SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

May, June and July 2013 Kissimmee Basin Environmental and Restoration Features

May was the peak of the breeding season in the Kissimmee Basin. The two largest breeding colonies were located on Rabbit Island and on an Island in Lake Mary Jane. Here a white ibis feeds a fledgling on Lake Mary Jane in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes.

May 24, 2013

A wood stork comes in for a landing on a rookery in Lake Mary Jane to feed its nestlings.

A young wood stork works on his balance on Lake Mary Jan.e

A white ibis feeds a fledgling on Lake Mary Jane.

A little blue heron fledgling on Lake Mary Jane

A little blue heron tries to feed its aggressively hungry fledged chick on Lake Mary Jane…ouch!

A great egret fledgling is on his own on Lake Mary Jane.

A white ibis feeds its fledgling on Lake Mary Jane.

May 24, 2013

A tricolored heron fledgling on Lake Mary Jane

A young anhinga on Lake Mary Jane

An ibis parent keeps busy feeding its recent fledglings on Lake Mary Jane.

Cattle egret nestling on Rabbit Island on Lake Kissimmee

Tricolored heron nestling on Rabbit Island on Lake Kissimmee

A pair of nestling anhinga wait patiently for their next meal in the south end of the Phase I restoration area.

May 22, 2013

A snail kite picks up an apple snail in the littoral edge of Rabbit Island on Lake Kissimmee.

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May 22, 2013

A snail kite on the littoral edge of Rabbit Island on Lake Kissimmee

Looking north from the south end of the Phase I restoration area during dry conditions

Water levels in the restoration area floodplain remained low through most of June.

Wetter conditions begin to build over the Kissimmee Basin as we settled into the wet season in late June.

Looking north in the central Phase I restoration area during late dry season conditions (See next slide for wet season comparison.)

Looking north at the same exact section of the river/floodplain two months later during wet conditions in early wet season

Broadleaf marsh vegetation flourishes in deeper pockets of the Starvation and Oak Creek floodplain of the Phase I restoration area as rainfall and high discharge help to inundate the floodplain. The invasive exotic West Indian marsh grass (*Hymenachne amplexicaulis*) seen here is expanding in much of the floodplain.

Looking west in the central Phase I restoration area during wet conditions

Starvation Slough floodplain under wet conditions. The invasive West Indian marsh grass can again be seen here.

A aerial view of the inundated floodplain in the Phase I restoration area from oak line to oak line

Floodplain waters extend to the oak line throughout most of the floodplain as seen here near Starvation Slough in the Phase I restoration area.

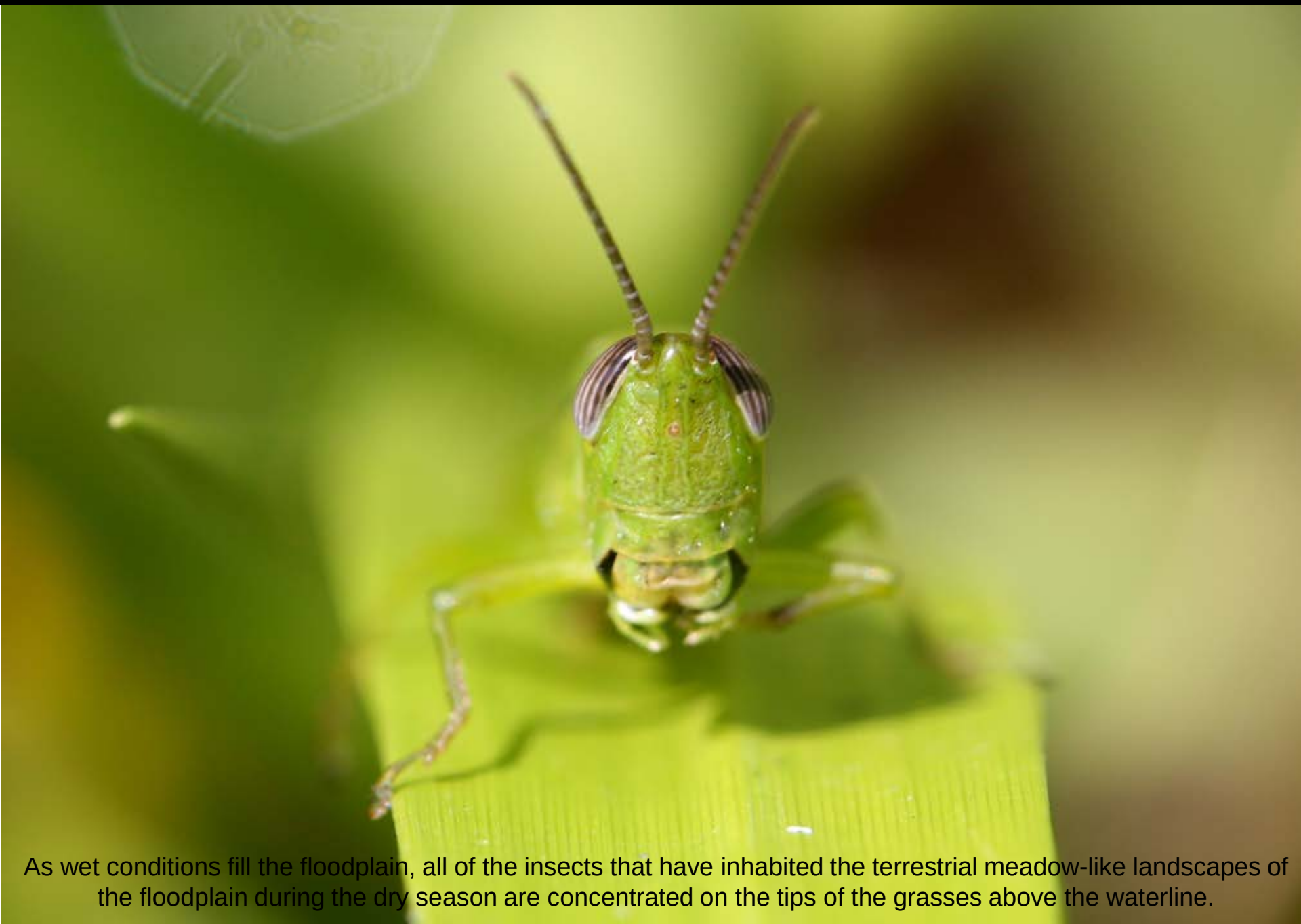
High water can be seen in the river channel of the Phase I restoration area as well as over-bankfull floodplain inundation following good rainfall and high discharge from upstream.

Phase I restoration area

High water can be seen in the river channel of the Phase I restoration area.

Phase I restoration area river channel and floodplain

Phase I and VIA restoration areas under wet conditions



As wet conditions fill the floodplain, all of the insects that have inhabited the terrestrial meadow-like landscapes of the floodplain during the dry season are concentrated on the tips of the grasses above the waterline.

This Crab spider uses its camouflage on this flower to ambush the next insect that visits the flower.

An interesting color variation of a praying mantis found in the Phase I restoration area.

Swallow-tailed kites take advantage of the high concentrations of prey on the Phase I restoration area floodplain.

June 18, 2013

A group of more than 20 swallow-tailed kites form a pre-migratory roost along the Istokpoga canal in the south end of the Phase I restoration area.

May 22, 2013

The swallow-tailed kites fly gracefully over the Kissimmee River floodplain scanning for prey such as insects, frogs, snakes and lizards fattening up before their long migration southward through Central and South America to their wintering grounds in Brazil.

June 18, 2013

This swallow-tailed kite snagged a frog from the floodplain in the Phase I restoration area.

June 18, 2013

This swallow-tailed kite swooped down for a splash in the Phase I restoration area floodplain.

Sunset over Riverwoods Run in the Phase II/III restoration area

American lotus – Lake Mary Jane