





> North Port Gardens Site Environmental Due Diligence Report

June 2022 ECT No. 220385 - 0100

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Document Review

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1.0 Introduction

Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT) conducted an environmental due diligence assessment for the ±513-acre site (project site) located east of Toledo Blade Boulevard and north of Interstate 75 (I-75), in Sections 6 and 7, Township 39 South, Range 22 East, City of North Port, Sarasota County, Florida (Figure 1).

The site encompasses two contiguous parcels (Parcel ID 1092001000 and 1093001000) that sit on the northeast corner of the I-75/Toledo Blade Boulevard interchange. The site directly abuts Toledo Blade Blvd to the west, I-75 to the south and undeveloped lands to the north and east. The site also has a transmission line that runs along the northeast corner of the site. Areas around the site are include sprawling residential development west of Toledo Boulevard and south of I-75, but expansive conservation lands occur north and east of the site including Walton Ranch Preserve (to the north) and the Orange Hammock Wildlife Management Area further east. The topography on the property is generally flat and slopes towards the southwest where it drains into a slough system that drains under Toledo Blade Boulevard into Creighton Waterway which ultimately spills into the Myakka River. The site is located in the South Cocoplum Waterway (HUC-12 031001020403) sub-basin of the Myakka River Watershed (Figure 2).

According to historic aerials from 1948 and 1974 (Figures 3 – 4), the site remained relatively undisturbed and consisted of native wetland and upland habitats. In 1986, mining activities started with the excavation of a borrow pit on the south side of the site and construction of a roadway that bisects the site (Figure 5). In the mid-90's, some areas were converted to agricultural use (Figure 6) and another borrow pit was excavated on the south side of the site immediately adjacent to the original borrow pit. This borrow pit operation started in 1998 and was completed by mid-2000's (Figure 7). Around this time, much of uplands were also converted to agricultural use mainly for pasture and the site is still used for cattle grazing. Although the site is still in agricultural use, it is zoned for Planned Community Development (PCDN).

This due diligence assessment was conducted to identify environmental constraints and permitting considerations associated with wetlands, upland habitats, and listed wildlife species that might be subject to either protection or development restrictions under state, federal, and/or local government



regulations. The due diligence assessment was conducted through a combination of desktop review and field work. The desktop review included a review of publicly available data such as: high resolution aerial photographs (current and historic), National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Land Use data, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey, and several listed species databases published by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). ECT also reviewed online records from regulatory agencies where readily available (e.g. SWFWMD, Sarasota County and City of North Port [CONP]) to research permitting history on this site (as discussed in Section 2.0).

Field work for this due diligence assessment was conducted during on May 11th – 16th, 2022 and included wetland delineations, habitat assessment/mapping, and a general listed species survey. ECT's findings pertaining to wetlands, habitat assessments and listed species are summarized below.



2.0 Permitting History

ECT reviewed records from regulatory agencies (e.g., SWFWMD) to evaluate permitting history associated with the site and found several expired Environmental Resource Permits (ERP) associated with the site for a variety of activities including mining, commercial, and a formal wetland determination petition. Details of each permit type are provided in Table 2-1 below.

Table 2-1. Environmental Resource Permits Associated with the North Port Gardens Site

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Permit No.	Permittee	Permit Type/Activity Type	Date Issued	Expiration Date		
42014092.000	North Port Investments #4 LLC	Standard General/Mining	6/17/1996	6/17/2001		
42014092.001	Northport Commercial Standard 2.001 Interchange c/o Lee General/Mining 8/25/1997 Pallardy III		8/25/1998			
42014092.002	002 North Port Investments Individual/Mining 8/23/2005		8/23/2015			
42014092.003	North Port Investments 1- 3 LLC	Standard General/Mining	9/24/2001	9/24/2006		
42014092.004	North Port Investments NPI 1 LLC	Petition for Formal Determination	5/25/2007	5/25/2012		
42014092.005	North Port Investments 4 LLC	Individual/Commercial	Permit Denied			
42014092.006	4092.006 Carlton Sara, Davis Sara et al. NPCI Excavation 6/8/2010		5/23/2015			

Copies of permits found on the SWFWMD database will be provided upon request, but a copy of the SWFWMD Petition for Formal Jurisdictional Determination of Wetlands and Other Surface Waters (ERP 42014092.004) issued on May 25, 2007 is enclosed along with a copy of the approved wetland survey (Appendix A). A total of 273.80± acres of jurisdictional wetlands and other surface waters (ditches and ponds) were identified within the project site during the original wetland determination. The Formal Wetland Determination Petition expired on May 25, 2012.



3.0 Soils

The *Soil Survey of Sarasota County* (1982) shows that the site contains eight (8) soil types (Figure 8), the majority of which are considered non-hydric soils commonly associated with uplands. The upland soils include Eaugallie and Myakka Fine Sands and Pineda-Pineda, Wet, Fine Sand, 0 to 2 Percent Slopes.

Hydric soils Bradenton Fine Sand, 0 to 2 Percent Slopes, Delray Fine Sand, Depressional, Felda Fine Sand, Frequently Ponded, 0 to 1 Percent Slopes, Floridana and Gator Soils, Depressional and Holopaw Fine Sand, Frequently Ponded, 0 to 1 Percent Slopes are mapped in the same locations as the wetlands and streams delineated by ECT.

Table 3-1. Soil Types Associated with the North Port Gardens Site

	Mapping	Hydric	Natural Vegetation Associations Referenced in the			
Soil Type	Unit	Init Soils Soil Survey of Sarasota County (1982)				
Bradenton Fine Sand, 0 to 2 Percent Slopes	004	Yes	This is nearly level, poorly drained soil is on low ridges and hammocks adjacent to floodplains, sloughs and depressions. The natural vegetation is slash pine, South Florida slash pine, longleaf pine, laurel oak, live oak, cabbage palm and magnolia. The understory includes scattered saw palmetto, wax myrtle, wild coffee, bluestem, longleaf uniola, and panicum.			
Delray Fine Sand, Depressional	008	Yes	This is nearly level, very poorly drained soil is in depressions on flatwoods. Most areas of this soil support natural vegetation of cypress, pickerelweed, maidencane, arrowhead, cutgrass, sand cordgrass, sedges, ferns, and other water-tolerant grasses.			
Eaugallie and Myakka Fine Sands	010	No	These nearly level, poorly drained soils are on broad flatwoods. Most areas of these soils support natural vegetation including slash pine, South Florida slash pine, longleaf pine, and scattered cabbage palm and oak. The understory includes inkberry, saw palmetto, chalky bluestem, creeping bluestem, pineland threeawn, and various other grasses.			
Felda Fine Sand, Frequently Ponded, 0 to 1 Percent Slopes	012	Yes	This is nearly level very poorly drained soil is in depressions. The natural vegetation is bald cypress, pond cypress, cabbage palm, sand cordgrass, cutgrass, maidencane, and various other water-tolerant weeds and grasses.			
Gator Soils, 015 Yes depressions. Most of these areas su		These very poorly drained, nearly level soils are in depressions. Most of these areas support natural vegetation of sand cordgrass, maidencane, St. John's				



Soil Time	Mapping	Hydric	Natural Vegetation Associations Referenced in th		
Soil Type	Unit	Soils Soil Survey of Sarasota County (1982)			
			wort, scattered wax myrtle, and other water-tolerant weeds and grasses.		
Holopaw Fine Sand, Frequently Ponded, 0 to 1 Percent Slopes	022	Yes	This is nearly level very poorly drained soil is in depressions. The natural vegetation is blue maidencane, broomsedge, St. John's wort, wax myrtle, panicum, sand cordgrass, white bracted sedge, pipewort, stiff paspalum, and various other water-tolerant weeds and grasses.		
Pineda-Pineda, Wet, Fine Sand, 0 to 2 Percent Slopes	031	No	This nearly level poorly drained soil is on low hammocks and in broad, poorly drained sloughs. The natural vegetation is scattered slash pine, South Florida slash pine, longleaf pine, cabbage palm, wax myrtle, scattered saw palmetto, blue maidencane, pineland threeawn, low panicum, bluestems, and various weeds and grasses.		
Water	099	Unranked	A borrow pit that was excavated from uplands between 1974 and 1986 is classified as water, per the soil survey.		



4.0 Habitats and Land Uses

ECT conducted habitat assessments on the project site to evaluate the extent of wetlands, other surface waters (OSWs), and native habitats that may be subject to agency jurisdiction or development restrictions. ECT also conducted new wetland delineations since the original wetland determination expired in 2012 and is no longer valid. The jurisdictional extent of wetlands and OSWs (ditches and borrow ponds) were delineated based on state methodology (*Chapter 62-340, F.A.C. Delineation of the Landward Extent of Wetlands and Surface Waters*).

As shown on the enclosed Wetland and Surface Waters Map (Figure 9), almost half (53%) of the project site is characterized by wetlands and surface waters. Overall, the site contains 166.41-acres (+/-) of wetlands (associated with 16 wetlands) and 109.45 acres of surface waters associated with ditches (1.63 acres) and three large ponds (107.82 acres). ECT also conducted a habitat assessment and mapped all habitats and land uses based on the *Florida Land Use Cover and Forms Classification System* (FLUCFCS) as reflected on the enclosed Land Use/Land Cover Map (Figure 10). A summary of uplands and wetlands and surface waters are provided below with a brief description of each habitat type reflected on the Land Use/Land Cover Map.

4.1 <u>Uplands</u>

The property is comprised of approximately 237.92 acres (46 percent) of uplands. Most of the uplands have been converted to pasture (FLUCFCS 211 & 213), but some native upland habitat still remains buffering the wetlands. These areas are mapped as Live Oak (FLUCFCS 427) and Cabbage Palm (FLUCFCS 428). The uplands also include an unimproved road (FLUCFCS 814) and an existing electrical transmission line (FLUCFCS 832) that runs along the northeast corner of the site. Each upland land use is discussed in more detail below and representative photographs of the various habitats are included in the photolog (Appendix B).



¹ Florida Department of Transportation, January 1999

Improved Pasture (FLUCFCS 211; 74.98 acres)

These pasture areas are located on the eastern portion of the site. The pastureland is dominated by bahia grass (*Paspalum notatum*) and Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) intermixed with smutgrass (*Sporobolus indicus*), cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), dog fennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*), and bluestem (*Andropogon* spp.). Also occurring in the pasture were scattered clumps of cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolia*), and saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*). Other herbaceous species observed include shrubby false buttonweed (*Spermacoce verticillata*), turkey tangle frogfruit (*Phyla nodiflora*), sweetbroom (*Scoparia dulcis*), softrush (*Juncus effusus*), and thistle (*Cirsium horridulum*).

Woodland Pasture (FLUCFCS 213; 109.94 acres)

These woodland pastures are more centrally located on the project site. The woodland pasture is similar to the improved pastures, but has a lot of scattered trees including slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*), live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), laurel oak (*Q. laurifolia*) and cabbage palm. Shrubby species observed include red mulberry (*Morus rubra*), Brazilian pepper, white lead tree (*Leucaena leucocephala*), and saw palmetto. Additional herbaceous species observed include turkey tangle frogfruit, sweetbroom, thistle, dog fennel, cogon grass, Caesar weed, bluestem, Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), and greenbrier (*Smilax* spp.).

Live Oak (FLUCFCS 427; 26.09 acres)

This upland habitat buffers the east side of the wetland slough system (Wetland A) that runs down the west side of the site. The canopy was predominantly live oak hammock with scattered cabbage palms and occasional slash pines and laurel oaks. The sub-canopy was comprised of live oak, cabbage palm, laurel oak, and wax myrtle (*Morella cerifera*).

Cabbage Palm (FLUCFCS 428; 10.96 acres)

This habitat buffers the east side of the wetland slough system (Wetland AA) and an isolated wetland (Wetland B) on the southwest corner of the site. It is dominated by cabbage palm, but also contains scattered oaks and pines in the canopy. The understory consists of a few shrubby species including American elm (*Ulmus americana*), red mulberry, and Brazilian pepper. Several species of grasses, forbs, and ferns also observed in this habitat type including, American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), wild coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*), Virginia chain fern (*Woodwardia virginica*), Caesar weed



(*Urena lobata*), foxtail flatsedge (*Cyperus alopecuroides*), shrubby false buttonweed (*Spermacoce verticillata*), common yellow wood sorrel (*Oxalis corniculata*), sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*), poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), and several species of air plants (*Tilandisa* spp.).

Roads (FLUCFCS 814; 4.45 acres)

An unimproved road meanders through the south side of the site and bisects the property.

Electrical Power Transmission Lines (FLUCFCS 832; 11.50 acres)

An overhead transmission line bisects the property in a northwest to southeast orientation.

4.2 Wetlands and Surface Waters

The property contains 166.41 acres of wetlands and 109.45 acres of surface waters (associated with ditches and three large pond) as shown on the Wetland and Other Surface Waters Map (Figure 9). The jurisdictional extent of wetlands and surface waters should be considered approximate until reviewed and approved by agencies during permitting (or a new formal wetland determination). The wetlands and surface waters delineated by ECT are generally consistent with the original wetland determination with the exception of a one wetland that claimed previously (east of WL-G) that is no longer present (see Figure 9 vs. Appendix A).

The wetlands include a large slough system that runs down the west side of the property and a series of fragmented wetlands that are scattered across the rest of site. Some wetlands are isolated, but most of them are hydrologically connected to each other through a series of ditches (FLUCFCS 513) and ponds (FLUCFCS 530). Most of the wetlands are characterized as freshwater marsh systems (FLUCFCS 641), but there are also some forested wetlands and shrub systems mapped as Hydric Pine (FLUCFCS 625), Wetland Forested Mix (FLUCFCS 630), Wetland Scrub (FLUCFCS 631). Below is an overview of each wetland and surface water community type mapped onsite.

Hydric Pine (FLUCFCS 625; 2.57 acres)

This forested wetland community is associated with Wetland N (on the east side of the borrow pit SW-3) and also occurs along the fringes of Wetland's D and H. The community is dominated by slash pine and sub-canopy vegetated with gallberry (*Ilex glabra*), wax myrtle, and fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*). The



ground cover included bluestem, hairawn muhly (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*), little blue maidencane (*Amphicarpum muhlenbergianum*), Carolina redroot (*Lachnanthes caroliana*), Florida yelloweyed grass (*Xyirs floridana*), fall panicgrass (*Panicum dichotomiflorum*), and bottlebrush threeawn (*Aristida spiciformis*).

Wetland Forested Mixed (FLUCFCS 630; 15.30 acres)

This forested wetland community is mostly found along fringes of the slough system on the west side of the property (Wetland's A and AA), but Wetland M also contains a forested pocket. The forested areas occur along the edge of freshwater marsh communities and are dominated by a mixture of pines and hardwood trees including laurel oak, American elm (*Ulmus americana*), swamp bay (*Persea palustris*), and cabbage palm in the canopy. The sub-canopy contains Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*), wax myrtle, and buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) with sparse ground cover characterized by rosy camphorweed (*Pluchea baccharis*), frogfruit, West Indian marsh grass (*Hymenachne amplexicaulis*), bahia grass, softrush, limpograss (*Hemarthria altissima*), Asiatic pennywort (*Centella asiatica*), lanceleaf arrowhead (*Sagittaria lancifolia*), and Caesar weed. Several vines were also observed including greenbrier, grapevine (*Vitis rotundifolia*), and climbing hempvine (*Mikania scandens*).

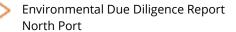
Wetland Scrub (FLUCFCS 631; 20.69 acres)

This wetland shrub community occurs in the interior portions of the slough system (Wetland A & AA), north fringe of Wetland M and the south side of the large borrow pit (SW-2). The community is dominated mostly by shrub species including Peruvian primrose willow, Carolina willow, wax myrtle, gallberry, and fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*). The groundcover included West Indian marshgrass, torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), and lanceleaf arrowhead.

Freshwater Marshes (FLUCFCS 641; 127.50 acres)

With the exception of Wetland's AA, I and N, all of the wetlands onsite are either entirely or partially characterized as freshwater marsh habitat. These marsh wetlands are dominated by herbaceous species including maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon*), lanceleaf arrowhead, pickerelweed, limpograss, bahia grass, softrush, marsh pennywort (*Hydrocotyle umbellata*), cattails (*Typha* spp.), several species of sedges, Asian pennywort, and ferns. The marshes also contain some shrubby species including





Carolina willow, wax myrtle, buttonbush, primrose willow, and Brazilian pepper were observed scattered throughout.

Wet Prairies (FLUCFCS 643; 0.35 acres)

This wet prairie community occurs along the northwest fringe of Wetland H and contains scattered wax myrtle, but is mostly vegetated with herbaceous species including sand cordgrass (*Spartina bakeri*), sandweed (*Hypericum fasciculatum*), maidencane, and softrush.

Ditches (FLUCFCS 513; 1.63 acres)

The property contains several surface water ditches that total approximately 1.63 acres and serve as drainage conveyances. Most of the ditches appear to have been excavated in the late 1970's or early 1980's based on historic aerials from 1986 (Figure 5). Some of the ditches are hydric cut (excavated from wetlands) and interconnect wetlands, while other ditches appear to have been excavated from uplands. Ditches are vegetated with scattered herbaceous vegetation including primrose willow, cattail, smartweed (*Persecaria punctata*), water hyssops (*Bacopa monnieri*), water pennywort, soft rush, and maidencane. Some of the ditches interconnecting wetlands are also lined with trees at top of bank. It should be noted that there could be other ditches that need to be surveyed at top of bank during formal wetland determination.

Reservoirs (FLUCFCS 530; 107.82 acres)

The project site contains three large reservoirs (SW-1, SW-2, and SW-3) totaling 107.82 acres. These reservoirs are large borrow pits that were created as part of historic mining operations. Based on historic aerials from 1995, SW-1 and SW-2 appear to have been excavated entirely from uplands (Figure 6), but SW-3 appears to have been partially excavated from wetlands based on the 1986 historic aerial (Figure 5). The reservoirs directly abut adjacent wetlands and are hydrologically connected. They are primarily open water habitat with some littoral vegetation around the edges including cattail, water lettuce (*Pistia stratioites*), lanceleaf arrowhead, torpedo grass, and smartweed. Some weedy species were also observed along the upland banks of the reservoirs and included smooth beggarticks (*Bidens laevis*), mock bishopweed (*Ptilimnium capillaceum*), and climbing hempvine.



5.0 General Wildlife Survey

ECT conducted a general wildlife survey to evaluate the site for listed species that may warrant consideration for permitting and development of this site. The wildlife survey focused on Threatened or Endangered species that are protected under State (FWC) and federal (USFWS) regulations under Chapter 68A-27, F.A.C. and 50 CFR 17 and 23. The survey was intended as a preliminary assessment to identify listed species that have potential to use this site, but only focused on species with geographic distributions covering Sarasota County and took into consideration habitats that occur onsite.

Before initiating field surveys, ECT conducted a desktop analysis to review relevant regulatory databases for listed species that are known to occur in the area (i.e., eagle nests, wood stork colonies, etc.). The survey therefore also took into consideration USFWS consultation areas that overlap this site for certain species (i.e., Florida scrub jays, crested caracaras, Florida grasshopper sparrow, and Florida bonneted bats) as reflected in Figure 11. ECT then completed field surveys in May (May 11th-16th) following general guidelines and methodologies outlined in the Florida Wildlife Conservation Guide² (2018) and marked locations of any observed species or evidence of their presence (e.g., burrows, nests, rookeries, etc.).

No formal listed species surveys were conducted during due diligence efforts. Therefore, this wildlife study is not intended to meet agency permitting requirements. Additional surveys will be required in support of permitting and prior to development. Below is a summary of our listed species findings and permitting considerations for listed species are addressed in Section 6.3.

5.1 <u>Summary of Listed Species Findings</u>

During the listed species survey efforts, ECT directly observed sandhill cranes (*Antigone canadensis pratensis*) and an eagle nest (Figure 11) onsite, but there are some other key species that will require additional surveys during permitting as summarized below. Table 5-1 below summarizes the listed

² Developed by FWC and USFWS.





wildlife species that were evaluated based on geographic distribution and on-site habitats followed by a brief summary for each listed species.

Table 5-1. Listed Wildlife Species Observed or Potentially Occurring on the North Port Gardens Site

Common Name	Scientific Name	Legal Status		Probability of			
Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS	FWC ¹	Occurrence			
Reptiles							
American Alligator Alligator mississippiensis			FT (S/A)	High			
Gopher Tortoise	Gopherus polyphemus	С	ST	Moderate			
Eastern Indigo Snake	Drymarchon couperi	Т	FT	Moderate			
Florida Pine Snake	Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus		ST	Moderate			
	Birds						
Bald Eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	*		Nest Observed			
Crested Caracara	Caracara plancus	Т	FT	Moderate			
Florida Grasshopper Sparrow	Ammodramus savannarum floridanus	Т	FT	Low			
Florida Scrub-jay	Aphelocoma coerulescens	Т	FT	Low			
Florida burrowing owl	Athene cunicularia floridana		ST	Low			
Southeastern American Kestrel	Falco sparverius paulus		ST	Moderate			
Florida Sandhill Crane	Antigone canadensis pratensis		ST	Observed			
Little Blue Heron	Egretta caerulea		ST	High			
Tricolored Heron	Egretta tricolor		ST	High			
Roseate Spoonbill	Roseate Spoonbill Platalea ajaja		ST	High			
Wood Stork	Mycteria americana		FT	High			
Least Tern	east Tern Sternula antillarum		ST	Low			
Mammals							
Florida Bonneted Bat	Eumops floridanus	Е	FE	High			

^{*} Bald eagles are afforded federal protection under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

USFWS Status: T: Threatened (subject to state and federal protection); E: Endangered (subject to state and federal protection); T(S/A): Threatened dur to similarity of appearance; C: Candidate for Listing.



¹ FWC status is based on the *Florida's Imperiled Species Management Plan* that was recently updated by the FWC on December 2018.

FWC Status:

FT: Federally Threatened (subject to state and federal protection); FE: Federally Endangered (subject to state and federal protection); ST: State-Threatened only (not federally listed); FT(S/A): Federally Threatened due to similarity of appearance.

American Alligator

American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*) are listed as federally Threatened only because of their similarity of appearance to the American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) which is Federally Threatened. They are known to inhabit nearly any freshwater and brackish waters including marshes, rivers, lakes, as well as man-made features including ditches, canals, and ponds if water levels are suitable. No alligators were directly observed but are highly expected to use the large borrow ponds onsite. Regardless, this species does not have any permitting implications for this site and will not result in any development restrictions.

Gopher Tortoise

Gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) are listed by the state as Threatened and prefer sandhills, xeric scrub habitat, palmetto prairie and pine flatwoods but can be found in other upland habitats and even developed areas. ECT did not observe any potentially occupied gopher tortoise burrows during the preliminary survey, but gopher tortoises are likely to occur onsite even if in low density populations. Overall, gopher tortoise density is probably low given the agricultural uses, high water table and wetland conditions on this site. Prior to construction, a formal (100%) preconstruction gopher tortoise survey will be required in accordance with FWC's *Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines* (Revised July 2020) to locate all tortoises (and burrows) in the development footprint. If any gopher tortoise burrows are found onsite, a permit will be required from FWC to relocate tortoises offsite prior to construction as discussed in Section 6.3.

Eastern Indigo Snake

Eastern indigo snakes (*Drymarchon couperi*) are listed as federally Threatened, and according to USFWS, can be found in nearly any habitat including sandhill, scrub, pine flatwoods, pine rocklands, scrubby flatwoods, high pine, dry prairie, coastal prairie, mangrove wetlands, tropical hardwood hammocks, edges of freshwater marshes, agricultural fields, coastal dunes, and human-altered habitats. They are also commonly associated with gopher tortoises and are often



found occupying the same burrows. No indigo snakes were observed during the cursory review, but this species is cryptic in nature and difficult to detect. Although no Eastern Indigo Snakes were observed, there is still potential for this species to occur onsite particularly given the habitats onsite and extensive area of undeveloped lands and conservation lands surrounding the site (to the north and east). Eastern indigo snakes will need to be addressed through USFWS consultation during permitting (see Section 6.3) but should not present any development constraints for this site.

Florida Pine Snake

Florida pine snakes (*Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus*) are listed by the state as Threatened and inhabit sandhill, scrub, xeric hammock, scrubby flatwoods, mesic pine flatwoods, and dry prairie with dry soils. No Florida pine snakes were observed during the site review, but they may occur onsite given the extent of habitat and undeveloped lands around this site. Although this species may be present on-site, it is unlikely to present development constraints or permitting concerns.

Bald Eagle

While no longer listed as Threatened by the USFWS or FWC, bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) continue to be protected by state and federal laws under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. They generally nest in large pines (and occasionally on cell towers) and have protection zones that need to be maintained around the nest (330-foot primary zone, 660-foot secondary protection zone). During the May survey efforts, ECT observed an eagle nest onsite, but it was observed during the tail end of eagle nesting season (October 1-May 15th) and ECT could not confirm whether it was an active nest (no eagles were observed). The nest is located in a large pine on the edge of the large borrow pond in the northeast corner (Figure 12). Photographs of the nest are included Appendix B. This nest was also observed during an aerial survey ECT conducted on March 2, 2022 (via helicopter) for the adjacent site (Toledo Village). During the helicopter survey, no eggs or young were documented in the nest, but an eagle was observed perched in a pine near the nest (on the edge of lake). It should be noted that this nest is not documented in FWC's Eagle Nest Locator Database and Audubon's Eaglewatch Database.



ECT also checked public databases (FWC's Eagle Nest Locator and Audubon's Eaglewatch) and there are two other registered eagle nests that are known to occur near this site. One of the nests (SA030) is located approximately 2 miles southeast of this site and the other nest (SA032) is located approximately 2 miles northwest of this site (Figure 12). The nearby nest (on Toledo Village) was carefully inspected during the helicopter survey and was in poor condition (appeared abandoned and in disrepair) so eagles are more likely to be nesting on this site. Given the eagle nesting activity on this site and adjacent lands, additional monitoring/inspections should be conducted when eagle nesting season recommences in October 2022. More discussion on eagle permitting considerations is addressed in Section 6.3 below.

Florida Grasshopper Sparrow

The Florida grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum floridanus*) is federally listed as Endangered. The Site is located within the western limits of the USFWS consultation area for species. The species is habitat specific and requires open, fire-managed native dry prairie/grassland communities which does not occur on-site. ECT did not observe or hear any grasshopper sparrows during the survey, nor does the site have any suitable habitat for the species. Therefore, Florida grasshopper sparrows are not likely to occur on-site and should not present development constraints or permitting concerns.

Florida Scrub-jay

The Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) is federally listed as Threatened. The Site is located within the limits of the USFWS consultation area for species. Florida scrub-jays are habitat specific and prefer low-growth, open xeric oak scrub habitat that is routinely managed by prescribed fire. According to the USFWS general survey guidelines, other potentially suitable habitats include improved, unimproved, and woodland pastures in addition to pine flatwoods. Minimal habitat is available on-site and is marginal at best in its current condition. No scrub-jays were observed or heard during the survey and the site does not contain any xeric scrub habitat preferred by this species. ECT also reviewed the Scrub Jay Parcel ID Lists published by both Sarasota County and the City of North Port, neither of which reference this site as having potential scrub jays. Therefore,



Florida scrub-jays are considered unlikely to utilize the site, and since there is no suitable habitat, formal scrub jay surveys should not be required.

Florida Burrowing Owl

Florida burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia floridana*) are state listed as Threatened and inhabit sandhills, ruderal communities, dry prairies, and pastures with minimal groundcover vegetation. Burrowing owls are year-round residents in Florida. No burrowing owls (or their burrows) were observed during the survey, and they are not expected to use this site given the ongoing agricultural uses and high water table that occurs throughout the site. Regardless, burrowing owls will be evaluated during gopher tortoise survey efforts to rule out any concerns for this species.

Crested Caracara

The crested caracara (*Caracara plancus*) is federally listed as Threatened and the project site is located within the western limits of the USFWS consultation area for species (Figure 11). Caracaras prefer to nest in scattered cabbage palms or cabbage palm hammocks surrounded by open pastures or dry/wet prairie habitats where they forage. ECT did not observe any caracaras onsite, but they have been observed nesting on adjacent lands during the 2022 nesting season (Figure 12). The site has both suitable cabbage palm nesting habitat and pasture which offers substantial foraging grounds for this species.

Given the suitable habitat and caracara activity in the area, formal caracara surveys may be required in support of permitting (in accordance with USFWS survey protocols) to rule out concerns for caracaras. USFWS requires formal surveys be conducted biweekly throughout the caracara nesting season (January – April). If any caracara nests are found onsite or adjacent lands, USFWS requires a 4,920-foot protection zone be maintained around the nest (during nesting). Therefore, if a caracara nest occurs on adjacent lands, the protection zone for the offsite nest could overlap this site and have some permitting implications or development restrictions. Caracaras will likely need to be addressed through USFWS consultation during permitting. More



details regarding the constraints and permitting considerations related to crested caracara are summarized in Section 6.3 below.

Southeastern American Kestrel

The southeastern American kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*) is state listed as Threatened, but can also be easily confused with the non-listed northern species (American kestrels) that migrates to Florida in the winter (September-April). Kestrels nest in cavities in dead trees (snags) and wooden utility poles and are generally found in open pine habitats, woodland edges, prairies, and pastures where they have unobstructed views of open lands where prey can be easily detected. No kestrels were observed by ECT, but the site has suitable habitat and kestrels have been observed on adjacent lands. Therefore, formal kestrel surveys may be required during permitting to rule out concerns for kestrels. FWC requires formal surveys be conducted during kestrel breeding season (April-August) in accordance with kestrel survey guidelines³. More details regarding the constraints and permitting considerations related to southeastern American kestrels are provided in Section 6.3 below.

Florida Sandhill Crane

Florida sandhill cranes (*Antigone canadensis pratensis*) are state listed as Threatened. This species typically nests in shallow, freshwater marsh wetlands between February and April. They also utilize open grassy areas such as pastures and golf courses for foraging. During the survey, ECT observed sandhill cranes foraging in the pasture and one of the herbaceous wetlands (Figure 12). Given they were observed at the end of nesting season, it's likely sandhill cranes were nesting onsite or on adjacent lands. Sandhill cranes have also been observed foraging and nesting on adjacent lands. Therefore, formal sandhill crane nesting surveys should be conducted in accordance with FWC guidelines⁴ to evaluate for active nests either during permitting or prior to construction, particularly if construction is anticipated during the breeding season (December – August). If any active nests are identified, FWC typically requires a 400-foot buffer be maintained around the nest



³Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines for Southeastern American Kestrels (December 2020)

⁴Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines for Florida Sandhill Cranes

to prevent disturbance (during construction) while the cranes are nesting. If flightless young are found, FWC requires a 1,500 buffer be maintained around the nest until they are capable of flight.

Listed Wading Birds

ECT evaluated the property for state listed wading birds (i.e., little blue heron, tricolored heron) and wood storks (*Mycteria americana*) which are federally listed as Threatened. No listed wading birds were observed during the survey, but they are expected to use this site given the extent of wetlands and surface waters onsite. A number of wading bird rookeries and wood stork colonies are also known to occur nearby which creates more potential for wading bird use on this site. Based on the FWC wading bird database, there is a wading bird colony that occurs approximately one mile northeast of this site (Figure 11) in addition to several other rookeries nearby. The USFWS wood stork database also shows the site occurs in the 18.6-mile core foraging area (CFA) of numerous wood stork colonies located in the Myakka River and Peace River (Figure 11).

ECT did not observe any evidence of wading bird nesting or rookeries onsite, but they can be expected to use the site for foraging and loafing. Wading bird nesting generally occurs between February and August. Therefore, pre-construction surveys may be required by FWC to evaluate for nesting by state-listed wading bird species (i.e., tricolored heron, little blue heron) should construction occur during the breeding season (February through August). If any active wading bird nests are identified for state-listed species, FWC typically requires a 330-foot buffer be maintained around the nest to prevent disturbance (during construction) while they are nesting. Also, given the site occurs in the CFA of wood stork colonies, any loss in suitable foraging habitat (associated with wetland/OSW impacts) will need to be evaluated during permitting to address USFWS criteria as discussed in Section 6.3

Least Tern

The least tern (*Sternula antillarum*) is state listed as Threatened and are found throughout most coastal areas in Florida including estuaries and bays as well as areas around rivers. Least terns generally nest from April through August and have been increasingly documented using artificial nesting sites inland including construction sites and agricultural lands because of loss of coastal



habitat. No least terns were observed on this site, nor does the site offer habitat in current condition, but terns have high potential to nest on construction sites, particularly in areas with areas with freshly graded fill (sand and shell that resembles coastal habitat) that are in dormant stages of construction. Some measures can be implemented to deter least terns from nesting by timing fill/grading (outside of nesting season) or seeding areas following grading activities to establish vegetation cover. Should any least tern nesting occur during construction, FWC coordination will be required and the perimeter of the nesting area would need to be fenced off and avoided during nesting season.

Florida Bonneted Bat

The project site occurs in the consultation area for Florida bonneted bat (*Eumops floridanus*; FBB) which is federally listed as Endangered by the USFWS. They have been documented in a handful of counties in South Florida (including Sarasota) and critical FBB habitat is known to occur approximately 6 miles east of this site (Figure 11). They are known to roost in hollow trees, palms and man-made structures and forage in a variety of habitats (i.e., semitropical forests, tropical hardwoods, pineland and mangrove habitats) and land uses associated with developed areas. USFWS came out with new FBB guidelines in October 2019 that require a full acoustic survey for any projects that have potential roosting habitat that are greater than 5 acres in size. Since the project contains potential roosting habitat, we anticipate a formal acoustic bat survey will be required to evaluate for the presence/absence of the FBB in accordance with survey methodologies outlined in the FBB Consultation Key released by USFWS on October 22, 2019. ECT has conducted formal acoustic surveys on adjacent lands which has shown FBB foraging activity occurring onsite. Therefore, formal FBB surveys and USFWS consultation will likely be required during permitting as discussed in Section 6.3.



6.0 Permitting Considerations

Below is a summary of permitting considerations for the property based on ECT's findings and applicable state, federal, and local government regulations. Permitting and compliance considerations are outlined specific to each agency we anticipate engaging with including the SWFWMD, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP 404), City of North Port, FWC, and USFWS.

6.1 SWFWMD

As noted in Section 2.0, the original wetland determination issued by SWFWMD has expired and is no longer valid. Therefore, the new wetland lines (established by ECT) will need to be reevaluated by SWFWMD as part of a formal wetland determination or future permitting efforts and should be considered approximate until they are reviewed and approved by SWFWMD.

As part of future permitting efforts, any impacts to wetlands and surface waters will be subject to review and approval by SWFWMD. When wetland impacts are proposed, avoidance and minimization first needs to be addressed consistent with criteria outlined in the ERP Applicant's Handbook (Volume 1) before SWFWMD will consider mitigation and unavoidable impacts need to be mitigated. Mitigation for surface water impacts (i.e., ditches, ponds) is generally not required by SWFWMD with the exception of hydric cut OSWs which may require mitigation (determined on case by case basis). Mitigation requirements for any wetland impacts would be determined based on the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method outlined in Chapter 62-345, F.A.C. SWFWMD also requires buffers (15 foot minimum, 25-foot average) around wetlands to ensure no secondary wetland impacts occur.

If needed, SWFWMD wetland mitigation can be provided through either a mitigation bank (i.e., Myakka Mitigation Bank) or onsite mitigation. Myakka Mitigation Bank is currently the only bank that covers this site and has appropriate credits available (i.e., freshwater forested and herbaceous). ECT also contacted the mitigation bank and confirmed that have both state and federal credits available. Onsite mitigation could also be provided through wetland creation or wetland enhancement (via hydrological restoration or nuisance/exotic removal).



As part of SWFWMD permitting process, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) will automatically be engaged and a copy of the ERP application will be forwarded to them for review as part of the State 404 program recently adopted by FDEP. Other third-party agencies will also engaged during SWFWMD permitting including the FWC who regulates state listed species and the Department of Historic Resources/State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) who oversees archaeological and cultural resource concerns.

6.2 <u>FDEP 404</u>

In December 2020, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) delegated the Clean Water Act Section 404 (Dredge and Fill) permitting to the FDEP for assumed waters which is now referred to as the State 404 Program. Most of the wetlands on the site should be considered jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) for FDEP 404 purposes based on the Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR) since they are either tributaries (or adjacent wetlands of tributaries) that drain into the Myakka River further downstream which is a Traditional Navigable Water (TNW). However, the site contains a few isolated wetlands (i.e., WL-F & G) that do not appear to have any hydrologic connections to tributary wetlands (WOTUS). It should be noted that the FDEP is currently relying on NWPR for evaluating WOTUS jurisdiction under the 404 Program, but the FDEP is in the process of revising WOTUS criteria and we anticipate current NWPR criteria (for WOTUS) will no longer apply when the new WOTUS criteria is implemented. It is speculated that the revised definition of WOTUS (expected to be passed in 2022/2023) will revert to the pre-2015 definition (aka Rapanos) ultimately re-instating the significant nexus determination which broadens the reach of federal jurisdiction.

Regardless, FDEP will be engaged during SWFWMD permitting and a WOTUS determination will ultimately have to be conducted and approved by FDEP to determine which areas fall under 404 jurisdiction. A 404 permit will likely be required by FDEP during permitting unless all WOTUS jurisdictional areas are avoided. If WOTUS impacts are less than 0.5-acres, the project may qualify for a State 404 General Permit under Chapter 62-331.227, F.A.C. (for residential development) which allows up to half an acre of impact. However, should WOTUS impacts exceed 0.5-acres, an Individual 404 Permit will be required from the FDEP. Given the extent of wetlands and surface waters on this site, ECT would anticipate an Individual 404 Permit (>0.5 acre of impacts) will be required to accommodate a site plan that is economically feasible for this project.



Similar to SWFWMD, the FDEP also requires avoidance/minimization of wetland impacts before mitigation is considered under 404 criteria. For Individual permits, they also require an alternatives analysis that considers both onsite alternatives and alternative sites that were evaluated for avoidance/minimization. FDEP also require mitigation for unavoidable WOTUS impacts, but mitigation banks are preferred over onsite mitigation based on the compensatory mitigation hierarchy criteria outlined in Section 8.5.1 of the State 404 Program Applicant's Handbook, unless there are extenuating circumstances (i.e., no mitigation banks available or no federal credits available). The Myakka Mitigation Bank is approved by both the State and USACE/FDEP, and therefore, should be a viable mitigation bank option. If for some reason, the bank no longer has credits available during permitting, onsite mitigation (aka permittee responsible mitigation) would need to be provided for FDEP 404 purposes.

As part of FDEP 404 permitting process, FDEP will also engage FWC and USFWS on state and federal listed species issues and the SHPO and THPO will also be engaged to review and comment on archaeological, cultural and tribal concerns.

6.3 <u>City of North Port</u>

The City of North Port's ULDC has environmental criteria under Chapter 33 that provide for wetland protection similar to SWFWMD including avoidance/minimization criteria and mitigation requirements. The City also defers to SWFWMD criteria for wetland lines and 25-foot wetland buffers and will generally accept wetland impacts and mitigation that is approved by SWFWMD. The City also generally focuses on listed species issues and will request documentation of listed species surveys including proof of gopher tortoise surveys, the FWC relocation permit and FWC after action report showing proof of relocation (if applicable) before they will issue local government approval. The City will also request documentation for other pre-construction surveys including bat surveys, kestrel surveys and sandhill crane nesting surveys where applicable. Heritage Trees also need to be considered for City approval and generally include any native trees (oaks and pines) that are greater than 30" DBH.



6.4 <u>Listed Species</u>

Project activities will need to adhere to state and federal regulations and guidelines as mandated by the FWC and USFWS. Both agencies will also be engaged by SWFWMD and FDEP during permitting. The following is a summary of surveys, permitting and/or agency consultation ECT reasonably expects that will need to be addressed for certain species based on our preliminary assessment. Although some species were not directly observed, additional surveys will be required for some species to address agency requirements during permitting.

Based on our preliminary listed species assessment, ECT anticipates that consultation with USFWS will be required to address eastern indigo snakes, wood storks, crested caracaras and Florida bonneted bats. We anticipate that some formal surveys will be required to address some of these species to satisfy USFWS criteria (based on habitats and likelihood of occurrence). Other surveys will also be required to address FWC requirements for state-listed species including gopher tortoises, state-listed wading birds, Florida sandhill cranes and southeastern American kestrel. Below is a brief summary of the permitting considerations or recommendations for federally listed species regulated by USFWS and state listed species regulated by FWC. Other species will have to be addressed during permitting, but the summary below addresses key species that may require additional surveys and some level of agency coordination or permitting and consultation.

USFWS (Federally Listed Species)

Bald Eagle

One bald eagle nest is known to occur on the site, but additional monitoring/inspections should be conducted when the next nesting season commences (October 2022) to evaluate for nesting activity. Assuming nesting is confirmed onsite, restrictions with development apply to the primary (330-foot) and secondary (660-foot) protection zones surrounding the nest based on recommendations in the USFWS *National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines* (May 2007) which has specific guidelines to avoid disturbance to bald eagles and their young during nesting. The primary protection zone around the nest should be avoided altogether, and any activities proposed in the secondary protection zone will likely require an Incidental Take permit from USFWS because of changes in land use relative to current uses tolerated by the birds. There are some activities that may be allowed in the secondary zone without a permit which is determined on a case-by-case basis (by USFWS) but would be limited to less



intensive uses such as stormwater ponds and passive recreational uses. Bald eagle monitoring will also need to be conducted in accordance with the USFWS Bald Eagle Monitoring Guidelines (September 2007) for any activities occurring in the secondary protection zone during the nesting season (October 1st through May 15th). Additionally, careful consideration should be afforded with the site plan design to come up a plan that includes conservation measures and minimization efforts (e.g., avoidance of the primary zone, etc.) to avoid disturbance to nesting activity, as this information will be required to meet permitting criteria under the BGEPA. This is especially critical for the south side of the nest which has direct exposure to the open pasture (where future development will occur) and no forested habitat to buffer the nest.

Eastern Indigo Snake

The site contains suitable habitat for indigo snakes, and given the surrounding lands, there is potential for indigo snakes to use this site. As part of the 404 permitting process, FDEP will follow the indigo snake guidelines outlined in the USFWS *South Florida Eastern Indigo Snake Programmatic Effect Determination Key* (aka Indigo Snake Key) (USFWS, August 2017) to evaluate potential effects to the species and whether formal consultation with USFWS is warranted under Section 7 of the ESA. Based on the South Florida Indigo Snake Key, if a project results in more than 25 acres of impact to suitable habitat (i.e., sandhill, scrub, pine flatwoods, pine rocklands, scrubby flatwoods, high pine, dry prairie, coastal prairie, mangrove wetlands, tropical hardwood hammocks, edges of freshwater marshes, agricultural fields, coastal dunes, and human-altered habitats), it keys out as a "may affect" for indigo snakes in which case formal consultation will be required with USFWS. Therefore, we anticipate Eastern indigo snakes will need to be addressed during USFWS consultation but should not present development constraints for this site.

Crested Caracara

As outlined in Section 5.1, no caracaras were observed on-site but the site (and surrounding lands) have suitable nesting and foraging habitat and caracaras have been documented nesting on adjacent lands. Therefore, formal caracara surveys should be conducted in accordance with the USFWS survey protocol during the nesting season (i.e., January – April) prior to development in order to document the presence (or absence) of nesting caracaras on or adjacent to the site. Caracaras are federally protected, and if an active nest site is identified, USFWS requires a 1,500 meter (or 4,920 foot) protection zone be maintained around the nest. Any activities proposed in the protection zone will



require formal consultation with USFWS and may require an Incidental Take permit. Caracara nests also have some restrictions that would limit development occurring in the nesting season and would require some level of monitoring during nesting.

Wood Stork

Wood storks will need to be addressed through USFWS consultation since the site is located within the CFA of two (2) or more wood stork colonies (Figure 11) and SFH is present on-site. Therefore, any impacts to SFH (wetlands and surface waters) will be reviewed and keyed out following guidelines outlined in USFWS *South Florida Programmatic Concurrence and Key for the Wood Stork* (aka Wood Stork Key) (USFWS, May 2010). Based on the Wood Stork Key, if a project is located in the CFA of a known wood stork colony and impacts greater than ½ acre of SFH, then the project would key out as "may affect" for wood storks in which case formal consultation may be required.

USFWS considers suitable foraging habitat any wetlands (or non-wetland waterbodies) that typically have shallow, open water areas with permanent or seasonal water depth of 2-15 inches deep and concentrates prey (i.e., fish, frogs, etc.). A wood stork foraging analysis may be required to quantify the net loss of SFH (associated with wetland impacts) and will require mitigation which can usually be accomplished through wetland mitigation (i.e., mitigation bank credits or onsite wetland mitigation) to ensure a replacement in the amount of habitat and foraging function equivalent to that impacted.

Florida Bonneted Bat

Given the project occurs in the FBB consultation area, is greater than 5 acres, has potential roosting habitat and is located near FBB critical habitat (6 miles east), formal acoustic surveys will definitely be required to evaluate for presence or absence of FBB (per USFWS October 2019 FBB Guidelines). If FBB are confirmed using this site (through acoustic surveys), the results are used to determine whether occurrence is associated with foraging or roosting on-site. FBB foraging activity has been recorded on adjacent lands (through acoustic survey efforts), therefore, USFWS consultation will be required if FBB surveys confirm FBB activity onsite. If FBB activity is confirmed, conservation measures will need to be implemented (through Best Management Practices) to address USFWS concerns and Incidental Take Permit may also be required depending on the extent of impact and best management practices (BMPs) implemented.



FWC (State Listed Species)

Gopher Tortoise

No potentially occupied gopher tortoise burrows were observed during the preliminary survey, but they are likely to occur onsite even if it's a low-density population. A formal (100%) gopher tortoise survey will be required prior to land clearing and construction in accordance with the FWC's *Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines* (Revised July 2020) in order to locate all potentially occupied burrows onsite. This survey will need to be conducted within 90 days of commencement of construction or land clearing activities. If any potentially occupied gopher tortoise burrows are observed (in development footprint), a permit will be required from FWC to relocate tortoises that cannot be avoided by twenty-five (25) feet to an approved recipient site.

Florida Sandhill Crane

ECT does not anticipate any permitting constraints associated with this species unless they were to have an active nest in onsite wetlands during construction activities in which case a 400-foot nest protection buffer would apply during the nesting season. Additionally, a 1,500-foot buffer would apply to any upland habitats surrounding a nest site when flightless young are present. Formal sandhill crane surveys may be required or requested (by FWC or City) during the breeding season (i.e., December – August) to further evaluate for nesting activity and use of foraging areas in accordance with FWC's Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines for Florida Sandhill Cranes.

State-Listed Wading Birds

ECT does not anticipate any permitting constraints associated with this species unless they were to establish a nest or rookery onsite, in which case a 330-foot nest protection buffer would apply during the nesting season. Formal wading bird nesting surveys may be required or requested (by FWC or City) during the breeding season (i.e., February – August) to further evaluate for nesting activity and use of foraging areas in accordance with FWC's Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines for Little Blue Heron, Reddish Egret, Roseate Spoonbill and Tricolored Heron. If any active wading bird nests are identified for state-listed species, FWC typically requires a 330-foot buffer be maintained around the nest to prevent disturbance (during construction) while they are nesting.



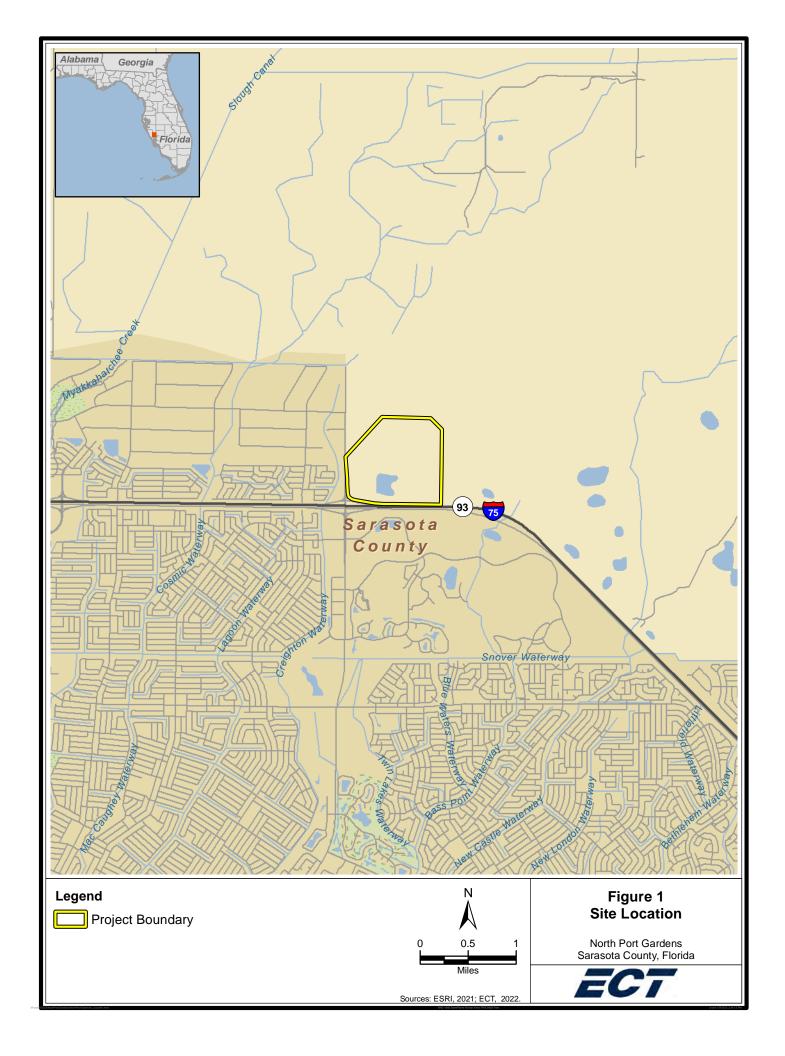
Southeastern American Kestrel

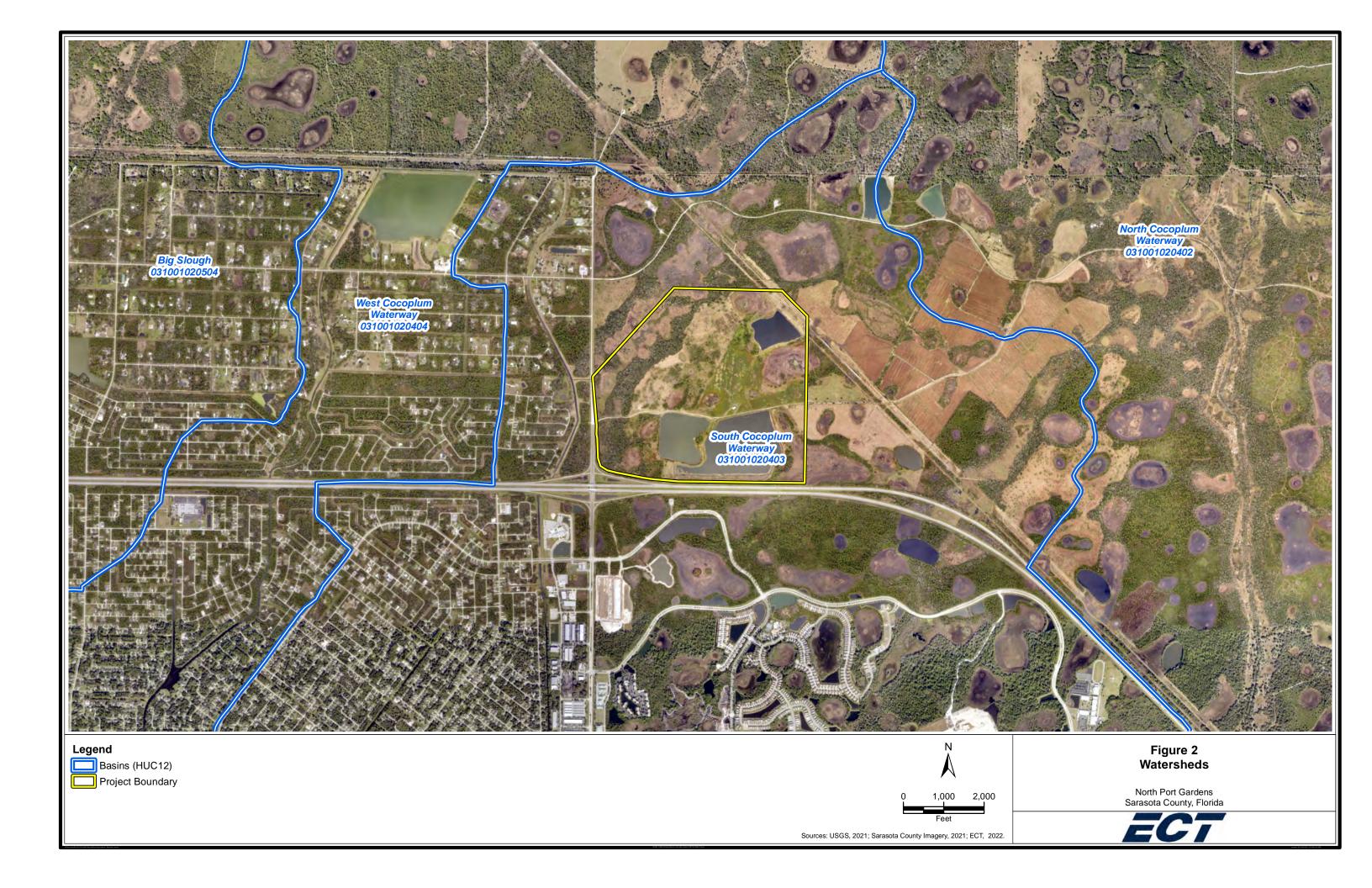
Although no kestrels were observed on-site, observations of this species have been made on adjacent parcels and suitable nesting and foraging habitat is present. Prior to development, a formal kestrel survey is recommended to occur during the breeding season (i.e., April – August) to determine the presence of the state listed resident subspecies and determine if the site is being utilized as foraging and/or nesting habitat. Methods should follow those found in the FWC *Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines for the Southeastern American Kestrel* (December 2020). If southeastern American kestrels are found nesting on or near the site, a 150-meter (i.e., 492 foot) setback buffer would be required to avoid disturbance. Occupied foraging habitat within a designated kestrel use area may further require protection and permitting. Coordination and permitting with FWC will be required for either proposed removal of a nest tree/structure, loss of occupied foraging habitat, or nest disturbance associated with development within the setback buffer during the breeding season. Formal kestrel surveys often rule out concerns for the listed kestrel species.

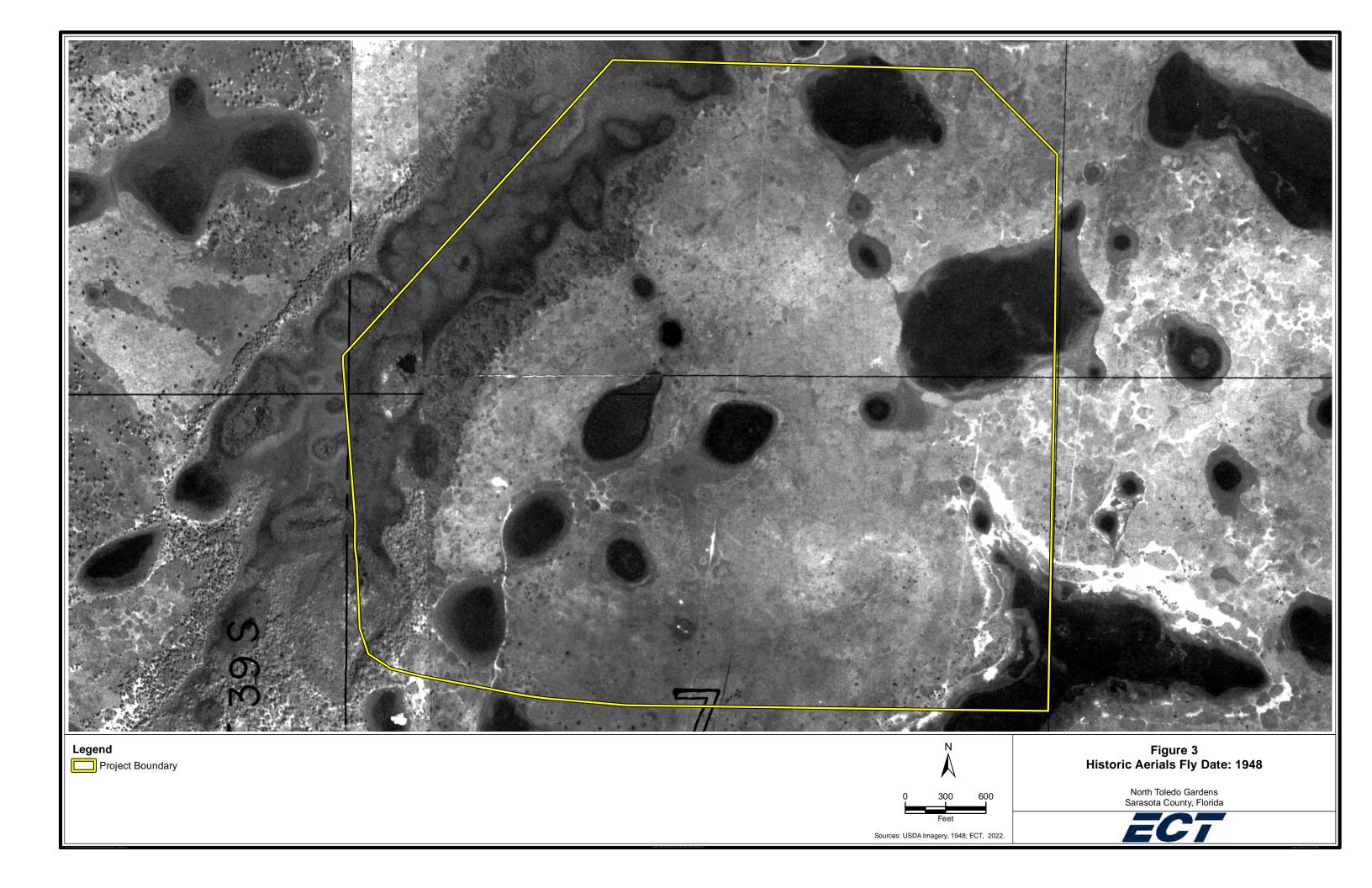


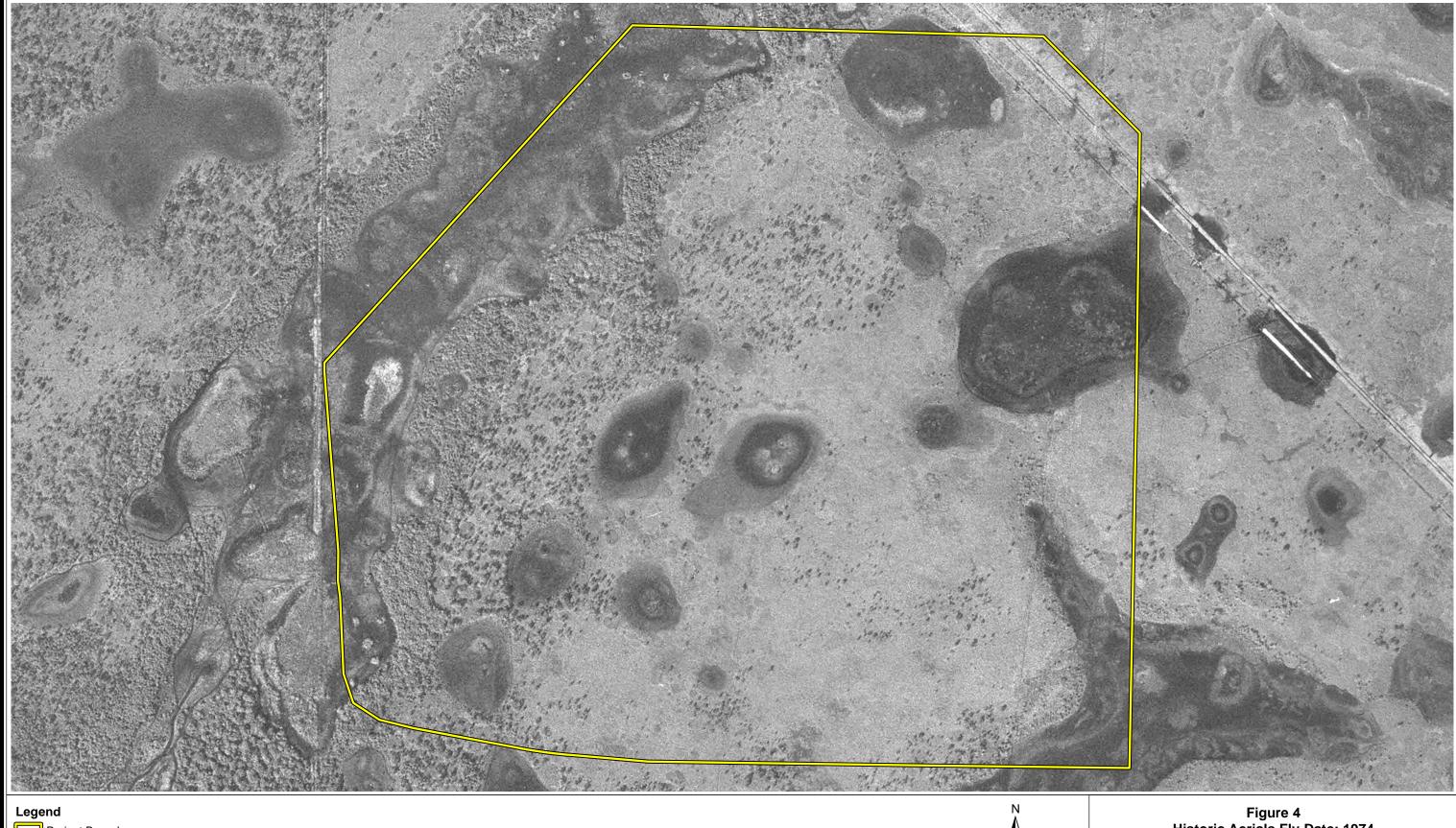
Figures













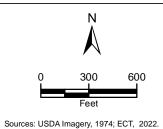
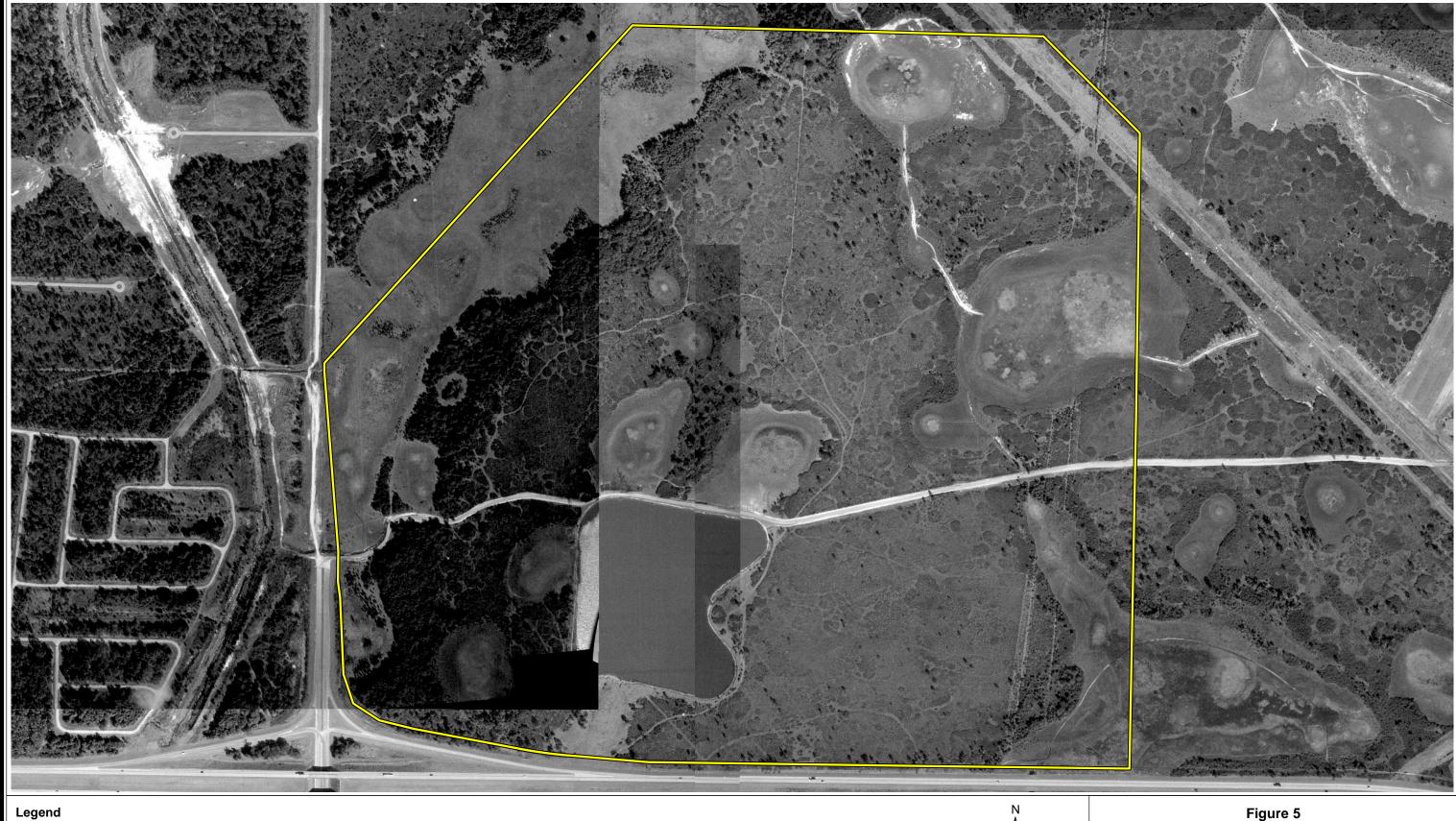


Figure 4 Historic Aerials Fly Date: 1974

North Toledo Gardens Sarasota County, Florida





Project Boundary

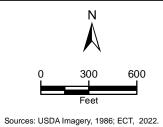
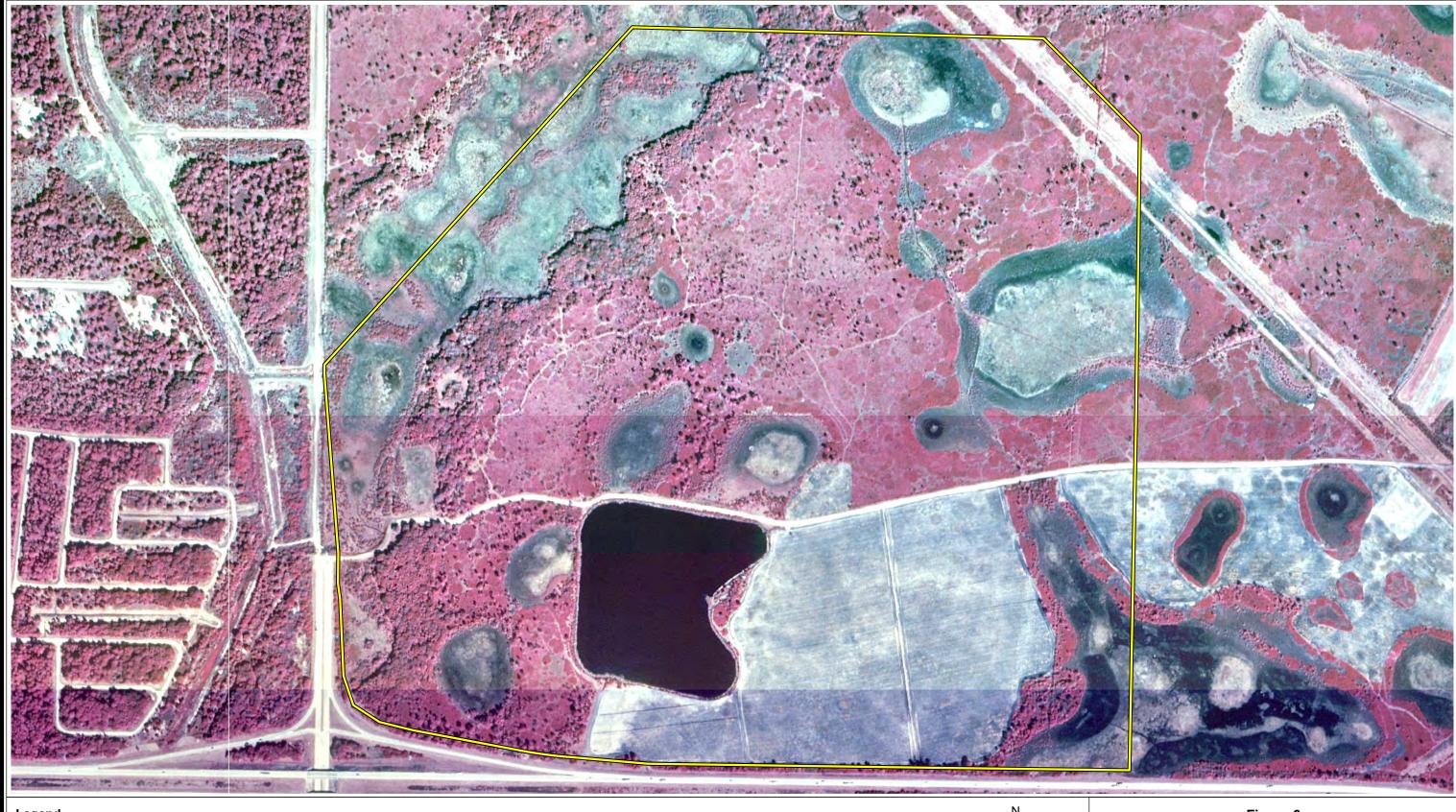


Figure 5 Historic Aerials Fly Date: 1986

North Toledo Gardens Sarasota County, Florida







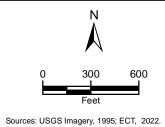


Figure 6 Historic Aerials Fly Date: 1995

> North Toledo Gardens Sarasota County, Florida





Project Boundary

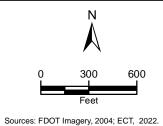


Figure 7 Historic Aerials Fly Date: 2004

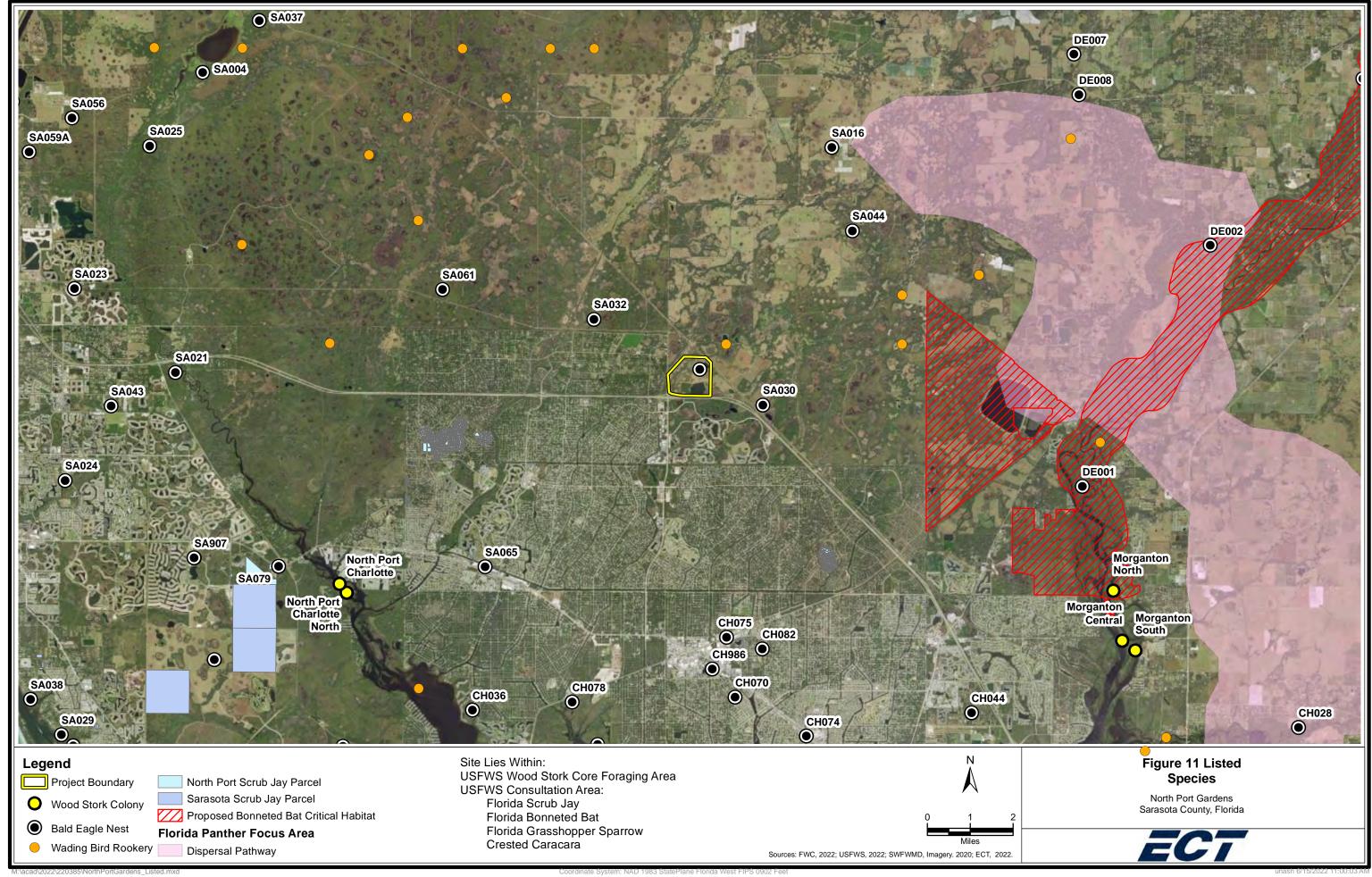
North Toledo Gardens Sarasota County, Florida

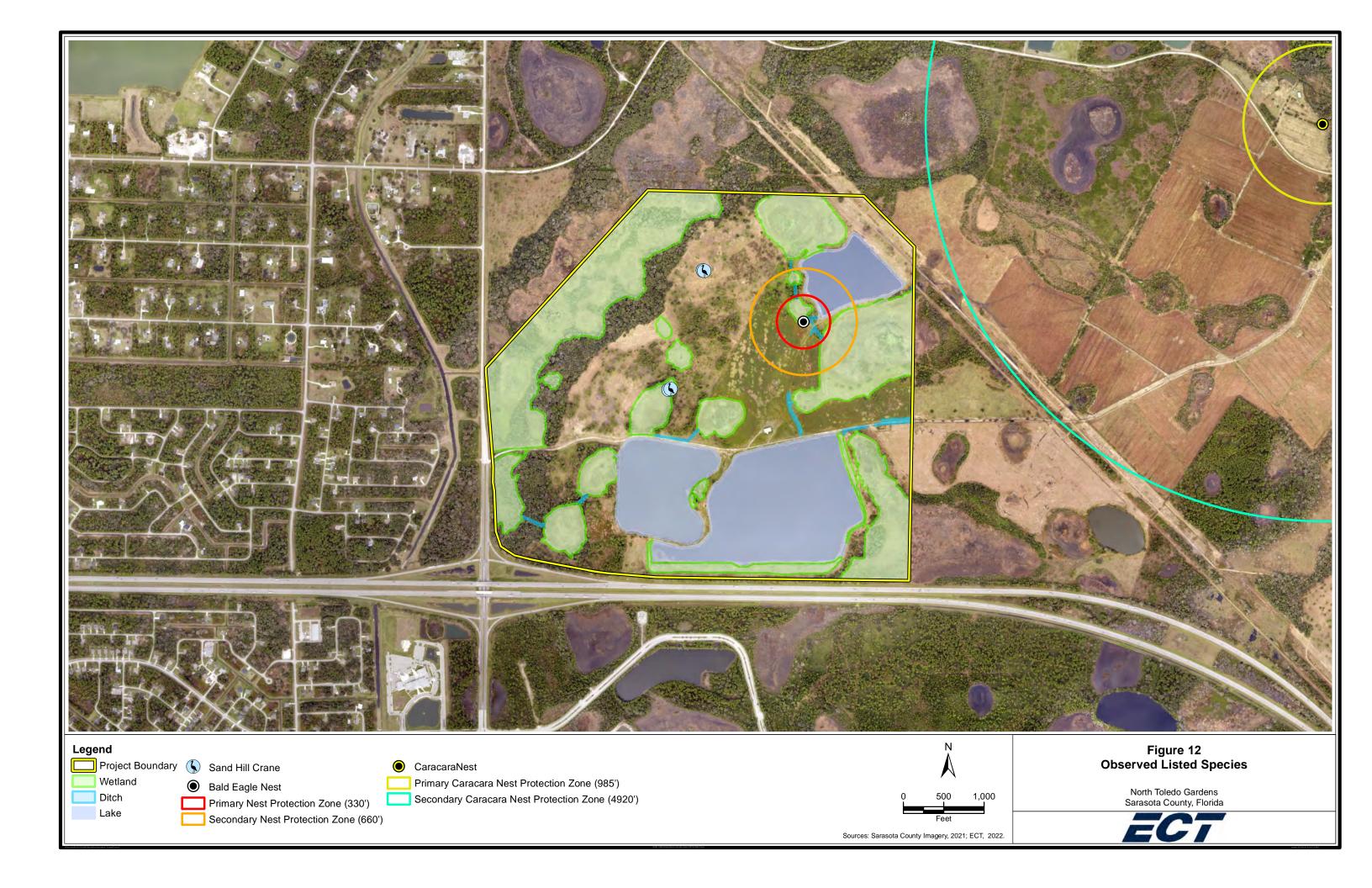












Appendix A SWFWMD Petition No. 42014092.004





Opportuni Employer

Southwest Florida Water Management District

Bartow Service Office 170 Century Boulevard Bartow, Florida 33830-7700 (863) 534-1448 or 1-800-492-7862 (FL only) SUNCOM 572-6200

Lecanto Service Office Suite 226 3600 West Sovereign Path Lecanto, Florida 34461-8070 (352) 527-8131

2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida 34604-6899 (352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only) SUNCOM 628-4150 TDD only 1-800-231-6103 (FL only)

On the Internet at: WaterMatters.org

Sarasota Service Office 6750 Fruitville Road Sarasota, Florida 34240-9711 (941) 377-3722 or 1-800-320-3503 (FL only) SUNCOM 531-6900

Tampa Service Office 7601 Highway 301 North Tampa, Florida 33637-6759 (813) 985-7481 or 1-800-836-0797 (FL only) SUNCOM 578-2070

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Patsy C. Symons

DeSoto

David L. Moore **Executive Director** William S. Bilenky

General Counsel

April 26, 2007

Michael D. Dinkel North Port Investments (NPI) #1, LLC, NPI #2, LLC. NPI #3, LLC. NPI #4, LLC 7208 Sand Lake Road, Suite 300 Orlando, FL 32809

Subject:

Final Agency Action Transmittal Letter for Formal Determination of

Wetlands and Other Surface Waters

Petition No.:

42014092.004 Project Name: Gulf Coast Gardens

County:

Sarasota Sec/Twp/Rge: 6,7/39S/22E

Dear Mr. Dinkel:

This letter constitutes notice of Final Agency Action for Approval of the above referenced Petition for Formal Determination of Wetlands and Other Surface Waters. This approval does not authorize any construction activities or constitute conceptual approval of any anticipated projects. Construction, alteration, operation, removal or abandonment of a surface water management system requires a permit from the District pursuant to Rule 40D-4.041. Florida Administrative Code, (F.A.C.), and Section 373.413, Florida Statutes, (F.S.), unless exempt pursuant to 40D-4.051, F.A.C., or 373.406, F.S.

You or any person whose substantial interests are affected by the District's action regarding a petition may request an administrative hearing in accordance with Sections 120.569 and 120.57, Florida Statute, (F.S.), and Chapter 28-106, Florida Administrative Code. (F.A.C.), of the Uniform Rules of Procedure. A request for hearing must: (1) explain how the substantial interests of each person requesting the hearing will be affected by the District's action, or proposed action, (2) state all material facts disputed by the person requesting the hearing or state that there are no disputed facts, and (3) otherwise comply with Chapter 28-106, F.A.C. Copies of Sections 28-106.201 and 28-106.301, F.A.C. are enclosed for your reference. A request for hearing must be filed with (received by) the Agency Clerk of the District at the District's Brooksville address within 21 days of receipt of this notice. Receipt is deemed to be the fifth day after the date on which this notice is deposited in the United States mail. Failure to file a request for hearing within this time period shall constitute a waiver of any right you or such person may have to request a hearing under Sections 120.569 and 120.57, F.S. Mediation pursuant to Section 120.573, F.S., to settle an administrative dispute regarding the District's action in this matter is not available prior to the filing of a request for hearing.

If you have any questions concerning this approval, please contact Tasha M. Bowers at the Sarasota Service Office, extension 6538.

Sincerely,

Ross T. Morton, P.W.S., Director Sarasota Regulation Department

RTM:TMB:bxm

Enclosures:

Approved Formal Determination of Wetlands and Other Surface Waters w/Attachments

Noticing Packet (42.00-064)

Sections 28-106.201 and 28-106.301, F.A.C.

CC:

File of Record 42014092.004

Jeffery R. Anderson, Director of Development and Authorized Agent, Jeffery R. Anderson Real

Estate, Inc.

Craig N. Huegel, Ph.D., Senior Ecologist, Biological Research Associates, LLC

Eric Hickman, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT FORMAL DETERMINATION OF WETLANDS AND OTHER SURFACE WATERS NO. 42014092.004

EXPIRATION DATE: April 26, 2012 FORMAL DETERMINATION ISSUED DATE: April 26, 2007

This Formal Determination of Wetlands and Other Surface Waters No. 42014092.004 is issued under the provisions of Section 373.421, Florida Statutes, (F.S.), and Rule 40D-4.042 and Section 3.4 of the Environmental Resource Permit Basis of Review, Florida Administrative Code, (F.A.C.). This Formal Determination consists of the District's determination of the locations on the property of the landward extent (boundaries) of wetlands and other surface waters based on the documentation consisting of a certified survey submitted by the Petitioner. This Formal Determination does not authorize any construction activities or constitute conceptual approval of any anticipated projects. Construction, alteration, operation, removal or abandonment of a surface water management system requires a permit from the District pursuant to Rule 40D-4.041, F.A.C., and Section 373.413, F.S, unless exempt pursuant to 40D-4.051, F.A.C. or 373.406, F.S. This Formal Determination does not in any way establish boundaries of sovereign submerged lands.

PROJECT NAME:

Gulf Coast Gardens

GRANTED TO:

North Port Investments (NPI) #1, LLC, NPI #2, LLC, NPI #3, LLC, NPI #4,

LLC

7208 Sand Lake Road, Suite 300

Orlando, FL 32809

ABSTRACT: Agency verification of the boundary that represents the landward extent of wetlands and other surface waters was conducted on January 31, 2007 by Tasha M. Bowers, Environmental Scientist. The other participant present was Craig Huegel of Biological Research Associates, LLC. for the Petitioner. At several sites along the wetland and other surface water boundaries, hydrologic indicators, vegetation and/or soils were examined in order to corroborate the portion of the respective boundary with the requirements of Chapter 62-340, F.A.C. The flagged boundaries were initially located by the Petitioner's Environmental Consultant. The landward extent of these wetlands comprises a total of 154.80 ± acres out of a 513.60 ± acre project area located 0.25 miles east of Interstate 75 just off of Toledo Blade Boulevard. There are 13 wetlands delineated onsite and they consist of Freshwater Marshes with some Wet Prairie areas. The Freshwater Marsh systems have subcanopies dominated by Salix caroliniana and Cephalanthus occidentalis, with a groundcover of Spartina bakeri, Pontederia cordata, Thalia geniculata, Ludwigia repens, Juncus effusus, Cladium jamaicensis, Panicum hemitomon, Panicum repens, Polygonum spp., and various other aquatic emergent and semi-emergent species. The majority of the Wet Prairie areas have a groundcover of Eleocharis baldwinii, Rhynchospora spp., Andropogon glomeratus, Lachnocaulon spp., Eriocaulon spp., Hypericum fasciculatum, and various other grasses and sedges. In addition to the wetlands, there are also eight other surface water features delineated onsite that total 119.00 + acres. The other surface water features consist of three borrow pits, two of which were permitted by the District and one that was excavated before 1984; the remainder of the other surface water features are a combination of upland and hydric cut waterways. The limits of the wetlands and other surface waters are delineated on the certified survey prepared by Van Buskirk/Fish & Associates, Inc., and received by the District on April 12, 2007, appended as Attachment "A".

COUNTY:

Sarasota

SEC/TWP/RGE:

6.7/39S/22E

PROJECT SIZE:

513.60 Acres

WETLAND AND OTHER

SURFACE WATER ACRES:

273.80

Permit No.: 42014092.004 Page 2 of 2 April 26, 2007

CURRENT LAND USE:

Agricultural

DATE PETITION FILED:

January 16, 2007

Pursuant to Subsection 373.421 (4), F.S., the Governing Board may revoke the Formal Wetland Determination upon a finding that the Petitioner has submitted inaccurate information to the District.

The Formal Wetland Determination shall be binding for the stated duration provided physical conditions on the property do not change so as to alter the boundaries of wetlands and other surface waters during that period.

Attachment A: Documents depicting the landward extent (boundaries) of wetlands and other surface waters are hereby incorporated into this petition by reference and the Petitioner shall comply with them.

Authorized Signature

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that a copy of the FAA letter on Application No. 42014092.004 was mailed by United States Mail to the below listed parties this April 26, 2007.

FAA Expiration Date: May 22, 2007

Permittee/Owner

Michael D. Dinkel

North Port Investments (NPI) #1. LLC, NPI #2, LLC, NPI #3, LLC, NPI Jeffery R. Anderson Real Estate,

#4. LLC

7208 Sand Lake Road, Suite 300

Orlando, FL 32809

Applicant

Jeffery R. Anderson, Director of Development and Authorized Agent Ecologist

3805 Edwards Road, Suite 700

Cincinnati, OH 45209

Engineer/Consultant

Craig N. Huegel, Ph.D., Senior

Biological Research Associates,

LLC

22 Sarasota Center Boulevard

Sarasota, FL 34240

FDEP WM

Mr. Eric Hickman Florida Department of **Environmental Protection** Division of Water Management Twin Towers Building, Suite 524 2600 Blair Stone Road Tallahassee, FL 32399-2400

Required Noticing:

(w/ Letter & Copy of the

Permittee/Consultant

Permit)

Documents sent by Regular FAA Transmittal Letter

US Mail to

Approved Permit with Conditions Attached Sections 28-106.201 and 28-106.301, F.A.C.

See USACOE address above, if applicable

Noticing Packet

Approved Construction Drawings (Permittee only)

Statement of Completion (Permittee only) Notice of Authorization (Permittee only)

Documents sent by Regular FAA Transmittal Letter

US Mail to

Approved Permit with Conditions Attached FAA Requestors and others Sections 28-106.201 and 28-106.301, F.A.C.

() ERP - Eminent Domain Property Owners (EPOs) mailed regular U.S. Mail (see list)

() WRP - Adjacent Waterfront Property Owners (AWPOs) if requested

Administrative Section

Sarasota Regulation Department

CertofMailing.frm.07/30/99 (Rev. 01/07/02)

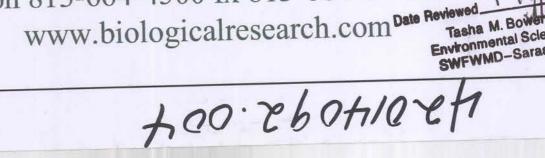


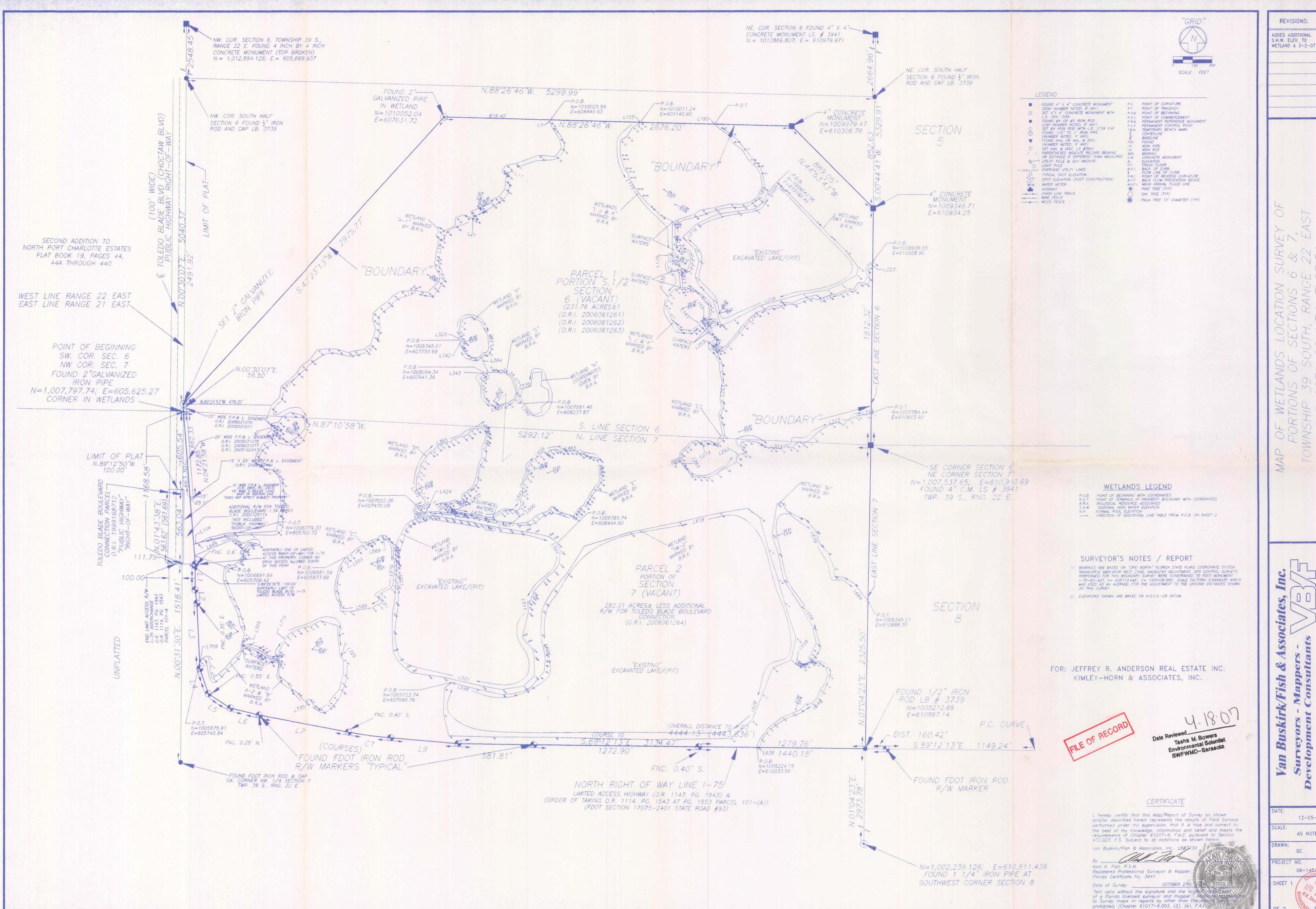
This map and all data contained within are supplied as is with no warranty. Biological Research Associates expressly disclaims responsibility for damages or liability from any claims that may arise out of the use or misuse of this map. It is the sole responsibility of the user to determine if the data on this map meets the user's needs. This map was not created as survey data, nor should it be used as such. It is the user's responsibility to obtain proper survey data, prepared by a licensed surveyor, where required by law.

Surveyed Wetlands and Surface Waters Gulf Shore Gardens North Port, FL

Biological Research Associates
3910 US Highway 301 N
FILE O

Suite 180 Tampa, Florida 33619 ph 813-664-4500 fx 813-664-0440





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Buskirk/Fish Van

12-05-2006

AS NOTED

RAWN: ROJECT NO. 06-1451



Appendix B Site Photographs





Photograph No. 1. Improved Pasture (FLUCFCS 211), facing south.



Photograph No. 2. Wetland Forested Mixed (FLUCFCS 630), facing south.



Photograph No. 3. Live Oak (FLUCFCS 427), facing southwest.



Photograph No. 4. Cabbage Palm (FLUCFCS 428), facing south.



Photograph No. 5. Freshwater Marsh (FLUCFCS 641), facing south.



Photograph No. 6. Reservoir (FLUCFCS 530), facing north.



Photograph No. 7. Woodland Pasture (FLUCFCS 213), facing west.



Photograph No. 8. Eagle nest observed onsite.