

A New Site for the Swamp Pink (*Helonias bullata*) in Maryland

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In the summer of 1989, Gene Cooley gave me some published extracts (Fessenden 1954, 1955) from the journal of Dr. Charles C. Plitt, a turn-of-the-century Baltimore botanist who spent considerable time studying the flora of Anne Arundel County. I was fascinated with Plitt's journal extracts and, since that date, have been trying to find some of the rare plants that he and his fellow "trampers" located in the "wilds of Anne Arundel County" in the late 1800's and early 1900's. I have had mixed success locating Plitt's sites, which I plan to report on in a subsequent more detailed paper. However, one outcome has been the discovery of the swamp pink, *Helonias bullata*, upstream from Lake Waterford in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. The purpose of this paper is to report on that find.

Since 1990, I have been searching for the swamp pink in both the Marley Creek drainage and the Magothy River tributaries above Lake Waterford, with no success. That is, until this spring when I walked the section of the stream between Route 10 and Lake Waterford. As I recorded it in my April 30, 1993 journal entry:

"Well, I finally did it. I found one of the two main species I've been looking for, *Lygodium palmatum* (climbing fern) and *Helonias bullata* (swamp pink), about half way to Lake Waterford, on the left side of the floodplain going downstream. Plitt had reported both, somewhere between the Marley Station and Lake Waterford [see below]. Initially, the floodplain had a small (about 5' wide) stream with adjacent marshy openings in an otherwise forested swamp with numerous shrubs. Periodically, I noted non-flowering turks-cap lilies (*Lilium superbum*). Soon the stream was more braided and open (a marsh/shrub swamp complex with numerous dead standing trees), apparently the result of water backing up from the old "dam" downstream. Much of the open area had bur-reed (*Sparganium* sp.), water starwort (*Callitriche heterophylla*), and skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*). I wore my low rubber boots since it was a little cool in the morning, but soon went over them. Fortunately, it soon warmed up (in the 70's) and was a nice sunny day. For the most part, I tried to stay near the edge of the swamp in saturated to shallowly flooded areas, assuming they might be optimal for the swamp pink verses the deeper open areas. At one point as I struggled along, I looked up and low and behold there it was -- a swamp pink standing out above the skunk cabbage staring me in the face. My immediate reaction to myself was: 'Damn! Damn! There it is! I'll be damn!' Then I looked in another direction and only 20' from me was another one. I inspected the general area pretty thoroughly, doubling back and forth a few times and recorded a total of six clones (?), five of which had a flowering scape. Because of the dense skunk cabbage, however, I could have missed some other plants, particularly non-flowering ones."

I found the swamp pink in a red maple-black gum (*Acer rubrum-Nyssa sylvatica*) swamp just upstream from Lake Waterford on the north side of the floodplain, adjacent to what I have described in the past (Sipple 1993) as an apparent old lake bed or otherwise impounded area behind the existing lake. This impounded area has the remnants of a low dam and is mostly a shrub swamp/marsh complex with scattered standing dead trees. The most abundant and characteristic herb in the immediate vicinity of the swamp pink was the skunk cabbage (*S. foetidus*). The plants were in an area perhaps a tenth of an acre in extent and there was one flowering scape per cluster of plants. The flowering specimens had mature, greenish-brown, flaccid leaves; the adjacent ramets had clusters of younger, bright-green, erect leaves. I collected