

# Autumn Musings on Peanut Pond

by Nadine Foley

*We couldn't resist this lovely essay about Peanut Pond in Lake County, written by LAKEWATCH volunteer Nadine Foley. We know you'll enjoy it as much as we did.*

It's been a hot, dry year and we are witnessing much of what that cycle in the weather brings to Florida. It means lower lake levels, fires, and hot stretches, which tax anything exotic. But, it also is a good thing in many ways. If you'll notice, the native plants are doing very well. Here at Peanut Pond, our lake is down again, although my neighbor, Yvonne Rice and I have seen it even lower two other times in the 35+ years we've lived here.



Mark Hoyer

Now the lake sports a golden necklace all morning long with thousands of yellow-eyed grasses blooming in the sun. Next down from the necklace is a band of new delicate green grass creeping down as the water lowers. A final band of white sand provides a feast of freshwater clams for the wading birds. We aren't worried. The lake will be up again, filling the grasses and there will be new habitat for the fish, frogs, snails and everything else. Let the lake go up and down, please.

A hot, dry stretch was perfect construction time for "Big Mama" gopher tortoise as she gained energy from the sun to dig a big new tunnel, sand flying at a fierce clip for days. She is nicely settled in now and ready for whatever the weather. Meanwhile, the sun has ripened her fruit treats on the passion vines and prickly pear cactus. In spite of heat and drought, all the wild cherry trees, blackberries, elderberries and other native fruits produced ample crops for the birds and animals.

The palms and palmettos had put out their bloom spikes then just waited awhile during the dry weather. After a nice half inch of rain, within two days, their blooms opened into dazzling plumes of sweet scented flowers laden with nectar. The pollinators got busy and the bee keeper was happy this year.

The wind blew down an old snag oak that had served woodpeckers for many years. Some red-bellied woodpeckers had already fledged one family this year out of the old tree and we knew there were baby birds in a nest hole again. Well, they had taken a wild ride down alright, but the babies were still peeping inside. So, we cut off a five-foot length with the nest in it, propped it up vertically, and hoped for the best. As we walked down the hill, one of the parents flew back in the hole and undeterred by misfortune they have raised their babies and launched them out.

Nature is resilient — stand back and take in the big picture.



  
**It's that time of year...**

Please be sure to deliver all remaining year 2000 water samples to the nearest collection center as soon as possible, or no later than December 31.

**P.S.**

**Thank you for your hard work and dedication in monitoring Florida's precious waters. May you enjoy a happy and safe holiday season!**

— the Florida LAKEWATCH Crew

*Dear Friend of Your Lake,*

Do you have a concern about your lake and an interest in its future? If you have access to any type of boat, can spend two hours each month on your lake, and are willing to monitor for at least a year, you might be eligible for the Florida LAKEWATCH volunteer program.

Florida LAKEWATCH is currently the only research program gathering monthly data for such a large number and wide variety of Florida's lakes. This would not be possible without the help of volunteers. Participants in the Florida LAKEWATCH program receive:

- a free newsletter subscription
- use of sampling materials
- training in monitoring procedures
- periodic reports and an annual report
- access to lake experts (limnologists)
- invitations to LAKEWATCH activities.

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