

## NOTICE TO VENETIA HOMEOWNERS

The Preserve Committee was established by VCA 3 years ago to ensure that VCA's Preserve woodland areas were in compliance with Sarasota County management requirements, same as our Environmental Committee manages our ponds and sumps throughout Venetia. Over these years, there has been consistent communications to homeowners on the activity of this committee via monthly committee updates at VCA Board Meetings, presentations at Town Hall Meetings, and emails sent to owners as work progressed.

The Committee has now completed their preliminary assessment work which has taken place over this time frame. Initial survey markers have been placed and we've completed our first annual vertical cut throughout our community. We are now establishing a maintenance plan, partnering with Sarasota County and Solitude, our restoration contractor. This was the goal stipulated at the inception of this committee in 2021.

Throughout this process several areas of concern have been identified including areas where the Preserve encroached ONTO VCA common property and areas where owners and/or sub-associations have encroached INTO the Preserve (planting sod, exotic plants, dumping). We are now in the Restoration Phase of the plan which has been approved by Sarasota County. These restorations will be carried out by Solitude and will continue into 2025.

The VCA Board of Directors has approved the recommendation that those who violate VCA's long-standing Preserve policy should bear the resulting expense; all VCA homeowners should not be responsible for others' violations which are considered to be damage to VCA property. Consequently, as we begin this process, violation notices will be sent to those parties, outlining the violation and the cost that is to be reimbursed to VCA. These notices will be sent by Sunstate on behalf of Venetia Community Association.

Going forward, it's critical that all Sub-Associations and their Owners comply with one very simple concept: know your personal property lines and stay within those lines when you landscape and plant and be aware of invasive plants that invade the Preserve from your property. We all live adjacent to either ponds/sumps, the preserve, or common property all of which are under the legal jurisdiction and responsibility of VCA. Following this simple principle will avoid violations, some of which will now require County monitoring for multiple years. Make sure to refer to your home purchase closing documents or if needed, call a surveyor for a new survey (we used Britt Surveying for the Preserve survey since they handled the original survey throughout Venetia and maintain those records for Venetia). Review the attached Preserve Policy for further information which includes actual violations we're resolving. Note that our community site, *Venetiacommunity.com*, has always maintained this information on VCA's wetlands and preserve property.

Thank you for your support and patience over these past years. We're now well on our way to creating a healthier Preserve which will benefit all of us and our wildlife.

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## **VCA PRESERVE POLICY**

### **REVISED 9-1-2024**

Preserve areas within communities in Florida are established to protect the wetlands, woodlands and the resident wildlife we all enjoy. If you live along the Preserve, consider it the same as living next to a state park; there are restrictions that homeowners and their HOA associations must be aware of and comply with. Violations will result in cost to the homeowner or a sub-association including fines and potential on-going monitoring by Sarasota County. Below is the list of expectations for all sub-associations and their homeowners within Venetia regardless of whether they reside along a Preserve boundary.

1. Homeowners and associations are expected to be aware of their personal property lines and may only plant or landscape within the limits of that property. This must also be communicated to your personal or community landscape contractors who have the potential to violate this policy on your behalf.
2. The above and below applies to any Homeowner who rents their property. Renters must comply with these requirements; any violations will be the responsibility of the owner.
3. Dumping – the Preserve is not a dumping ground. Examples include, but are not limited to, expired food and leftovers, landscaping debris from landscapers or the owner, used charcoal, dead/dying house plants, pottery and planters, building materials, and the dumping of any liquids such as paint, fuel, cleaning fluids, used cleaning water, outdated fertilizer or pesticides, mulch, etc.
4. Avoid planting invasive plants near the Preserve such as vines, Mexican Petunias, Oyster Plants which will gravitate toward the Preserve. House plants that are replanted outside should be avoided and already have and will quickly move into the Preserve; owners are responsible for the cost of removing these plants as they encroach and kill healthy trees.
5. Feeding wildlife, including birds, is not permitted.
6. Outside lighting including motion-activated lighting and landscape lighting should never be directed toward or into the Preserve, only toward the residence.
7. Fences are not allowed within Venetia; this includes any security or electric fences around a Preserve area intended to deter wildlife.
8. Benches or other furniture, container plants or flowers, birdbaths, umbrellas, and other like items are not allowed within the Preserve. Birdfeeders are not allowed within Venetia.
9. All pets are to be leashed and never be allowed to freely play or roam throughout Venetia; this includes Preserve areas which are dangerous areas for a domesticated pet.
10. The Preserve Committee should be contacted regarding any Preserve growth that crosses over into the owner's property. In many cases the country arborist

must review trimming requirements to ensure the continued health of plants and trees. Once approved, the homeowner may proceed to trim back hanging branches but only to their property line.

The Committee conducts annual Preserve trimming throughout the community and regular monitoring with Solitude and our County partners. If you have questions specifically related to the Preserve, please contact a committee member by visiting <http://venetiaincommunity.com> under "VCA Committees".

Sincerely,

Brian Rivenbark, CAM

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