

Florida Panther Payment for Ecosystem Services Pilot Program Application

Welcome!

Over half of Florida's lands are privately owned, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recognizes the essential role these lands play in providing wildlife habitat. The FWC's Landowner Assistance Program (LAP) offers technical support to help landowners maintain and enhance these lands for wildlife.

This application is for consideration for the FWC's Florida Panther Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) Pilot Program, a 3-year initiative providing financial rewards to private landowners managing high-quality panther habitat.

Enrollment is competitive based on the location, amount and quality of panther habitat, as well as funding. To determine if your property is eligible, please refer to the requirements listed below.

For further program information or application assistance, please contact program staff at PES@MyFWC.com. The application period is open until October 19, 2024.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, the area considered:

- Must have at least 500 acres of contiguous property* located in one of the 17 counties (see figure 1 below). **Applicants have the flexibility to determine which contiguous acres of their property they would like to enroll in the program.*
- Must be within 2-miles of the Florida Wildlife Corridor* (Florida Ecological Greenways Network Priority 1-3 lands) **Please contact FWC staff if you are unsure if you meet this requirement.*
- Must meet all of the following habitat criteria:
 - Minimum of 10% native forest cover
 - Maximum of 70% open habitat
 - No more than 25% of property dominated by invasive plants.
- Must be owned by a non-governmental entity (private individuals, for-profit organization, or non-profit organization) or American Indian Tribe for private or commercial use.

- May be held under a conservation easement, except if part of an existing easement is required to mitigate loss of wildlife habitat.

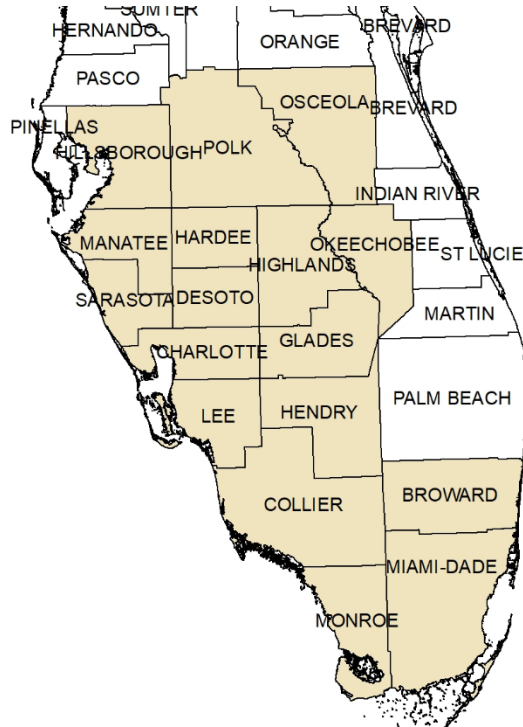


Figure 1: Counties eligible for program enrollment.

Exceptions to the criteria may be considered on a case-to-case basis.

In proceeding with the application, please have the following available for reference: the landowners' contact information and the parcel identification number(s) for FWC to verify ownership.

Applicant Information

First Name	Last Name	
Entity Name		
Mailing Address		
City	State	Zip
Email		
Primary Phone	Alternate Phone	

Preliminary Eligibility Questions

Please check the boxes that best fit your answer.

1. Is the land owned by a non-governmental entity (private individuals, for-profit organization, or non-profit organization) or American Indian Tribe for private or commercial use?
Yes No
2. Is your land located in one of the following counties: Broward, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Osceola, Polk, or Sarasota?
Yes No
3. Does your property fall within the 2-mile radius of the Florida Wildlife Corridor?
Yes No
4. Does the area that you would like to have enrolled in the Panther PES Pilot Program contain no more than 25% non-native invasive plants (Florida Invasive Species Council Category I and II plants including non-herbaceous and cogongrass)?
Yes No
5. Annual assessments will be made to determine habitat quality prior to giving out financial compensation. Will you allow FWC staff on your property for these assessments?
Yes No
6. Does the area that you would like to have enrolled in the Panther PES Pilot Program contain at least 10% native forest (pineland, hardwood forest, wetland forest, etc.)?
Yes No
7. Does the area that you would like to be enrolled in the Panther PES Pilot Program fall outside the boundary of a currently recorded conservation easement that was required to mitigate habitat or species impacts?
Yes No
8. Is the area that you would like to have enrolled in the Panther PES Pilot Program at least 500 acres of contiguous habitat?
Yes No

Supporting Questions and Materials

Requested materials will help FWC biologists better understand your area.

9. Would you be interested in allowing FWC to set up wildlife cameras to capture panther images during the contract period in exchange for financial compensation?

Yes No

10. What is/are the major land use(s) for this entire property?

Cattle Operation Row Crop Timberland Citrus
Hunting / recreation Wildlife Habitat Other

11. In the time that you have owned your property, have you experienced cattle depredations that you suspect were due to panthers?

Yes No

Property and Additional Landowner Information

If the property is owned by a group, only one member may submit application for the property, but all landowners must be listed on the application.

FWC verifies ownership using parcel data found at the county property appraiser's website. If there is an ownership discrepancy between the application and the property appraiser, then proof of ownership may be requested.

Property Information

Property/Farm/Ranch Name	
Street Address	
City	County
Parcel Number(s)*	
Total Acreage	Proposed # acres to enroll in PES

*Please provide the parcel numbers you would like to enroll, either in part or in full.

Landowner #2 (if applicable)

First Name	Last Name	
Mailing Address		
City	State	Zip
Email		
Primary Phone	Alternate Phone	

Landowner #3 (if applicable)

First Name	Last Name	
Mailing Address		
City	State	Zip
Email		
Primary Phone	Alternate Phone	

Applicant Statement

By signing this Application for the Panther PES Pilot Program, I attest to the following, in favor of the FWC:

1. I verify that there are not pending legal disputes regarding the boundary or ownership of the described property and that said property is under my lawful ownership or control.
2. For the proposed tract, I am the:
 - Sole Owner
 - Co-Owner
 - Legal Representative
3. I certify that participation, by me or on behalf with FWC's Landowner Assistance Program, is not fraudulent or otherwise illegal.
4. I understand that any false statement herein may subject my property to ineligibility to the program.

5. FWC access to the property listed above will be obtained only with prior permission.
6. I authorize/do not authorize FWC to collect incidental observations of threatened and endangered plant and animals' species. Information collected will be used to guide management recommendations and fill critical data gaps regarding the state's wildlife resources. *

**Participation in the Panther PES Pilot Program is voluntary and receiving technical assistance is not contingent on your authorizing FWC to collect incidental observations. No observations of threatened or endangered species will be collected without your authorization.*

Authorize Do not Authorize

7. I acknowledge that participation in FWC programs is subject to public records requests per Florida Public Records Law, Chapter 119 Florida Statutes.
8. I will abide by all applicable state, federal, and local laws.
9. I acknowledge that none of the applicable areas are lands in conservation easements that are considered ineligible due to the purpose of the easement conflicting with the goals of the Panther PES Pilot Program, and any existing easement is not required to mitigate loss of wildlife habitat.
10. easement is not required to mitigate loss of wildlife habitat.

Applicant Acknowledgement

Yes, I attest to the preceding conditions.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

How to Submit this Application

To submit your completed application, either hand to your local **Landowner Assistance Program biologist**, scan and email to PES@MyFWC.com, or mail to PES Coordinator, 1875 Orange Ave. East, Tallahassee, FL, 32311.

Please note that applications are due by October 19, 2024.

If you have any questions or need assistance in completing the application, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team at PES@MyFWC.com.