

Eric Fryson

From: Matthew Schwartz [matthew3222@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, July 02, 2012 6:32 PM
To: Filings@psc.state.fl.us; Records Clerk
Cc: Eric Fryson
Subject: Re: FW: FW: FPL 10 Year Site Plan
Attachments: SFWA Comments on FPL 10 Year Site Plan.doc
Please see attached.

Sincerely,

Matthew Schwartz
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South Florida Wildlands Association
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**SOUTH FLORIDA
WILDLANDS ASSOCIATION**

P.O. Box 30211
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33303

July 2, 2012

Dear Florida Public Service Commission:

South Florida Wildlands Association was recently informed that Florida Power and Light (FPL) has included the Hendry County energy center (potential site #4 - Hendry County) in its 2012 Ten Year Power Plant Site Plan submitted to the Florida Public Services Commission. on April 2, 2012.

Our organization has a longstanding objection to the location of this plant which has been brought up on numerous occasions. We objected when the proposal was first brought to the Hendry County Planning and Zoning Board in 2011. When the board transmitted their approval to the full commission, we again objected to the commission prior to their vote approving the re-zoning that would make this project possible. We also attended a meeting organized by Laurie McDonald of the Defenders of Wildlife between FPL and representatives of numerous local and national environmental organizations. We again stressed that this particular site for a 3,750 MW gas fired power plant was completely unacceptable to our organization no matter what steps the utility takes to "mitigate" the damage. We have sent action alerts to our membership on this issue (opposing the project) and our views have been covered by the news media (e.g. The Sun-Sentinel and Fox4 television in southwest Florida).

Our objections fall into the following categories:

1. According the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), all but 6 of the more than 3000 acres purchased by FPL for this project fall in the primary habitat zone of the critically endangered Florida panther. Panthers have been dying in record numbers as the population expands into ever shrinking habitat. Not only will this destroy and degrade a certain amount of habitat on site, but the impacts on panthers and their prey in the surrounding area from an industrial project of this magnitude are unknown (but extremely likely to be negative). FWS has provided us with GIS maps which indicate numerous instances of both roadkill and "intra-specific" aggression (panther on panther fights to the death) both in and around the FPL property (at least 3 panthers have been killed on a section of CR 833 bordering the property. Telemetry shows a great deal of panther occupancy and state FWC maps of collared panthers indicate that the property and the surrounding area is one of the most important - if not the most important - in the entire state for the species.

The former property owner, prior to selling the property to FPL, wrote a letter to the

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FWS asking for help putting a conservation easement on the property. In that letter, Mr. Eddie Garcia stressed the property's importance to the panther and numerous other listed and non-listed animals on site (e.g. black bear, crested caracara, eastern indigo snake).

2. The property is currently completely rural and is surrounded by - or in a nexus of - either public lands (e.g. the Big Cypress National Preserve, Dinner Island WMA, OK Slough State Forest, etc.) or lands which have been long sought by Florida Forever for protection. The entire McDaniels Ranch was always expected to have a conservation easement on it - and was in fact included in a Florida Forever project named "Panther Glades". The McDaniels property was considered an "essential" part of that project. The FPL projected energy center will not only degrade the value of nearby public lands, but will introduce development into a still completely rural section of south Florida. Leaving the Seminole Reservation to the south - one encounters virtually no development until one arrives at either Clewiston to the north or Immokalee to the southwest. The area is completely rural. The history of development in south Florida shows that projects like this will not long stand in isolation. Development follows development. In this case - the project alone is enough to cause significant harm to the panther. Further development of the area - including widened roads and increased traffic - would simply be unacceptable.
3. The Hendry County plant would be a virtual twin of the West County Energy Center in Palm Beach County. It is completely unacceptable for a massive utility to be built in such close proximity to a location like the Big Cypress National Preserve Addition Lands (just a few miles to the south). Emissions in the form of CO2 but also other pollutants are massive and will clearly degrade what the Big Cypress National Preserve resident botanist - Dr. Jim Burch - has referred to as the most biodiverse piece of land in the entire continental United States. Numerous other scientific papers attest to the diversity of flora and fauna nearby to the FPL Hendry County site. It should also be noted that the waters in the preserve are considered "outstanding Florida waters". That is a resource that clearly needs to be preserved in the condition it is now in.
4. In their Ten Year Plan, FPL has said that their plant will utilize up to 7.5 MGD (million gallons per day) per unit. With three units, that would a total of 22.5 MGD from water that currently makes its way not only to the Seminole Reservation, but to the Big Cypress National Preserve. This is about 7 million gallons a day more than is used by a major municipality like Pembroke Pines in Broward Count and is an unacceptably high amount of water to be drawn from this critical location.
5. There are numerous numbers of alternative sites (not far from the chosen site) for this Hendry County plant which would have far fewer ecological consequences. At the meeting with environmentalists, FPL representatives said that the fact that an existing power corridor existed on the north end of the property was a "major

consideration". However, semi-developed and already industrial sites outside the towns of Clewiston, LaBelle, or Immokalee could be easily connected by power corridor and contain available lands that contain far fewer ecological considerations. The "convenience" of a power corridor should not be an excuse for causing irrevocable damage to the one of the most important natural areas left in south Florida.

Time does not allow us to go into numerous other reasons why the FPL plant should not be built at this location. We will send additional information as time allows. Please do not hesitate with any questions or comments regarding this submission.

Thank you for your time and have a very good holiday.

Sincerely,

s/ Matthew R. Schwartz

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