



Protect Our Preserves. Safeguard Wildlife Habitats. Enjoy the Views.

By the Ponds & Preserves Committee

[Woodlands Word – August 2021]

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The protection of native habitat areas and wildlife has long since been a community priority for Sarasota County. As a result, Sarasota County has adopted standards that protect specific types of native habitats to ensure that their values and functions are retained for future generations. The most common habitat in Sarasota County is freshwater wetlands, which typically have an upland buffer surrounding the wetland preserves. Important benefits of having upland and wetland preserves include water quality, flood control, aesthetics, privacy/screening by native vegetation, wildlife habitat, and property value.

Leave our Preserves alone. We are so fortunate to live in Rivendell with its beautiful greenspaces, lakes, ponds and natural preserves. Together with our ponds, these preserves are also an integral part of our stormwater management system and also add significant aesthetic value to our community. With one-third of the homes in Rivendell bordering designated preserves, we share the County's commitment to protecting our preserve areas. Homeowners who live adjacent to a preserve need to be aware of their special responsibilities. Please leave our preserves and buffer areas alone.

(Video image: G. Mruz)



Sarasota County Code - as per Section 124-251, Article 13 – Subdivision or Site Development Plan Regulation of Sarasota County's Unified Development Code (UDC):

Subsection 124-251(a)(2) states: "All activities involving filling, excavating, disturbing of vegetation (both trees and understory) and storing of materials shall be prohibited within preservation or conservation areas and buffer areas".

[Click here to read [Sarasota County's Preservation Areas Facts Sheet.](#)]

In addition, Rivendell has its own land use restrictions that reinforce this code [Covenants under Articles 4.01 (k) and 4.01 (l)]. In a nutshell, homeowners or renters are not allowed to plant, disturb, remove from, build or store anything in preserve areas. They must not cut or remove dead vegetation, deposit yard waste, nor allow grass or invasive vegetation to migrate into preserves.

Know Your Property Line. It's important for homeowners to know their property lines so they are not encroaching on community-owned or preserve land to minimize incursions. Consult the survey map of your property which you should have received when you purchased. You can also find the Plat for Rivendell and your lot on the County's website. [Search "Rivendell" at <https://secure.sarasotaclerk.com/subplatssearch.aspx>.]



Regular Maintenance and Inspections. The Rivendell Community Association (RCA) is responsible for maintaining these preserve areas in accordance with requirements by SWFWMD and the County. As part of their preserve management contract, Aquagenix routinely inspect the preserve and buffer areas to remove invasive and nuisance plants that can displace and negatively affect native plants in a habitat.

Although the buffers might look aesthetically unpleasant due to layers of fallen branches, palm fronds and vines, they generally do not need to be "cleaned" up. Instead, leaving buffers in their nature state encourages the decomposition cycle - an important biological process that creates microhabitats, food sources, nesting areas, and returns valuable nutrients to the soil.

No Incursions. Our contractor also routinely inspects the land behind resident properties bordering preserves for any incursions. Homeowners will be advised of any incursion issues and corrective actions will be taken. Buffer and preserve areas are monitored regularly to ensure compliance with the community and County rules.

Together, let's enjoy and protect the beauty of our wetland and upland preserves. After all, isn't that one of the main reasons we choose to live in Rivendell?

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