

News Release
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Eastern Collier Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan
and Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Available for Public Review and Comment**

VERO BEACH, Fla. – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking public comments on a group of landowners' plan to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to Florida panthers and 18 other federally and state protected species in eastern Collier County, Florida in conjunction with their plans to build residential and commercial developments, and conduct earth mining there.

Public comments will be considered on the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and associated draft Environmental Impact Statement (dEIS) for the proposed development over the next 45 days. A final decision whether to issue an incidental take permit (ITP) to the applicants will follow.

The HCP is a flexible conservation planning tool that is part of an application for an ITP from the Service available through the ESA. The duration requested for this permit is 50 years from the date of issuance.

The dEIS is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and discusses the purpose and need for this action, alternatives to the action, and provides evidence and analysis of impacts. The NEPA process concludes when the final EIS is completed and the Record of Decision is issued.

The public is invited to view the HCP and dEIS, and submit comments on them for up to 45 days. Written comments can be submitted by one of the following methods:

1. Internet: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2018-0079.
2. Hard Copy: Via U.S. mail or hand-delivery to Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R4-ES-2018-0079; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters, MS: BPHC; 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

Links to the HCP and dEIS can be also viewed on our webpage at: <https://www.fws.gov/verobeach/>

More information is available at: <http://easterncollierhpcpeis.com/>

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