

# **ENVIRONMENTAL NARRATIVE**

## **GARDENS OF VENICE Sarasota County, Florida**

**January 2015**

**Prepared by:**

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## INTRODUCTION

The following environmental assessment has been prepared to help facilitate Sarasota County review of a rezoning application for the Gardens of Venice project. This environmental assessment identifies and addresses vegetative communities, jurisdictional waters, and grand trees located within the subject property, as well as listed wildlife species which may be utilizing the property.

The subject property is located in Section 34, Township 39S, Range 19E within Sarasota County, Florida. More specifically, the project is located along the west side of Jacaranda Boulevard, south of U.S. 41 and north of S.R. 776. Please refer to the attached LOCATION MAP.

## SITE CONDITIONS

The site inspection was conducted by qualified staff ecologists in January 2015. During the inspection, temperatures ranged from 45° - 50° F, winds were 8-10 mph from the north, and skies were overcast.

## VEGETATIVE COMMUNITIES

Field observations, in conjunction with the Sarasota County Soil Survey and aerial photographs, were used to develop a map of the vegetative communities onsite. The following table displays the vegetative associations found on the subject property. The vegetative communities were identified and classified utilizing the Florida Land Use Cover and Forms Classification System (FLUCCS). A description of the communities is also included. The limits of on-site wetlands and/or surface waters were previously approved by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) through issuance of an Environmental Resource Permit. Please refer to the attached FLUCCS MAP.

<b>FLUCCS ID</b>	<b>FLUCCS DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ACREAGE</b>
170	<i>Institutional</i>	4.52
411	Pine Flatwoods	2.34
424	Melaleuca	0.83
535	Stormwater Management Areas	1.52
619M	Hydric Melaleuca	1.97
631E2	Shrub Wetland, Invaded by Exotics (26-50%)	0.51
643E4	Wet Prairie, Invaded by Exotics (76-90%)	0.32
740	Disturbed Land	0.56
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>12.57</b>

## UPLANDS

### FLUCCS 170 – Institutional

This portion of the property has been previously developed and currently contains an active adult living facility with associated parking and infrastructure. Vegetation present is limited to planted landscape and ornamental species.

### FLUCCS 411 – Pine Flatwoods

This association is characterized by a dense canopy and midstory of slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*) with scattered cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*), live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), and Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) also present. The groundcover consists of saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), carpetgrass (*Axonopus sp.*), grapevine (*Vitis sp.*), wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), runner oak (*Quercus pumila*), broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*), and dog fennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*).

### FLUCCS 424 – Melaleuca

This upland community contains a dense canopy dominated by melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*). The midstory and groundcover are comprised of wax myrtle, Brazilian pepper, water pennywort (*Hydrocotyle umbellata*), saltbush (*Baccharis halimifolia*), ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), dog fennel, and chainfern (*Woodwardia virginiana*).

### FLUCCS 740 – Disturbed Land

This upland area has been previously cleared with evidence of soil disturbance and is now vegetated with opportunistic grass and weed species. Dominant species present include: broomsedge, Brazilian pepper, hempvine (*Mikania scandens*), Peruvian primrose willow (*Ludwigia peruviana*), buttonweed (*Spermacoce sp.*), ragweed, common frog fruit (*Phyla nodiflora*), beggar's ticks (*Bidens alba*), knotgrass (*Paspalum distichum*), saltbush, creeping oxeye (*Wedelia trilobata*), crowfoot grass (*Dactyloctenium aegyptium*), and Caesarweed (*Urena lobata*).

## WETLANDS and STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AREAS

### FLUCCS 535 – Stormwater Management Areas

Two man-made stormwater management areas were previously permitted by the SWFWMD and constructed. These non-jurisdictional areas are dry retention basins associated with the existing adult living facility. The dry retention basins are comprised of a dense groundcover of various herbaceous species. The dominant vegetative species within the dry retention areas include: Bahia grass (*Paspalum notatum*), common frog-fruit, water pennywort, knotgrass, carpetgrass, beggar's ticks, ragweed, flatsedges (*Cyperus spp.*), and fleabane (*Pluchea odorata*).

### FLUCCS 619M – Hydric Melaleuca

This wetland association is characterized by a dense canopy of melaleuca and lacks a significant midstory. Groundcover species present include: water pennywort, little blue maidencane (*Amphicarpum muhlenbergium*), torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*), duck potato (*Sagittaria lancifolia*), hempvine, Virginia buttonweed (*Diodia virginiana*), dayflower (*Commelina diffusa*), smartweed (*Polygonum punctatum*), Peruvian primrose willow, swamp fern (*Blechnum serrulatum*), and Asiatic coinwort (*Centella asiatica*).

### FLUCCS 631E2 – Shrub Wetland, Invade by Exotics (26-50%)

This wetland association lacks canopy coverage but contains a dense midstory comprised of Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*), Brazilian pepper, Peruvian primrose willow, saltbush and wax myrtle. Groundcover

species include: arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*), hempvine, torpedo grass, water pennywort, and creeping seedbox (*Ludwigia repens*).

FLUCCS 643E4 – Wet Prairie, Invaded by Exotics (76-90%)

This wetland association lacks a canopy and midstory. Groundcover vegetation present includes: torpedo grass, Brazilian pepper, cattail (*Typha sp.*), Peruvian primrose willow, smartweed, swamp fern, water pennywort, dayflower, Virginia buttonweed and Asiatic coinwort.

**DISCUSSION OF JURISDICTIONAL WETLANDS**

The limits of on-site wetlands and surface waters were previously approved by the SWFWMD through issuance of Environmental Resource Permit 40876.000.

The subject property contains approximately 2.80 acres of jurisdictional wetland. These wetland associations are classified as Hydric Melaleuca (FLUCCS 619M), Shrub Wetland, Invaded by Exotics (26-50%) (FLUCCS 631E2), and Wet Prairie, Invaded by Exotics (76-90%) (FLUCCS 643E4).

**IMPACTS TO JURISDICTIONAL WATERS**

The site plan does not propose impacts to any on-site jurisdictional wetlands. Based on the proposed site plan, all on-site jurisdictional wetlands and surface waters shall be preserved in the post-development condition.

**WETLAND, SURFACE WATER, and NATIVE HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

An aggressive maintenance plan shall be implemented to ensure that the preserved jurisdictional wetlands, and associated upland buffers are relatively free (<5% aerial coverage) of exotic and nuisance vegetative species, and maintain a minimum 80% aerial coverage of desirable native vegetative species. The maintenance plan will consist of an initial exotic/nuisance vegetation treatment and removal event, with scheduled quarterly maintenance events to ensure that regrowth of exotic and nuisance vegetation is limited. Natural recruitment of native vegetative species will provide additional native groundcover. Therefore, the necessity for planting of native vegetation is not anticipated.

**DISCUSSION OF LISTED WILDLIFE SPECIES**

The following narratives address wildlife species listed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern which may be utilizing the subject property.

**LISTED SPECIES SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

To provide approximately 80% coverage of the site, both linear and nonlinear overlapping transects were completed across the parcel per FWC guidelines. Transects were spaced approximately 20 - 40 feet apart depending on the visibility within the vegetative association being surveyed. Evidence of protected species

was gathered through both direct observation and through observation of signs such as tracks, nests, burrows, and fecal material. If evidence of utilization by a protected species which may require permitting prior to development of the subject property was observed, an aerial photograph was marked depicting the approximate location. In addition, a search of available online resources was conducted to reveal the previously documented presence of listed species which may be utilizing the subject property. These resources included, but were not limited to, the following: FWC Eagle Nest Locator Database; Sarasota County GIS Database; FWS Panther Consultation Area Map(s); and FWS Wood Stork Colony Map(s).

### **LISTED SPECIES ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Search of available online resources revealed that the subject property is located within an 18.6-mile radius designated as Core Foraging Area of several wood stork (*Mycteria americana*) nesting colonies. The nearest documented colony appears to be greater than 6.5 miles from the subject property. No impacts to suitable on-site wood stork foraging habitat (wetland or surface water habitat) are proposed. Therefore, based on current regulations, the proximity of the nesting colonies is not likely to affect the development of the subject property.

Search of available online resources revealed that the subject property is located within the Consultation Area of the Florida scrub jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*). However, a review of the Sarasota County GIS Database for documented Scrub Jay Habitat and Family Groups revealed that the subject property does not contain documented scrub jay habitat nor previously documented sightings of scrub jays. In addition, the subject property does not provide suitable nesting or typical foraging habitat for the Florida scrub jay. Therefore, the Florida scrub jay is not likely to affect the future development of the subject property.

Search of available online resources did not reveal documentation of any other listed wildlife species currently utilizing the subject property. No protected species or evidence of protected species utilization which would require permits from the FWC or FWS were observed onsite during the January 2015 site inspection.

### **DISCUSSION OF GRAND TREES**

The following narratives address the presence/absence of Grand Trees within the subject property. In order to qualify as a Grand Tree, applicable tree species must meet or exceed the minimum score(s) as defined by the point scoring system described in Sarasota County Code 2007-091 [Tree Protection Code].

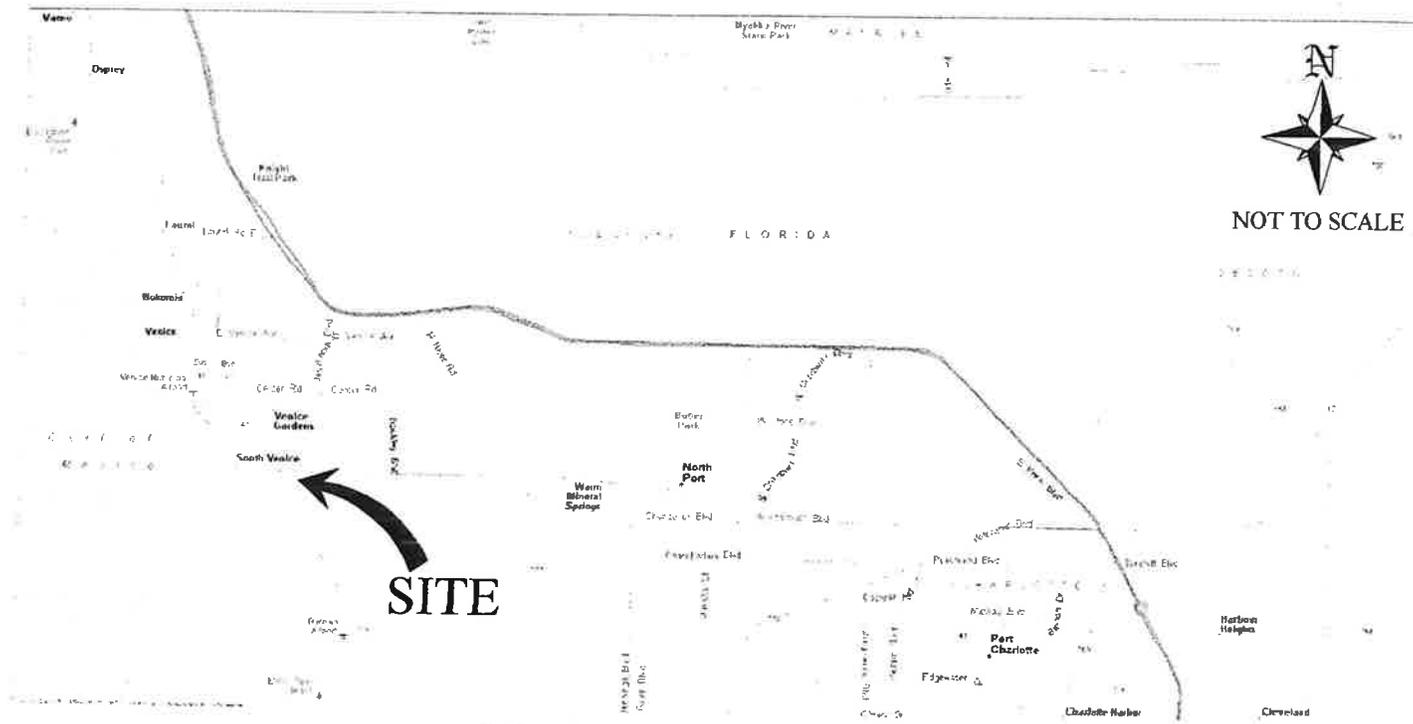
### **GRAND TREE SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

To provide approximately 100% coverage of the site, both linear and nonlinear overlapping transects were completed across the property. Identification of potential on-site Grand Trees was determined through direct observation and measurement.

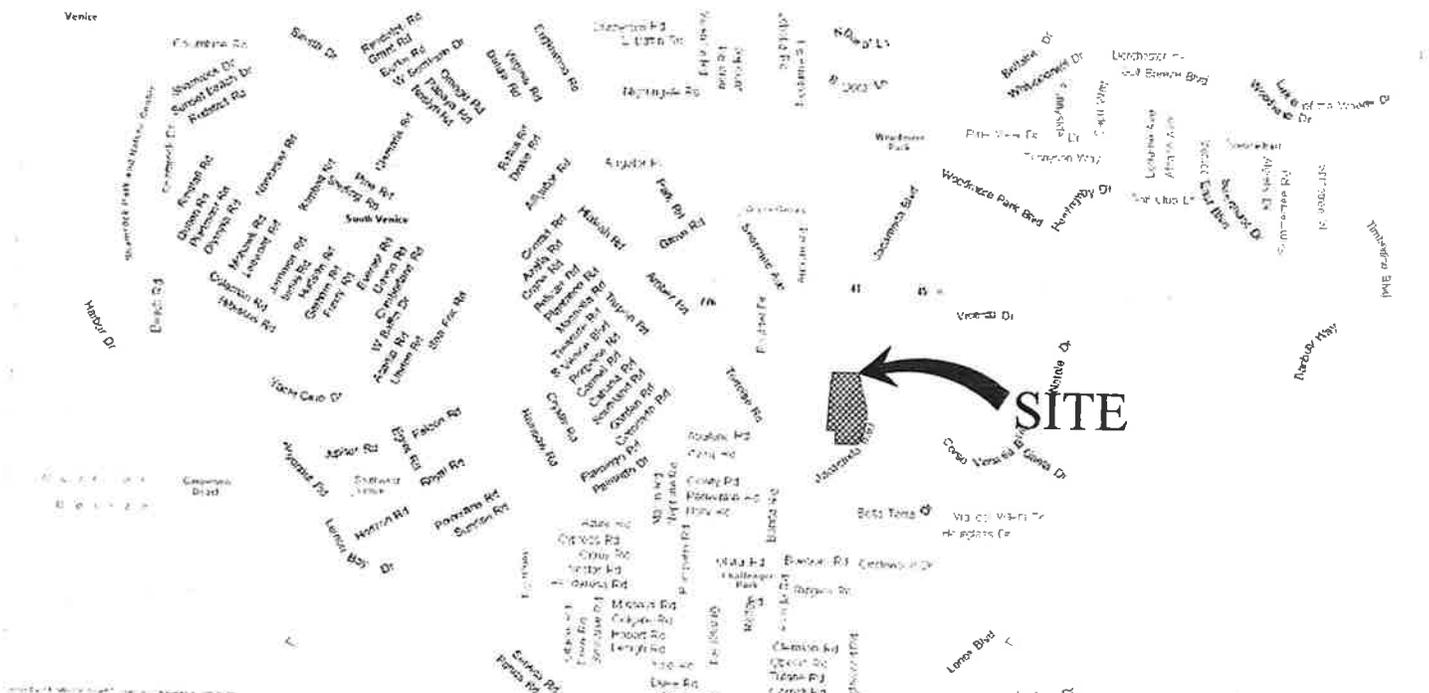
## **GRAND TREE ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

The subject property does not contain any trees which meet the minimum score criteria, or are very close to meeting the minimum score criteria, to be designated as a Grand Tree. Therefore, the subject development plan will not impact any Grand Trees as defined by Sarasota County Code 2007-091 [Tree Protection Code].

# SECTION 34; TOWNSHIP 39S; RANGE 19E



SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA



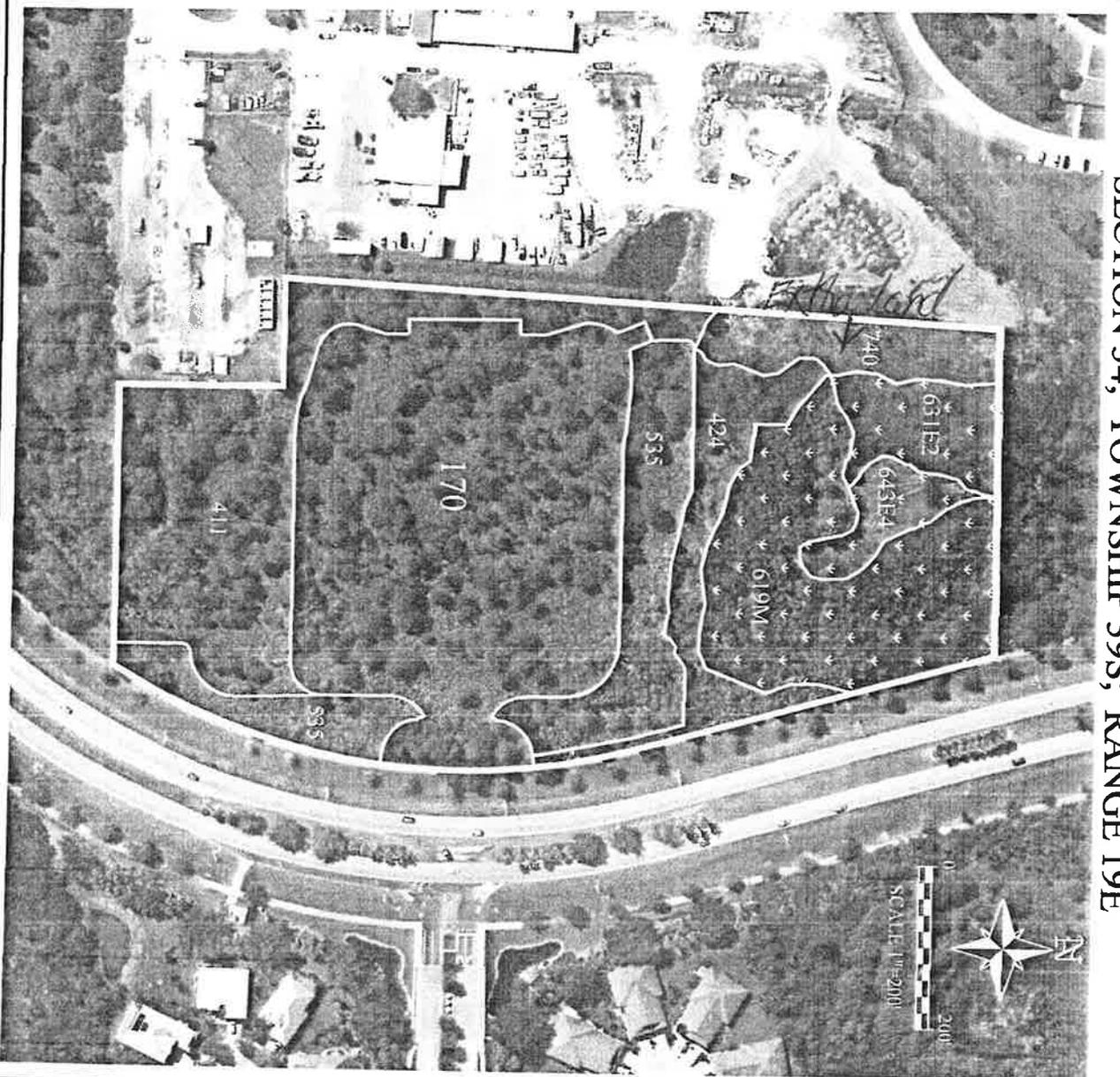
LOCATION MAP

14-007 / JANUARY 13, 2015

**GARDENS OF VENICE**  
LOCATION MAP

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SECTION 34; TOWNSHIP 39S; RANGE 19E



GARDENS OF VENICE  
FLUCCS MAP

LEGEND

FLUCCS DESCRIPTIONS	ACREAGE
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535 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AREAS	1.52±
619M HYDRIC MELALEUCA	1.97±
631E2 SHRUB WETLAND, INVADDED BY EXOTICS (26-50%)	0.51±
643E4 WET PRAIRIE, INVADDED BY EXOTICS (76-90%)	0.32±
740 DISTURBED LAND	0.56±
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12.57±</b>



WETLANDS

2.80±

- NOTES:
1. FOR PERMIT USE ONLY, NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION.
  2. PROJECT LIMITS ARE APPROXIMATE AND WERE PROVIDED BY HERSTON ENGINEERING SERVICES, INC.
  3. MAPPING APPROXIMATE AND BASED ON INTERPRETATION OF 2011 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY AT 1"=200' SCALE.
  4. THE DELINEATION OF ANY ON-SITE WETLANDS SURFACE WATERS, AND/OR OTHER SURFACE WATERS IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO REVIEW/APPROVAL BY APPLICABLE REGULATORY AGENCIES.

14-007 / JANUARY 14, 2015

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