

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

### **Transportation Sub-team**

#### **Meeting Summary**

July 28, 2015

FDOT District 1 Office, Bartow, FL

#### Attendees:

Amber Crooks, Conservancy of Southwest Florida  
Elizabeth Fleming, Defenders of Wildlife (phone)  
Terry Gilbert, FWC (phone)  
Darrell Land, FWC  
Nancy Payton, Florida Wildlife Federation  
Brent Setchell, FDOT  
Don Scott, Lee MPO  
John Wrublik, FWS (phone)  
Laurie Macdonald, Defenders of Wildlife, PRIT liaison (phone)  
David Shindle, USFWS (phone)

Members of the public - Chris Dailey of RS&H, Mark Easley of Kisinger Campo,  
Nicole Monies of FDOT

- Minutes approved.
- Communications
  - FWS staff liaison
    - David Shindle introduction
      - Subteam can present the FDOT Guidelines at October PRIT meeting.
  - PRIT Liaison update
    - Laurie provided an overview of the May 19, 2015 PRIT meeting.
- Miscellaneous
  - David brought up the issue of gate at panther fencing on SR80 at C-1. Homeowner has been having issues with keeping gates open at driveway.
    - FDOT sent them a letter asking to keep the gate closed.
    - Electric gate was also discussed, although funding by FDOT would not likely be provided and would not be maintained by FDOT.
  - BOMA property
    - FDOT is purchasing a stormwater pond about 4 acres.
    - UF IFAS is also pursuing lease for research activities on this property with SFWMD.

- Amber raised question about maintaining an easement or other assurances in agreement to ensure that no incompatible intensification occurred along the corridor area.
- Wildlife agencies asked for an easement on western boundary of the BOMA property for protected panther access northward.
- C-2 canal on SR80
  - A wildlife shelf is proposed on the east side of canal when the SR80 bridge over the C-2 canal is replaced.
  - There was a discussion about materials used on the west side, right now riprap, Darrell asked to not use large rubble riprap to help facilitate movements if wildlife comes up on the west side.
- C-1 canal on SR80
  - Fencing currently extends 250 feet east of the canal. If property owner agrees by January 2016, FDOT will extend fencing per the FWS Biological Opinion.
- Southwest Florida Hotspots
  - The group discussed formatting and additional information needed for Amber's draft document.
  - Next meeting may want to discuss the following projects that are closer to design-
    - Polk County
    - SR29 from Labelle to US7 Glades County
    - LRTP Cost Feasible projects
  - Discussions to-date
    - SR29 from SR82 to Labelle (Cowboy Way)
      - FWS has been asked to provide formal consultation for the panther on the project and John indicated that USFWS would consider the subteam's recommendations.
      - There was a discussion about design of recommended wildlife structures.
        - Mark, public commenter, suggested that the subteam also consider movement of deer. Dan is doing a study about presence of deer using the structure.
        - Additional design input may be provided from the subteam after the 'compendium of structure types' is drafted.
      - At the conclusion of the last meeting, the subteam agreed that based on the available information, the Roberts Canal and Twelve Mile locations along SR29 were the most logical to evaluate further. However, Darrell indicated that the Sears Rd. location was also very promising and should not be excluded from consideration. The group discussed that land ownership near Sears Rd. and the logistical issues of placing a crossing structure with fencing there.
        - There was consensus among the subteam to make recommendations for wildlife crossings at all three

locations, but continue to prioritize Roberts and Twelve Mile.

- Brent stated that Dan's Last Cost Pathway model would offer additional information to help support the subteam's recommendations.
- The existing 12 Mile culvert is located at the southeast corner of Rodina which is designated as long-term agriculture area.
- Remainder of segments of SR29 south of above segment, group discussed available information and existing structures, but will need to return to these segments to finalize recommendations.
- Group discussed that there may be a need to correct the Twin Eagles structure dimensions as it is 20 ft. wide (not 10 ft. wide as reported previously).
- Future discussions
  - Hendry County top concerns
    - Keri Road
    - CR846 E of countyline ("Crow's Nest" area)
    - CR833
  - Other areas of concern
    - CR835 near STA5
    - SR80 at Dispersal Zone and at CR833/US27
- Pending
  - Crash Data
  - Transportation Impacts Outside of Focus Area
    - This issue will be discussed further when the subteam reviews Collier County projects.
  - Compendium of Structure Types
    - Continued
  - Belle Meade/Golden Gate Estates stretch of I-75
    - FWF contracted with Dan on study and report will be released this week. The report will include recommendations for fencing.
  - Gaps and gates
    - Amber reported on update from Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge that the office gate has been improved and an automatic gate will be installed. The Refuge staff also stated that there are no other gaps of concern.
- Next meeting
  - September 29, 2015 @ 10-3 (rescheduled to 10/06/15) in Bartow