

Environmental Due Diligence

Wetland and Protected Species Assessment



What is Environmental Due Diligence?

- ▶ Environmental Due Diligence assessments can vary in intent and scope, however generally include desktop and site investigations to identify environmental features, review of site history and confirmation of conditions on the ground to provide advice on the opportunities and constraints to potential development, and what further work or approvals may be necessary to accomplish development objectives and to address those time sensitive and financial risks early on.

What are we looking for?

- ▶ Reveal potential environmental issues and the potential cost requirements and risks to developing the land.
- ▶ Is the buyers proposed project feasible?
- ▶ Will there be design or other permitting constraints?

- ▶ Constraints
 - ▶ Wetlands
 - ▶ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and/or South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) jurisdictional wetlands

 - ▶ Listed Species
 - ▶ Potential listed (endangered, threatened, etc.) species inhabiting the site that are regulated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Why are these issues important ?

- ▶ Early consideration of the wetland and wildlife constraints of a site or a project can lead to an increased ability to avoid or mitigate impacts and therefore assist in a streamlined assessment and approvals process.

- ▶ **Wetlands**

- ▶ If impacting wetlands, permits are required
- ▶ Permits take time and resources (\$)
- ▶ Mitigation for Wetland impacts can be costly(\$\$\$)

- ▶ **Listed Species**

- ▶ Additional Survey requirements - May be date or time sensitive
- ▶ Permitting with Regulatory agencies (USFWS, FWC)
 - ▶ Time and resources (\$)

What is in the report?

- ▶ An environmental due diligence assessment level of detail can vary from a simple desktop study (GIS mapping) to more detailed assessments which include site visits, soil sampling, mapping and profiling. Varies with the degree of investigation. Time and \$

What are we looking for?

- ▶ The Corps and the SFWMD are the agencies that regulate development activities in wetlands. In general, to be considered wetlands by the Corps and/or SFWMD, the area should exhibit wetland hydrology, wetland vegetation, and hydric soils. Because hydric soils, wetland hydrology, and wetland vegetation should be present for an area to be considered wetlands, the property was reviewed for indicators of these parameters.
- ▶ Existing Site Conditions
 - ▶ Native habitat, Disturbed, Developed?
 - ▶ Soil type - Hydric? - Potential wetlands
 - ▶ Vegetation Communities -Each community was mapped in the field according to the system in use by the agencies, the Florida Land Use Cover and Forms Classification System (FLUCFCS).

What are we looking for?

- ▶ Potential Wetlands- Corps and the SFWMD are the agencies that regulate development activities in wetlands.
 - ▶ Determine approximate wetland boundaries
 - ▶ Soils, Hydrology, vegetation
- ▶ **Potential Listed Species** have the potential to occur onsite or may affect the potential development of the parcel due to their proximity to the site.
 - ▶ Habitat type
 - ▶ Known range
 - ▶ Observed signs of listed species or habitat
 - ▶ (burrows, cavity trees, nests)

Results

- ▶ Quantifying approximate wetland acreage for detailed site planning and estimate of mitigation costs.
- ▶ Review of potential listed species that may require buffers, mitigation, consultation with USFWS or special permits with FWC.
- ▶ Assess potential risk for development.
 - ▶ Client can then be informed of potential costs and timeline to determine if the site is appropriate and feasible.