

WETLAND MITIGATION PROJECT

By, Larry Eichert 4/17

There are many challenges in restoration and maintenance of wetland areas, especially the mitigated area. These are broken down into four main groups. They include; (1) the proper flow of water through the system, (2) the elimination and/or control of invasive and opportunistic plants species, (3) introduction of desirable indigenous indicator plant species, (4) the establishment of an upland buffer transition region between wet and dry areas. This is a time consuming, highly labor intensive process that requires constant supervision throughout the year. Mitigated areas are under the most stress because the native vegetation found within the natural canopy were removed to make space for road construction, the preparation of the golf course and housing areas. The five year restoration project for mitigated areas was dropped from the C.D.D. wetland management program in 2012.



The Stone Harbour Loop wetland is a mixed wetland hardwood with a **mitigated section** on the north and west side. Under normal conditions this type of wetland will go dry prohibiting invasive species plants from taking root. Siltation prohibited this from happening and many opportunistic and invasive plant species took advantage of the water supply.

Funding has now been made available for the resumption of that program. Aquatic Systems will be presenting a revised program that will meet the needs for those mitigated areas, in their current condition, at the April C.D.D. meeting. There are challenges that face this restoration process.

Since 2012 the hydrology within the Stone Harbour Loop area has been modified by invasive, opportunistic, and a monoculture of primary succession, plant species. Consequently the projected biodiversity project that had been planned for will not be able to be restored. Aquatic Systems will be presenting a petition to SWFWMD to remove some of the opportunistic vegetation that has established itself within the buffer region of the wetland area. If successful, it would at least open up a window into the wetland area so that the newly developing area can be made visible. The next objective would be to include appropriate compatible, ecological sustainable species that would be in harmony with those that are present and are adapted to the hydrology.



Awareness of Stoneybrook's natural features and natural resources is available to all the members of our community. Spend some time to become acquainted with the natural environment. The beginning of spring is an excellent time to see nature at her best. Walk some of the trails, sit and observe, but most of all become a part of the natural community in which we live.

(Pictures taken at Stone Harbour Loop wetland 10/09/11)