



**VICENZA PHASE 2
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

ENVIRONMENTAL NARRATIVE

June 2020

Prepared for:
NEAL COMMUNITIES
5800 Lakewood Ranch Blvd North
Sarasota, Florida 34240

Prepared by:
ARDURRA
1523 8th Avenue West, Suite B
Palmetto, FL 34221
941.722.0901 fax 941.722.4931

INTRODUCTION

The applicant proposes to construct the SJMR Property on the 106.24-acre subject parcel, located in Sections 35 and 36, Township 38S, Range 19E, Sarasota County. The subject parcel is currently undeveloped and contains a mix of open land, pine flatwoods, and mixed freshwater marshes. Onsite jurisdictional wetlands and other surface waters (OSW) were delineated and flagged by Ardurra Group, Inc. (Ardurra) pursuant to the 62-340, Florida Administrative Code, F.A.C.

The project proposes to preserve all jurisdictional wetlands. Wetland buffers will be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The wetland buffers are in good condition with native upland vegetation. The project is likely to impact upland cut ditches which have drained uplands for agriculture purposes.

METHODOLOGY

The following methods were employed to assess the referenced parcel:

- Field inspection of the site for evidence of wetlands, protected species, or other sensitive environmental features.
- Listed species evaluations of the site were conducted in accordance with appropriate State or Federal agency requirements. Gopher Tortoise Surveys were conducted under the supervision of Danielle Puls, Authorized Gopher Tortoise Agent GTA-19-00009A. Methodology utilized to evaluate the site for gopher tortoise was consistent with FFWCC Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines Appendix 4.
- Recent and historical aerial photograph interpretation of the subject property.
- Review of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps.
- Review of the NRCS Web Soil Survey for Manatee County, Florida and documentation of the soil characteristics on site.
- Research of Manatee County, and various State and Federal databases regarding protected wildlife species.

The following sections provide information on environmental considerations associated with the proposed project. The discussion includes on-site habitat descriptions, adjacent land uses, and wildlife issues for the subject parcel.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing conditions of the project and **within 500 feet** of the project area including upland and wetland plant communities were mapped in accordance with Florida Land Use Cover Forms and Classification System (FLUCCS, Florida Department of Transportation 1999). An aerial photograph and FLUCCS land use map of the site pre-development is provided is attached.

Wetland and Other Surface Water Habitats

Streams and Waterways (FLUCCS 510) – 0.67 acres

Vegetation: The project site contains one excavated ditch. This ditch runs along the central portion of the project area, and contains typical species including creeping primrose willow (*Ludwigia repens*), danglepod (*Sesbania herbacea*), manyflower marshpennywort (*Hydrocotyle umbellata*), torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*), and spikerush (*Eleocharis spp.*).

Impacts: These are all upland excavated features associated with historical agricultural activity.

Hydrology: The onsite ditch appears to flow in response to rain events.



Wildlife: No wildlife was observed utilizing the above described surface water. The man-made ditch has very limited wildlife utilization.

Reservoirs less than 10 acres (FLUCCS 534) – 0.04 acres

Vegetation: The project site contains one pond that is currently utilized by cattle. The pond had little to no vegetation.

Impacts: This is an upland excavated feature associated with historical agricultural activity.

Hydrology: The onsite pond appears to have a consistent hydrology with standing water.

Wildlife: No wildlife was observed utilizing the above described surface water. The man-made ditch has very limited wildlife utilization.

Freshwater Marshes (FLUCCS 641) – 24.38 acres

Vegetation: Freshwater marshes within the project area are of very high quality and exhibit high plant species diversity. These wetlands are mostly vegetated with marsh St. John's Wort (*Hypericum fasciculatum*), sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*), fragrant water-lily (*Nymphaea odorata*), arrowhead (*Sagittaria spp*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), cordgrass (*Spartina spp.*), buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon*), along with scattered individual native species typically found within freshwater marsh ecosystems. Nuisance exotic plant species were limited to minor amounts of melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) saplings and Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolia*) at the margins of the wetland areas.

Impacts: No wetland impacts are proposed for this project.

Hydrology: Freshwater marshes on the subject parcel exhibit permanent and semi-permanent hydroperiods.

Wildlife: These freshwater marshes support wildlife function that may include wading bird foraging and a population of common amphibians, reptiles and fish during the wet season.

Upland Habitats

Open Land (FLUCCS 190) – 8.16 acres

Large areas of the subject parcel contain open, disturbed land. These areas are vegetated with transitional upland grasses and shrubs typically associated with disturbed sites including low growing grasses like cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), upland sedges (*Cyperus spp.*), Caesar weed (*Urena lobata*), John-Charles (*Condea verticillata*) and dog fennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*). Cattle were noted utilizing the open areas.

Pine Flatwoods (FLUCCS 411) – 70.65 acres



Pine flatwoods containing a canopy of slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*) and an understory dominated by saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) and gallberry (*Ilex glabra*) comprised the majority of the uplands within the project area. The project proposes to preserve a series of Upland Preservation areas as open space. The location and size of these areas will be determined with the final design of the project.

Electrical Power Transmission Lines (FLUCCS 832) – 2.34 acres

A Florida Power and Light (FPL) easement runs east west along the central portion of the project area. The easement is maintained and therefore, grasses and sedges dominate the vegetative cover.

Conservation Easements

No conservation easements are proposed.

SOILS

According to the current Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) web soil survey <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx> for Manatee County, there are three (3) soil types found within the project boundary. Please see the attached NRCS Soils Map. Soils found on site are listed below:

- 10 – EauGallie and Myakka fine sands
- 22 – Holopaw fine sand, frequently ponded, 0-1% slopes
- 31 – Pineda-Pineda, wet, fine sand, 0-2% slopes

LISTED SPECIES

Senior scientists with Ardurra have conducted numerous site visits since August 2017. An updated assessment was conducted in June 2018 and again on June 24, 2020. Both the preliminary and updated assessments included site visits and data research.

Ardurra environmental scientists reviewed online listed species databases to identify species known to exist within the project's geographic area, including the Florida Native Areas Inventory (FNAI) Biodiversity Matrix, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Eagle Nest Locator, and the Audubon EagleWatch Program. These database searches revealed no documented utilization of the project area or areas adjacent to the project area by listed species. The closest bald eagle nest documented by the FWC is nest SA023 located approximately 2000 ft. west of the property corner and was designated Occupied during the 2020 season by the EagleWatch program. The subject parcel is not within any bald eagle nest protection zones.

FNAI Biodiversity Matrix

In addition to the previous listed species evaluations conducted on the site, the FNAI Biodiversity Matrix was consulted to determine documented, likely, and/or potentially occurring rare plants, animals, and natural communities in the vicinity of the project area. No species was listed as “documented” or “likely” to occur in the vicinity of the project as listed by FNAI (Matrix Unit 25217).

The table below lists both the species that have a potential to utilize the project area, results of the preliminary surveys, and results from the updated survey.



Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal/State Status	Likelihood of Occurrence	Results of Updated Survey
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Migratory Bird/X	Not Observed.	No nests identified by FWCC or during site visit.
Eastern Indigo	<i>Drymarchon couperi</i>	T/T	Likely (FNAI)	Not observed.
Wood Stork	<i>Mycteria americana</i>	T/T	Likely (FNAI)	Not observed.
West Indian Manatee	<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	E/E	Likely (FNAI)	No habitat exists on site.
Gopher Tortoise	<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	X/T	Potential (FNAI)	Burrows observed on site.
Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis pratensis</i>	X/T	Potential (FNAI)	Not observed. No nesting identified in freshwater marshes.
Florida Burrowing Owl	<i>Athene cunicularia floridana</i>	X/T	Potential (FNAI)	Not observed.
Gulf Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi</i>	T/T	Potential (FNAI)	No habitat exists on site.

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

A search of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) bald eagle database was completed to determine whether any known bald eagle nests occur within the vicinity of the subject parcel. The database revealed that no known bald eagle nest is located within 660 feet of the parcel, the closest eagle nest SA023 is located approximately 2000 feet west of the property in Sarasota County. During the updated site assessment, no bald eagle nests were observed within or adjacent to the project boundary. The nest was last recorded Active in 2017 by FWC; an updated survey in 2020 by the EagleWatch program designated the nest Occupied. Should a bald eagle nest be located within 660 feet of the project area, the appropriate U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) consultation will occur, and permits acquired, if necessary.

Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

Arduarra scientists conducted a survey of the potential gopher tortoise habitat. During the survey no evidence of Gopher Tortoise or burrows were observed on site; however, burrows have been identified previously within the project area. Ninety (90) days prior to start of construction activities, a 100% gopher tortoise survey is recommended. If gopher tortoise burrows are found during construction, appropriate efforts should be taken to relocate gopher tortoises before any construction continues. City of Venice will be copied on any obtained permits.

Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*)



The eastern indigo snake is listed as “Threatened” by both the FWS and FWC. The snake occurs in a range of habitats, including pine flatwoods, scrubby flatwoods, dry prairie, edges of freshwater marshes, agricultural fields, and human-altered habitats. According to FNAI data, habitat for the eastern indigo snake is likely present within the project area. During the field reviews and wetland evaluations, no eastern indigo snakes were observed within or adjacent to the project area.

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) and Wading Birds

The wood stork is listed as “Threatened” by the USFWS. According to USFWS data, the project does fall within five (5) Core Foraging Areas (CFA) – for the Casey Key Sorrento Inlet, Blackburn Bay, Dona Bay, North Port Charlotte North and North Port Charlotte CFA. The closest CFA, Blackburn Bay colony, is located approximately 6.5 miles southwest from the project boundary. There are limited wetland impacts proposed; furthermore, there is no evidence of breeding or foraging occurring within the project area. There are no anticipated impacts to the Wood Stork or foraging areas as result of the proposed project. See the attached map for the location of the closest known wood stork nesting colony.

Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis paratensis*)

Sandhill cranes are designated as a ‘State Threatened’ species. According to the FNAI, the sandhill crane has the ‘potential’ to be located within the project area. The distribution of this species can be found throughout Florida in open pasture, ditches, and certain wetland type habitats. No nests or foraging was observed during the multiple wildlife surveys conducted on the property. Furthermore, no wetland impacts are proposed. E Co recommends surveys to be conducted for nesting sandhill cranes to be conducted prior to construction activities, with nesting typically occurring during the December through August breeding season. If there is evidence of nesting by sandhill cranes during this period, FWC recommendations as specified in the Sandhill Crane Species Crane-Species-Guidelines-2016.pdf) and in the Florida Wildlife Conservation Guide (<http://myfwc.com/conservation/value/fwccg/>) will be followed.

West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*)

The West Indian Manatee inhabit rivers, bays, canals, estuaries and coastal areas. No habitat for the West Indian Manatee exists within the proposed project boundaries. It is likely that the FNAI Matrix includes this species as likely due to the presence of the Myakka River within the Matrix Grid.

Gulf Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*)

The Gulf Sturgeon inhabit similar habitats as the West Indian Manatee and are identified as a likely species due to the presence of the Myakka River within the Matrix Grid.

Florida Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia floridana*)

Florida burrowing owls are usually located within open prairie type landscapes with little to no understory vegetation. The bulk of the uplands on the subject property are covered in pine flatwoods with a dense understory of saw palmettos. One hundred percent of the areas identified as open lands were evaluated on numerous visits to the site by Senior Scientists with Ardurra. The most recent survey conducted in these open lands was on June 24, 2020. No evidence of Florida burrowing owls or their burrows have been identified on the project site.



PROPOSED CONDITIONS

Wetlands

Impacts

There are no wetland impacts associated with the proposed project.

Upland/Open Lands Restoration Plan

This plan will provide for the removal of nuisance and exotic plant species, as identified by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council's List of Invasive Plant Species as Category I or Category II nuisance exotic plants. Any Category I or II plants that currently exist or become re-established within common areas and open spaces of the residential development will be targeted for removal. Manual methods will be required in preserve areas and can include hand removal and herbicide treatments where appropriate. All post development state open lands within the project boundaries will be maintained in accordance with Section 706 of the LDC. Annual inspections and maintenance to remove any nuisance/exotic plant species that may reestablish will be also be required.



FLORIDA
Natural Areas
INVENTORY

1018 Thomasville Road
Suite 200-C
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850-224-8207
850-681-9364 fax
www.fnai.org

Florida Natural Areas Inventory

Biodiversity Matrix Query Results

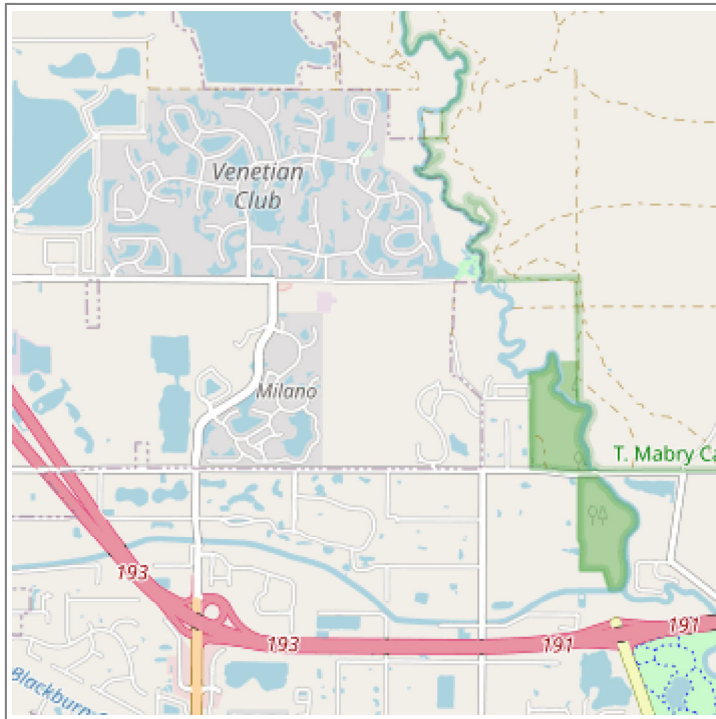
UNOFFICIAL REPORT

Created 6/25/2020

(Contact the FNAI Data Services Coordinator at 850.224.8207 or kbrinegar@fnai.fsu.edu for information on an official Standard Data Report)

NOTE: The Biodiversity Matrix includes only rare species and natural communities tracked by FNAI.

Report for 2 Matrix Units: 27083 , 27360



Descriptions

DOCUMENTED - There is a documented occurrence in the FNAI database of the species or community within this Matrix Unit.

DOCUMENTED-HISTORIC - There is a documented occurrence in the FNAI database of the species or community within this Matrix Unit; however the occurrence has not been observed/reported within the last twenty years.

LIKELY - The species or community is *known* to occur in this vicinity, and is considered likely within this Matrix Unit because:

1. documented occurrence overlaps this and adjacent Matrix Units, but the documentation isn't precise enough to indicate which of those Units the species or community is actually located in; or
2. there is a documented occurrence in the vicinity and there is suitable habitat for that species or community within this Matrix Unit.

POTENTIAL - This Matrix Unit lies within the known or predicted range of the species or community based on expert knowledge and environmental variables such as climate, soils, topography, and landcover.

Matrix Unit ID: 27083

1 Documented Element Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Haliaeetus leucocephalus Bald Eagle	G5	S3	N	N

0 Documented-Historic Elements Found

3 Likely Elements Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
<i>Drymarchon couperi</i> Eastern Indigo Snake	G3	S3	LT	FT
<i>Mesic flatwoods</i>	G4	S4	N	N
<i>Mycteria americana</i> Wood Stork	G4	S2	LT	FT

Matrix Unit ID: 27360

0 Documented Elements Found

0 Documented-Historic Elements Found

4 Likely Elements Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
<i>Drymarchon couperi</i> Eastern Indigo Snake	G3	S3	LT	FT
<i>Mesic flatwoods</i>	G4	S4	N	N
<i>Mycteria americana</i> Wood Stork	G4	S2	LT	FT
<i>Trichechus manatus</i> West Indian Manatee	G2	S2	LE	FE

Matrix Unit IDs: 27083 , 27360

23 Potential Elements Common to Any of the 2 Matrix Units

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
<i>Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi</i> Gulf Sturgeon	G3T2	S2	LT	FT
<i>Athene cunicularia floridana</i> Florida Burrowing Owl	G4T3	S3	N	SSC
<i>Calopogon multiflorus</i> Many-flowered Grass-pink	G2G3	S2S3	N	T
<i>Centrosema arenicola</i> Sand Butterfly Pea	G2Q	S2	N	E
<i>Corynorhinus rafinesquii</i> Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat	G3G4	S2	N	N
<i>Flatwoods/prairie lake</i>	G4	S3	N	N
<i>Forestiera godfreyi</i> Godfrey's Swampprivet	G2	S2	N	E
<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i> Gopher Tortoise	G3	S3	C	ST
<i>Grus canadensis pratensis</i> Florida Sandhill Crane	G5T2T3	S2S3	N	ST
<i>Lechea cernua</i> Nodding Pinweed	G3	S3	N	T
<i>Linum carteri var. smallii</i> Small's Flax	G2T2	S2	N	E
<i>Lithobates capito</i> Gopher Frog	G3	S3	N	SSC
<i>Lythrum flagellare</i> Lowland Loosestrife	G2	S2	N	E
	G2	S2	N	E

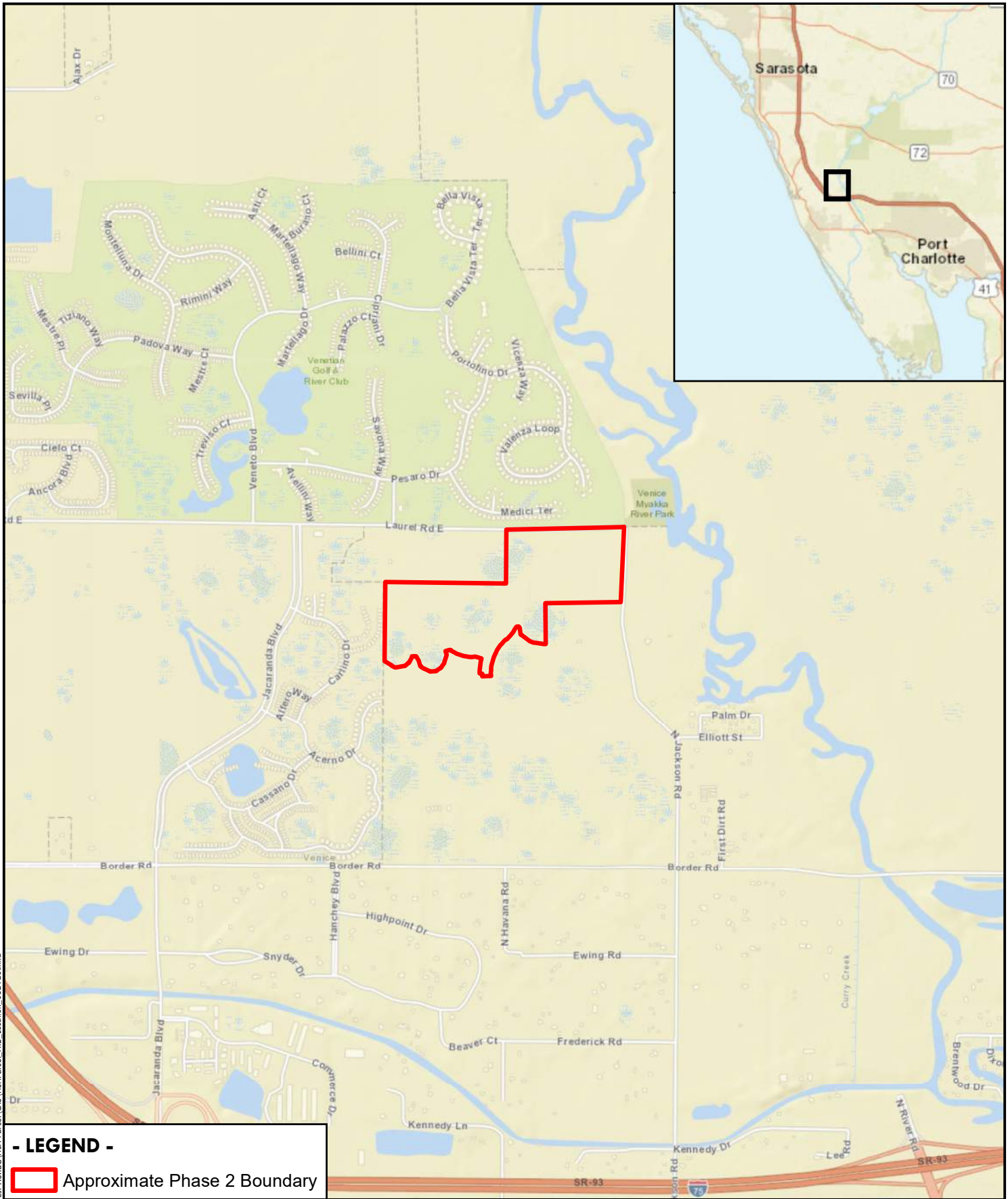
<i>Matelea floridana</i> Florida Spiny-pod				
<i>Mustela frenata peninsulæ</i> Florida Long-tailed Weasel	G5T3	S3	N	N
<i>Nemastylis floridana</i> Celestial Lily	G2	S2	N	E
<i>Nolina atopocarpa</i> Florida Beargrass	G3	S3	N	T
<i>Panicum abscissum</i> Cutthroat Grass	G3	S3	N	E
<i>Phyllophaga elongata</i> Elongate June Beetle	G3	S3	N	N
<i>Rhynchospora megaplumosa</i> Large-plumed Beaksedge	G2	S2	N	E
<i>Sciurus niger shermani</i> Sherman's Fox Squirrel	G5T3	S3	N	SSC
<i>Setophaga discolor paludicola</i> Florida Prairie Warbler	G5T3	S3	N	N
<i>Zephyranthes simpsonii</i> Redmargin Zephyrlily	G2G3	S2S3	N	T

Disclaimer

The data maintained by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory represent the single most comprehensive source of information available on the locations of rare species and other significant ecological resources statewide. However, the data are not always based on comprehensive or site-specific field surveys. Therefore, this information should not be regarded as a final statement on the biological resources of the site being considered, nor should it be substituted for on-site surveys. FNAI shall not be held liable for the accuracy and completeness of these data, or opinions or conclusions drawn from these data. FNAI is not inviting reliance on these data. Inventory data are designed for the purposes of conservation planning and scientific research and are not intended for use as the primary criteria for regulatory decisions.

Unofficial Report

These results are considered unofficial. FNAI offers a [Standard Data Request](#) option for those needing certifiable data.



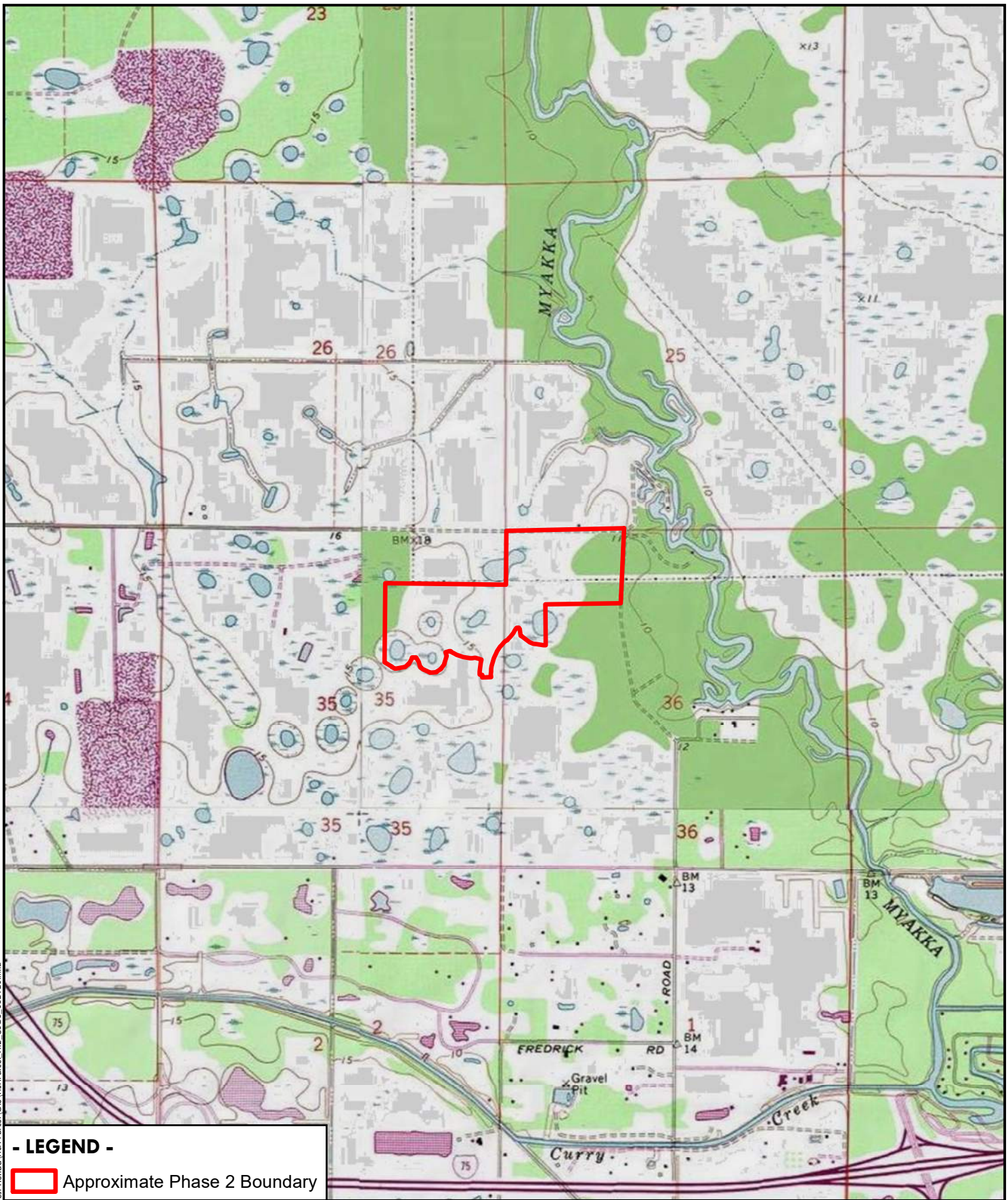
Client: Neal Communities
Project: Vicenza, Phase 2
Location: Sarasota County, Florida
TRS: 38S19E35, 36
Title: Location Map
Source: ESRI World Street Map

Drawn By: KS
Date: 6/30/2020
Sheet: 1

SCALE: 1" = 2000'

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- LEGEND -

 Approximate Phase 2 Boundary



Client: Neal Communities
Project: Vicenza, Phase 2
Location: Sarasota County, Florida
TRS: 38S19E35, 36
Title: USGS Quad Map
Source: USGS Topo Maps

Drawn By: KS
Date: 6/30/2020
Sheet: 1

SCALE: 1" = 2000'




- LEGEND -

Approximate Phase 2 Boundary

Soil Code

- 10: EauGallie and Myakka fine sands
- 22: Holopaw fine sand, frequently ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes
- 31: Pineda-Pineda, wet, fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes



Client: Neal Communities
Project: Vicenza, Phase 2
Location: Sarasota County, Florida
TRS: 38S19E35, 36
Title: NRCS Soils Map
Source: Sarasota County Imagery (2019), NRCS

Drawn By: KS
Date: 7/1/2020
Sheet: 1

SCALE: 1" = 300'

0 150 300

N



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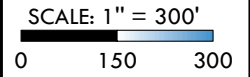
GRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS ARE GENERAL IN NATURE AND SHOULD BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY





- LEGEND -

- Approximate Phase 2 Boundary
- Approximate Wetland Boundary
- Approximate OSW Boundary



Drawn By: KS
Date: 7/1/2020
Sheet: 1

Client: Neal Communities
Project: Vicenza, Phase 2
Location: Sarasota County, Florida
TRS: 38S19E35, 36
Title: Wetland & OSW Map
Source: Sarasota County Imagery (2019)

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