

News Release

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Meets With Coral Reef Commons Developer

VERO BEACH, Fla. – A team of biologists and others from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s office here met with representatives of the company planning to develop a portion of pine rockland property recently purchased from the University of Miami into a commercial and residential development called “Coral Reef Commons” near Zoo Miami.

The July 22 meeting, which was the first between the Service and the company--Ram Realty Services of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.--was a preliminary exchange of information. Ram presented information about the history of the land at the project site and the status of their development project, while the Service sought to educate Ram about currently protected plant and animal species believed to reside on the site and those that could be protected soon under the Endangered Species Act.

No decisions about the project were made at the meeting. However, both parties agreed to share more information over the coming weeks and to work toward a more formal, detailed meeting in early August.

“We appreciate Ram’s willingness to meet with us and to open lines of communication,” said Larry Williams, the Service’s Florida State Supervisor for Ecological Services. “We’re looking forward to working with Ram, Miami-Dade County and the University of Miami to find a workable solution that balances the need for economic development and protecting this value habitat and any imperiled species that depend on it.”

Peter D. Cummings, Chairman of Ram Realty Services, said, “Until we resolve any potential issues with the Service, Miami-Dade County and the University of Miami, we don’t plan to do anything on the property other than by-hand removal of exotics under the terms of our county permit.”

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