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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Re-Wilding the Quad Parcels project receives anonymous \$1 million gift

**OSPREY, FL (May 29, 2025)** Big Waters Land Trust and Sarasota Audubon Society's joint initiative to Re-Wild the Quad Parcels received a \$1 million anonymous grant earlier this month. The re-wilding officially kicked off in January of this year with the groundbreaking of the 11-acre southeastern parcel. Sarasota Audubon and Big Waters note this parcel will have the highest number of trees planted, and when complete, will provide more wooded areas for wildlife to forage and nest, as well as a pollinator meadow. The two environmental not-for-profits estimate approximately one year until completion of the SE parcel re-wilding. Fundraising continues to complete the three-parcel re-wilding.

Located at the intersection of Palmer Blvd and Apex Road, the Quad Parcels buffer the western edge of the environmentally significant Celery Fields from industrial areas. The Celery Fields is a nationally and internationally recognized birding hotspot and is vital to water quality and flood protection in the region. Sarasota Audubon Society manages 28 acres of the 33-acre Quad Parcel property – which is comprised of three 11-acre parcels – while Big Waters stewards the perpetual conservation easement. Together, the two partner organizations are working toward a shared vision of transforming the Quad Parcels into a special place in their own right, diversifying the habitat, adding additional opportunities for passive recreation, and creating a destination for all to enjoy.

"The Celery Fields represent an exceptional wetland habitat, but what's missing is denser trees and foliage for birds and other wildlife that depend on woodlands to thrive," notes Jeanne Dubi, former president of Sarasota Audubon Society and current Director of Special Projects.

"On the southeastern parcel, we are creating woodlands to increase habitat diversity which will attract more and different birds as well as other species. This in turn provides our community with additional opportunities for birding, wildlife viewing, and passive recreation – everyone wins!"

The design for the SE parcel targets five imperiled species of birds and two of bats with plantings carefully selected based on the needs of these and other local and migratory birds. Big Waters and Sarasota Audubon expect the southeastern parcel to be fully prepped and ready for planting by rainy season. When complete, this parcel will provide public access for thousands of annual local, national, and international visitors with ADA footpaths and a boardwalk to a shaded structure for wildlife viewing over the newly created pond.

"We are so very thankful to this anonymous donor for their generous philanthropy," comments Christine P. Johnson, president of Big Waters Land Trust. "The re-wilding of these parcels is a

monumental undertaking, but our community has stepped up time and time again to show their commitment to protect, enhance, and restore nature for the benefit of all who live, work, play – and migrate through! – our region. We thank all those who donated to support this project. This re-wilding would not be possible without your generosity.”

The total project budget is an anticipated \$5+ million across all three parcels with work taking place in phases as funding milestones are reached. To learn more about Re-Wilding the Quad Parcels, or to donate, visit Big Waters Land Trust online at [bigwaterslandtrust.org](http://bigwaterslandtrust.org) or Sarasota Audubon Society at [sarasotaaudubon.org](http://sarasotaaudubon.org).

### **About Big Waters Land Trust**

Big Waters protects land and water in Southwest Florida for the benefit of people and nature. Through strategic collaborations with individuals, groups, organizations, and government, they work to ensure all people have access to clean water, fresh air, nutritious food, abundant wildlife, beautiful natural areas to enjoy, and all the other physical and mental benefits nature provides. Their vital work strengthens Southwest Florida’s resiliency to storms and floods, enriches lives, and helps safeguard our community for generations to come. Learn more at [bigwaterslandtrust.org](http://bigwaterslandtrust.org).

### **About Sarasota Audubon Society**

Sarasota Audubon is dedicated to the protection, conservation, and enjoyment of birds, wildlife and the environment in Sarasota, Florida. Using a combination of science and education, Sarasota Audubon conserves and restores natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth’s biological diversity. Learn more at [SarasotaAudubon.org](http://SarasotaAudubon.org).