



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2004:071

SUPPORT OF MICCOSUKEE TRIBAL POSITION TO REMOVE AND RELOCATE NUISANCE PANTHERS FROM LOOP ROAD, MICCOSUKEE RESERVED AREA, AND PINECREST AREAS

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-four (24) federally recognized tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida have lived in peace and harmony with nature in South Florida since time immemorial; and
- WHEREAS,** the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service ("Agencies") have been involved in the Florida Panther Project to promote and save the endangered Florida Panther from extinction; and
- WHEREAS,** these Agencies felt they could not save the Florida Panther so they introduced Texas Cougars which look like the Florida Panther; and
- WHEREAS,** the introduction of the Texas Cougar has produced a Texas Cougar/Florida Panther cross which is predominately Texas Cougar (60 to 65%) that within a short time (< 10 years) will result in the extinction of the Florida Panther in the wild; and
- WHEREAS,** these cross-bred animals are not true Florida Panthers and do not exhibit the physical and behavioral characteristics of the Florida Panther; and
- WHEREAS,** a female cougar/panther cross had three kittens, one was killed on US 41 near Willie Jim's Camp, the other panther/cougars roam on Loop Road in the Pinecrest area, the Corn Dance site, six Indian Villages, and adjacent to the Miccosukee Reserved Area; and
- WHEREAS,** these panthers have exhibited no fear of humans, have had numerous close encounters with humans, and pose an imminent immediate threat to the safety of the Miccosukee people, their children, the non-Indian residents of Loop Road, tourists, and campers; and
- WHEREAS,** there have been recent attacks on humans out west by mountain lions/cougars which have resulted in severe injury and death; and
- WHEREAS,** the Agencies had no contingency plan in place for cougars/panthers which threaten and/or pose a threat to humans, even though the panther populations have more than tripled in South Florida; and
- WHEREAS,** the cougars/panthers were seen at the Corn Dance site, during the Green Corn Dance, the most important traditional, religious ceremony of the Miccosukee Tribe, Seminole Tribe, and independent Indians; and
- WHEREAS,** the Agencies, at the behest of the Miccosukee Tribe, the Corn Dance Coordinating Council, and Corn Dance participants reluctantly relocated one of the juvenile panthers which was staying at the Corn Dance Site during the Green Corn Dance; and
- WHEREAS,** the Agencies to this date are reluctant to take this threat seriously, have yet to consider removing the remaining two panthers, and continue to refuse to implement aversive conditioning to chase the panthers away from human habitation; therefore, be it

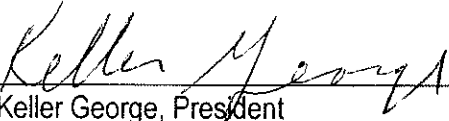
"Because there is strength in Unity"

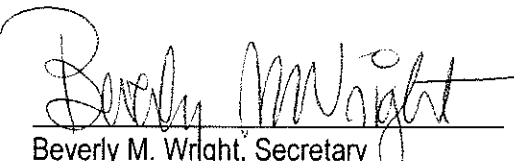
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RESOLVED that the USET Board of Directors supports the following Miccosukee Tribal Positions: (1) calling for removal and relocation of the remaining nuisance/aggressive cougars/panthers immediately, (2) development/implementation of a contingency plan requiring aversive conditioning of any cougar/panther found within ½ mile of residences, Indian Villages, and the Corn Dance site located on Loop Road and US 41; (3) that all cougars/panthers in southern Big Cypress National Preserve and Northern Everglades National Park be collared and tagged immediately with frequency numbers; and (4) provide frequency numbers to the Miccosukee Tribe for monitoring purposes.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Semi-Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Hollywood, FL, Thursday, June 17, 2004.


Keller George, President
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.


Beverly M. Wright, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Big Cypress National Preserve
HCR 61, Box 110
Ochopee, Florida 34141-9710



IN REPLY REFER TO:

N1621 (BICY-S)

August 20, 2004

*cc Jeffery
Libb
Chai Cypress
Steve J...*

James T. Martin
Executive Director
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.
711 Stewards Ferry Pike, Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37214

Dear Mr. Martin:


Thank you for your letter dated June 25, 2004. We apologize for the delay in responding to you.

On behalf of the National Park Service (NPS) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), we wish to express that the agencies all take the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) resolution seriously. The agencies have been working very closely together in trying to resolve the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida's concerns over the Florida panthers located near Loop road, Miccosukee Reserved area and the Pinecrest areas.

We believe that the cooperative efforts among the FWC, FWS, and NPS have resulted in the implementation of a sound, comprehensive approach to resolving the current situation between the Pinecrest panthers and the public. Our first priority remains ensuring public safety; however, we have endeavored to enact an approach that ensures human safety while also conserving this highly endangered species.

As always, we continue to welcome the Tribes collaboration on this issue and their assistance in further developing our panther response protocols. The agencies are currently working on a South Florida Panther Response Plan and the Tribe has agreed to discuss this plan with the agencies once it is in draft. If you should have any questions please do not hesitate to contact this office at 239-695-1103.

Sincerely,


Carol A. Clark
Acting Superintendent

Cc:

Fran Mainella, Director, NPS
Patricia A. Hooks, Southeast Regional Director, NPS
Sam Hamilton, Regional Director, FWS
Layne Hamilton, FWS, Florida Panther Refuge
Ken Haddad, Executive Director, FWC
Acting Superintendent, Big Cypress National Preserve
Acting Superintendent, Everglades National Park

