



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chain-of-lakes restoration project establishes nature lovers' escape

PBCC at Lake Worth restores pond apple slough habitat

(Sept. 28, 2005 – Lake Worth, FL) The endangered wood stork of Florida loves going to college now. Exotic vegetation that once threatened the rare pond apple slough habitat at the northeast corner of the Palm Beach Community College campus in Lake Worth has been removed. Native plants have been re-established, leading native birds and animals to return and flourish.

The current project, the second phase of restoration work at the site, was accomplished with a \$50,000 grant from Palm Beach County's public lands grant program. The project also was funded by matching funds from the PBCC Foundation and a South Florida Water Management District grant. The total cost was over \$100,000. Students in PBCC's Environmental Science Technology program and the Community Earth Club will work with the college's grounds and landscape crew to maintain the site as a "living laboratory" for science classes complete with a nature trail and signage for the nature lovers in the community. The project is a part of the restoration effort for the chain-of-lakes ecosystem to improve native habitats and water quality.

The three-quarter acre site was once heavily infested with exotic species, including Brazilian pepper, Australian pine, earleaf acacia and melaleuca. Contractors have removed all exotics from the site and planted native vegetation, assisted by student volunteers and PBCC facilities staff. The pond apple forest is a much different place today.

"The native vegetation is thriving and with it the local native species of butterflies are flourishing, as well as birds such as wood storks, herons, egrets, ibis and our local osprey," said Professor Jessica Miles, department chair of the Environmental Science Technology program.

“We hope that all visitors to the restoration area have a chance to view numerous species and discover their value to our native ecosystems.”

The public is invited to walk the nature trail and learn more about this unique habitat. The site is located on Lake Worth Road in the northeast corner of the campus. To find out more, contact Professor Jessica Miles at (561) 207-5220.

Media contact:

Toni Wolf

College Relations & Marketing Specialist

(561) 868-3129