Cape Coral Environmental Survey Guidelines

The City of Cape Coral requires an environmental survey for all development projects. Please provide a recent Environmental survey of the subject property. The purpose of the survey is to review the property for plant and wildlife species listed by the Florida Department of Agriculture (FDA), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern. The survey should also identify all wetlands and environmentally sensitive habitats.

If any protected species of plant or animal life are found on the site, a professionally prepared management plan may be required. City staff will conduct site checks to verify the findings of each survey. Any disturbance of habitat, such as the unpermitted destruction of any animal burrow, will be reported to the state and/or federal authorities and may delay any City inspections until the until the matter is resolved.

For sites that are NOT routinely mowed/disturbed:

Properties with areas of natural vegetation and other areas that may have been previously disturbed, but have not been routinely mowed (such as agricultural areas) require a survey conducted by an environmental professional. Surveys for these development projects must adhere to the survey guidelines issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission or Lee County

The Environmental survey should include the following information:

1) A current aerial map of the property with the locations of any observed listed species or their sign. All listed species observed should be documented whether it nests on the site or not.

2) A list of all protected species that could potentially occur on the site, their protection status, and whether or not they were observed.

3) The methodology used to survey the site and the times and dates of the site survey.

4) A FLUCFCS map and a description of the habitat type(s).

5) Narrative of all listed plant and wildlife species found on the site, with description of possible impacts from development and any proposed mitigation, relocation or avoidance measures for those species.

6) Description of any unique features found on the site.

7) If wetlands are identified onsite, please provide a map showing the location of the wetland and any impacts from the planned development. Any proposed wetland buffers or conservation areas should also be indicated on the site plan.

8) Please describe how any impacts to onsite wetlands will be mitigated.

9) A management plan will be required if listed species are identified on the site.

Guidelines for Development Projects located on previously disturbed, routinely mowed properties:

Previously disturbed parcels that are on a routine mowing program typically offer limited wildlife habitat with some notable exceptions such as burrowing owl and gopher tortoise habitat. Individuals without specific environmental training may be able to recognize burrows of the burrowing owl and gopher tortoise. Therefore, the City will not require a professional

environmental survey for such properties, although it is encouraged. Sites with wetlands or wetland potential must be surveyed by an environmental professional.

The developer or his/her agent is required to do a systematic walkover of the site and prepare a written report using the guidelines below. Any individuals performing the survey are urged to obtain and be familiar with the use of field guides for plants and animals developed for Florida. The individuals conducting the survey should also download a copy of Floridas Endangered and Threatened Species from the link provided. https://myfwc.com/media/1945/threatened-endangered-species.pdf The individuals performing the species surveys should be equipped with GPS equipment and must be capable of plotting field locations onto a scaled drawing or aerial.

If any protected species of plant or animal life are found on the site, a professionally prepared management plan may be required. City staff may conduct site checks to verify the findings of each survey. Any disturbance of habitat, such as the unpermitted destruction of any animal burrow, will be reported to the state and/or federal authorities and may delay the issuance of the development order until the matter is resolved.

Survey Guidelines:
The developer or agent shall conduct a thorough walkover of the project site. No surveys shall be made while driving a vehicle. Transects must be walked from property line to property line in a north/south direction with a spacing of no greater than fifty feet between transects until the entire property is covered. If vegetation or other features obscure the view, closer transects are necessary. Cross transects shall then be conducted in an east/west direction in a similar manner. As each transect proceeds, the surveyor must note the locations of any listed species and plot them on a scaled diagram or aerial of the site. All listed species observed should be documented whether it nests on the site or not.

The developer must submit a written survey report indicating the results of the walkover. The report must include the following information:

1) Legal description of the property (Unit, Block, Lots) with scaled diagram or aerial of the site. The diagram or aerial shall indicate the locations of any listed species observed.

2) Name(s) of the surveyor(s) and business affiliation.

3) Procedures used to survey the site and the times and dates of the site survey.

4) General description of the property describing landscape type(s).

5) Narrative indicating species found on the site, with special notice given to listed species.

6) Description of any unique features found on the site.

7) If listed species or wetlands are documented on site: Provide a protection plan or describe the proposed method of mitigating the impacts of the development on the flora or fauna.

Any questions concerning the above guidelines should be directed to the Department of Community Development at (239) 574-0587.