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Foundation awards grant for Urban Forest Phase 3

STAFF REPORT

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A grant from Gulf Coast Community Foundation will add more than 600 trees to the Venice Urban Forest.

PROVIDED PHOTO

VENICE — Gulf Coast Community Foundation recently awarded Venice Area Beautification Inc. a \$100,000 grant to support Phase 3 of the Venice Urban Forest.

The grant brings GCCF’s total support of VABI to more than \$1.5 million dollars since 1998, according to a news release.

Phase 3, the final phase of the project, will include the installation of additional irrigation piping to irrigate all the new trees and understory plants.

The GCCF grant will cover the cost of bringing in native trees, including 400 slash pines, 200 red cedars and 10 long-leaf pines, the release states.

The forest lost about 125 trees due to Hurricane Ian.

It's home to more than 90 species of birds, the release says.

“The Venice Urban Forest, powered in part by funding from Gulf Coast, is an environmental safe haven for wildlife, clean water and a place of natural respite for residents and visitors,” GCCF Senior Vice President of Community Leadership Jon Thaxton said in the release. “The secret sauce in the success of this project has been the hardworking volunteers of VABI who have not been deterred by rain, heat or hurricanes in their mission to create an accessible and beautiful walking trail forest for all.”

VABI President Nancy Woodley lauded GCCF for its support.

“Gulf Coast Community Foundation has been a constant and strong supporter of VABI and many of its endeavors over the years. I am very thankful that I live in a community where such a generous foundation has supported this organization from the beginning,” she said in the release. “The Venice Urban Forest is a magical place for future generations to enjoy. We are grateful for Gulf Coast’s impact on this long lasting endeavor.”

Currently, Phase 1 of the Urban Forest is open to all from dawn to dusk.

To learn more about the Venice Urban Forest, visit [VeniceUrbanForest.com](https://www.yoursun.com/venice/urban-forest).

