

Tropical Audubon Society *The Voice of Conservation in South Florida*

VIA EMAIL

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D.D.S.

January 15, 2010
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Collier County

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3301 E. Tamiami Trail
Naples, FL 34112

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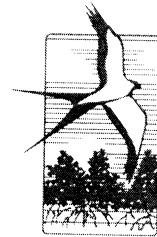
RE: PETITION CP 2009-01: PETITION TO AMEND THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT AND COMPANION FUTURE LAND USE MAP BY CREATING THE "DADE-COLLIER CYPRESS RECREATION AREA DISTRICT" IN THE CONSERVATION DESIGNATION OF THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN [GMP]

Dear Commissioners:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Tropical Audubon Society in opposition to the above described petition. The proposed amendment to allow certain uses of the lands in Collier County suffers from several flaws:

1. The site is an important habitat for endangered species, including the Florida panther. Uses of the site by off-road vehicles will be particularly disruptive to that species and will continue to push it to extinction.
2. The proposed use favors the few over the many. The operation of ORV's on this site will necessarily preclude its enjoyment by others: birdwatchers, butterflywatchers, and those that enjoy the "peace and quiet" of nature.
3. ORV use on the subject land is inconsistent with Dade County's (and we assume Collier County's) interest in conserving natural resources. There is no good reason for ORV use to be encouraged on natural lands and continued use will cause irrevocably damage to the site by adversely impacting soils, vegetation (inviting exotic plant invasion) and the ecosystem generally. For a true picture of the impact of ORV's, see "ORV Impacts on Vegetation in Big Cypress National Preserve" (http://www.crms.uga.edu/big_cypress_orv_impact.htm#orv1). Also please see pp. 130, 194, 236, 246, and 397 of the GMPA Application for Dade-Collier Cypress Recreation Area (June 2009).
4. Finally, we believe that to encourage the use of ORV's on the subject site will only invite disaster and create liability. ORV use is inherently hazardous. Despite what may be the best laid plans of policing such activities in this remote section of Collier County, Dade County, if charged with such duties, has neither the financial wherewithal nor the political will to provide appropriate levels of law enforcement or emergency services. Collier County, as well as the property owner, will be "hailed into court" when the inevitable personal injuries occur at the site. Why would you allow Dade County the opportunity to make mischief in Collier County?

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We encourage you to reject the proposed amendment to the GMP. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Reynolds". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name.

Laura Reynolds
Executive Director
Tropical Audubon Society
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tropicalaudubon@gmail.com