* Sustaining Community Lands, Inc.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

 **Attorney Peggy Wood Joins the Martin Grade Team!**

Margaret (Peggy) Wood, Esq., an attorney specializing in local government law, will provide pro bono legal services to Sustaining Community Lands, Inc., the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which is spearheading the effort to secure scenic highway designation for the Martin Grade in accordance with the *Florida Scenic Highway Program*.  The Martin Grade is local name for the lushly vegetated and strikingly beautiful 12-mile stretch of tree-canopied road (western CR 714 between 609 and SR 710, between Palm City and Lake Okeechobee).

The Martin Grade Scenic Highway Project is a community-wide effort to seek landmark status for this historic roadway as a State Scenic Highway.  The main emphasis of this project is to protect the tree canopy that covers much of the corridor and to preserve the rural nature of the area for generations to come. Growth and development throughout the region pose a threat to the tree canopy. There are no other east-west roads to handle that traffic, and widening the road would destroy the trees. More immediate threats include destructive maintenance practices, such as mowing, ditch cleaning, and tree trimming, and invasive exotic species.

Peggy explains, “The Martin Grade is captivating, both in its physical beauty and its intriguing history.  As a Martin County resident, it is important to me to help to preserve this unique, irreplaceable ‘green cathedral.’”

Peggy has practiced with the law firm of Caldwell Pacetti Edwards Schoech & Viator LLP in West Palm Beach since 2007.   Prior to joining the firm, she clerked for Judge Carole Y. Taylor at the Fourth District Court of Appeal.  Peggy is a 2005 graduate of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and a 2001 graduate of the University of Maryland College Park.   Peggy and her husband, Michael, reside in Palm City.

The project to protect the trees and the Martin Grade is now entering the Designation Phase, a critically important segment of the state application process which depends upon the participation of the local community in order to be successful. For further information on the Martin Grade Scenic Highway project, to submit a letter of support, to make a financial donation or to volunteer, please contact the chairperson, Mary Dawson at (772)708-3021 or info@SCLands.org. The organization’s website is www.SCLands.org.

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