

FDOT DISTRICT 7 DISTRICT-WIDE GOPHER TORTOISE SUPPORT SERVICES



Project Description

For this project, Scheda biologists provide services related to gopher tortoise permitting and relocation throughout District 7 on an as-needed basis.

Gopher Tortoise Burrow Surveys - Scheda scientists coordinate with both the FDOT and project engineers to determine the gopher tortoise burrow survey limits for each FDOT project proposed for construction. This includes CADD analysis to determine equipment staging areas, advanced utility relocations, areas proposed for silt fence installation, and the limits of construction. To date, the largest number of tortoise burrows documented within one project area totaled 175 gopher tortoise burrows.

Submitting/Obtaining FWC Gopher Tortoise Relocation Permits – Scheda scientists submit Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) gopher tortoise relocation permit applications for projects where tortoise burrows will be impacted due to proposed construction.

Sunshine 811 Coordination – Because underground utilities such as sewer and gas lines, fiber optic communication cables, etc. are routinely located with the FDOT right-of-way, Scheda scientist coordinate with Sunshine 811 to document utility locations and use this information to determine if burrows can be backhoe excavated versus bucket trapped. If backhoe excavation is utilized hand trenching is performed to document the location of the underground utility.

Capture and Relocation of Gopher Tortoises – Scheda scientist use a variety of methods to capture gopher tortoises including hand shovel excavation, bucket trapping, live trapping, and backhoe excavation of gopher tortoise burrows. Captured tortoises are transported to an FWC approved tortoise recipient site.

