

# **Addendum to Recommendations in 2024 Annual Report of Environmental Committee**

*Amended July 15*

**Material here offers further details and narrative observations from the committee on topics 1, 2, 4, and 5 presented in the recommendations section of the 2024 Annual Report. They are presented to assist the Council in acting on the recommendations.**

## **1. Address the water quality and reduce pollution in the Pithlachascotee River with a masterplan focusing on reduction of toxic storm water and bilge discharges, including ordinances to mandate compliance.**

- Reduce storm water discharge and resulting nitrate levels caused by development;
- Establish city ordinance imposing fines for the blowing or dumping of lawn clippings and other yard debris including leaf piles into the river and/or into the parks along the river (e.g., the city mowing contractor has been observed blowing their clippings directly into the river along the Cotee River Park and the residents along this park have been observed blowing their leaves and clippings across Grand Blvd and into the park, so both are ending up in the river);
- Establish city ordinance imposing fines for leaving unused bait, dead fish or blood, hooks, fishing line and other such foul and dangerous debris in Cotee River Park; and
- Establish city ordinance imposing fines for discharging of bilges from boats' inboard-outboard engine compartments without the regular use of oil absorbent pads or socks placed in such bilges to capture any leaks before they can be pumped overboard:
  - Some boaters leave these pads in place during operation. As with waste oil, absorbent pads or materials must be disposed of properly;
  - For larger boats with deep bilges, pump out services can prevent the need for overboard discharges;
  - For smaller boats, inline bilge filters can separate petroleum contamination from bilge water, making it safer to pump overboard when needed;
  - As with any filter, a regular schedule of inspection and replacement is warranted; and
  - Finally, if an oily bilge is pumped overboard, it is imperative that these discharges are reported. State and federal laws vary; marina owners can assist boaters by posting emergency contact numbers in prominent locations within the marina facility. Containment of spills should be attempted until regulatory authorities respond to the report (marina owners face many risks in their operations, and marina insurance, pollution insurance, and other types of insurance coverage do their part to help mitigate those risks, while prevention of oil spills can save the environment from harm while protecting marina owners from liability claims and regulatory penalties

## **2. Enhancing current efforts to reduce or eliminate the City's Muscovy Duck Colony.**

- Formally adopt the 2023 recommendation received from GHS Environmental to collect eggs on a regular basis, and to report monthly statistics of eggs destroyed as a result of this effort, by way of ordinance;
- Establish city ordinance imposing fines for feeding or breeding Muscovy Ducks within the New Port Richey City limits, and encourage the City of Port Richey to do the same (as part of our efforts to improve the water quality in the Pithlachascotee River); and
- Accept the 2023 recommendation received from the Environmental Committee to relocate the Muscovy Ducks living in the City to a habitat (if feasible), or otherwise adopt the final 2023 recommendation received from GHS Environmental to fully capture and euthanize the Muscovy duck populations since other efforts have failed.

**4. Consider ordinances to further restrict removal of trees during construction, contingent on any superseding State prohibition on home rule tree-removal policies.**

When further considering the sixth point in the 2023 Annual Report regarding reforestation, also consider establishing ordinances aimed at substantially reducing the initial deforestation caused by construction clearing and grading efforts, in order to better protect our native trees such as Live Oaks and Cabbage Palms (so there are fewer complaints about the visual created by new construction such as that now seen on Little Road). More pockets of these trees should be left in place for such construction projects to work around and help the local wildlife survive.

**5. Native Planting (“Wildflower”) Ordinance**

**See sample ordinance (and addendum #2):**

[https://www.fnps.org/assets/pdf/pubs/model\\_landscape\\_ord\\_final\\_022407.pdf](https://www.fnps.org/assets/pdf/pubs/model_landscape_ord_final_022407.pdf)