

Exhibit I - Environmental Report

EW CONSULTANTS, INC.
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, WETLAND, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING SERVICES



**ESTATES AT
EQUESTRIAN VILLAGE**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Prepared for:

WELLINGTON EQUESTRIAN PARTNERS

Prepared by:

EW CONSULTANTS, INC.

September 2022

INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment Report documents and summarizes natural resource features present on a 175- acre project area in the Village of Wellington, Palm Beach County. The project area is comprised of a main site and an amenities parcel to the southwest, west of the C-4 Canal. The main site is bordered to the north by a residential single family home neighborhood and a community park; to the west by the ACME C-4 Canal; to the east generally by Southshore Boulevard; and to the south by 40th Street/Lake Worth Road and the adjacent C-24 Canal. The site is situated within Sections 20 and 21, Township 44 South, Range 41 East; Palm Beach County, Florida. A Location Map (Figure 1), USGS Quad Map (Figure 2), and Aerial Photo (Figure 3) depicting the site boundaries and immediate surrounding areas are provided in the Appendix.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND METHODS

The project area is irregularly shaped and largely undeveloped, comprising a grassed/mowed practice field, pasture and low quality wetland habitat dominated by exotic species on the western portion of the site. There is an overgrown impoundment known as “Peacock Pond” in the northwestern portion of the site. The impoundment was constructed in the 1970’s and functioned as part of a water quality treatment system until 2003, when that function was replaced with other permitted, off-site treatment facilities. A perimeter berm exists around the impoundment which may also be used as an equestrian trail.

Chronological review of historical aerial imagery dating back to 1940 indicates that impacts have occurred to the parcel primarily related to agriculture and local water control efforts and surrounding development. The adjacent canal was constructed in the 1950’s. By 1984, nearby adjacent land was under development as both ranches, single family homes and commercial entities with the associated infrastructure and surface water management systems. The perimeter ditch/berm on the north portion of the property is visible at this time. Through the interim years, development and surface water manipulation is apparent on aerial photographs. Agricultural use of the south east leg of the property appears to partially cease around 1984 while the north east continued to be used as practice polo fields.

Prior to the site visit, the U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute Quadrangle Topographic Map, Loxahatchee SE and Loxahatchee Quadrangles, and the *Soils Survey of Palm Beach County Area, Florida* (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service 1970) were reviewed to determine topographic features and site soil mapping units. Copies of the 2022 Palm Beach County aerial photographs of the parcels were obtained and reviewed to determine potential locations of environmental features.

Pedestrian transects of the project area were conducted to map approximate locations and boundaries of significant environmental resources, vegetative communities, exotic vegetation,

and potential jurisdictional wetland areas. The survey was also conducted to note any occurrence of listed plant or animal species and vegetative communities which would require protection or identification by the Federal, State or local regulatory agencies.

Wetland protection is mandated under federal, state, and local regulations. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (CE) and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) regulates activities in Waters of the United States pursuant to the Clean Water Act (PL92-500 Section 404) as further defined in the CE regulatory program (33 CFR 320-330). The FDEP has established wetland identification and permitting processes at Chapter 62-330, 62-340, and 62-312 of the Florida Administrative Code (FAC). Current federal and state wetland definitions are derived from the original definition found in 33 CFR 328.3, identifying wetlands as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted to life in saturated soil conditions”. Delineation of federally regulated jurisdictional wetlands is determined by the Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual (USAE Waterways Experiment Station Environmental Laboratory 1987) and the Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain Region (USAE Research and Development Center 2010). Delineation of State wetlands regulated by DEP and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is done according to Chapter 62-340 FAC, Delineation of the Landward Extent of Wetlands and Surface Waters. The Florida Wetlands Delineation Manual (Gilbert et al. 1995) serves as a guide to Chapter 62-340. Both manuals, which emphasize the identification of hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and wetland hydrologic conditions in making wetland determinations, were used in this investigation.

SOILS

The soil on the site is mapped as Riviera fine sand, frequently ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes, and Riviera fine sand, frequently ponded (depressional), 0 to 2 percent slopes. A description of each soil type in its natural condition is listed below. The description is based upon the general characteristics for the soil type as illustrated in the Soils Survey of Palm Beach County Area, Florida and is not necessarily indicative of the exact characteristics of the parcels. A soils map with the site boundary is included in the Appendix as an attachment.

Halopaw fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes (17). This is a nearly level, poorly drained soil that has a thick sandy surface layer and loamy subsoil at a depth of 40 to 72 inches. This soil is on broad low-lying flats and depressions. Under natural conditions the water table is within 10 inches of the surface for 2 to 6 months during most years. Depressions are covered by water for 6 months or more in most years. The typical natural vegetation is saw-palmetto, slash pine, cypress, cabbage palm, inkberry, southern bayberry, sand cordgrass, broomsedge bluestem, blue maidencane, pineland three-awn, and other grasses.

Okeelanta muck, drained, frequently ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes (24) – This is a poorly drained, organic soil that has sandy mineral material within a depth of 40 inches. It is in large, fresh water marshes and small, isolated depressions. Under natural conditions, the soil is covered

by water, or the water table is within 10 inches of the surface for 6 to 12 months in most years, except during extended dry periods. The typical natural vegetation is sawgrass, ferns, fireflag, maidencane, pickerelweed, and scattered areas of willow, elderberry, southern bayberry, cypress, and pond apple.

Oldsmar sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes (25) – This is a nearly level, poorly drained, sandy soil that has a dark colored, weakly cemented layer below a depth of 30 inches over a loamy layer. It is in broad, flatwood areas. Under natural conditions the water table is within 10 inches of the surface for 1 to 3 months during most years. It is within 10 to 40 inches for 6 or more months in most years and recedes to below 40 inches in extended dry periods. The typical natural vegetation is saw-palmetto, slash pine, cabbage palm, inkberry, southern bayberry, pineland three-awn, blue maidencane, fetterbush, broomsedge, bluestem, and a variety of other grasses.

Tequesta muck, frequently ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes (42) – This is a nearly level, very poorly drained soil that has a thin organic layer on the surface overlying a mineral soil that has a sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil. This soil is on broad, low flats and in marshes and depressions. Under natural conditions, this soil is covered by water for 4 to 6 months in most years. The water table is within 10 inches of the surface for 6 to 12 months during most years. The typical natural vegetation is needlegrass, pickerelweed, maidencane, ferns, southern bayberry, and scattered cypress trees.

NATURAL COMMUNITIES AND LAND COVERS

The Guide to the Natural Communities of Florida (Florida Natural Areas Inventory 1990) provides classification of natural communities of Florida and was used in this investigation. Approximate location of vegetative community cover type boundaries and other features of the site were mapped in accordance with Florida Land Use Cover and Forms Classification Systems Handbook (Florida Department of Transportation 1999) (FLUCFCS).

Field reconnaissance and aerial photograph interpretation were employed in the mapping effort of the vegetative communities on the project area. The vegetative community descriptions include discussions of potential wildlife habitat in those communities. A land cover map of the observed community types with acreage is included as Figure 4 in the Appendix of this report.

189 Recreational-Equestrian – 36.5 acres this land area comprises a large portion of the northeastern corner of the subject property. It is a grassed area that exhibits prior grading and regular maintenance as an equestrian practice field.

212 Unimproved Pasture –8.1 acres this area is previously cleared land with some stands of trees and brush where grasses and weeds have been allowed to develop. Generally unmanaged but occasionally mowed in the majority of the area. Vegetation coverage is Bahia grass, ruderal weeds, shrubby false buttonweed, caesar weed, and some primrose willow and small Brazilian pepper.

510 Ditches – 2.5 acres This land use is found in several areas of the property. The ditches run east-west and north-south on the subject parcel. The vegetative assembly is dominated by invasive species such as cattail, torpedo grass, primrose willow and Brazilian pepper.

619 Exotic Wetland Hardwoods – 115.8 acres this disturbed land area comprises the largest portion of the subject property and includes the impoundment. The majority of the canopy and subcanopy vegetation is dominated by melaleuca, Brazilian pepper, Java plum, Carolina willow, bishop wood, woman's tongue, earleaf acacia, air potato and lygodium. Sparse native vegetation is found in areas with groundcover and includes cattails, chain fern, and swamp fern.

621 Cypress –6.3 acres this habitat is found within the amenities portion of the subject property west of the canal and north of Lake Worth Road. These areas are presently poor quality cypress swamp wetlands with a canopy of cypress and predominant subcanopy of Brazilian pepper and Japanese climbing fern, with scattered swamp fern and chain fern.

743 Disturbed Lands-Spoil Areas-Berm – 6.6 acres this land use comprises a large encircling berm around the impoundment portion of the property, and another smaller section along the north boundary of the C-24 Canal Lake Worth Road. Vegetation coverage on the berm includes mainly Brazilian pepper with scattered oaks, eucalyptus, and some ornamental trees.

LISTED SPECIES AND WILDLIFE

Listed species of wildlife are found in *Florida's Endangered Species, Threatened Species and Species of Special Concern, Official Lists* (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission June 2021) and regulated plants are listed in *Preservation of Native Flora of Florida*, Chapter 5B-40 (Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry, April 2004). A series of pedestrian transects were conducted across the property to determine the presence of any listed species.

No signs of listed wildlife species were observed. The property, at one time, contained freshwater marsh habitat within the impoundment and in other areas. These areas may have attracted listed wading bird species. However, over time these areas have been impacted by severe encroachment of invasive plant species, mainly melaleuca, Brazilian pepper and climbing fern, leaving them too dense for avian access in most areas. Additionally, regional and local hydrologic manipulation has impacted the natural hydrology on the site, and mowing and other human activities are frequent on the eastern portions of the property. Therefore, the probability of utilization by listed species is low.

Non-listed wildlife and wildlife signs observed include black racer, mocking birds, red bellied woodpeckers, and hog rooting and raccoon scat.

Three listed plant species, common wild pine (*Tillandsia fasciculata*), giant wild pine (*Tillandsia utriculata*) and Northern needleleaf (*Tillandsia balbisiana*) were observed in a few scattered locations. Common wild pine and Giant wild pine are listed as Endangered and Northern

needleleaf is listed as Threatened by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). These plants are generally found growing in cypress, oaks and other trees in both wetland and upland habitats.

FDACS regulated plant species are the property of the landowner, and as such the landowner has the ability to remove or relocate the listed plant species without authorization from the state. State law prohibits the sale of regulated plants. However, local governments may encourage the preservation or relocation of listed plant species where possible.

STATE AND FEDERAL PERMIT HISTORY

The project area has a long history of permitting with South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The “Peacock Pond” impoundment was at one time used for water quality treatment as mentioned above, but that function was replaced off-site in the 1980’s. The impoundment has not been managed and has become severely overgrown with exotic and nuisance species. In 2012, SFWMD issued a permit for a residential development on the subject property. The permit, which was later extended through July 2024, allows for wetland impacts and mitigation, and covers all of the subject project area except for the south half of the Peacock Pond impoundment. The permit also identifies two wetland conservation areas that are part of the overall mitigation plan. One conservation area is 12.49 acres and is located on the northern portion of the amenities parcel, and the other conservation area is 6.17 acres and is located at the southwestern corner of the main parcel. The applicant proposes to work with SFWMD to determine the feasibility of relocation of a portion of the required conservation area as part of the future permit modifications that will be necessary for this proposed development.

The south half of the impoundment will require environmental resource permitting with SFWMD and a compensatory mitigation plan will be prepared and presented to SFWMD as part of the permit modification process. Additionally, review by FDEP will be necessary to determine the Federal jurisdictional status of wetlands within the project area and whether a permit is required. Because the impoundment is hydrologically isolated, we believe that no FDEP permit will be required for the wetlands within it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As described above, an environmental resource permit modification will be required through SFWMD for the proposed project. As part of this modification, wetland areas in the southern half of the impoundment should be reviewed for habitat quality and a mitigation plan will be required. Previously permitted conservation areas should be reviewed and any proposed relocation or reconfiguration of these areas should be addressed at that time. FDEP will require review for Federal wetland jurisdiction and if wetlands are determined to be jurisdictional, then a permit and mitigation plan will be required.

The Village of Wellington Land Development Regulations (LDR), Article 7, Chapter 7 defines trees that require preservation, protection, or mitigation. The Village encourages preservation or relocation of individual upland native trees and plants wherever possible, especially specimen trees. It is recommended that, prior to site plan approval, a tree survey be performed in upland areas to verify the size and location of native trees. Trees greater than or equal to two inches dbh that cannot be preserved or relocated may require mitigation in accordance with the LDR.

No listed wildlife species were observed on the property. The potential for listed wildlife species utilization will also be reviewed by State and Federal commenting agencies in the permit process. The listed air plant species that were observed were very scattered and limited in quantity. The proposed project is not expected to have an adverse impact on the air plant population.

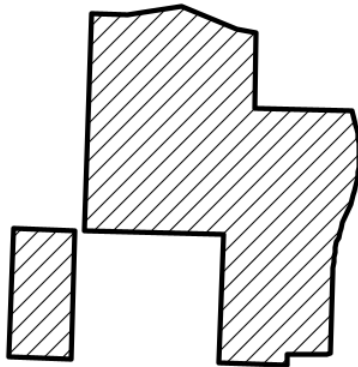
APPENDIX

Maps and Figures:

- Figure 1: Location Map
- Figure 2: Quad Map
- Figure 3: Aerial Map
- Figure 4: FLUCCS Map


Attachment:

USDA Soils Report



© OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC-BY-SA

LEGEND

 - SITE (175.7+/- AC)

0 2,000 Feet



**WELLINGTON EQUESTRIAN VILLAGE
ESTATES**

LOCATION MAP

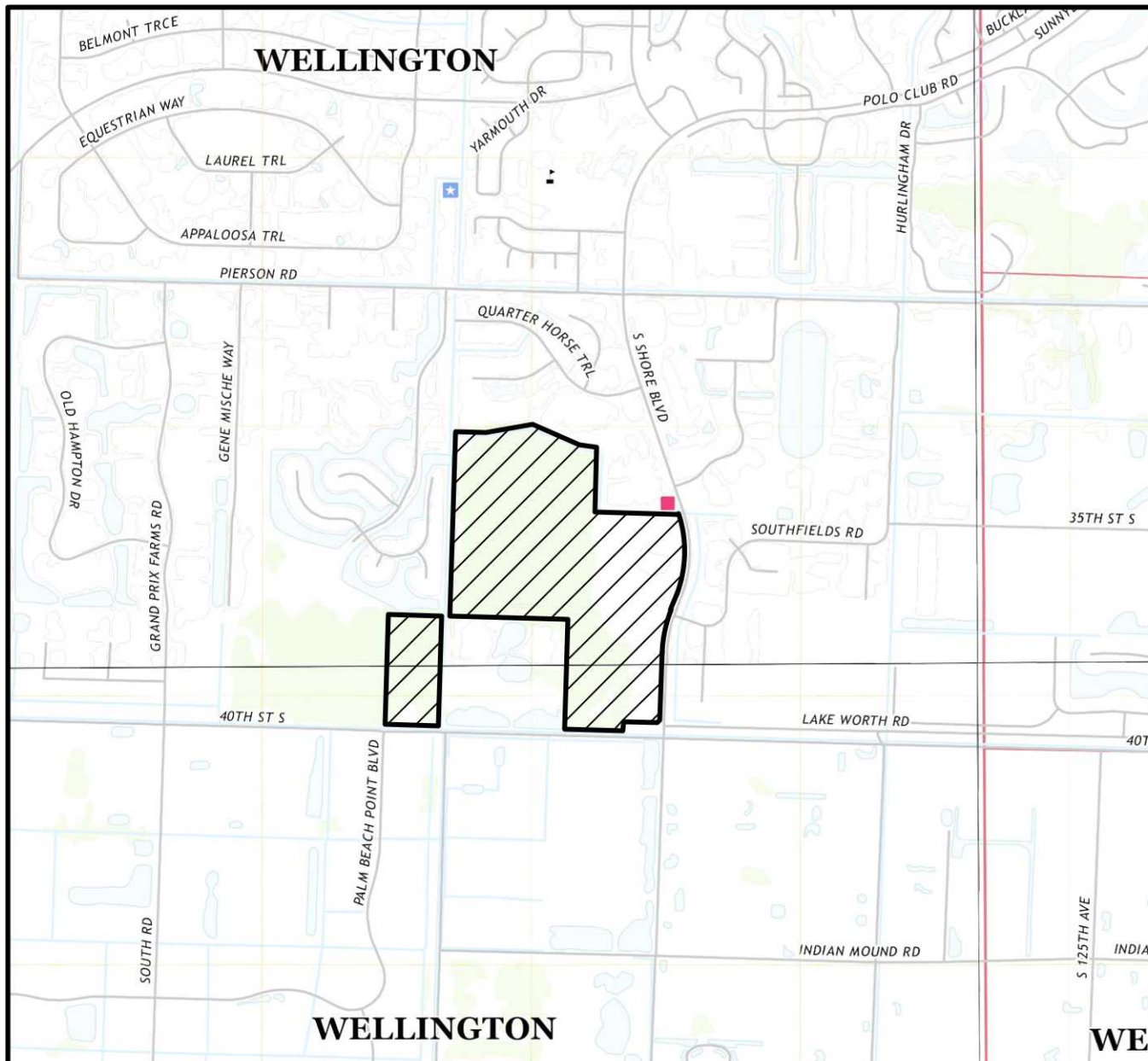
EW CONSULTANTS, INC.

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WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33407
561-291-7950 PHONE 561-530-4908 FAX
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FIGURE

1



USGS QUAD MAPS "LOXAHATCHEE SE" & "LOXAHATCHEE", SECTIONS 20/21, TOWNSHIP 44 SOUTH, RANEG 41 EAST, VILLAGE OF WELLINGTON, PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, LATITUDE 26°37'45" LONGITUDE -80°15'57"

LEGEND

 - SITE (175.7± AC)

0 2000
SCALE IN FEET



**WELLINGTON EQUESTRIAN VILLAGE
ESTATES**

QUAD

Wellington Equestrian Village Estates.dwg QUAD



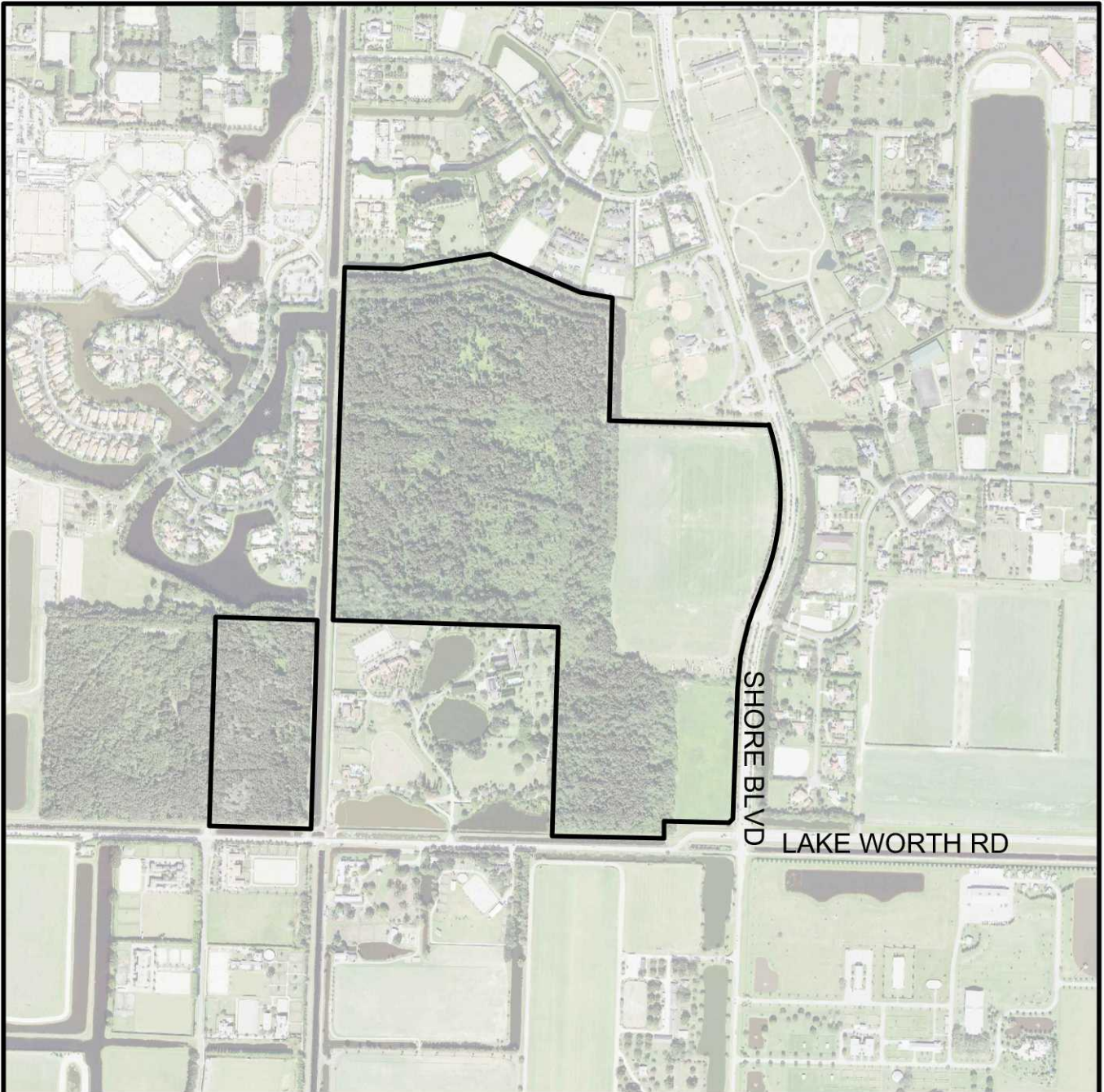
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FIGURE

2



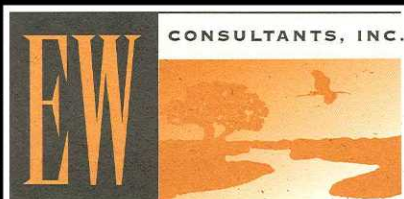
PALM BEACH COUNTY AERIAL DATED 2022



WELLINGTON EQUESTRIAN VILLAGE ESTATES

AERIAL

Wellington Equestrian Village Estates.dwg AERIAL



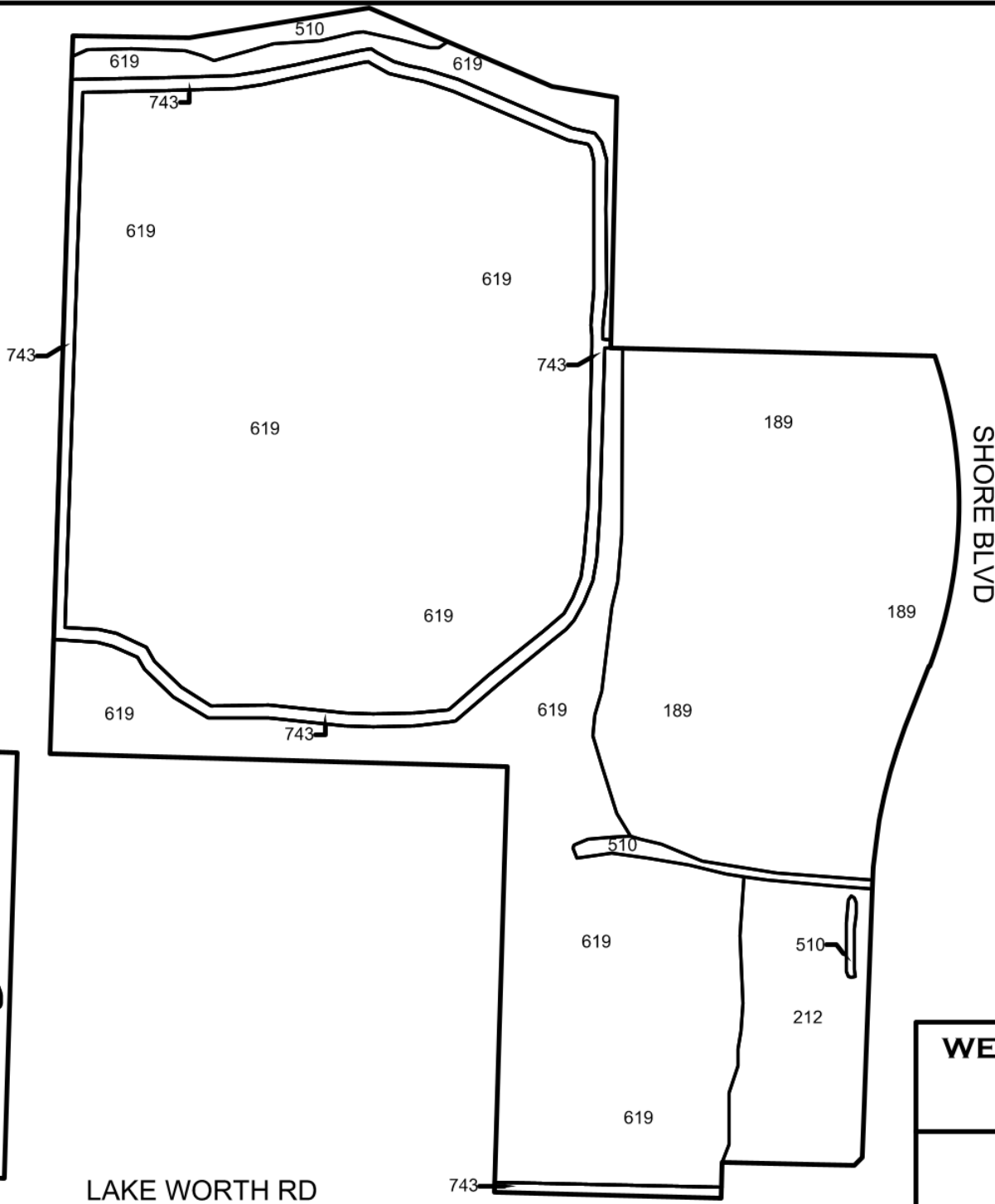
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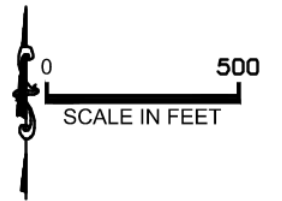
SEPT 2022

FIGURE

3



- LEGEND**
- 189 - OTHER RECREATIONAL (36.5± AC)
 - 212 - UNIMPROVED PASTURE (8.1± AC)
 - 510 - DITCHES (2.5± AC)
 - 619 - EXOTIC WETLAND HARDWOODS (115.8± AC)
 - 621 - CYPRESS (6.3± AC)
 - 743 - SPOIL AREAS (6.6± AC)
 - TOTAL SITE (175.8± AC)**



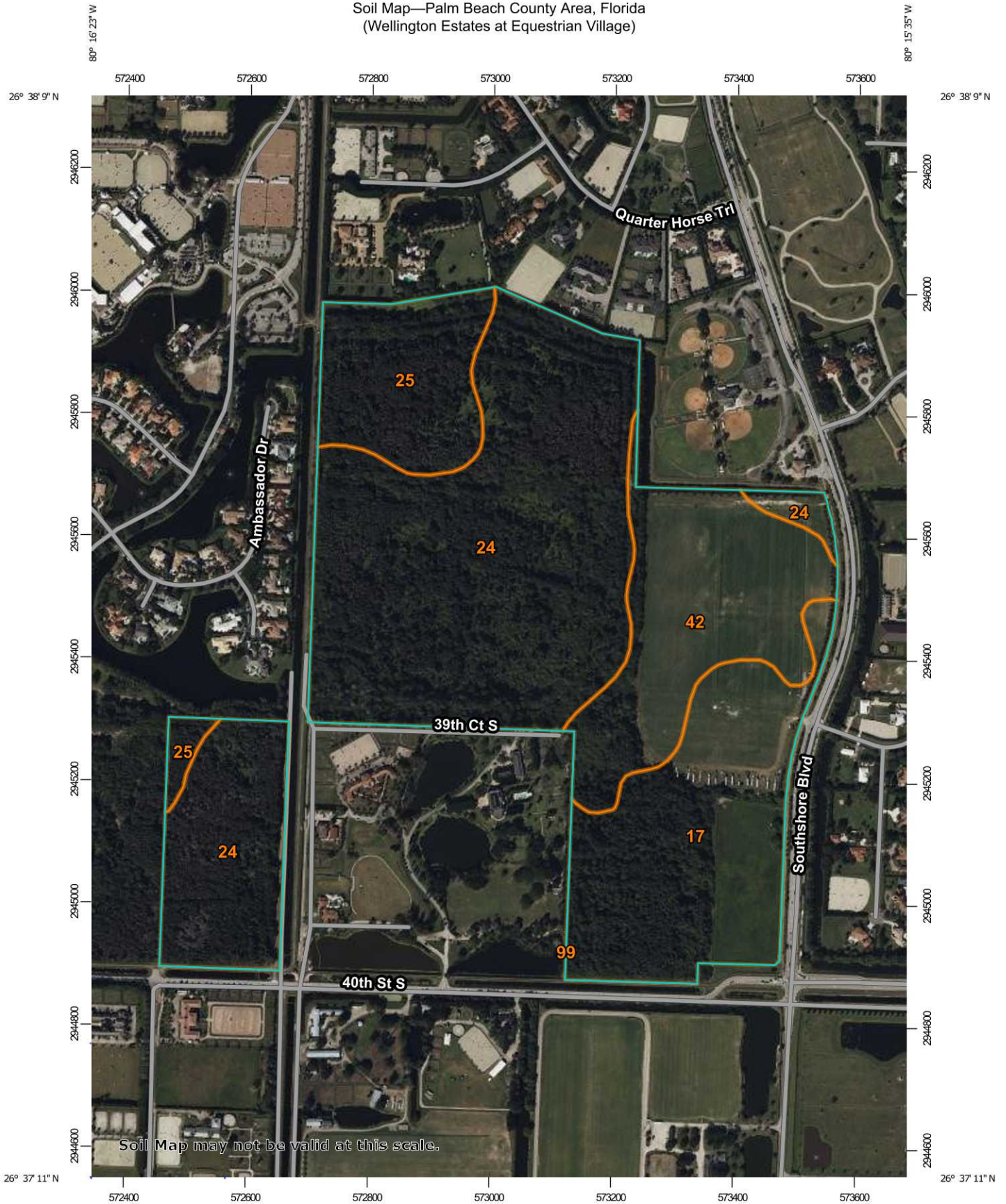
PALM BEACH COUNTY AERIAL DATED 2022

WELLINGTON EQUESTRIAN VILLAGE ESTATES FLUCFCS

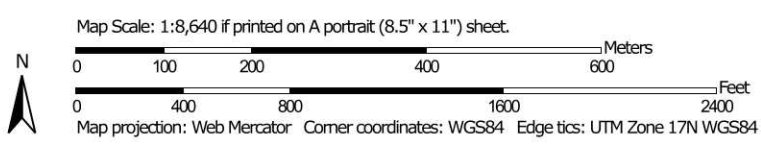
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FIGURE 4

Soil Map—Palm Beach County Area, Florida
(Wellington Estates at Equestrian Village)




Soil Map may not be valid at this scale.



MAP LEGEND

Area of Interest (AOI)

 Area of Interest (AOI)

Soils

 Soil Map Unit Polygons

 Soil Map Unit Lines

 Soil Map Unit Points

Special Point Features



Blowout



Borrow Pit



Clay Spot



Closed Depression



Gravel Pit



Gravelly Spot



Landfill



Lava Flow



Marsh or swamp



Mine or Quarry



Miscellaneous Water



Perennial Water



Rock Outcrop



Saline Spot



Sandy Spot



Severely Eroded Spot



Sinkhole



Slide or Slip



Sodic Spot



Spoil Area



Stony Spot



Very Stony Spot



Wet Spot



Other



Special Line Features

Transportation



Rails



Interstate Highways



US Routes



Major Roads



Local Roads

Background



Aerial Photography

MAP INFORMATION

The soil surveys that comprise your AOI were mapped at 1:20,000.

Warning: Soil Map may not be valid at this scale.

Enlargement of maps beyond the scale of mapping can cause misunderstanding of the detail of mapping and accuracy of soil line placement. The maps do not show the small areas of contrasting soils that could have been shown at a more detailed scale.

Please rely on the bar scale on each map sheet for map measurements.

Source of Map: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Web Soil Survey URL:
Coordinate System: Web Mercator (EPSG:3857)

Maps from the Web Soil Survey are based on the Web Mercator projection, which preserves direction and shape but distorts distance and area. A projection that preserves area, such as the Albers equal-area conic projection, should be used if more accurate calculations of distance or area are required.

This product is generated from the USDA-NRCS certified data as of the version date(s) listed below.

Soil Survey Area: Palm Beach County Area, Florida
Survey Area Data: Version 18, Aug 25, 2021

Soil map units are labeled (as space allows) for map scales 1:50,000 or larger.

Date(s) aerial images were photographed: Jan 14, 2022—Jan 24, 2022

The orthophoto or other base map on which the soil lines were compiled and digitized probably differs from the background imagery displayed on these maps. As a result, some minor shifting of map unit boundaries may be evident.

Map Unit Legend

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
17	Holopaw fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	36.9	21.0%
24	Okeelanta muck, drained, frequently ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes	90.0	51.2%
25	Oldsmar sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	19.0	10.8%
42	Tequesta muck, frequently ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes	29.9	17.0%
99	Water	0.0	0.0%
Totals for Area of Interest		175.7	100.0%