



Upper Captiva Civic Association Inc. Box 423, Pineland, Florida 33945

Upper Captiva Civic Association

January 31st, 2021

Ms. Emily Gear
Environmental Plan Reviewer
Lee County Development Services

Ms. Gear,

Thank you and your colleague Elizabeth Workman for arranging to meet last Thursday. Director Swinford of the Upper Captiva Civic Association (UCCA), Mrs. Beiermeister, past President of UCCA and I felt our conversation was informative and helpful in understanding Community Development's attitude towards Brazilian pepper eradication on Upper Captiva. We do recognize that our island presents special problems with regard to this matter and appreciate all assistance you can provide in its resolution. Working in partnership with the Safety Harbor Club, we would like you to consider UCCA your resource on Upper Captiva. We have already begun to alert owners of vacant lots to this issue. I will be your primary point-of-contact within the UCCA regarding Brazilian pepper.

As you requested this provides a short list of questions/concerns among islanders with respect to Brazilian pepper eradication. Please let me know if anything is unclear:

- Our understanding is that education is the County's immediate focus. It would help us in communicating with islanders if we had details: when will it begin; what will it contain; how will the County notify islanders (i.e., "snail-mail", e-mail, website). How can UCCA assist?
- Your description of the permitting process last Thurs. was clear and concise. Do you have something short in writing that we can push out to the island?
- Removal of Brazilian pepper remains presents a unique challenge. While we know that mounding and drying is the preferred method of disposal, the island has had success with chipping and spreading in place. With no roadway connection the mainland, barging almost certainly prohibitively expensive and no community disposal sites at present, this is an issue.
 - Upper Captiva Fire & Rescue is wary of mounds of vegetation = potential fire hazard. Does the County have expertise in mitigating this danger?
 - What help can the County offer in terms of purchasing a private lot on-island for disposal? Is the County willing to assist in gaining State of Florida approval for usage on property in the state park on Upper Captiva for this purpose?

- Once removal is effected we must consider the use of Garlon or other herbicides to kill the stump and roots. Can the County provide financial assistance in purchasing the required amount of Garlon? We also need advisement on application, as there is concern that non-natural herbicides might seep into ground water if applied in quantity across many lots.
- While the Ordinance is only for “real property” there are many places on the island such as in the state park and across the canal from Boats ‘n Fun and NCIC where Brazilian pepper will remain after eradication on private lots and continue to be a source of re-habitation. Does the County experience suggest how to address this issue?
- What is the timetable for complete eradication of Brazilian pepper on vacant lots?
 - It is the belief of UCCA members that a “hard stop” end date will serve to concentrate owners’ minds on eradication in a manner which an amorphous, ill-defined approach will not.
 - As a practical matter eradication on vacant lots with resources available on-island (many of which are at any time committed to construction projects) is neither quick nor easy. We have suggested a minimum of 1 year; 2 or 3 years would be much better.
- Given the lack of specificity – or any mention at all – around enforcement in the LDC for vacant lots, what does the County believe will be the most appropriate process to enforce the eradication of Brazilian pepper?

Thank you for sharing your expertise, guidance and (hopefully) more tangible support in working with us to remove this invasive species. Feel free to contact me at any time. I look forward to seeing you again on Upper Captiva!

Sincerely,

Rick Noland

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