



Inspecting and Protecting Our Preserves. Homeowner & Resident Incursions Co\$t Everyone!

By Sue Remy, Ponds and Preserves Committee.

[Woodlands Word – July 2023]

Living in Rivendell with its 115 acres of 14 Wetland and Upland Preserves is one of the reasons we are here. Both beautiful and functional, our preserves, along with our ponds, are part of our stormwater management system designed to control flooding. Rivendell Community Association (RCA) is responsible for maintaining our preserve areas as required by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and the County. One-third of our homes border designated buffer or preserve areas. These residents should be aware of their special responsibilities.



(Photo: PS Remy)



(Photo: Bob Frank)

How Are Wetlands Beneficial? Wetlands provide storage of floodwaters and stormwater runoff. They also improve water quality by absorbing excess nutrients from urban runoff. Plus, preserves provide much-needed habitat, food sources, and nesting sites for wildlife, especially threatened and endangered species.

Our RCA/HOA is responsible for maintaining our Preserves in accordance with the requirements of our permit. The HOA hired a professional preserve maintenance company who regularly inspect these areas. They will remove invasive or exotic vegetation. They also identify and report areas of encroachment or incursions by residents beyond their property line. You may also see P&P members in your backyard walking along preserve areas to assist with these inspections.

These preserves and buffer areas are not your property! Incursions and remediation are costly and affect everyone. Preserves are to be left untouched. HOA's contractors inspect preserve areas for incursion violations to preempt County fines or penalties. Homeowners are notified of incursions for remediation. Some incursion violations have included:

- Vegetation removal or trimming beyond the property line
- Dumping of yard waste within designated buffer/preserve areas
- Unauthorized planting or encroachment of nuisance or exotic vegetation and trees
- Extension of lawns or planting vegetable/garden areas into buffer/preserve land
- Construction of any structure or seating area in buffer/preserve areas
- Landscape lighting directed into preserves or buffer areas is not permitted



(Graphic: Bing)

Each year, the HOA spends \$1,000's of valuable community dollars to address incursions and ensure compliance with our permit. Valuable community resources have been spent on remediation from resident incursions that otherwise should be earmarked for positive improvements to our natural resources and beneficial wildlife habitats. Incursions hurt everyone. Know your property line and do not encroach beyond it. Let's work together to keep our wetland and upland preserves and buffer areas healthy and in compliance.

Click here to visit the Ponds & Preserves website at <https://www.rivendellcommunity.com/ponds>.