

*Trails Homeowners Association, Inc.*

201 Main Trail Ormond Beach Florida 32174

[www.trailshoarmornd.com](http://www.trailshoarmornd.com)



## **Landscape Seven-Year Strategic Plan**

**Initiated January 2014**

**Formally Adopted by The Trails Board of Directors July 2016  
Revision adopted by the Board of Directors May 2024**

### **Acknowledgement**

The Board of Directors recognizes and thanks the following Trails homeowners for their service on the Landscape Committee and their contributions to development, of the original comprehensive plan:

Flo McNelly  
Marilyn Dorinson

Al Legg  
Clara Cooper

Maureen Bridger  
Sally Panella



**Landscape Committee  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
Originally Presented March 2016  
Revised 2024**

Mission

To develop a comprehensive seven-year plan for renovating, enhancing, and maintaining the environmental preservation appeal that has historically reflected the quality and beauty of The Trails and the Ormond Beach community. The purpose of this plan is to continue in perpetuity, and revise as it benefits the Association.

***The History of the Trails... A Planned Community Development***

The Trails, situated among 385 beautiful acres of forest land. The Trails is truly blessed by nature. The Tomoka River and Misner Branch wind their way through the sturdy oaks, hickories, and Florida palms, creating a peaceful, secluded neighborhood.

As we stroll back in time...

In 1974-75, Gerald Upson was building the Tomoka Oakwood Condominium, adjacent to the Tomoka Oaks Country Club, where he met Luke Browning, manager of the Tomoka Oaks Country Club. These two individuals were highly skilled in the development and building fields.

They heard about the 385 acres adjacent to Tomoka Oaks, of beautiful untouched forest land, which at one time housed a cootie fern farm and a coquina stone quarry for rock and shell, suitable for development. Gerald Upson was very passionate about trees and the land being left in its most natural state. Together Jerry and Luke took their vision to Security First Federal Bank, which opened a mortgage department and became a subsidiary of The Trails.

Before development started, Gerry took many trips with his wife Wanda in their motor home to Hilton Head, South Carolina. Gerry's vision was to build a smaller scale of the Hilton Head project he knew, here in Ormond. Gerry and Wanda also took trips in a dune buggy through the 385 acres we now call home; they would see bears, deer, wild boars, and snakes. Wanda quotes, "I really thought he had lost his mind; I guess he fooled me".

The Trails office was constructed where the Regions Bank is now, and SR 40 was only two lanes. The office later relocated next to Tomoka Elementary. The Trails development was underway with the construction of the shopping center, racquet club and multi-family and single-family homes. In addition, miles of bicycle paths were created throughout The Trails like those which Gerald Upson and his wife had seen at Hilton Head.

The tennis courts and a stadium court for tournaments were built in the stone quarry area. There were racquet ball and hard courts, also. The racquet club was built with a porch all around it, as it is today, for people to enjoy watching events. The racquet club also had a snack bar and a full-service pro-shop. The first swimming pool was built on the racquet club property for the exclusive use of homeowners and racquet club members.

During the construction of phase three, the entrance at SR-40 was underway. Being the creative and nature loving man Gerald Upson was, he had the two exceptionally large trees at the entrance taken down and turned upside down, so that the roots were exposed as landscaping. During this phase Gerald Upson also wanted a wooden bridge built across Misner's Branch so it would keep the natural look of the forest. The wooden bridge was later converted and paved, because of complaints about the noise from traffic traveling over the wooden planks, which annoyed nearby homeowners.

Behind phase three there is an area called Twelve Oaks, some of whose lots are located on the Tomoka River. This was and is a very exclusive area within The Trails. The Rivell Family originally owned the Twelve Oaks property and had a home there on the Tomoka River, which they wanted to keep and live in at the time of negotiation. Gerald Upson agreed to provide them with a private road named Rivell Trail, and it is still there today.

In 1978 The Trails Community Center was completed, and The Trails development was flourishing. In 1981 Gerald and Wanda Upson's daughter was married and the reception was held at the clubhouse. Gerald put a large red/white/blue ribbon on the front lawn to indicate where a helicopter was to land and whisk the bride and groom to their honeymoon suite in Orlando, all of which was planned without knowing that a tennis tournament was ongoing at the racquet club. Timing was bad.

The Trails won many prestigious awards and Gerald Upson went on to establish six more award-winning developments. He was so immensely proud of The Trails and The Trails Shopping Center.

A map of The Trails in its early development is attached to this historic account and you will notice that the clubhouse was not constructed, and the wooden bridge was not built when first published. The bridge would connect phase three to the SR-40 entrance, which was under construction, yet not complete at the time of first print. A copy of the original brochure is also attached and shows The Trails development including the shopping center, the racquet club, and the unique beauty of The Trails, as it was becoming "the place to call home."

The Trails has withstood economic difficulties, numerous hurricanes, tropical storms, and the storm of the century on March 13, 1993. That storm, which caused historical blizzards in our northern states in March 1993, began by wreaking havoc on our Florida Panhandle and Central Florida towns. The Trails would not escape unscathed. During that storm some of our beautiful trees were damaged or destroyed, and our landscape changed for the long term. However, our landscape and natural setting remain beautiful and are still our most endearing and treasured community features.

Wanda and her family will always cherish the creativity of Gerry reflected in this community and enjoy seeing The Trails name on all the projects in which Gerry was involved. As you travel through the development, whether by car, bicycle, or foot, look at the natural environment of the sturdy oaks, the hickories, and the magnolias as well as the Florida palms, and know that our wish as a community is to preserve this natural beauty.

Gerald Upson was born December 19, 1935, in Holly Hill, Florida, and died December 30, 2012, in Daytona Beach, Florida. He departed this wonderful and beautiful city and left a legacy of community enhancements and developments for everyone to enjoy. We will strive to maintain and preserve his vision of the natural beauty known as The Trails.

Luke Browning, during the early development, had a special dog named Brownie, who passed away during the construction of The Trails. Brownie is buried on the first island near the tall coquina rock on Main Trail, at the Nova Road entrance. Luke Browning eventually moved from the Trails to Austin, Texas to open an exceptionally large flea market.

Remember Gerald Upson and Luke Browning looking at the 385 acres of the untouched forest land in 1974-75.

Currently, in this updated version (2024), our committees persist in crafting a thorough and strategic seven-year plan. Our aim is not merely to set an expiration date, but to establish a timeline for nurturing and anticipating the growth of newly planted replacement flora over a span of the next 40+ years within our community.

Our objective remains the preservation of our community and the upholding of its esteemed environment as initially envisioned.

- This historical record is a collaboration of Mrs. Wanda Upson, a resident of Ormond Beach, Florida and widow of Gerry Upson, and Trails homeowner and Landscape Committee member, Al Legg.

### **Community Strengths**

- Mature Landscape
- Beautiful Canopies throughout Neighborhood (from Live Oak Trees)
- Interested Residents
- Contracted Staff and Established Landscape committee

## **Community Weaknesses**

- Irrigation
- Heavy Root Systems from Large Live Oaks; Not Conducive to Replanting.
- Heavy Shade
- Resident Expectations/Perceptions
- Budget

## **Distinctive Landscaping Opportunities and options**

**Follow Florida Friendly Landscape guidelines, established by the University of Florida:**

### 1. Right Plant, Right Place

Creating a thriving, easily managed landscape begins with the careful selection of plants suited to their environment. Future plantings should align with the specific soil, light, water, and climate conditions of the site, aiming for a varied selection of trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and flowers. Once these plants take root, they will need minimal additional water, fertilizer, or pesticides, saving both time and money while safeguarding precious resources. Any invasive species should be promptly removed as indicated.

### 2. Water Efficiently

Arrange plants with comparable water requirements in proximity and designate irrigation zones, accordingly, ensuring watering occurs before signs of wilting. Adherence to established environmental guidelines is paramount, as outlined at <http://www.sjrwmd.com/wateringrestrictions/>.

Regularly inspect the irrigation system for leaks, blockages, or damage, ensuring all sprinklers target plants rather than hardscapes. Consider redesigning or relocating components as needed.

Optimize the irrigation system for peak efficiency through calibration. Employ proper mulching and mowing techniques to enhance plant health and drought resilience, while prioritizing micro-irrigation methods whenever feasible.

### 3. Fertilize Appropriately

Follow UF/IFAS recommendations for fertilizing, using the correct amounts and timing to prevent runoff. Choose fertilizers with slow-release nitrogen and minimal phosphorus. Avoid fertilizing within 10 feet of water bodies or before heavy rainfall. If fertilizer spills onto the lawn, sidewalk, or driveway, promptly sweep it up and return it to the bag. For a quick green-up in summer, opt for iron supplements on turf instead of nitrogen fertilizer. Refrain from using "weed and feed" products containing both fertilizers and herbicides to prevent harm to certain plants. Always adhere to the directions on the fertilizer label.

#### 4. Mulch

Mulch keeps soil moist, shields plants, and stops weeds. It makes your yard look tidy and is perfect for tricky areas like slopes and shade. Maintain 2 to 3 inches of mulch on beds, leaving a gap around tree trunks to avoid rot. Let fallen leaves create natural mulch under trees. Avoid cypress mulch, as its source might be uncertain, according to the Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program.

#### 5. Wildlife

Today's urban areas pose challenges for wildlife. By being mindful of the environment in our enhancements, we'll strive not to disrupt the wildlife already present in the community. Cutting down on insecticide usage benefits animals and beneficial insects, as they consume pests and assist in pollinating flowers.

#### 6. Manage Yard Pests Responsibly

Scientists recommend Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for human and environmental health. This approach manages pests with minimal chemicals. To prevent disease and insect issues, choose plants resistant to pests and place them appropriately. Use the right amount of water and fertilizer, and mow grass at the correct height. If problems arise, remove affected leaves, or pick insects off by hand. Avoid blanket spraying; spot-treat and use selective insecticides. Always follow label instructions. With IPM, create a sustainable, low-maintenance, and healthy landscape that minimizes chemical use for the well-being of people, animals, and the environment.

#### 7. Recycle Yard Waste (Homeowners)

Maintaining your landscape, like mowing and pruning, produces yard waste that you can recycle to save money. When organic matter decomposes, like pruned branches or grass clippings, it enriches the soil with nutrients that plants need. Try composting by mixing "green" (nitrogen-rich) and "brown" (carbon-rich) materials such as grass clippings, weeds, plant trimmings, eggshells, coffee grounds, tea bags, twigs, pine needles, corncobs, and shredded cardboard. Turn the pile regularly and add water for microorganisms to break it down. Use this nutrient-rich compost to improve your soil, resulting in better water retention and fertility, while reducing waste sent to landfills.

#### 8. Reduce Stormwater Runoff

Florida's waterways are sensitive to what we use in our home landscapes. Fertilizers and pesticides can seep into the soil or flow into storm drains, along with landscape debris and eroded soil, harming water quality and the ecosystems it supports. Florida-Friendly Landscaping aims to capture and utilize as much rainfall and irrigation water as possible. Building shallow rain gardens or shaping slopes with berms and swales can slow runoff during heavy rains, letting water soak into the ground. Direct downspouts towards gardens instead of sidewalks or

driveways. Use permeable materials like brick, gravel, or crushed shell for walkways, driveways, and patios to allow rain to penetrate the ground.

#### 9. Protect the Waterfront

Florida has an abundance of water bodies, including rivers, lakes, springs, and coastline. Even if you do not live directly beside one, your actions in your home landscape still affect them. Protecting these water bodies starts with maintaining a 10-foot "maintenance-free zone" around them—no mowing, fertilizing, or pesticide use allowed. Keep grass clippings and pet waste away from water, as they carry harmful nutrients and bacteria. Installing structures like seawalls and planting native aquatic plants can prevent shoreline erosion and control invasive species. Transforming stormwater ponds or canals into attractive habitats for wildlife is also possible with community effort. Collaborate with neighbors or homeowner associations to create Florida-Friendly neighborhood amenities.

#### **TREE CITY USA, ORMOND BEACH-Participate in coordinating with city.**

Ormond Beach has been a Tree City for 23 years, recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation. This national program, Tree City USA, sets standards for urban forestry management across America. To achieve Tree City USA status, communities must meet four core criteria:

1. Have a Tree Board or Department
2. Implement a Tree Care Ordinance
3. Maintain a Community Forestry Program with a budget of at least \$2 per capita.
4. Conduct an Arbor Day Observance or Proclamation

Participating communities show their commitment to caring for and managing public trees.

#### **THE PLAN**

Process: We have Identified, numbered, and graded all cul-de-sac and median strip islands throughout.

#### **List of Goals:**

1. **Educate residents on plan** - include small article in quarterly newspaper, include on website, homeowner portal and sent out as an email blast to members open to receiving such emails.
2. **Add splashes of color** in main corridors; maintain annual bright colors at Granada and Nova
  - a. Enhance the community building area with added annual beds.
  - b. Combine colors and textures in raised planters.
  - c. Rotate color based upon contractor recommendation 3x/year.

3. Continue to identify areas of replanting based on completed rating of areas.
  - a. Encourage a landscape committee drive through bi-annually to assess and make recommendations to the board for design and expenditure based upon contractor proposals.
4. With rating of cul-de-sac and medians, establish a plan and timeline for renovations.
5. Irrigation
  - a. Repair priorities will be for the main corridor along the Main Trail, Iroquois Trail, and Rio Pinar Trail.
  - b. Irrigation in outlying areas will be accessed for need. If not needed, heads will be capped to below surface and not restored. These areas will be replanted, as necessary, with Florida Friendly, drought tolerant plants, requiring little to no water to sustain a natural look of beauty relevant to The Trails.
  - c. In areas where fiscally doable, add irrigation to provide water on high profile or newly planted annual color areas.
  - d. Complete irrigation improvements by summer 2018.
6. Consider recommendations for long term goals of area by bridge.
  - a. Currently, the area is being used for storing debris collected throughout the community by grounds contractors, that by contract is responsible for debris removal annually or as needed.
  - b. Requests and previous discussions suggesting the potential for a dog park or community garden. However, the best use for now, is the fenced (to prevent an eyesore) communal area debris storage.
  - c. Debris storage use is not open to members or other vendors due to the clearing expense responsibility being absorbed by the landscape vendor.
7. Yard of the Quarter "YOTQ" (Criteria)
  1. Overall curb appeal/beauty
  2. Originality
  3. Seasonal appropriateness (May include non-plant displays)
  4. Use of Florida-friendly plants (no invasive species)
  5. Lawn maintenance (no dead trees or foliage)
  6. The owner/occupant must be in good financial standing with the HOA.
  7. Article of appreciation for "YOTQ" is included in the Trails Canopy. Members of the landscape committee and board members cannot participate. Instead, the landscape committee will serve as the judging panel. They will select top candidates from a list provided by property management. Winners will be chosen for single-family homes in the Trails HOA and sub association entrance and common areas.
8. Tree replanting linked with Arbor Day and Coordinate with the City of Ormond Beach and notice community of how to participate.

- 9. Concrete curbing repair/replacement**
  - a. Many cul-de-sacs need to be reduced to accommodate the larger garbage trucks; preventing a constant curbing contact situation; those that do not need reducing should be repaired where the concrete is cracked.
  - b. This will require a thorough survey, contractor, and capital funds to be designated.
- 10. Railroad tie replacement with concrete curbing**
  - a. This may involve combining it with the curbing repair project.
- 11. Maintaining the continuity and specific environmental elements**
  - a. Maintain coquina stone throughout and implement new where it creates a desirable design element.
  - b. Continue to maintain natural elements such as the scrub palmettos and oak trees, indigenous to this area.
- 12. Landscape lighting:** In future years, a plan should be developed to incorporate solar or other up lighting in trees along the Main Trail from Nova to Granada and including the club house area.