

# Transportation SubTeam Update to Florida Panther Recovery Implementation Core Team



*Photo by R. Repenning*

**September 1, 2016**

# Transportation SubTeam

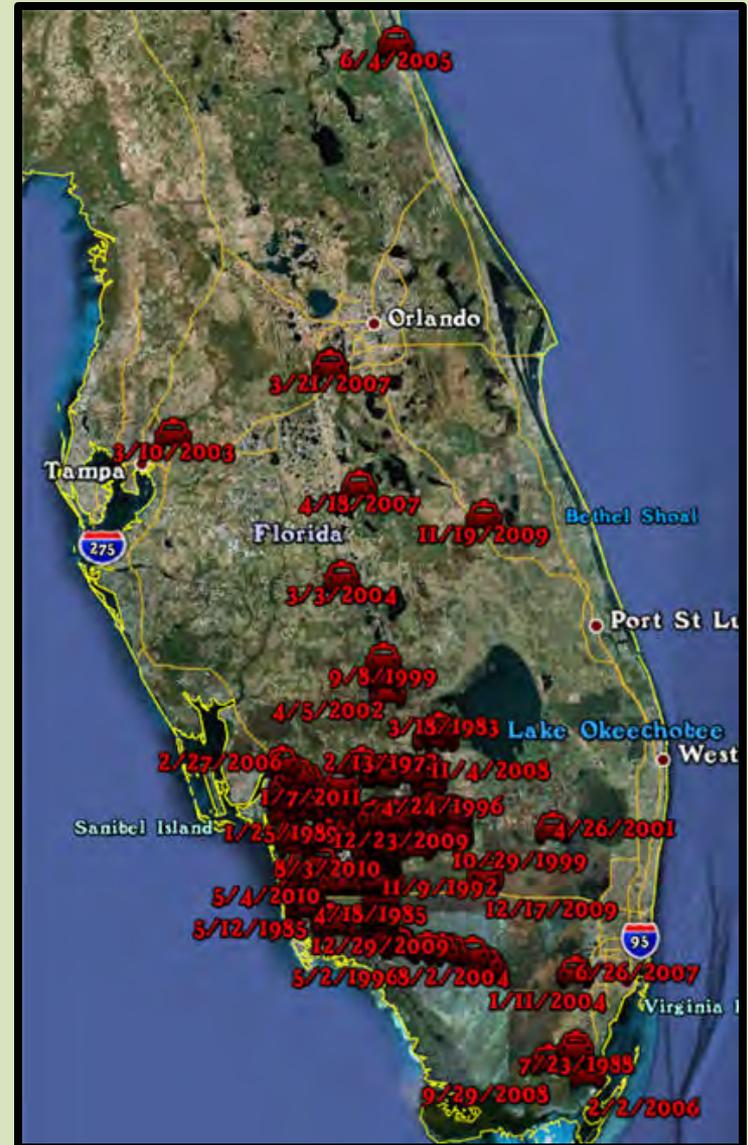
- Core Team Liaison: Elizabeth Fleming, Defenders of Wildlife
- SubTeam Chair: Nancy Payton, Florida Wildlife Federation
- Katasha Cornwell: Florida Department of Transportation
- Amber Crooks, Conservancy of Southwest Florida
- Terry Gilbert, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Darrell Land, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Xavier Pagan, Florida Department of Transportation
- Gwen Pipkin, Florida Department of Transportation
- Don Scott, Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Brent Setchell, Florida Department of Transportation
- Dan Smith, University of Central Florida
- John Wrublik, US Fish and Wildlife Service

<http://www.fws.gov/verobeach/FloridaPantherRITTransportation.html>

# Mission

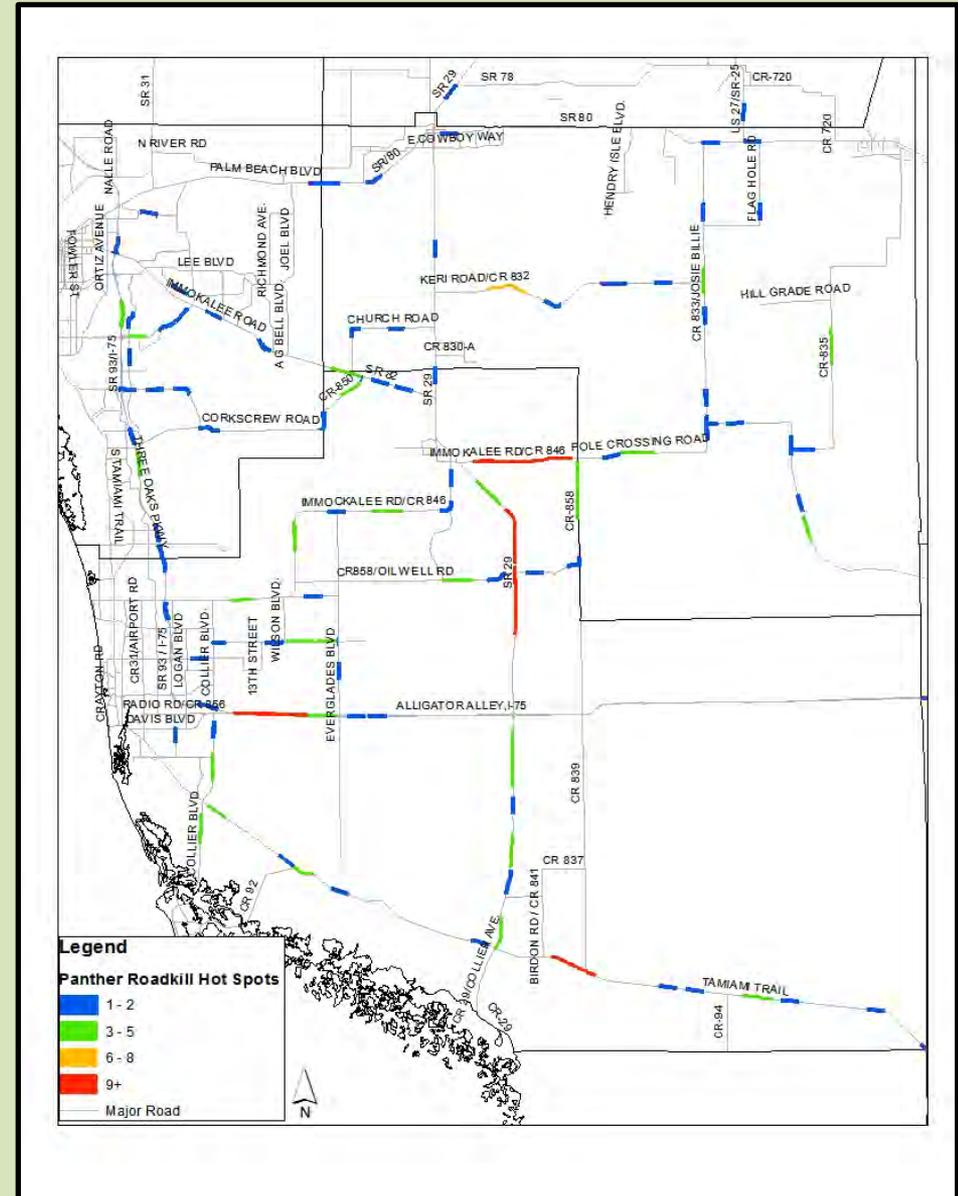
To identify and prioritize high vehicular mortality areas and recommend risk-reduction measures.

- South Florida
- Central Florida
- Statewide



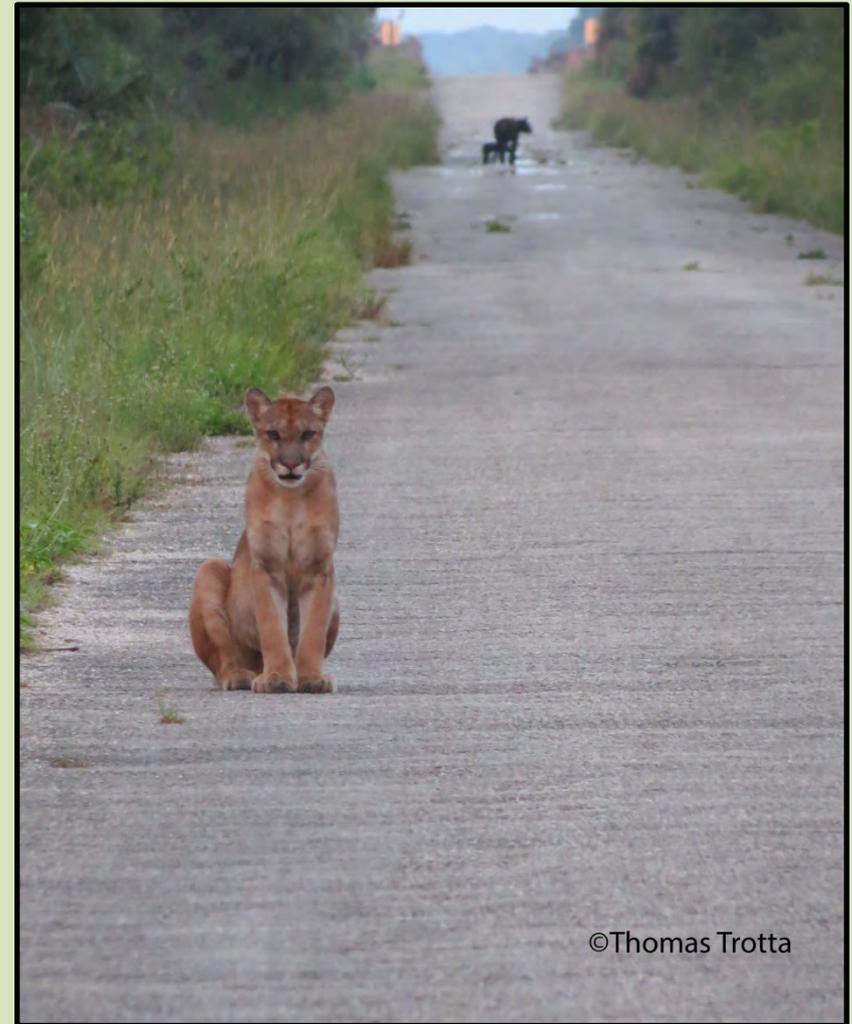
# Southwest Florida Hotspots

- Mapping shows hotspots based on documented vehicle mortalities (as of August 14, 2016) only.
- Does not predict potential future hotspots.



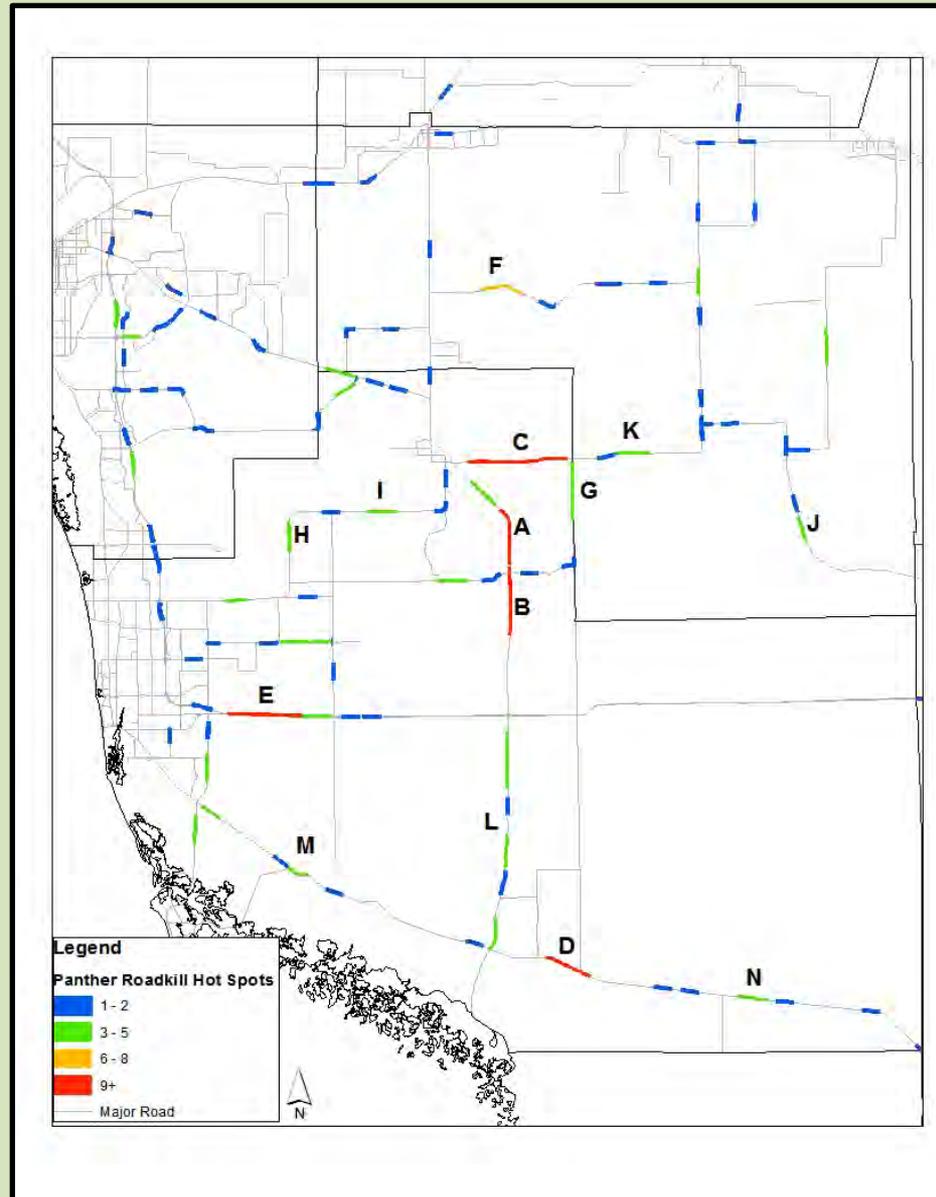
# Methodology

- Utilizing ARC GIS to identify “hot spot” segments based on roadkill data.
- This will be a living document and amended with additional data.
- New data may elevate the severity of a segment(s).



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# Southwest Florida Hotspots



# Completed Projects

- Revision to FDOT Wildlife Crossings Guidelines.
  - Reviewed by PRIT core team and letter from USFWS to FDOT December 2015.
  - FDOT adopted revised guidelines May 2016.

Florida Department of Transportation  
Wildlife Crossing Guidelines  
2016

A wildlife crossing is a road-related structure that provides wildlife an option to cross under roadways. These crossings have the potential to reduce motor vehicle collisions with wildlife, consequently reducing the likelihood of injuries and mortalities to humans and wildlife as well as reducing the potential for damage to motor vehicles. These guidelines have been developed for use by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to evaluate the appropriateness of including wildlife crossings (upland or wetland) and associated features (herein referred to collectively as "wildlife crossing features") for proposed projects on the State Highway System (SHS) or as possible stand-alone retrofit projects on the SHS when warranted. These guidelines have been developed in coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), which agencies have regulatory authority and are the recognized experts for wildlife species nationwide and within the State of Florida, respectively.

For these guidelines the term "wildlife crossing feature(s)" may include, but is not limited to new or modified structures, such as bridges, bridges with shelves, specially designed culverts, enlarged culverts or drainage culverts and/or exclusionary devices such as fencing, walls or other barriers, or some combination of these features. Further, as used in these guidelines, the term "wildlife" refers to listed, protected or otherwise regulated species that the USFWS and/or FWC have jurisdiction over.

In cases where a FDOT District has an off-SHS project, the District will coordinate with the State Environmental Management Office regarding possible inclusion of any wildlife crossing features. Wildlife crossing feature locations should be identified as early as possible in the project planning and development processes, and prior to project design. These guidelines also establish criteria that must be considered during design of wildlife crossing features.

In developing projects, the FDOT District Offices, in coordination with USFWS and/or FWC, will determine if a wildlife crossing feature is appropriate. As part of the planning and project development processes, the FDOT also considers input from other stakeholders, including local governments, non-governmental organizations and the public. Although opportunities for input exist throughout the process, the FDOT has two prescribed phases where early coordination and input are solicited during project planning and development. These two phases are:

- 1) Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) is the process where projects are screened and wildlife agency and other stakeholder input is solicited to provide early scoping information regarding potential effects and resources of concern in the project area. During the screening event(s), wildlife agencies and stakeholders have the opportunity to propose wildlife crossing features as well as opportunities for wildlife impact minimization and, if necessary, potential mitigation strategies.
- 2) Project Development and Environment (PD&E) is the process by which the FDOT develops the project alternative(s) and analyzes project impacts. It is important for wildlife agencies and stakeholders to be involved during this phase since this is when preliminary

# Continuing or Future Projects

- Finalize cost surface modeling
- Compendium of existing panther/wildlife crossings
- Hotspots north of the Caloosahatchee River
- Recommendations for resolving hotspots
- Funding opportunities
- Field trips

# Questions and Comments



# **Additional maps**

