



Draft management plans overview May 2007

This presentation will provide a high level review of FWC's listing process, how the management plans were developed, and what they are intended to do. Today we will present revised draft management plans for the Florida manatee, Panama City crayfish, and the gopher tortoise. The fourth species currently in the management plan phase of the listing process is the bald eagle. The first draft of the bald eagle plan is currently open for public comment and we plan to revise that draft and bring it to the September meeting.

Process overview

- Phase I – Biological status review
 - Recommendations approved June 2006
- Phase II – Management plan development
 - With approval of plans, reclassification goes into effect



In April 2005, FWC adopted a revised listing process and directed staff to proceed with Phase I of the listing process for four species that had petitions on hold while the process was being revised. FWC staff receives petitions for listing or reclassifying species, determines if the petitions are sufficient, and if the request is warranted, staff then seeks approval from the Commission to proceed with Phase I. The first phase of our listing process consists of the biological status review which is conducted by a panel of scientists, chaired by a FWC biologist. The panel evaluates data about the species against the five listing criteria and makes a recommendation that is then peer-reviewed by independent scientists. Staff brought the recommendations for all four species to the June 2006 meeting where all reclassification recommendations were approved by the Commission. The Commission then directed staff to proceed with Phase II of listing which is development of a management plan. The reclassification of the species does not occur until rules in the management plan are approved. Each phase of the process can take six months to a year or more. It is important to note that our new listing process now allows us to develop rules and protections that will best allow Florida to conserve the individual species. In the past, listing status conferred protection under blanket rules and prohibitions for each listing category. Having clear separation of listing status from protections allows more flexibility and for us to tailor our approaches to the species and the needs of the public.

Reclassification summary

- Manatee
 - Endangered to Threatened
- Panama City Crayfish
 - Special Concern to Threatened
- Gopher Tortoise
 - Special Concern to Threatened



The biological review panels for each species made reclassification recommendations. In June 2006, the Commission determined that these recommendations were warranted and directed staff to proceed with development of the management plans. A threatened species is defined by our rule as a species with a very high risk of extinction.

Process overview

- Draft plans developed according to standardized template developed by staff
 - 45+ day public comment period
- Draft plans revised
 - 45+ day public comment period ends June 14
- Presented today for Commission review
- Final plans presented for approval at a future meeting



FWC's management plan process is summarized here. The draft plans were developed by a team ranging from 5 to 8 members after a minimum 45-day public comment period to solicit input as to what needed to be included in the plan. Specific emphasis in the solicitation was for information relating to social and economic factors.

The management plan teams spent at least six months developing the plans and most met several times monthly in person or via tele- or video-conference. Plans were developed based on a template created by staff last June that included all topics required by rule. The template provided for a standardized approach for all the plans under development. Editors were hired to ensure readability and to help comply with the governor's new plain speak initiative.

Once the plans were drafted they were released for a minimum 45-day public comment period and then revised based on input.

Staff will finalize the plans and bring the final plans back to the Commission for approval and adoption.

Public input

- Received prior to plan development
- Public comment on draft plan
- Public comment on revised draft
 - closes June 14
- May – public workshops
- Final public comment at Sept. meeting



Our listing rule requires public input on the management plans before and during the process. We solicited input from June-August 2006 as to what should be included in each of the plans to conserve the species and ecological, social, and economic impacts that needed to be considered. Draft plans were produced by FWC staff with significant input from stakeholders and the public. The first drafts were released for 45+ days of public comment in November (the Florida manatee) and February (the gopher tortoise and Panama City crayfish). Press releases were sent out when each public comment period opened in order to generate interest in the plans. Staff decided to add an additional public comment period when the revised drafts were released. This additional public comment period closes June 14. Public workshops were held for all three plans in May to solicit input. Staff directly contacted many of our partnering government agencies to encourage them to provide input on the revised draft plans.

As the plans were developed, each of the teams had a stakeholder group that they consulted and through which, ideas were refined and vetted. In summary, staff received a tremendous amount of input through formal written comments as well as through interactive dialogue with individuals and groups in order to create these plans.

Stakeholder involvement – gopher tortoise

- GT Stakeholder Group
 - 100+ members
 - Steering committee of 10 interest groups
 - 2 reps each + alternates
 - Met approximately monthly since Aug. 2006, less frequently prior to that
 - Facilitated by Perran Ross and attended by Greg Holder and occasionally team members
- Public Comment
 - Received comments from 2000+ people
 - Public workshop May 2007



Stakeholder involvement – Florida manatee

- Manatee forum
 - June 2006, provided input about what should be in the plan
 - November 2006, reviewed first draft of the plan
 - April 2007, reviewed revised draft
- Staff met one-on-one with individual stakeholders
- Public comment – 1,400+ comments from individuals
- Public workshop May 2007



Stakeholder involvement – Panama City crayfish

- Invited stakeholders in Bay County to participate
 - Reps from state, county, municipalities, power companies, developers, environmental organizations
- Met seven times during plan development
- Public workshops Dec. 2006 and May 2007
- Public comment – 28 comments received
- Significant local outreach by Regional Director



Conservation blueprints

- Plans for Florida
 - Not staff plans!
 - Represent best available science and are conservation blueprints not prescriptions
 - Most of our management challenges are adaptive as opposed to technical which means periodic assessments and changes will be needed
 - Reviewed every five years
 - Plans contain accountability measures and benchmarks



These plans are conservation blueprints that will direct management activities for the species

The plans are not staff plans – they have been developed with significant stakeholder interaction and input. Implementation of the plans will require active partnerships in order to conserve the species in Florida. FWC staff recognizes they cannot manage Florida’s wildlife alone.

Plans call for review every five years but can be sooner if warranted

The plans have measures associated with the conservation objectives that will demonstrate progress towards reaching the species goal defined in the plan.

Commissioner action

- First meeting
 - Provide approval to proceed with developing rules
 - Provide guidance on finalizing plan
 - Provide direction as to when to bring final plan to Commission for approval
- Second meeting
 - Approve rules in management plan
 - Approve management plan



This summarizes the actions required of commissioners regarding these plans. Today staff will be seeking direction on finalizing the plans and also when the final plans should be brought to the Commission for approval.

Staff recommendation

- Revisions to the management plans will be brought to the Commission for consideration.



- For additional information, visit [My FWC.com](http://MyFWC.com)

Once the final plans are approved, staff anticipates that modifications may, on occasion, be required prior to the built-in five year review. Several stakeholders have asked what the procedure will be for changing the plans before the five year review. Staff is recommending that revisions to the management plans be brought to the Commission for consideration.