Did you know?
In May 2010, three Florida panthers were killed in a three-day period.

Florida’s panther, the state animal, is one of the most endangered mammals living in the United States. Today its estimated population ranges from 100 to 160.

RADS provides early warning to drivers about the presence of large animals nearing the highway. Motorists can reduce their speed and be more prepared for animals crossing the roadway in this segment of US 41.

For more information please contact:

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FDOT is using grant money ($450,000) to monitor RADS’ operation. A two-year monitoring period began early in 2013 that involves on-scene review as well as data collection from trail cameras and sensors.

Staff with the University of Central Florida’s biology department will record where and when RADS detects animals within the project segment, frequency of the system’s activation, and wildlife species detected. Staff will analyze data and information collected and will report findings to FDOT in late 2015.

Benefits

Research has shown RADS to be effective in reducing vehicle collisions with large wildlife in other areas of the United States. This $450,000 RADS project is intended to assist in the reduction of vehicle-wildlife collisions in this area and also to reduce fatalities and injuries to people and animals.

RADS also will improve habitat connectivity for large wildlife species like the Florida panther, white-tailed deer, Florida black bear and other large wildlife. RADS costs less than construction of other wildlife crossings used in Florida and, with no fencing associated with the system, minimizes effects to the environment.

Project partners and history

US Fish and Wildlife Service and Defenders of Wildlife partnered together to obtain enhancement grant funding through FDOT for this project. Other partners who helped develop the project included Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, University of Central Florida and Montana State University’s Western Transportation Institute.

An information workshop on July 30, 2009, offered the public an opportunity to discuss wildlife crossings along US 41 from Bass Road to Turner River Road with the department.

After reviewing comments received and evaluating different options, FDOT determined two approaches could provide wildlife protection in this area. One project, completed first, installed panther advisory signs with flashers in this segment of US 41. The second project designed and installed RADS. The system became operational in January 2012.

RADS recently installed on US 41