



LAST LANDS LOST?

Eastern Collier County "Habitat Conservation Plan" – What's at Stake?

What is the HCP?

A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is required as part of a permit application under the Endangered Species Act. For example, development in endangered species habitat may incidentally harm, harass, or even result in death to a protect species. Although it is called a 'conservation plan,' don't let the name mislead you. The proposed HCP will have dire consequences to our natural environment, wildlife and personal quality of life.

What does the HCP mean to me?

A HUMAN POPULATION EXPLOSION

- The HCP proposes to convert 45,000 acres of natural and rural lands into an urban area. That is equivalent in size to Washington D.C.! Approximately two cities of Miami would fit in the proposed development area! This development would accommodate more than 300,000 additional people to eastern Collier County.

MORE ROADS = MORE PANTHER VEHICLE COLLISIONS

- The HCP would lead to 200 miles of new and widened roads.
- On Corkscrew Rd., traffic may increase 23.5 times its current rate. By 2050, about one million more daily vehicle trips would be added to roads that are already deadly to the Florida panther and other species.
- It would make State Road 29 the main transportation artery.

WILDLIFE DISPLACED, HARMED AND KILLED

- The HCP is home to environmentally sensitive lands. This includes habitat for the critically endangered Florida panther and other federal and state protected species. These rare and unique species include the gopher tortoise, crested caracara, wood stork, eastern indigo snake, Florida bonneted bat, and the Florida panther.
- The HCP fails to appropriately avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts. This is contrary to the Endangered Species Act. The plan does not direct development away from the "Primary Zone" or "Adult Breeding" habitat – the most important areas for panthers - despite having enough land available to do so.
- The HCP, as proposed, would impact over 20,000 acres of the panther's most critical lands. It would also fragment and destroy key corridor linkages.

Why now?

The HCP is proposed by several major landowners in the area, and is being reviewed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. If approved, the HCP would be in effect for the next 50 years. The futures of Collier County and of the panther are being decided now.

What Can I Do?

Join us to protect our wildlife and important habitats. Tell the US Fish and Wildlife Service not to approve the Eastern Collier HCP.

We have made it easy. Just go to www.conservancy.org/HCP to learn more and take action to save the Florida panther.

