

Builders and developers actually improve the environment despite occasional claims to the contrary

Real Developers and Builders occasionally butt heads on land use. Who is right and who is wrong?

PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIDA, USA, September 15, 2022 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Stephen Gravett provides analysis about the odd and ever changing relationship between environmentalists and real estate builders and developers.

Much is made about real estate developers and builders ruining the environment and ravaging the earth as they create their new residential subdivisions.

As there is in every profession there are always a handful of renegade builders that abuse the environment. In particular, I am talking about land abuse, excessive tree clearing, poor drainage and non-permitted development. "But, let's examine a few misunderstood concepts pertaining to these two groups."

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I have often seen environmentalists become developer advocates given the proper spirit of cooperation."

I take pride in working collaboratively with environmentalists



Environmentalists please give me a break

Tree clearing– Obviously if a builder buys a tree filled parcel of land something has to give in order to make an economically feasible project. In nearly all cases cities require a tree removal survey where tree felling is minimal and monitored by the town. "What about a relatively barren parcel of land with just a few trees, what then? Or, what about submerged land with evasive trees on site?" A minimally tree covered lot is of course easier to get approved. But the difference is that in most cities strict

landscape approvals require builders to plant many trees, shrubs and sod far in excess of what

usually existed before. Further, and in most cases the builder has already stripped the lot or subdivision of evasive plants, plants required by ordinance to be removed before a permit is granted and land development can begin.

Environmentalists can be quick to talk about builder deforestation but rarely acknowledge or analyse the net difference of beginning tree content on vacant undeveloped land as compared to the newly planted trees and shrubs installed on new lots and common areas in new subdivisions after full development of the land. For the Developer, it can be both frustrating and encouraging to encounter strict environmentalists that they are able to convert into eventual advocates once they have the true stats and have examined the facts. Case in point- Many years ago a great new town was planned and approved by a newly formed city in western Broward County, Florida . It was called Coral Springs by its creator, Westinghouse. In the beginning it looked like hundreds of acres had been cleared giving the land a stripped barren appearance. First impressions can be deceiving. As it turned out this part of the county had a large layer of coral rock just below the surface that hindered the growth of taller trees giving way to mostly weeds and scrub coverage. It was not very attractive. Only hearty scrubs and evasive plants were cleared. It became evident why Westinghouse had named its new city Coral Springs. A tremendous building boom ensued and a big silver lining emerged.

The surprise that emerged was not the hundreds of homes that were built but, rather the abundant landscaping that contained prized trees and shrubs. Now 45 years later a low-density community exists, with great schools and it has become one of the prized family locations. The now stately trees, hedges and ground cover give the city a mature manicured appearance that is pleasing to the eye. To the original point about builders planting so many new trees, this landscaping manifestation is so much more than ever would have existed if left in its original state. Also it is important to remember that trees emit oxygen after they absorb ozone dangerous carbon dioxide.

Submerged land with tree forestation- "I have seen occasion's where ambitious developers with foresight take it upon themselves to develop submerged property loaded both evasive and regular trees." Normally these properties are claimed by federal agents as wetlands. But on occasion you can find a property that is just plain low and is not in any way a protected wetland. The Army Corp usually has jurisdiction in Florida to make those determinations. When the AC declines to designate a property as a wetland the drainage authority will vest with local agencies. This can lead to interesting uses of the land. "In one case I saw that a substantial wetland was required to be reconstructed by local authorities on just such a property in exchange for increased density." A large purpose built wetland became a controlled wetland of over 4 acres creating a home to birds, iguanas, fish and turtles that had never existed on this land.

Builders don't generally scoff at environmentalists, especially if they have a working history. Most are reasonable when they see the efforts most builders go through to care of the environment.

Stephen Gravett has been a real estate developer for over 45 years and was most recently CEO of Kennedy Homes for the past 11 years and is still CEO of Kennedy Development Partners (KDP). He is also full time Director of Operations for 5 Star Developers. He is also a state licensed broker and since 1980 a State licensed General Contractor Unlimited. He flew B-52's in the US Air Force during the Vietnam war.

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