there is still much work to be done. 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 on our P&P website.

OUR PRESERVES: Leave Them Alone. Forestry Mowing Needed.

Rivendell has a preserve management plan for all five units of the community. The developers agreed to the plan that is strongly supported by the County. It states that the preserves are to be managed by forestry mowing or roller chopping every four years to control invasives and the understory. Some areas were mowed in 2021 and 2022. However, there are Preserve and common ground areas that have never been forestry mowed. The P&P Committee will work with the Board to budget for and take action on these critical issues.

Ecological mowing is an alternate to prescribed burning that maintains healthy habitat and reduces the chance of catastrophic fire. It provides access to preserve areas for both invasive plant treatments and firefighters in the event there is a wildfire in a preserve. It also keeps our wetlands healthy by preventing encroachment of vegetation into these areas. In addition, cattails are still overgrown in areas which block outflow structures and can cause flooding. Cattail growth is regularly monitored and treated as needed.

Regular maintenance continues, including removing invasive plants, clearing perimeter pathways, and unblocking grates and weirs from debris. Plus, incursions in preserve areas by some residents is costing the HOA valuable budget dollars for remediation. Wetland and upland preserve areas must be left in their natural state. Let our wildlife friends thrive in these habitats.



OUR PONDS & LAKES: Control Erosion. Reduce Flooding. Improve Wildlife Habitats.

We thank our homeowners help in reaching a milestone in February when our community codified pond LMZs (Low-Maintenance Zones) into our Covenants. Our pond LMZs are well established and with shoreline plantings, work effectively to control erosion and flooding. We also transitioned to a new pond management contractor, with a goal to use more biologic and less-toxic treatments. Also, P&P Committee members personally inspected each pond this Spring to identify areas of concern. You may have seen us walking the ponds in our new branded vests.

We have also continued to engage the community to help us track sightings of wildlife during our **Rivendell Wildlife Week**. Results indicate a diverse variety of wildlife enjoy our ponds and preserves. They use our habitats to feed, nest, raise their young, and for shelter. 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. Appreciate 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.