

W THE CITY OF WESTON

M I T I G A T I O N P R O J E C T S

T H E W H O , W H A T , W H E N , W H E R E
A N D W H Y O F M I T I G A T I O N





Great Blue Heron

The what

A wetland mitigation area is a parcel of land created by man to restore, enhance and preserve the characteristics of original wetlands.



The why

Weston's mitigation areas are a requirement of the permits allowing for Weston's development (residential and commercial areas), issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation, and the Broward County Department of Environmental Protection. Prior to development, this area was sawgrass marsh that had been drained for pastureland. Homes and businesses were allowed to be built on the condition that these mitigation wetlands were constructed and maintained.

Natural wetlands are protected under federal, state and local laws. Mitigation areas must be created if natural wetland areas are impacted by construction activities, such as the development of Weston.



The where

Weston has four major mitigation areas:

- A 275-acre area west of South Post Road and south of the Regional Park
- A 118-acre area and a 108-acre area, each just east of U.S. 27 near SW 26th and SW 16th Streets
- A 1,185-acre area between the Savanna community and U.S. 27, the largest wetland mitigation project in the United States

The Who

Queen Butterfly



UNDERSTANDING *what we see*

The Indian Trace Development District, a dependant district of the City of Weston, is responsible for the construction and maintenance of all mitigation areas.

Maintenance includes the elimination of specific plant species while fostering the growth of healthy wetland plants. Monitoring requirements must prove the success of the mitigation areas.

● → **Indicators of Success: Wildlife and Water Quality**

The When

The construction of mitigation areas began in 1988 and was completed in 2001. Monitoring requirements continue through 2004 and maintenance will continue perpetually.

Native plants vs. weeds

Each of the plantings in an area was put there for a specific purpose - from attracting certain birds, fish and insects to providing nesting and roosting places for reproduction for some species, to providing a food supply for others. Littoral shelves, varying ground levels along and in the water embankment that are planted with vegetation, are constructed for this purpose. The use of native Florida plants within our mitigation areas include pickerelweed, knotted & gulf coast spike rush, cord grass, gama grass, marsh fleabane, blue mistflower, pond apple, and bald cypress - all of which attract bird life to the area and provide food for aquatic species. The District is required to eradicate exotic weeds, leaving only healthy plants.

The vegetation is also necessary for water quality, enabling us to enjoy pristine lakes and canals. Diverse vegetation pulls impurities from the water and releases oxygen and water into the atmosphere.

Blue Mistflower



Gama



Marsh fleabane





Kosteletzkya virginica

frequently asked QUESTIONS

Why can't we cut back or pave some of these areas?

Maintenance of the vegetation is governed by the permitting authorities. Tampering with any part of the wetlands mitigation area is against the law and may result in arrest, fines and/or imprisonment.

Why doesn't the area near my house look like other areas I have seen?

Various types of mitigation were required to be constructed within Weston:

- Vegetated shelves of specified lengths & widths

- Open water areas
- Lake corner plantings
- Aquatic pods
- Large acreage of contiguous mitigation

Not all areas have matured, with sparse areas indicating a youthful state. Plants have been properly spaced to allow for growth, which in South Florida's climate occurs rapidly. Patience and a little time will unveil an evolutionary process through which successful mitigation unfolds. The mitigation area appearance, sometimes lush with higher water levels, or at times drier with more exposed vegetation, by design is tied to the effects of seasonal rainfall, and naturally fluctuates as such.

Besides the fact that Weston was allowed to be built, what other benefits are there?

Wetlands assist in stormwater management by storing stormwater and releasing it at a controlled rate. This collection of stormwater within the wetlands means higher water levels during rainy seasons.

Wetlands recharge the ground water that is vital for South Florida's fresh water supply by holding water until it percolates through the soil, becoming non-vulnerable to evaporation. Wetlands also purify storm water by removing organic materials, fertilizers and contaminants from the water before being discharged to the Everglades or the Atlantic Ocean.





Blue Mistflower



Blue Heron



Snail Kite

Wetlands provide a habitat for fish, birds and other animals. Residents and visitors benefit by having a preserved conservation area that may also be used as an educational resource.

What types of wildlife will I see?

One of the required measurements of a successful mitigation area is the species of birds and fish that exist within it, such as hawks, osprey, egrets, ducks, herons, wood stork, and tern. In Weston you will also spot the endangered snail kite - a bird that feeds exclusively on the apple snail, which survives only in a pure aquatic environment. This is truly an ecosystem at its best. Fish inhabitants include bass, catfish and mosquito fish (yes, they feed off of mosquitoes). Other animals include alligators, white-tailed deer and marsh rabbits.

... → **STOP**

*and take the time
to enjoy this unique
environment*

... → **LOOK**

*at the diversity
and beauty of
the vegetation
and wildlife*

... → **LISTEN**

*to the symphony
of sounds*



Queen Butterfly



Blue Mistflower



Marsh fleabane

*Building the City of Weston
has meant the development of over
15,000 residential homes.*



*Mitigation areas are designated,
constructed and maintained to
compensate for natural wetlands lost
due to development.*





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