

Attn: Grand Oaks Community Development Residents

Re: Conservation Easement Buffer Zones – Compliance Issues

During an onsite review with the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) on October 20, 2023, it was documented that a majority of the onsite upland buffer zones that are found throughout the Grand Oaks Community Development were out of compliance of Permit Number 139022-4. These buffer zones are conservation land and provide mitigation to the state for impacts caused by the neighborhood development.

The SJRWMD noted the following issues with these areas as a direct result of homeowners and landscaping activities:

1. Upland buffer zones are being mowed and maintained by homeowners in order to create extensions to the resident's property, as well as around common area ponds. As a result, tree species which were planted to a specific density in these upland buffers are no longer existing or meeting the required criteria for successful mitigation efforts.
2. Homeowners have installed permanent manmade structures such as windchimes, bird feeders, lawn ornaments, light fixtures, etc.
3. Posted no trespassing signage have been removed/missing.

These areas are meant to be left in their natural state in order to help prevent secondary impacts (light pollutions, noise pollution, runoff, etc.) to the nearby wetlands. Grand Oaks Community Development is required to replant all areas with over 850 3-gallon tree species and 8,500 bare root groundcover species, in order to bring these buffer zones within compliance.

This letter will serve as final notice that all residents, landscapers, and subcontractors are hereby prohibited from conducting any further activity into the upland buffer zones and conservation easements. All personal items such as bird feeders, wind chimes, need to be removed immediately, and you will soon notice no trespassing signage being installed along these buffer zones. Under no circumstances are any mowing activities permitted that are outside of the residents' property lines. Any homeowners who fail to abide by these rules will be subject to fines by the state, as well as being responsible for restoring the conservation areas back within compliance.

To the extent the district incurs penalties or fines as a result of such homeowner activity, the district will absolutely be seeking restitution to the extent that the responsible party can be identified. Otherwise, the district will have no choice, but to include such additional costs in future annual budgets. Please help us keep community costs lower by following the obligations of the environmental permits.

Sincerely,

Bob Koncar – District Manager - Inframark