

## **Incentives for Florida Friendly Yards in Adopt-A-Pond Drainage Areas**

### **Intent**

In the current climate of stormwater regulations in the NPDES and TMDL programs, the Stormwater Management Section Environmental Team recognizes that we must take cooperative steps with other programs and with citizens to accomplish our goals of safe and healthy stormwater resources. To that end, the Hillsborough County Adopt-A-Pond Program will initiate an incentive program to encourage citizens to adopt Florida-friendly landscape practices. The program recognizes that typical landscape practices result in significant contributions to stormwater pollution. The Florida-friendly landscape concept is designed to produce low-cost, low-water-use, low-fertilizer-use landscapes that also provide habitat for wildlife and reduce the spread of invasive plants. The Hillsborough County Extension Service coordinates the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program (FY&N) to teach this concept, and evaluate and recognize yards that comply with the program criteria.

### **Incentives**

These incentives are available for currently active Adopt-A-Pond groups who meet the criteria.

**Level 1:** Pond Groups that have one to five properties with Florida-friendly Yards recognized by the FY&N Program within the area that drains to the pond either over land or through the storm sewer system are eligible to receive \$200.00 worth of equipment/hardware<sup>1</sup> for their pond group.

**Level 2:** Pond Groups that have more than one and not less than 20% of the properties in the drainage area recognized as Florida-friendly Yards by the FY&N Program are eligible to receive one free herbicide treatment<sup>2</sup> in the pond and \$500.00 of equipment/hardware<sup>1</sup> for the pond group, **OR** \$500.00 of equipment/hardware<sup>1</sup> and \$200.00 of native plants<sup>3</sup>.

**Level 3:** Pond Groups that have at least two and no less than 50% of the properties in the drainage area recognized as Florida-friendly Yards by the FY&N Program are eligible to receive two free herbicide treatments<sup>2</sup> in the pond, \$500.00 of equipment/hardware<sup>1</sup> and \$200.00 worth of native plants<sup>3</sup>, **OR** \$500.00 of equipment/hardware and \$500.00 of native plants.

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<sup>1</sup> Equipment may include waders, shovels/rakes, pump sprayers, habitat boxes, bird feeders, benches, or other similar items as approved by the Adopt-A-Pond Program Coordinator.

<sup>2</sup> Herbicide treatment is subject to the Program Coordinator's determination that there is a need for the application. Treatment shall not exceed \$3500 in total value.

<sup>3</sup> Native plants are subject to availability. Plants may be used in the pond or other community areas.

## **Conditions**

Qualifying yards must be adjacent to the pond, or drain directly to a storm sewer system that discharges to the pond and must be officially recognized by the Hillsborough County Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program.

To claim an incentive, Pond Group Representatives should contact the Adopt-A-Pond Program to request verification. The Program will verify the level of incentive available to the pond group.

Incentives must be used within six months of official notification of eligibility. Six months from the date of notification, all unused portions of the incentive will be void.

Incentives will be distributed at the discretion of the Adopt-A-Pond Program Coordinator.

The Group Representative is responsible for communicating with the Pond Group and arriving at a decision about which option to select (in the case of Levels 2 & 3), and what items will be selected. The Group Representative must then coordinate with the Program Coordinator to receive the incentives for the group.

A Pond Group shall be eligible for a particular level of incentive only once. The Group will be eligible to receive higher level incentives as they qualify. A Group that qualifies for a higher level incentive at the time of verification will not be eligible to receive a lower level incentive.