

MEMORANDUM

Florida Department of Transportation
District Seven Environmental Management Office - MS 7-500

DATE: May 28, 2003
TO: Mike Seifert
FROM: Todd Mecklenborg
COPIES: Dan Kelly, File
SUBJECT: SR 50 (Mariner Blvd. to Suncoast Parkway)
WPI Seg. No. 407951 1

Field surveys were conducted for the proposed roadway improvements and the potential stormwater pond locations during the month of May. The field reconnaissance's quantified potential wetland impacts from the conceptual mainline improvements and any involvement with listed species. The results are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Because of the conceptual nature of the design and scale of the aerials, wetland boundaries adjacent to the corridor were not delineated on the plan sheets. However, there are very few wetlands along the corridor. With the possible exception of culvert extensions, no wetland involvement is anticipated. There is a small isolated wetland on the north side of the roadway near the intersection of CR 485 and SR 50. It is adjacent to the proposed right-of-way located within parcel number 98 on sheet 19 of 29. It appears from the aerials that the wetland lies outside of the proposed right-of-way.

No federally protected threatened or endangered species were observed along the study corridor. Two state listed "Species of Special Concern" occur within the project limits. The *Gopherus polyphemus* (gopher tortoise) and the *Sciurus niger shermani* (Sherman's fox squirrel) are the species that were encountered during the field survey events. Active gopher tortoise burrows were observed along the mainline in the northeast quadrants of Sunshine Grove Road (sheet 9 of 29) and Fort Dade Avenue (21 of 29). In addition, active gopher tortoise burrows were observed in stormwater pond basins C, E north, E south, F south, and G. Coordination with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will need to be initiated during the final design/permitting phase.

July 17, 2003

Mr. Don Palmer
US Fish and Wildlife Service
6620 Southpoint Drive South, Suite 310
Jacksonville, FL 32216

RE: WPI Seg. No. 407951 1/FAP No. 300-1(7)
SR 50, from US 19 (SR 55) to the east intersection of SR 50/SR 50A, Hernando County

Dear Mr. Palmer:

The Florida Department of Transportation is conducting a reevaluation on a previously approved Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study. The proposed actions involve widening SR 50 (Cortez Boulevard), from the existing 4-lane roadway to a 6-lane roadway, from US 19 to the eastern intersection of SR 50/SR 50A for an approximate distance of 13.7 miles. The widening will occur within the existing right-of-way with the exception of a few minor acquisitions to accommodate sidewalks and intersections improvements. A project location map, recommended roadway typical sections, and aerials depicting the existing right-of-way and proposed acquisitions are included with this transmittal.

This proposed project has been evaluated for impacts on federally protected threatened and endangered species. Based on the results of the literature review and field surveys conducted, the Department has concluded that no federally listed threatened or endangered species will be affected by the proposed improvements. Furthermore, the proposed project is not located in an area designated as Critical Habitat by the US Department of Interior. Therefore, the Department on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration has determined that the proposed actions will have "No Effect" with any federally protected threatened or endangered species.

If your office concurs with this determination, please respond to the Department in writing at your earliest convenience. If your agency would like a site review or any additional information, please feel free to call me at (813) 975-6457.

Sincerely,

Mr. Todd Mecklenborg
Biologist