



## **Resident Information for Homes that Border on the Preserve and Water Features**

Our community is unique! We have an abundance of Conservation lands Buffer lands, Sump (drainage) Ponds, and drainage cache areas. With two exceptions these areas all depend upon surface water drainage for a water supply. In that our waters come and go on a seasonal basis; we are subject to near drought conditions in the dry season and near flood conditions during the wet season.

### **Buffer Zones**

A very rough estimate of our buffer zone area is 12,000 linear feet. This zone is established at roughly 30ft deep and creates a buffer area between the common property and the conservation property.

Buffers generally do not need to be cleaned up. Instead, buffers should be left in their natural state because they are an important element for protecting the interior habitats. Leaving the buffer in its natural state encourages the decomposition cycle, which is an important biological process that creates microhabitats, food sources, nesting areas, denning areas and returns nutrients to the soil.

Residents may walk through the Preserves for enjoyment of these habitats; however, please be aware that no chopping trails, removal of natural litter or wildlife is allowed.

If a tree limb or other vegetation from a Preservation Area encroaches into your property, please discuss your problem with your homeowner's association or environmental committee. They will direct you as to what can be done and how it can be done.

Residents may not plant vegetation in the Preservation Areas. The planting of exotic, ornamental landscape plants is not allowed within Preservation Areas. It is important to know exactly where your property line is, because all lots are not equal.

Only licensed professionals are permitted to use herbicides in these areas. Our Aquatic consultants deal with these problems. Please be aware that most home store (Home Depot, Lowes, etc) chemicals are oil based with restrictions and are not permitted within or near natural areas that retain water, such as wetland or mesic hammocks.

Homeowners applying herbicides adjacent to Preservation Areas may use water soluble herbicides.

Vegetative debris, yard waste, and any other materials, waste, or trash, MAY NOT be dumped, thrown, buried, or burned within a Preservation Area. All materials must be disposed of properly at an off-site location or by your community's scheduled waste collection.

The possibility of a natural fire in a Preservation Area is considered low because most of the preserved habitats located in subdivisions are wetlands or mesic hammocks. Both systems hold water in their soils and rarely become a fire hazard.

Where there are signs posted, there is not to be any cutting beyond these posts. They have already been flagged by the county for violations and must not be violated.

It is always a good idea to ask for permission concerning the buffer or preserve behind your house, as to what you can do. Violations that the county finds will be addressed and the cost passed on to the association and then passed on to the homeowners who committed the encroachment into the buffer or preserve.

There are over 45 water features located in Venetia, ranging in depth from 3 to 18 feet deep. The variety in depth is needed for two main reasons, water flow out of the community and reabsorption into the water table.

The storm water retention ponds that are shallower are needed for reabsorption. Florida friendly aquatic plants, which prevent erosion, provide food for wildlife and filter the water, are only able to survive in the shallow areas.

The water level and conditions of these shallower sumps are dependent on Florida weather conditions. In certain years they can be completely dry. When these conditions occur the entire composition of the sump can change, from one season to the next. A sump devoid of aquatic life one season can be filled with spike rush, pickerel weed, smartweed, or other Florida native aquatics, the next.

The use of herbicides or other chemicals that leach into groundwater or flow into the Gulf of Mexico should be avoided whenever possible. There should be no pesticides or fertilizers applied to sod within 10 ft. of any waterbody. The water flow system in Venetia was designed by SWFWMD and is monitored by Sarasota County and SWFWMD subject to their rules and regulations.