

Biologists on hand as Colleyville pond drained!

Colleyville

Turtles, Turtles, wherefore art thou Turtles?

A large contingency was on hand Wednesday morning as the Colleyville pond, located near Heritage and Glade behind the Walgreens store in the new Heritage Oaks Town Home development, was drained.



Employees of Mady Corporation standby as the draining trench is opened.



(r to l) Greg Puklicz, VP of Mady Development Corporation and Bruce Scasta, Project Manager.



This large bullfrog protested loudly about the disruption of his home. Carl Franklin, Biological Curator and Collections Manager for University Texas at Arlington collects turtles on right.



Randy, on left, a site supervisor with Mady, holds a net in the drainage area to snag anything going with the flow; while Dan O'Connell, a biologist with Tarrant County College, examines a fish in his net above.



Colleyville Animal Control was on site as the biologists examined every area of the muddy pond bottom.



At times the two biologists were in a muddy suction mix literally past their knees as they worked to identify and rescue what they could from the pond. Not found, were any significantly very large turtles of any species. The few turtles that were captured were identified as Red Ear sliders, a common kind of turtle, when small, that are sold by many pet stores.



Mr. Puklicz said he would relocate the turtles rescued to the Nature Center in Colleyville.



Left, Franklin displays a perch from the pond, while above, a common snapper turtle, prepares to bite into any threats he can reach.



The two biologists continued to work the muddy pond area probing for turtles that buried in the soft slush. Franklin holds a fairly large specimen he identified as a large Red Ear Slider on right.



Unfortunately, what was not found was any extremely large turtles, an alligator or an alligator turtle. One of the project supervisors said that the pond had a heavy rain about two weeks ago and he noticed a significant reduction of activity in the pond thereafter. The water had reached the level of a large ravine that drained to the east then back to a drainage area to the south.

There was some speculation that the significant amount of construction activity, immediately adjacent to the pond, may have spooked some of the wildlife to the point they decided to change addresses when the water level was high enough to escape the Heritage Oaks pond.

At any rate, Colleyville resident and VP of Mady Development, Greg Puklicz deserves conservationist's kudos for his extraordinary effort to provide rescue to all sorts of little creatures in the pond. Puklicz said that they are going to leave the drainage trench open so that turtles that may not have been found, because they burrowed under the soft mud, would have a route out through the trench to a nearby drainage creek.

The lack of any meaningful sighting was a disappointment for most everyone, but the effort of trudging through mud in an extraordinary effort to find and rescue the ponds living creatures, by two local biologists, was a sight to see in of itself.

I suppose the pond now can officially be the "Loch Nest Turtle Pond," because no physical evidence was discovered by observers today. In fact, the pond appeared to be no more than 4 foot, at its deepest point, as a result of silt on the bottom.

Now the pond will be further dredged and enlarged as a central nature preserve in the up scale future Town Home development of Heritage Oaks.

LNO looks forward to seeing the new nature preserve and bringing our readers new photos as the restocking of creatures in the new and improved pond takes place.



This late breaking photo was supplied by Mr. Puklicz after LNO left the scent. Dan O'Connell literally went all in to search for survivors!