



Section 8: Russell Park

Railroad bridges, called trestles, cross the water between small islands. At sunset, Nick flies over. His shadow slides along the tracks like a train.

Boats usually travel in the middle of the river where the water is deepest. The track that crosses the channel is raised like a drawbridge so boats can pass under. Nick lands on the top and looks at the houses and docks built on the shores.

He flies to the south shore and lands near the Russell Park Boat Launch. A driveway of gravel slopes into the river. The grass on either side of the driveway is blocked off with “no parking” signs.

Nick stands very still when he sees a frog hopping across the grass.

Across the street are many historic homes. In front of one, a woman and a girl walk out and down the front porch steps. They hold hands as

they walk to the street and stop. The woman points at Nick. “See the bird?”

“What kind is it, Mommy?” the girl asks.

The frog hops closer to Nick and eats a mosquito.

“Some kind of heron, I think. Look at its long legs,” the woman says.

The girl rubs her leg. “Bugs are biting me, but I can’t see them!”

“They are tiny flies called no-see-ums.” The woman slaps her arm. “The mosquitoes are biting too. Let’s go back in.”

“Will the bird go home?” the girl asks.

“I think it’s a kind of night heron. Like an owl, it hunts at night.”

As they walk away, the girl waves her hand.

“Bye, bye, birdie.”

The frog leaps very close to Nick, and he grabs it in his bill.

FLOODING

by Desiree Companion, Sarasota County Surface Water Planning & Regulatory

Flooding is part of the earth's natural hydrological cycle. Floodplains are low-lying areas near coastlines, rivers and streams that temporarily store excess surface water caused by storm surge or intense rainfalls. Many people want to live by water, and their homes and businesses have filled these once-natural storage systems. Flooding only becomes a problem when met with human habitation.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

by Curtis Porterfield, Polk County Natural Resources Division

Florida is developing fast. Many houses, shopping centers and roads are being built. When people build, they often get rid of natural lands and surface water to make room for the buildings and roads. This means that many animals and plants lose their homes. Also, because surface water refills ground water, when we get rid of surface water, we lose ground water too. When surface waters are surrounded by buildings and roads, they change. The dirty substances in towns and cities can run off into surface waters when it rains, and this can make them too dirty for plants and animals to live in.