

# Long Range Ponds Working Group

*by Mary Lynne Collins*

## **What's happening with the ponds?**

In January 2018, the LRF board appointed a Long Range Ponds Working Group to evaluate the status of our ponds. The Group was charged with assessing the status of our ponds in serving their purpose as storm water retention ponds now and in the future and making recommendations for current and future actions. The Group evaluated records assembled from a variety of sources including County development records, LRF archives, Centex and vendors' records. Historical photographs were compared to current conditions. The Group is preparing a final report that will include all this information.

While we may call them lakes, they are actually storm water retention ponds that are designed to drain storm water from LRF. Proper drainage protects our homes from flooding. Pond edge erosion and drainage from roofs and pond edge grading are potential problems that can require expensive remedies. The good news is that the Group has found that while there are some problem areas, our ponds are generally in good shape.

The Group is considering some measures that may reduce further erosion and trying these measures on a small pilot scale. One approach is a reduced frequency mow zone or no mow zone at the edge of the ponds. The Group evaluated the success of this approach in two neighborhoods in The Meadows in Sarasota County. One neighborhood found that a 3-foot zone at the edge of the pond where reduced frequency mowing prevented and actually reversed erosion. It reduced the amount of fertilizer and soil run-off into the pond reducing the amount of herbicide that was added to the pond to suppress unwanted aquatic plants. It had the additional beneficial effect of increasing habitat for shore birds and butterflies.

The Group was evaluating the idea of a pilot "no mow" study on the pond nearest Mi Pueblo, which is outside our walls but one of our ponds. While considering this issue, the Group learned that West Bay (our new landscaping contractor) had already undertaken a "no mow" test at this location. We will all watch this study together.

One further measure considered by the committee and already recommended by Roads and Grounds in August 2017 and approved for funding by the LRF Board in November 2017; is a pilot study of a small number of appropriate aquatic plants at selected areas of the shoreline away from homes. To date nothing has been planted.

All residents will continue to receive notices of future Long Range Ponds Working Group meetings and are invited to attend. All residents will have access to the final report.

See photos below.

