

New Guidelines for Gopher Tortoise Relocation

New gopher tortoise Permitting Guidelines have been implemented by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) for the relocation of gopher tortoises. With tortoises being upgraded from a species of special concern to a threatened species, the plan is geared to eliminate tortoise mortalities during development. Under the new permitting guidelines, FWC has created an authorized agent permit. The agent will be able to assist developers with permitting and relocating gopher tortoises. The new guidelines also eliminated the Incidental Take Option and increased FWC fees associated with relocation. They also increased the permit turnaround time to upwards of 90 days and changed the requirements of on-site and off-site relocations.

Significant changes were also made to the relocation methods and cursory health examination. Some of the changes include using soil from the bottom of burrow in the relocation container, soaking for 20-30 minutes and examining the eyes, skin and shell during relocation. FWC has also implemented a disinfection protocol which includes using hand sanitizers or 60% ethyl alcohol and cleaning equipment (containers, shovels and backhoe bucket) using a 5% to 10% bleach solution.



The new guidelines are designed to encourage relocation of gopher tortoises to protected recipient sites because the tortoises will have a better chance of continuing the species. These guidelines also provide incentives for landowners who qualify for having their land certified as Recipient Sites for displaced gopher tortoises. The main goal for these guidelines and incentives is to prolong the survival of the species. In addition, the guidelines address other gopher tortoise issues including conservation permitting (protected and unprotected areas), temporary exclusion, emergency takings, and settlement permits.

For more detailed information and assistance with the FWC's updated gopher tortoise rules, please contact Doug Powers, Project Scientist, at dpowers@esciencesinc.com or by telephone at (407) 481-9006.

U.S. EPA ISSUES LONG AWAITED RULES FOR SPCC REQUIREMENTS

The U.S. EPA issued a final Spill Prevention and Countermeasure Controls (SPCC) rulemaking in late November 2008 that includes important compliance information for facilities that store petroleum products in aboveground tanks. The final rule provides facilities with new flexibility in meeting SPCC plan revisions that must be implemented in 2009, and will make compliance with SPCC revisions more streamlined and cost-effective. In addition to the final rulemaking, the EPA simultaneously issued a proposed rule that extends by four months (from July 1, 2009 to November 30, 2009) the date by which revised SPCC plans must be in place. Another final rulemaking issued on the same day restores a narrower definition of *navigable waters* under the SPCC regulations which avoids added regulatory burdens on facilities with bulk plants. Contact Jeff Peters, P.G., jpeters@esciencesinc.com or Nadia Locke, P.E., nlocke@esciencesinc.com for details.

TEAM WITH US! *E Sciences was recently selected to provide Continuing Environmental Assessment, Testing, and Remediation services for the City of Orlando; was on both winning teams awarded the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority's Systemwide Construction Engineering Services contract; and E Sciences has teamed with Infrastructure Engineers to support FDOT District 5 with the District's Districtwide Bridge Concept Development contract. To discuss teaming opportunities for your next winning project, contact Pam Stewart, Marketing Professional, at pstewart@esciencesinc.com or by phone at (407) 481-9006.*

Wetland and Listed Species Habitat Restoration at Pal Mar East - Nine Gems Parcel

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E Sciences, working with the South Florida Water Management District, prepared the restoration design plans and obtained the permits from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Army Corps of Engineers for wetland and listed species habitat restoration at Pal Mar East - Nine Gems parcel, a 2,886-acre parcel located in southern Martin County between County Road 711 and Florida's Turnpike.

The objective of the project is to enhance and restore lost hydrologic and biologic function to a mosaic of flatwoods, wet prairie, depression marshes and sloughs that had been drained and disturbed for both native range and improved pasture cattle grazing. Site plans include invasive species control, prescribed burning and hydrology modifications to restore hydrology and habitat for this wildlife management area. Regionally, the purchase of Pal-Mar East by SFWMD provides the central link in a 125,000-acre greenbelt extending from Jonathan Dickinson Park to the DuPuis Management area that will ultimately connect to the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail via a mile-wide connector corridor.

Pal-Mar East encompasses most of the lands that are missing to complete the mile-wide wildlife and water management corridor.

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