WORKSHOP ITEM SUMMARY SHEET
VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 2026

Agenda Item:

The Coccoloba Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (Marlene Rodak) will present an update on the Estero River Oaks Preserve.

Background:

The Coccoloba Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (CC-FNPS) is a 501{C){3) organization formed in 2001. CC-FNPS members are volunteers - there are no employees or contractors. The parent organization, Florida Native Plant Society {FNPS), organized in 1980, is also a 501(c)(3). The mission of both organizations is to promote the preservation, conservation and restoration of native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

The Coccoloba Chapter has been active in and around Estero with a wide range of activities. CC- FNPS helps stakeholders earn NPDES credits through community outreach and by operating a native plant nursery. Outreach programs promote the use of native plants which reduce or eliminate the need for fertilizer, which can result in runoff into our waterways and leaching into our aquifers. Additionally, homeowners, homeowner associations, condo associations, community development districts can learn ways to reduce or eliminate the need for supplemental irrigation. All these practices lead to improved water quality while creating improved habitat for Florida's wildlife. The parties are Village of Estero {Estero) and The Coccoloba Chapter pf the Florida Native Plant Society {CC-FNPS).

Description:

Village of Estero owns the 10-acre vacant parcel, commonly known as "River Oaks Preserve" at the east end of Broadway Avenue. This property is listed as 9531 and 9541 Broadway East, Estero, FL 33928, plus the 5-acre parcel east.
This ongoing partnership between the two entities supports the Village of Estero's vision of a community that embraces its historic heritage and protects the environment while allowing for future development. It includes relevant cornerstones to ensure success including varied parks, public spaces, recreational facilities, and unique natural environments. It shows how parks are successfully incorporated into development and how municipalities can partner with non-government organizations (NGOs) and non-profits to save money and gain expertise while operating efficiently as "government lite."

Estero's River Oaks Preserve continues its focus to be a passive recreational area with a strong focus on concepts of simplicity, natural/native care of the land, sustainability, and being "one with nature." This property focuses on exposing visitors to a lesser-known side of Florida - one where threatened and endangered species reside safely in developed areas.

This partnership allows residents, FGCU students, and other organizations to participate in hands-on activities to learn about the Florida environment. The revenues generated from the nursery will help fund the continuation of the project.

Project to Date (2022-present)
Hundreds and hundreds of volunteers including:

- FNPS members
- FGCU students
- Neighborhood

This Year:
738 FGCU student's hours (value*=$25,741)
3,814 total volunteer hours this year (value*= $133,032)
Project to Date:
4,548 FGCU student's hours (value* = $158, 617)
19, 328 total volunteer hours (value* = $674, 152)

*$34.88 is the current Florida volunteer value

Financial Impact:

The Village pays CC-FNPS an amount of $3,000 per month for maintenance, plants for public areas, security and upgrades to the "Preserve". Additional funding has been secured from the state for capital infrastructure upgrades which should begin in 2027.

Prepared by:

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Attachments:

1. PowerPoint