

Florida Panther Recovery Implementation Team

Action Items Accomplished

- Created a website to post Panther Recovery Implementation Team (RIT) meeting agendas and summaries: <http://www.fws.gov/verobeach/FloridaPantherRIT.html>
- Created a Panther RIT email address to enable the public to communicate with the Team. A link to that email address is posted on the website.

Programs for Private Landowners

- Kevin and Laurie provided copies of the FL Invasive Species Partnership list & the Defenders' Conservation Incentives Toolkit report following the August meeting.
- Tom provided a copy of the PFLCC Landowner Incentives Working Group's white paper at the August meeting.
- Scott Sanders presented information about FWC's Landowner Assistance Program at the October meeting.
- Michael Bush and Henry Burkwhat (NRCS) attended the October meeting to participate in the landowner incentives discussion.
- Dawn provided Elizabeth Pienaar's proposal on structuring landowner incentives to the Team following the October meeting. Elizabeth will attend the January meeting.
- Kipp provided an existing proposal as a possible template for a pilot landowner incentives project following the October meeting.
- Elizabeth Pienaar (UF) presented an overview of her research project on structuring landowner incentives to the Team at the January meeting.
- Laurie worked with NRCS for updates to the Defender's report on the Conservation Incentives Toolkit. She also shared a NRCS fact sheet that describes their program and provides a summary of the financial assistance they provided to Florida participants in FY-12 through their various programs.
- The Team revised the draft concept paper for a pilot PES project. The PES document has been vetted to stakeholder groups and the concept was presented at the public forum on May 22nd. Stakeholder comments are currently being addressed in the draft document. Kevin Godsea is the Team's lead for this effort.
- Erin Myers presented a brief overview of the PES concept to participants at the PFLCC Landowners Incentive Working Group workshop on June 5th in Gainesville. Dawn also participated in that workshop.
- Members talked with State Office Farm Service Agency (FSA) representatives about the details of their Livestock Indemnity Program in Florida as it relates to livestock depredation by panthers. FSA will reimburse producers for depredated livestock over the "normal" mortality rate for 75% of the market value of the livestock. Landowners should visit with their county FSA office for details.

Inventory & Monitoring

- Dawn compiled list of ongoing FL panther research projects to share with the Team following the August meeting. That document is posted on the website.
- Ron checked the list of panther research and monitoring projects to confirm it includes all ongoing efforts by NPS.
- Kipp provided an update on the results of FWC's mark/resighting techniques using radio telemetry and road kill data at the October meeting.
- The Team is recommending expanding the Population Subteam to form a panther Inventory and Monitoring Subteam. Robin Boughton will continue to be this Subteam's liaison to the Team. There will be more discussion about this on the June teleconference.
- The FWS South Florida office updated its website with the current best estimate of the FL panther population as 100-180 animals.

Range Expansion & Reintroduction Potential

- Kipp provided overview of the Bleiker workshop results at the October meeting.
- Laurie presented an overview of the summary document from the Human Dimensions of Carnivore Conservation meeting at White Oak Plantation in 2010 at the October meeting.
- The Defenders of Wildlife brochure about recognizing the FL panther is posted on the Recovery Team website.
- Dawn and Larry held a teleconference with Jacki Lopez (CBD) and Alexis Meyer (Sierra Club) on Nov 5th to discuss their ideas about a FL Panther "Forum" (now "Symposium") to be held March 21, 2014.
- Dawn talked with Darrell Land about providing the FL panther "roadshow" information to FWS refuges and ES offices in FL. He already had planned to do so.
- Dawn, Larry and Kipp discussed the implications of using ESA section 10(j) for panther reintroduction with DOI solicitor Mike Stevens on Nov 14th. Insights from that discussion will be provided at the January meeting.
- Kipp and Laurie led the discussion about the creation of a FL Panther Stakeholder Forum at the January meeting.
- Dawn provided an overview at the January meeting of the various USFWS tools from the draft Decision Matrix (now Alternative Options Matrix) as possible incentives for landowners in areas where panthers could repatriate.
- Bob Frakes (USFWS) presented a summary of his FL panther habitat model to the team at the January meeting. Although the model focused primarily on habitat in the Primary, Secondary and Dispersal zones, it also showed areas just north of the Caloosahatchee River (Expansion Zone) that would be suitable for panthers.

- Laurie provided a list of NGO representatives for several of the Team members to meet with to get feedback about the Alternative Options matrix prior to the public Forum.
- Dawn consulted with the Service's solicitor (Vicki Mott) about the section 10(a)(1)(A) permit issued as part of a SHA for take under different circumstances. Vicki is conducting additional research on the use of a SHA with baseline of zero or near zero.
- Dawn talked with supervisors and staff in the South Florida Ecological Services Office about consultations on panthers north of the Caloosahatchee River. They are consulting in an area they designated as the Primary Dispersal / Expansion Zone.
- Dawn has held numerous conversations with the Service's Regional Office and Washington Office, including solicitors about developing Safe Harbor Agreements for panthers north of the Caloosahatchee River.
- Dawn talked with Julie Morris about landowners north of the Caloosahatchee River to invite to preliminary stakeholder meetings and to the public forum.
- Dawn prepared the list of invitees (landowners and NGOs) and designated Team members to participate in the preliminary discussions about the PES concept and Alternative Actions Matrix.
- The Alternative Options "Matrix" document has been vetted to stakeholder groups and a brief overview of these options was presented at the public forum on May 22nd. Stakeholder comments are currently being addressed. Dawn Jennings, Team liaison, is the lead for this effort.

Recovery Criteria

- Dawn visited with Madon Oli to discuss the spatially-explicit individually-based model that he is developing.
- Madan Oli and Madelon van de Kerk presented information on a previous panther demographic model and on the early results of an individual-based model at the October meeting.
- Kipp and Robin recommended potential members for a "Panther Population" Subteam and prepared a purpose statement for the subteam. The subteam will help determine the most credible, well supported estimate of the FL panther population based on current data. They will also help the agencies with messaging that information.

Vehicular Mortality

- The Team selected potential members for appointment to a Transportation Subteam at the March meeting. We included a representative from the Metropolitan Planning Organization Laurie drafted a purpose statement for this subteam.
- Dawn prepared appointment letters for potential subteam members. *We are waiting for the RD's signature and notification of members to schedule the first meeting.*

FL Panther Public Forum

- Dawn prepared the agenda for the Public Forum and worked with Ken Warren and Carli Segelson for the announcements to stakeholders, local governments and legislative staff.
- The Panther Public Forum was held on May 22nd at Archbold Biological Station and 62 stakeholders attended (excluding FWC or FWS staff). The purpose of the Forum was to provide a venue for information exchange with the public about what the Recovery Implementation Team has been working on with respect to incentives for private landowners. We presented information about the PES concept and the FWS alternative options for landowners north of the Caloosahatchee River to help prepare them for panther range expansion.
- Notes from Public Forum were finalized.
- Presentations made at the Public Forum are posted on the Recovery Team website.