

Southeast Region

USFWS Regional Director James Pulliam Jr. signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) based on a final environmental assessment of the Florida panther captive breeding program. This clears the way for the USFWS to issue permits which will allow panthers to be captured and held for captive breeding purposes. Permit issuance was anticipated 30 days after the December 19 publication of the FONSI in the **Federal Register**. However, the process was delayed when the Fund for Animals filed suit to suspend permit issuance until completion of a full environmental impact statement. A meeting of the Technical Subcommittee of the Florida Panther Interagency Committee was held in mid-January to plan implementation of the first phases of the captive breeding program.

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The first annual Mammoth Cave Karst Research Conference was held on December 17 and 18 at Mammoth Cave NP. Sixteen people, including Joe Meiman and Martin Ryan of the MACA staff, presented papers on various subjects relating to Karst hydrology. At the close, the group recommended topics and format for future conferences.

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Zandy Hillis, Resource Management Specialist at Buck Island Reef National Monument (BUIR), is looking for radio telemetry equipment to use on a hawksbill turtle tracking project. If anyone has receivers, antennas, headsets or other tracking equipment they would be willing to loan or transfer to BUIR, please contact Zandy at 809 773-1460.