

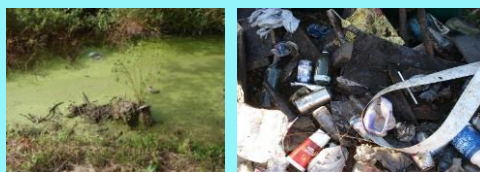
South Venice [Beach] Civic Association's Water Quality Task Force's October 14, 2017 Celebration

*"This is a great example of a community taking charge and
government following – I love It"*

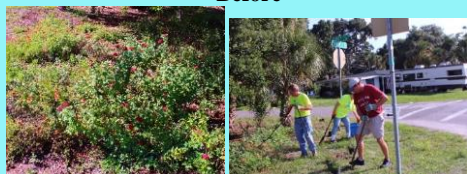
Former Sarasota County Commissioner Jon Thaxton

Today we celebrate both the opening of "The Grove" and restoration of approximately 7,500 linear feet of South Venice Beach waterway bank rehabilitation.

The story begins in 2012. South Venice Beach neighbors and organizations decided after an extensive review, to focus on their #1 concern – water quality. The project and related efforts is a bottom up neighborhood based effort. Residents have and will continue to define what is to be done and how "our" dollars are spent. Representatives of the Waterway Quality Task Force meet monthly with Sarasota County, University of Florida's IFAS, and SWFWMD staffs to be updated and define next steps. We are very excited about benefits and impact of what is being accomplished in South Venice Beach.



Before



After

Today

"The Grove" is a neighborhood gathering place that runs approximately 525 feet north along both sides (Quincy Road and Siesta Drive) of Siesta Waterway beginning at junction of Seminole Road and Jamaica Road.

Over nearly six years, hundreds of volunteers have met to plan and clear waterway, remove exotic vegetation, and place in "The Grove" four hundred (400) Florida native and friendly plants and shrubs. "The Grove" is being maintained by friends and neighbors under Sarasota County's *Keep Sarasota County Beautiful* adoption program.

South Venice Beach waterway bank rehabilitation Beginning in 2016, utilizing funds from Sarasota County and Southwest Florida Water Management District, a Sarasota County contractor - Rick Richards, Inc., restored approximately 7,500 linear feet of waterway bank. The rehabilitation provides replicable, cost effective bank stabilization, as well as habitat and water quality improvements.



Volunteers

The project includes removing invasive plants and accumulated sediment with installation of site appropriate plants -- over 50,000 Florida native plants (see Attachment A), to create a more naturalized waterway. The contractor will maintain the waterway bank rehabilitation for one year. Beginning in early 2018, Sarasota County will maintain the banks. The total project cost is \$530,611.73.



Early Efforts to Clear Banks

The Siesta Waterway and Briarwood Canal bank rehabilitation will reduce mowing and maintenance costs as well as promote improved water quality and biodiversity resulting in a healthier drainage system discharging into Alligator Creek and eventually Lemon Bay. Other benefits include:

- Building a collaborative relationship between the South Venice Beach neighbors and Sarasota County,
- Leveraging Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) grant funding,
- Reducing nutrient loading and sedimentation in Alligator Creek and Lemon Bay, and
- Encouraging and continuing to support South Venice Beach citizens' conservation, stewardship commitment and actions.

THANK YOU

Thank Yous are in order for Sarasota County Commissioners as well as SWFWMD Board members and staff for listening, advising, and acting to facilitate South Venice Beach water quality improvements possible.

Funding, volunteers, and staff assistance has been received from:

- Sarasota County neighborhood grant \$1,999;
- three Charlotte Harbor NEP funded grants of \$750 for Florida Native plants & video funding;
- Sierra Club provided equipment and publicity valued at \$2,500;
- Sarasota County Sheriff provided workers valued at over \$7,000 (360 hours);
- University of Florida, IFAS has designated staff assistance valued in excess of \$1,500;
- Sarasota County's *Adopt a Spot* program has provided risk protection and support valued in excess of \$2,500;
- Sarasota County staff has been assigned and their value exceeds \$55,000;
- Friends and neighbors have provided donations valued in excess of \$2,500 and over 1,300 hours of volunteer time valued at over \$24,000; and
- Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) grant was awarded for \$287,000 which was matched with \$313,832 South Venice's Sarasota County neighborhood funds.
- Videos were supported by Charlotte Harbor NEP and produced by Dr. Ernesto Lasso De La Vega Water Quality Laboratory Manager Lee County Hyacinth Control District.
- We especially want to thank South Venice Garden Club for their contribution of nearly 200 plants (photos below), help with placement of florae and shrubbery.
- Support and assistance from Venice Gardens as well as members of Northport Commission and City of Venice Council

The total exceeds \$650,000.

Most important are the People!!



South Venice Garden Club Planting



Neighborhood Workshop/Charrette with Staff from Sarasota County and Sierra Club

Objectives

Objectives of South Venice Beach Waterway Restoration—a collaborative effort between South Venice [Beach] Civic Association’s Water Quality Task Force, Sarasota County, SWFWMD, and others—is to improve the biological conditions in the water and along the banks of waterways (Siesta Waterway, Woodmere Waterway, and Briarwood Canal) in South Venice Beach area of Sarasota County, to protect and rehabilitate Alligator Creek, and to improve water quality of upper Lemon Bay watershed.

South Venice Waterway Restoration will require many years to complete. The goals are to:

- inventory the South Venice Beach waterways, (partially completed)
- develop a biological assessment procedure (completed) and perform regular assessments
- continue work on Siesta Waterway, Woodmere Waterway, and Briarwood Canal,
- begin planning and funding for Alligator Creek and Lemon Bay rehabilitation,
- restore selected lakes and ponds (15+)
- improve drainage into Alligator Creek as funded by Sarasota County and others (underway),
- develop draft manuals,
- encourage homeowners to improve the over 160 miles of South Venice Beach swales, and
- encourage pilot tests and demonstrations of conservation and recreation features (i.e. gardens—natural, produce, and butterfly; swale restoration; build shelters, benches, and tables; and begin walking trail construction.)



Monthly Cleanup

Come JOIN US!!

Commented [HF1]:

Photo History



Volunteers



Story Board



One of Many Dumpsters



Workshop/Charrette with 60+ Volunteers



Project Signage



The Grove



On Site Hawk Family



Mulch Promotes Mushroom Growth



Children with Parents



All Ages Having Fun Working



The Grove Maintenance



Award and Swale Repair



Planting without Mat (Pilot Test)



Hydra Seeding (Pilot Test+)



Florida Native Plants (Success!)

How Can We Help You!

A cultural change in how government works

Sarasota County and SWFWMD have helped Water Quality Task Force volunteers improve water quality in South Venice Beach by asking “how can we help you!” This is way government is supposed to work.



Volunteers with Sarasota County and SWFWMD Staff

Pilot Testing

Key to successful project!

At least a half dozen pilot tests were evaluated before the final treatment was applied. Pilot testing saves dollars, allows time for evaluation of proposed treatments, insured that maximum impact is obtained.

Lessons Learned

People

- Most important lesson is that people (volunteers, elected officials, and staffs) can make a difference!
- Neighborhood stewardship and action supporting conservation is crucial.
- Support by government officials and staff allows scale of impact to be increased dramatically.

- Private sector and individual contribution of time and dollars has a very positive impact.
- Government staff and contractors perform 90+% of tasks.
- Strong commitment and financial support from elected and senior appointed officials are absolutely necessary for success.

Nature

- When people give nature a chance, it will do most of the work!

Mulch

- Tons of mulch was spread in The Grove. Mulch improves soil over long run and retards invasive plants.
- Plants do not grow in mulch. Florida native and friendly plants need soil to grow.

Hydro seeding

- Hydro seeding Florida native plants over undisturbed soil is futile.

Fiber Mats

- Fiber mats help Florida native plants to become established – retarding invasive plants.
- Planting without removing invasive plants is futile.
- Fiber mats are essential on large areas of sloping waterway banks.

Regular Maintenance

- Florida native and friendly plants need regular maintenance – especially over first 3 years.

Water Quality

- Clearing sediment from waterways encourages activity by birds, fish/minnows, and animals including otter.

Plants

- Removing invasive plants – cattails, Brazilian pepper shrubs, weigela, and potatoes vines, allows Florida native and friendly plants to thrive.
- Shade, soil type, position on waterway bank, and water all affect how plants thrive.

Attachment A

Plant list for what has been placed on Siesta Waterway and Briarwood Canal sloping banks

**ATTACHMENT A
SCOPE OF WORK
SOUTH VENICE WATERWAY RESTORATION (Phases 1 and 2)
Final: 4-30-15**

determined by the County Representative to be not viable during the one year warranty will be replaced by the vendor at no expense to County.

Table 1: Plant List

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ABBREVIATION	COMMON NAME	PLACEMENT	SIZE
Mimosa strigillosa	(Ms)	Powderpuff (Sunshine) Mimosa	Top (3 ') of bank	1 gal.
Arachis glabrata 'Ecoturf' or approved variety	(Ag)	Perennial Peanut	Top (3') of bank	1 gal.
Stachytarpheta jamaicensis	(Sj)	Native porterweed	Middle bank	1 gal.
Licania michauxii	(Lm)	Gopher apple	Middle bank	1 gal.
Dyschoriste oblongifolia	(Do)	Twinflower	Middle bank	1 gal.
Eragrostis elliottii	(Ee)	Elliott's Love Grass	Middle bank	1 gal.
Acrosticum danaeifolium	(Ad)	Leather fern	Lower (3 ') of bank	1 gal.
Spartina bakeri	(Sb)	Cordgrass	Lower (3') of bank	1 gal.
Canna flaccida	(Cf)	Golden (Yellow) Canna	Toe of slope	Bare root
Sagittaria spp.	(Ss)	Duck Potato	Toe of slope	Bare root
Iris virginica	(Iv)	Blue Flag Iris	Toe of slope	Bare root

Florida Native Plant List¹

Found along South Venice Beach's Siesta Waterway as well in "The Grove" and Briarwood Canal and on sloping banks²

1. White Beach Buttercup (*Turnera urmifolia*)
2. Lanceleaf Tickseed (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)
3. Pineland Lantana (*Lantana depressa*)
4. Spike Gayfeather (*Liatris spicata*)
5. Tropical Sage Scarlet/Red (*Salvia coccinea*)
6. Dwarf Purple Porterweed (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*)
7. Calamint (*Calamintha ashei*)
8. Blanket Flower (*Gaillardia pulchella*)
9. Red Penta (*Pentas lanceolata*)
10. Yellow Top (*Flaveria linearis*)
11. Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohimensis*)
12. Tickseed Coreopsis (*Coreopsis leavenworthii*)
13. Purple Love Grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*)
14. Compact Fire Bush (*Hemelia patens*)
15. Powder Puff (Sunshine) Mimosa (*Mimosa strigulosa*)
16. Frogfruit (*Phyla nodiflora*)
17. Lyreleaf Sage (*Salvia lyrata*)
18. Florida Betony (*Stachys floridana*)
19. Narrow Leaf Sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*)
20. Creeping Sage (*Salvia misella*)
21. Dwarf Wild Coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*)
22. Swamp Fern (*Blechnum serrulatum*)
23. Starry Rosen (*Silphium asteriscus*)
24. Scrub/False Rosemary (*Conradina canescens*)
25. Coontie (*Zamia pumila*)
26. Beach Sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*)
27. Plumbago (*Plumbago zeylanica*)
28. Wild Poinsetta (*Poinsetta cyathophora*) *not planted or seeded
29. Milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*)
30. Spider Lily (*Hymenocallis palmeri*)
31. Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) **Some planted some not planted
32. Spanish Needles (*Bidens bipinnata*) * not planted—has reported health benefits
33. Air Plants/Bromeliad (up to 16 native) *not planted
34. Cabbage Palm (*Sabal palmetto*) *not planted

35. Oaks (to be identified) * not planted
36. Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) * not planted
37. Slash Pine (*Pinus elliotii*) * not planted
38. Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia humifusa*) * not planted
39. Yellow Canna (*Canna flaccida*)
40. Whiteweed, ageratum, flossflower, or Seaside Ageratum (*Ageratum houstonianum*)
41. Button Sage Lantana (*Lantana involucrata*)
42. Scorpions tail (*Heliotropium angiospermum*)
43. Golden Aster (*Chrysopsis (=Heterotheca) floridana*)
44. Pinebarrow goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.)
45. Wild Allamanda (*Urechites lutea*)
46. Skyblue Cluster Vine (*Jacquemontia pentanthos*)
47. Blue Flag Iris (*Iris virginica*)
48. Perennial Peanut (*Arachis glabrate*)
49. Porterweed (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*)
50. Gopher Apple (*Licania michauxii*)
51. Twinflower (*Dyschoriste oblongifolia*)
52. Elliott's love grass (*Eragrostis elliotii*)
53. Leather fern (*Acrosticum danaeifloium*)
54. Duck Potato (*Safittaria* species)
55. Crinum Lily (*Crinum* spp.)
56. Cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*)
57. Cordgrass (*Spartina* spp.)
58. Yellow Allamanda (*Allamanda cathartica*)

Florida Friendly Plant List³ in "The Grove"⁴

101. Turks Cap *Not planted
102. Glory Bower
103. Variegated Ginger
104. Ponytail Palm
105. Fishtail Palm
106. Firecracker
107. Grape Myrtle
108. Agave * not planted
109. Travelers Palm
110. Iris – various *Genius*
111. Boston Fern (invasive) *not planted
112. Firespike (*Odontonema strictum*) red/purple/lavender
113. Bird of Paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*) common/white
114. Four O'Clock

¹ Draft as of October 11, 2017 by Harrison Fox, Chair, South Venice Water Quality Task Force. Please send corrections and updates to hwfox14@gmail.com

² "The Grove" is a neighborhood gathering place that runs approximately 525 feet north along both sides, of Siesta Waterway, following Quincy Road and Siesta Drive beginning at the junction of Seminole Road and Jamaica Road. "The Grove" is being maintained by friends and neighbors under

Sarasota County's **Sarasota is Beautiful** program sponsorship. Plants have been purchased, planted and maintained by our volunteers. An additional 50,000 Florida native plants have been planted along the Siesta Waterway and Briarwood Canal.



The Grove



Powderpuff (Sunshine) Mimosa



Blanket Flower



White Beach Buttercup



Lantana



Firespike



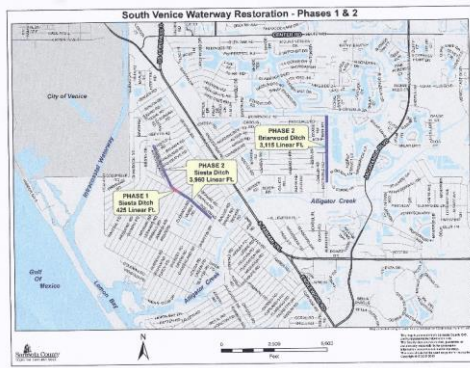
Milkweed



Blue Flag Iris



Perennial Peanut



The Project

<https://vimeo.com/104070492>



The Volunteers <https://vimeo.com/104221104>



The Plants

<https://vimeo.com/104225623>

[Thanks to CHNEP for funding & Dr. Ernesto Lasso de la Vega for producing videos!!!](#)