



Wildfire Risk Mitigation Program - Protecting Our Preserves

By the Ponds & Preserves Committee

[Woodlands Word – April 2021]

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Rivendell's natural preserves are a precious resource both for our community and the wildlife that inhabit them. Like anything valuable, they need to be protected and maintained. Some preserves have accumulated vegetation (fuel) over many years creating a wildfire risk (mainly from lightning), especially adjacent to Oscar Scherer State Park (OSSP). An agreement with Sarasota County, requires the HOA to manage these preserve areas by taking proactive steps to minimize wildfire risk, thereby protecting the preserve and by extension the adjacent homes.

As you may have seen (or heard), on February 16th, the Florida Fire Service brought in specialized equipment – a **Mulch Mower** - to cut needed firebreaks in selected preserve and buffer areas. This initial mowing will reduce accumulated vegetation, improve access and reduce fire danger threat.



Ongoing, Rivendell's HOA will continue to maintain these areas using mechanical equipment to reduce vegetation and wildfire risk as required by the agreement with the County.

Our community contractors may have to use residents' backyards to gain access without prior notice. Actions include: removing invasive plants, inspection and correction of incursions in preserve and buffer areas, and installing signs to mark preserves boundaries.



Let's work together to support and protect our natural preserves. We can enjoy the abundance of wildlife who share these habitats, improve our quality of life, and keep property values strong.

A Bald Eagle checks out her nest above the firebreak clearing in the pine uplands behind Eagle Lake and Placid Lake.

(Photo by Nancy Dobias.)

(Reminder: Eagles are federally protected. It is illegal to get within 600 feet of an active nest.)

Supporting this important effort, we thank Mike Keegan, FL Fire Service, & Larry Dobias, President, Rivendell HOA, P&P Liaison.

