



A Sarasota, Fla., neighborhood brings its pond back to life — and life back to its pond.

Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Team (NEST)

ON BIRD BAY POND

Residents from Bird Bay Village in Venice, Fla., joined forces with Sarasota County Government's Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Team (NEST) to transform their community's stormwater pond into a more natural landscape feature. Residents employed innovative techniques to stabilize the pond's eroding shoreline, create a Florida friendly habitat buffer and improve water quality. To the delight of residents, wildlife returned to the pond.

Since its construction in 1979, the Bird Bay Village Phase II stormwater pond collected anything that rolled off the surrounding landscape. Runoff eroded eight feet of shoreline, endangered nearby buildings and filled the pond with sediment. Nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizer used on surrounding turf grass caused noxious mats of algae to

overgrow the pond. Herbicides, used to fight the algae, further reduced habitat quality and the presence of wildlife. And when heavy rains came, the soup that was Bird Bay Pond would overflow into nearby Curry Creek Preserve. In 2012, Bird Bay Village residents decided to do something about it ...



Curry Creek, Venice, Florida



Above Geo-Tubing shoreline stabilization system with Florida Friendly landscaping plants ready for installation; Residents installing landscaping to intercept runoff; Checking pond depth by kayak; Algae removal with the amazing AquaRake.

Bird Bay Pond restoration is a success story of creative community-driven environmental stewardship and partnership with Sarasota County’s Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Team. Donna Tterlikkis, Joan McGowan and Emily Zielke envisioned a more healthy pond, and led their community to make it happen.



Donna Tterlikkis and Joan McGowan at Bird Bay Pond

Residents researched Florida’s natural environment, stormwater dynamics and Florida Friendly Landscaping principles and sought advice from environmentalists and engineers about their plans. They contacted the NEST Program at Sarasota County and learned about educational and financial resources available to help. “When we saw the Sarasota County Neighborhood Grants program’s application,

we knew right away we could do this” beamed McGowan. To stop erosion, they installed a Geo-Tubing shoreline stabilization system, which uses fabric tubes filled with sediments removed from the bottom of the pond to line the shoreline. Removing sediment for the tubes restored pond depth and storage capacity. They replaced their old irrigation system with a water-conserving micro-irrigation system, saving water and reducing runoff into the pond. They reduced their need for fertilizer, herbicides and watering by replacing 6,000 square feet of lawn with Florida Friendly plants, that residents affectionately call “the fuzzy ring”.

“I’ve spent my life doing water quality assessment and when you see a man-made ‘cesspool’ that could be so much better, you have to do something about it.”

–DONNA TTERLIKKIS, Community Leader

Over 2500 Florida Friendly landscape and aquatic plants were planted to remove nutrient pollution. Residents stopped using herbicides to control algae, which is now kept in check by an AquaRake – a device residents invented using an oversized leaf rake, swimming pool noodles, and rope.

“This was a remarkably successful project – I think the community accomplished something very special here.”

–ROB WRIGHT, NEST Program Coordinator

GET INVOLVED

The NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP TEAM is a Sarasota County program to help communities who help themselves. The NEST Coordinator helps community leaders design, finance and build environmental improvements with hands-on teamwork in their own neighborhoods. If your community is motivated to have a more natural shoreline, better stormwater management or other aquatic enhancements – call the NEST Coordinator.

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PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Who: NEST
When: 2012-13
Location: Bird Bay Village Phase II: 729 Bird Bay Drive West Venice, Florida
Cost: \$33,551
Funding Source: \$10,000 grant from Sarasota County Neighborhood Grants Program; remainder in-kind and cash from Bird Bay Village.