

The Waters of The Concession.

A report from your neighborhood committee.

Sunrise on Pond 10, Beacon Park Place.

THE CONCESSION POND COMMITTEE

is a group of neighbor volunteers (most of us live on one of our 18 retention ponds) who got together out of love for our community. We set out to learn about the ponds and lakes that were literally in our backyards. Our goal is to keep our waters healthy and promote the beauty of the Natural-Florida-look our neighborhood has championed.

The first Thursday of each month we walk around one or two ponds to evaluate their health. We are guided and patiently taught by George Colbath of Pond Professional LLC.

In the spirit of stewardship, we created this report to share what we've learned. You may enjoy reading about it here instead of walking around the ponds in 95° and 95% humidity.

We have 18 total ponds and they are unremarkably labeled by numbers.

Most of our ponds have littoral shelves, those shallow places on the sides where plants grow. The littoral shelves have remarkable benefits to ponds and are required to meet Southwest Florida Water Management regulations. (SWFM or "Swift Mud")

They filter out excess fertilizer and nutrients. With less phosphorous and nitrogen circulating around the water itself, algae and aquatic weeds have less to consume. Nobody wants sludgy green ponds. Littoral shelves and the plant life they support create beautiful natural water filters. They also have the added advantage of both stabilizing the wetlands shoreline and preventing and minimizing erosion. As the shoreline's plant roots become stronger, the banks become even more durable. The largest cost exposure in pond maintenance is erosion prevention and repairs. That's why a shoreline surrounded by plants is ideal. You may have noticed some plants aren't as pretty as others. While beauty is a subjective thing, we've spent a great deal of time learning the good plants from the bad. There are nuisance/invasive species (e.g., cattails, primrose willow, torpedo grass) that are challenging to control. Unfortunately, sometimes the only way to kill the bad invasive species, sacrifices beautiful beneficial plants. It's a balancing act.

Overall, our lakes and ponds were dug deep, and since homes have sprung up, in general, they have more water and more stable banks due to shoreline plant recovery.



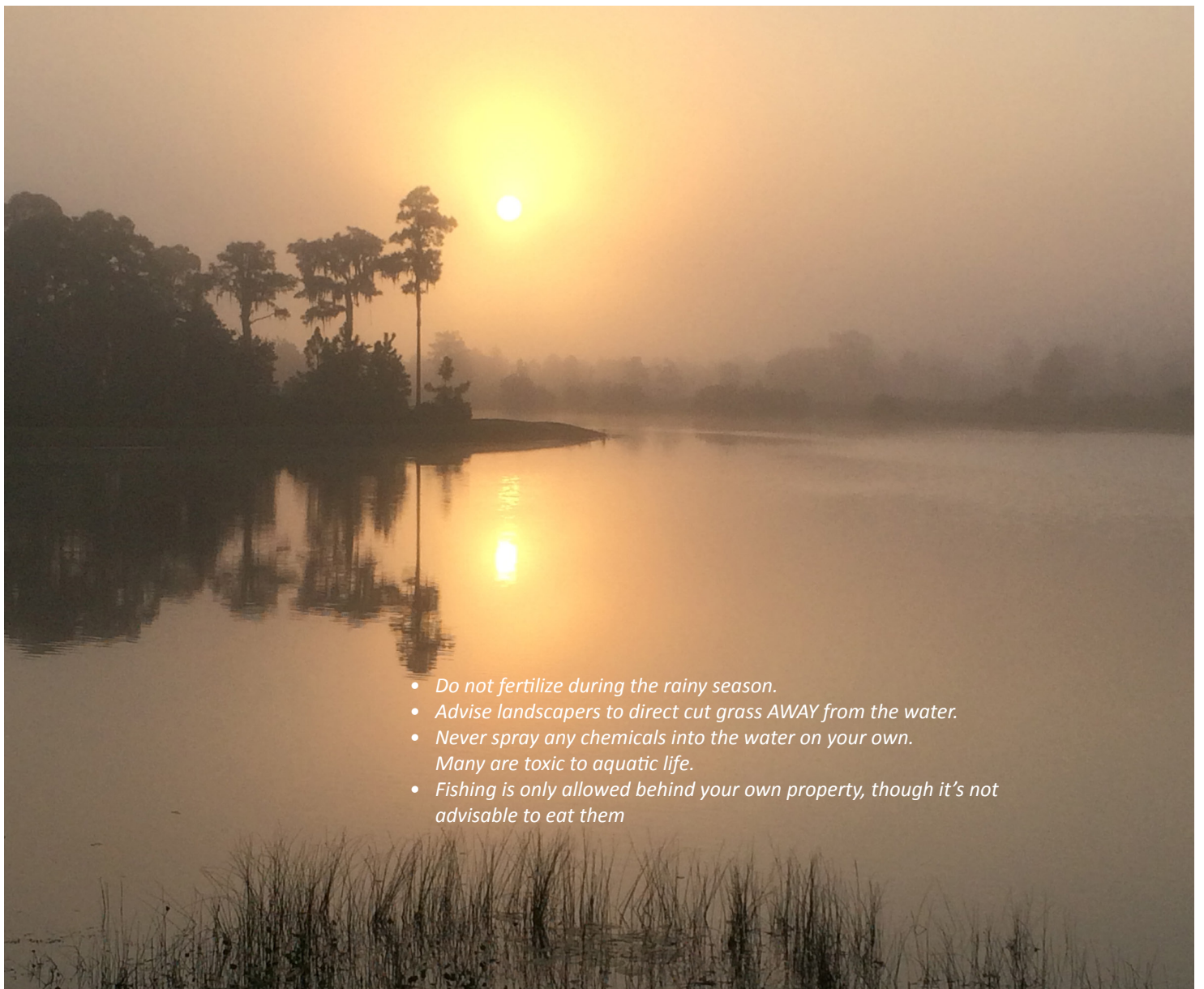
MEET GEORGE COLBATH, BIOLOGIST/OWNER OF POND PROFESSIONAL.

Pond Professionals is contracted by The Concession Home Owners Association to maintain our ponds and preserves. George has Associate and Bachelor's

degrees in Biology, is a member of the Society of Wetland Scientists, the Florida Beekeepers Society, and Manatee/Sarasota Building Industry Association. He is also a licensed fish dealer with Florida FWC, a certified Open Water Diver as well as a disabled army veteran who served our country in Iraq. He and his team of cart riding sprayers, maintain our wetlands and lakes as well as bordering preserve areas, and ensure we are compliant with state and county regulations.

- Fish Stocking (George can stock your lake at your expense. It's surprisingly not that expensive but be prepared to lose them all if a family of otters show up.)
- Water Testing
- Erosion repair
- Fountain/Aerator installation (though none of our ponds have a need for this)
- Wetland and aquatic planting
- Invasive species removal





- *Do not fertilize during the rainy season.*
- *Advise landscapers to direct cut grass AWAY from the water.*
- *Never spray any chemicals into the water on your own. Many are toxic to aquatic life.*
- *Fishing is only allowed behind your own property, though it's not advisable to eat them*

Plants vs. Erosion. Best Practices.

Builders are responsible for the final grade down to the water's edge and are required to sod to the shoreline. Sometimes the slope to the water can be drastic and until sod and aquatic plants have established themselves along the shoreline, some lakes experience dramatic erosion. Your committee has addressed some of these areas and are continuing to keep an eye out for more.

During construction, builders are required to install silt fences along the perimeter of the lot and maintain them. While it's all good in theory, problems do arise. Most runoff and erosion happens in the drainage swales between lots.

Along banks that do not currently have aquatic plants, over time, wind and lapping waves can undercut the shore and the bank can slough off into the water. Aquatic plants can prevent this. If your lot lacks aquatic

plants, and you would like them, we would like to hear from you. Your interest can help us establish a budget that can support an ongoing planting practice.

Often, once construction is completed, lakes heal themselves and aquatic plants will begin to grow along the shore naturally. But if you prefer a certain species of plant over another, you can choose.

See a problem with your lake?

Questions or concerns?

Contact Heather Hamilton at:

hhamilton@theiconteam.com

Heather will contact George Colbath of Pond Professional, as well as Joe Julian, our Lake Committee Chairperson.

The Good Plants

These are a few common shoreline plants in our lakes. They only grow in shallow waters. Where lakes begins to deepen, these plants won't grow. The more we have, the less erosion and the deeper and healthier a lake remains.



PICKERALWEED *Pontedaria cordata*

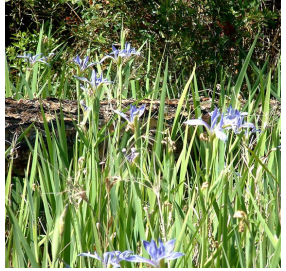
This plant is our favorite. The more of these plants we have the better. Here's why. Though it is dormant in winter, it's a broad-leaf plant. That means the herbicides used to kill invasive grasses won't kill this beauty. We love Spikerush too. However, every time George and his team need to kill the invasive torpedo grass, the good grasses like Spikerush are killed as well. It sort of defeats the purpose.



BLUE FLAG IRIS
Iris virginica

SOFT RUSH
Junius effesus

GIANT BULLRUSH
Schoenoplectus californicus



PRAIRIE IRIS
Iris hexagana

DUCK POTATO
Sagittaria lancifolia

SPIKERUSH
Eleocharus interstincta

ARROW ARUM
Peltandra sagittifolia

GOLDEN CANNA
Canna flaccida

The Bad Plants

By "bad", we refer to its genetic desire to take over the earth.



TORPEDOGRASS *Panicum repens*

CATTAILS *Typha domingensis*

PRIMROSE WILLOW *Ludwigia peruvian*



Meet Your Wild Neighbors.

Last year I had to have a 6 1/2 foot nuisance alligator removed from pond 10. What made it a nuisance was the fact that it followed me along the shoreline while I was weeding in my backyard. He was extremely interested in me and I was not comfortable turning my back to the water. I helped the alligator wrangler reel him in and he said my particular alligator was probably fed. Which made him unafraid of humans. It cost him his life. They are not relocated and set free. All males are killed and their hides are graded and sold. Female alligators are sometimes used for breeding in alligator farms.



This gator took about two hours to consume a massive turtle behind Lake Committee Chairman, Joe Julian's lake.

DON'T FEED ALLIGATORS. EVER. If you see workers feed an alligator stop them. If they associate food with humans they lose their fear. If it's hungry, an alligator will eat anything that moves. This includes pets and children.

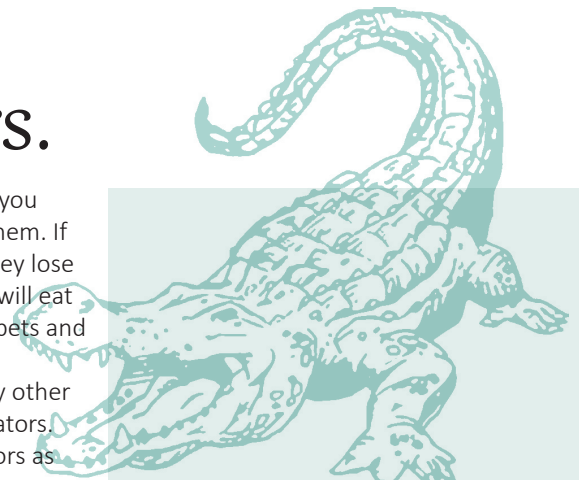
DON'T feed ducks, turtles or any other animals inhabiting waters with alligators. This food source attracts the alligators as well and trains them to associate humans with foods. Do not clean fish in the water or leave your scraps or bait on the ground as that is also a potential food source for alligators.

DON'T let pets swim or run along the shoreline of waters known to contain large alligators. If you don't know if there are large alligators, play it safe and assume there are.

DON'T swim or allow pets to swim in areas with emergent vegetation (plants growing up out of the water). Alligators favor this type of habitat.

DON'T swim, walk dogs or small children, at night or at dusk, along the shoreline of waters that are known to contain large alligators. Large alligators feed most actively during the evening hours.

DON'T get closer than 50 feet to an alligator. Some website advise suggests 15 feet. You decide. They run astonishingly fast and can outrun any human over a 20-30 foot area.



**NUISANCE ALLIGATOR
HOT-LINE
866-FWC-GATOR
(866-392-4286)**

Generally, an alligator may be deemed a nuisance if it is at least four feet in length and the caller believes it poses a threat to people, pets or property.

The Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program (SNAP) is administered by the FWC's Division of Hunting and Game Management.

Florida has a healthy and stable alligator population. There are about 1.3 million alligators in Florida. Alligators live in all 67 counties, and they inhabit all wild areas of Florida that can support them. The removal of nuisance alligators does not have a significant impact on our state's alligator population.

The Bad Guys

Okay some would argue they're all bad. But harmless snakes can eat venomous ones so you don't want to kill a good snake. In fact, most people bit by venomous snakes were trying to kill them. In The Concession you'll most likely see diamond back and pygmy rattle snakes. Take time to learn to identify the venomous ones.

ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu

- Call 911 if bitten
- Seek medical attention immediately.
- Remove rings, watches and tight clothing.
- Keep the bite below your heart
- Stay calm



DIAMOND BACK
RATTLESNAKE

PYGMY RATTLESNAKE



WATER MOCCASIN (COTTONMOUTH)



COPPERHEAD

CORAL SNAKE

AFTER HOURS PET EMERGENCY:

**University Pet ER (941) 355-2884 In the plaza University Shoppes near Home Goods
Sarasota Veterinary Emergency (941) 923-7260 7414 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota**