

# **Panther Recovery Implementation Team (PRIT)**

## **Transportation Sub-team**

### **Full Meeting Minutes**

May 8, 2015

FDOT District 1 Office, Bartow, FL

#### Attendees:

Amber Crooks, Conservancy of Southwest Florida  
Elizabeth Fleming, Defenders of Wildlife  
Terry Gilbert, FWC (phone)  
Darrell Land, FWC  
Nancy Payton, Florida Wildlife Federation  
Gwen Pipkin, FDOT  
Brent Setchell, FDOT  
Don Scott, Lee MPO  
Dan Smith, UCF  
John Wrublick, FWS (phone)  
Laurie Macdonald, Defenders of Wildlife, PRIT liaison (phone)

Members of the public - Chris Dailey of RS&H, Bruce Johnson of Stantec, Nicole Monies of FDOT

- Minutes
  - Minutes approved by the group with one change.
- Communications
  - FWS staff liaison/Florida Panther Recovery Lead has not been filled yet.
  - Laurie is retiring and the conservation organization slot will be open and FWS will need to select another appointee.
- FDOT Wildlife Crossing Guidelines
  - Subteam will look to present guidelines and recommended changes to PRIT at an upcoming meeting.
- Cost Surface Mapping
  - Dan showed maps of land covers categorized into various land cover classifications.
  - The subteam looked closely at maps showing Golden Gate Estates and Collier County, Lehigh Acres, and Bone Valley.
  - There was a consensus to show land cover values for the cost surface mapping exercise as follows:
    - Exotics - leave as '3'.
    - Extractive – '0'

- Cultural – ‘0’
  - Other agricultural (more intense) – ‘0’
  - Transportation – ‘0’
- Several ‘0’ categories will remain zero since their areas are very small compared to larger land uses and are not expected to have any impact on the cost surface model.
- The group also looked to create source and destination points. These included North Belle Meade, CREW, FPNWR, and two in Big Cypress National Preserve.
- Other road project updates
  - SR82 – Wildlife shelves are planned to be incorporated into the two bridge replacements at Under Canal and Panther Creek, just northwest and southeast of Corkscrew Road. This project is currently in design with no construction funds programmed.
  - SR80 - Looking to maintain a small strip of habitat on BOMA property which may be undergoing surplus.
- South Florida Hotspots – Discussion of SR29 from US41 to SR80
  - SR29 from SR82 to Labelle
    - FDOT has several segments within this stretch of SR29 that are being scoped for design (SR82 to the county line, county line to CR832, CR832 to Spencer Road, Spencer Road to Cowboy Way).
    - The group reviewed FP155 telemetry, as well as other panther VHF and GPS telemetry, roadkills and least cost pathways identified in TR-13. The group also reviewed land ownership in the area.
    - The subteam reviewed available information and determined that wildlife crossing structures should be further evaluated by FDOT on SR29 at Robert's canal and 12 Mile Slough. The structure at Sear's canal should also be evaluated by FDOT if fencing from the structure at Robert's or other measures are not able to cover that area.
    - The FDOT will explore possible design options at these locations and include optional services for crossings to better support wildlife movements.
  - SR29 from I-75 to SR82
    - These segments are in PD&E process and are funded for design in Fiscal Year 2019.
    - Amber shared maps that the Conservancy prepared with available data and technical report recommendations. The group discussed these maps, as well as known roadway structures that could accommodate wildlife improvements.
  - The subteam discussed the need for updated signage and gaps in the fences near the FPNWR and the I-75 interchange.
- Public Comment

- None.
- Pending
  - Dan will get with Jen Korn of FWC and Brent about compendium of structure types task.
  - Remaining items to be continued at next meeting
- Next meeting
  - 07/28/15, 10am-3pm, at FDOT building in Bartow, Florida.