

## **The City of Cape Coral requires an environmental survey for all development projects.**

Section 5.4.3 of the Land Development Regulations requires the applicant to make "... adequate provision for fitting development harmoniously into the existing natural environment and will not adversely affect existing uses, scenic character, natural resources or property values in the surrounding areas."

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. 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. Properties with wetland or potential wetland areas also must be surveyed by an environmental professional.

Surveys for these development projects must adhere to the survey guidelines issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

### **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 wildlife survey for such properties, although it is encouraged. 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 species surveys are urged to obtain and be familiar with the use of field guides for birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, insects, and plants, especially those guides developed for Florida. Additionally, individuals performing the species surveys are urged to consult the six volume series, Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida, published under the general editorship of Peter C.H. Prichard by the University Press of Florida in Gainesville. The individuals performing the species surveys should be equipped with measuring equipment and must be capable of plotting field locations onto a scaled drawing or aerial photograph.

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 the issuance of the development order until the matter is resolved.

## **SURVEY GUIDELINES**

**Transects.** 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 may be 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.

**Survey Report.** 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 the transects and the locations of 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. General description of possible impacts of development on flora and fauna.
8. Proposed methods for mitigating the impacts of the development on flora and fauna.

Any questions concerning the above guidelines should be directed to the Department of Community Development at (239) 574-0589.