



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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February 11, 2004

Dear stakeholder:

On January 7, 2004, we hosted a meeting attended by one or more representatives of your organization (see enclosed attendance list). We discussed the long-term conservation of the Panama City crayfish, a State species of special concern. Our objective was to inform attendees of the biology of the species, regulatory and management requirements of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC), and options to complete long-term conservation agreements.

The group (in general) agreed that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA) process (see enclosure) would be a worthwhile endeavor. The CCAA could provide landowners and local governments regulatory assurances and achieve the FWCC's management objectives for the species. In order to begin the development of a CCAA, we need to have specific commitments from the various entities expressing an interest in developing the agreement. While we hope that your commitment will lead to your organization's signature on a CCAA, this initial commitment in no way obligates you to the actual agreement. We request that you designate a specific point of contact who can serve on a steering committee that will begin drafting an agreement. Secondly, we envision at least two sub-committees to assist in several aspects of development of the agreement. Please consider designating a representative to a sub-committee on Best Management Practices and to a sub-committee on scientific technical issues.

We look forward to working with you in the coming months. We believe that this joint effort is an opportunity to demonstrate how the CCAA process, designed to remove enough threats to target species, can eliminate the need for protection under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me (ext. 225; gail_carmody@fws.gov) or Patty Kelly (ext. 228; patricia_kelly@fws.gov).

Sincerely yours,

Gail A. Carmody
Project Leader

Enclosures:
CCAA Fact Sheet
Attendees List

gc/pk/rg/kh/T:\TEAM2\U.S. Fish & Wildlife\Website\Programs section\Candidate Conservation\crayfish_lettwe.wpd