



PATH OF THE PANTHER

WILD FLORIDA'S LAST STAND



ACTIVITY PACKET

Created in partnership with Disney's Animals, Science and Environment

PATH OF THE PANTHER

The culmination of more than five years in the field, half a million photographs, and over 800 hours of ultra-high-definition camera trap footage, this odyssey of hope and heartbreak documents the Florida panther's fight for survival. Against all odds, the panther demonstrates a path forward in which both humans and wildlife can thrive.

Brought to you by Wildpath and Grizzly Creek Films, directed and produced by Eric Bendick and produced by Carlton Ward Jr., Thomas Winston and Tori Linder, "Path of the Panther" is wild Florida's last stand.

Watch "Path of the Panther," now on Disney+ and Hulu.

GRIZZLY CREEK FILMS AND WILDPATH IN ASSOCIATION WITH COMMON PICTURES AND APPIAN WAY PRESENT "PATH OF THE PANTHER" WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ERIC BENDICK
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS LEONARDO DICAPRIO JENNIFER DAVISSON HOWARD BUFFETT SIGRID TIEDTKE TED HADDOCK PHILLIP WATSON
 CINEMATOGRAPHY BY CARLTON WARD JR. DANNY SCHMIDT DAWSON DUNNING JEFF REED ERIC BENDICK RICK SMITH THOMAS WINSTON KATIE BRYDEN
 EDITED BY ANDREW HARRISON BROWN ERIC BENDICK JEFF REED SOUND EDITOR BRIAN EIMER ONLINE EDITOR SCOTT STERLING
 ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS LAUREN YOHO ASHLEY SIANA FIELD PRODUCERS MALIA BYRTUS ALEX FREEZE GEORGE MCKENZIE JR.
 IMPACT PRODUCER TORI LINDER ORIGINAL MUSIC BY KEVIN MATLEY PRODUCED BY CARLTON WARD JR. TORI LINDER THOMAS WINSTON ERIC BENDICK



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@PATHOFTHEPANTHER



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Photos by Carlton Ward Jr. / Wildpath

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Disney's Animals, Science and Environment would like to take this opportunity to thank the amazing teams that came together to develop the "Path of the Panther" Activity Packet. It was created with great care, collaboration and the talent and hard work of many incredible individuals. A special thank you to Dr. Mark Penning for his ongoing support in developing engaging educational content that connects families with nature. These materials would not have happened without the diligence and dedication of Kyle Huetter who worked side by side with the filmmakers to help create these compelling activities. As well as Emma Leslie and Savannah Tanney who authored the unique writing found throughout each page and whose creative thinking and artistry developed activities into a world of outdoor exploration for the conservation hero in all of us. Special thanks to director Eric Bendick and producers Carlton Ward Jr., Thomas Winston and Tori Linder, for sharing such an incredible story that inspired the activities found within this packet.

Allyson Atkins
Content Manager
Disney's Animals, Science and Environment

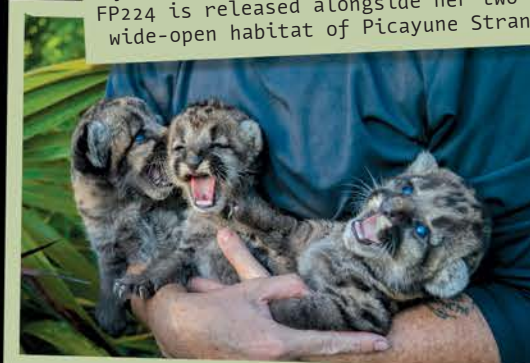
PATH OF THE PANTHER



A camera trap captured this photo at Babcock Ranch State Preserve, showing the first female sighted north of the Caloosahatchee River in nearly 50 years.



After recovering from a vehicle strike near Naples, FP224 is released alongside her two kittens into the wide-open habitat of Picayune Strand State Forest.



Three kittens held by veterinarian Lara Cusack.



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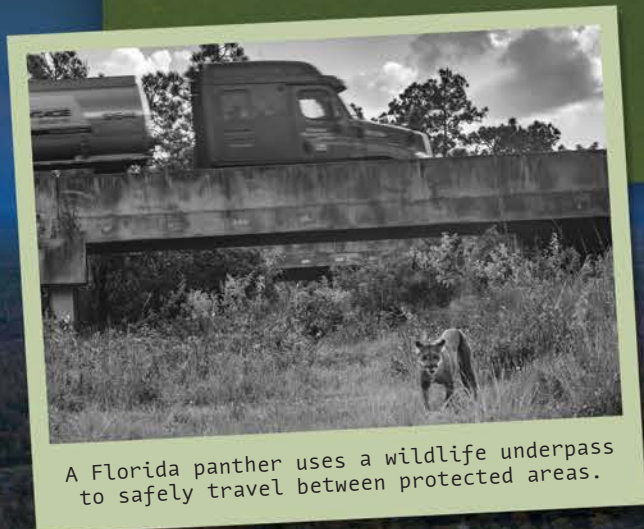
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WELCOME TO THE PATH OF THE PANTHER

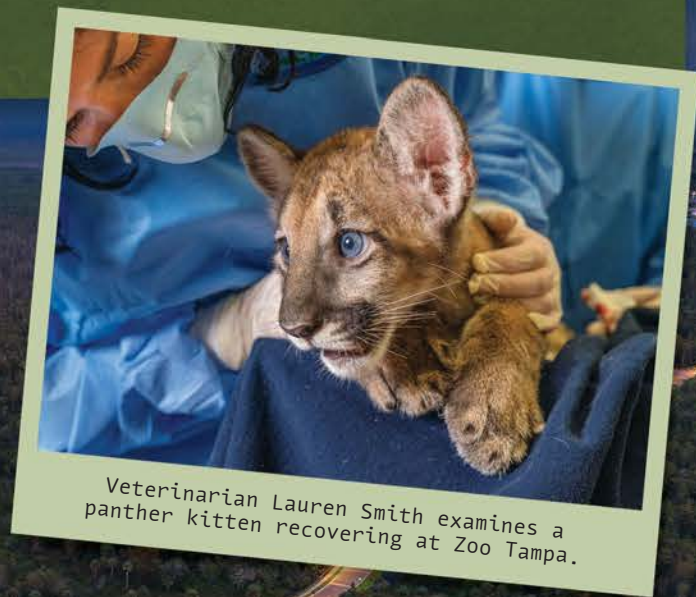
Join the journey of a wildlife photographer, biologists, ranchers, conservationists and Indigenous peoples as they follow the path of the revered and mysterious Florida panther.

In a struggle resonating across the globe, the panther's habitat is declining. Its lush territory is at risk of becoming "islands" surrounded by development. Now, the future of the Path of the Panther will require adaptation and survival. But how the story ends is up to us.

Find your inner conservation hero by exploring the pages of the "Path of the Panther" Activity Packet. Learn more about this incredible umbrella species, understand how different groups work together, practice tracking an elusive animal, discover what it takes to create a wildlife corridor, and reflect on the importance of sharing knowledge.



A Florida panther uses a wildlife underpass to safely travel between protected areas.



Veterinarian Lauren Smith examines a panther kitten recovering at Zoo Tampa.

FEATURING



CARLTON WARD JR. is a National Geographic Explorer and photographer focused on Florida's hidden wild.



BRIAN KELLY is a panther researcher with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.



BETTY OSCEOLA is a Miccosukee Everglades educator, airboat captain, conservationist and clean water advocate.



DR. JEN KORN is a panther biologist. She is also the Education Chair of the Wildlife Society of Florida and adjunct professor at South Florida State College.



ELTON LANGFORD is a full-time cattle rancher in Arcadia, Florida.



DR. LARA CUSACK is a panther veterinarian with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.



BABS is the first female panther documented north of the Caloosahatchee River since 1975 and a pioneer representing the expansion of her species' historic range.



TRES is a three-time survivor of vehicle strikes and an emblem of his species' fight to endure.

PORTRAIT OF THE PANTHER

Meet the Florida panther: The only remaining big cat in the eastern United States, an icon for Florida's last wild places and an umbrella species with the potential to help protect dozens of other species that share the same ecosystem.

The Florida panther (*Puma concolor coryi*) is a subspecies of the puma. Once found throughout North and South America, pumas nearly vanished east of the Mississippi River in the United States. The only population that persists in the eastern United States is the Florida panther, found in the unique and essential ecosystem of the southern Everglades.

With only 120–230 adult Florida panthers left in the wild, conservation efforts are necessary for bringing this species back from the edge of extinction. The Florida panther is considered an umbrella species because it represents the conservation needs of its entire ecosystem. Umbrella species often live in large habitats that are shared with countless other animals. So, when conservation efforts are focused on the umbrella species, the other species in the same environment also benefit.

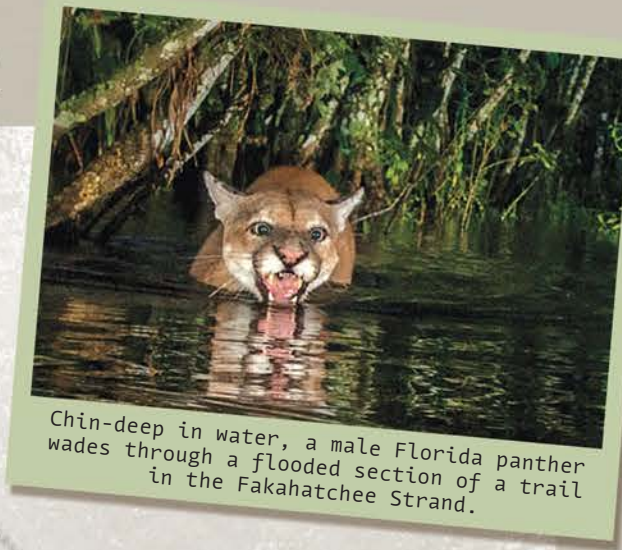
Everyone can play a role in helping to conserve wildlife and wild places around the world and sometimes it can be as simple as learning more. Taking the opportunity to expand your knowledge of wildlife around you brings awareness to different species and can inspire you to take action against the threats they face.



Florida is home to countless species. Shown here: a pawpaw sphinx moth and ghost orchid, a wading bird, a young manatee, a bobcat.

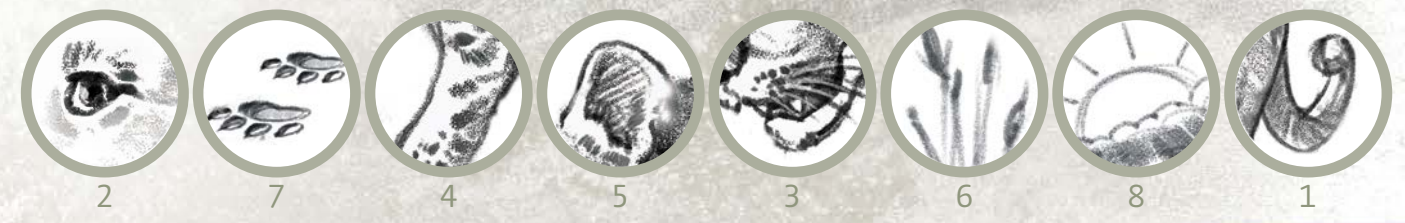
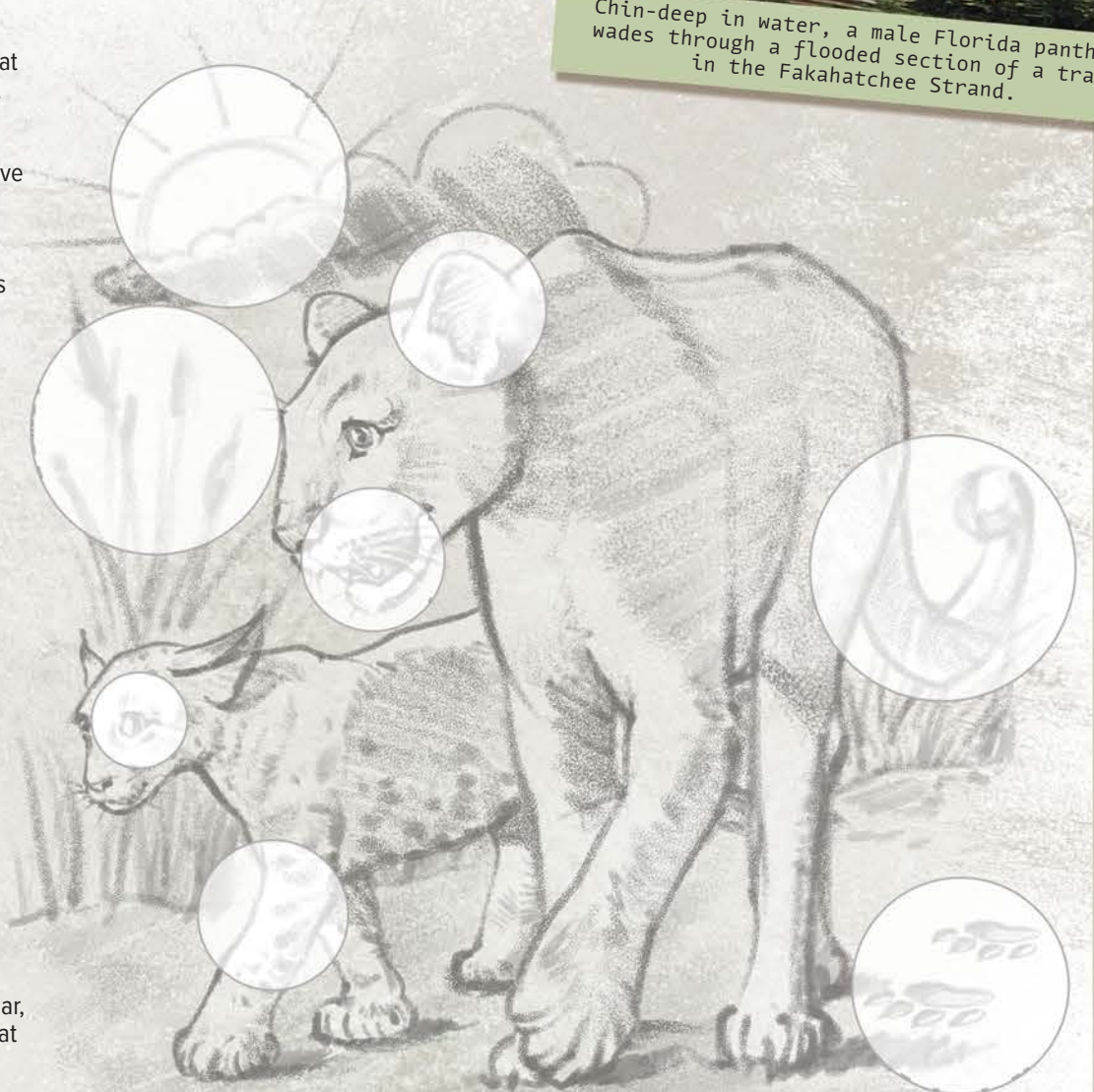
DRAW A FLORIDA PANTHER

Read the sentences on the left, noting the words in **bold** which correspond to the image pieces in the circles below. Trace the image and fill in the missing pieces to bring the panther to life.



Chin-deep in water, a male Florida panther wades through a flooded section of a trail in the Fakahatchee Strand.

- 1 Florida panthers have a **tail** that can be as long as their bodies.
- 2 To help see when it's dark, the **eyes** of the Florida panther have a special reflective layer that absorbs light.
- 3 As carnivores, Florida panthers have **sharp teeth** for eating their prey, like deer.
- 4 This type of cat is solitary, meaning they like to live alone, except when females have a litter of one to three **kittens with spotted coats**.
- 5 Florida panthers rely on their sense of smell and excellent hearing, using their **nose and ears** when hunting.
- 6 Florida panthers rely on **large plants** to conceal themselves when hunting and to hide young.
- 7 These cats have large home ranges and scientists can follow their movements by looking for their **four-toed paw prints**.
- 8 Florida panthers are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at **sunrise and sunset**.



Field Notes: The future of the Florida panther is uncertain but we have the power to band together as protectors. You can help make sure this species never fades from the landscape by bringing awareness to your friends and family and sharing with them what you've learned.

PROTECTORS OF THE PANTHER

Protecting and conserving species is a big task. Conservationists bring awareness to and inspire action for the protection and preservation of land, plants, and animals. When it comes to protecting the Florida panther, there are many groups of people who care about the fate of this species. From photographers, to ranchers, to educators, these different perspectives must work together to reach a common goal.

Some conservationists use similar skills and responsibilities to do their work. Others provide meaningful contributions in their own unique way. A land manager who creates maps and plans and a panther biologist who conducts research studies may have different roles but they are both working to understand the landscape and how a panther moves through its environment. Both contribute to conservation in critical ways that complement and inform each other's work.

Learning about the responsibilities, tasks, and skills of these diverse individuals is a great way to understand how to participate in conservation and create impact in your own backyard.

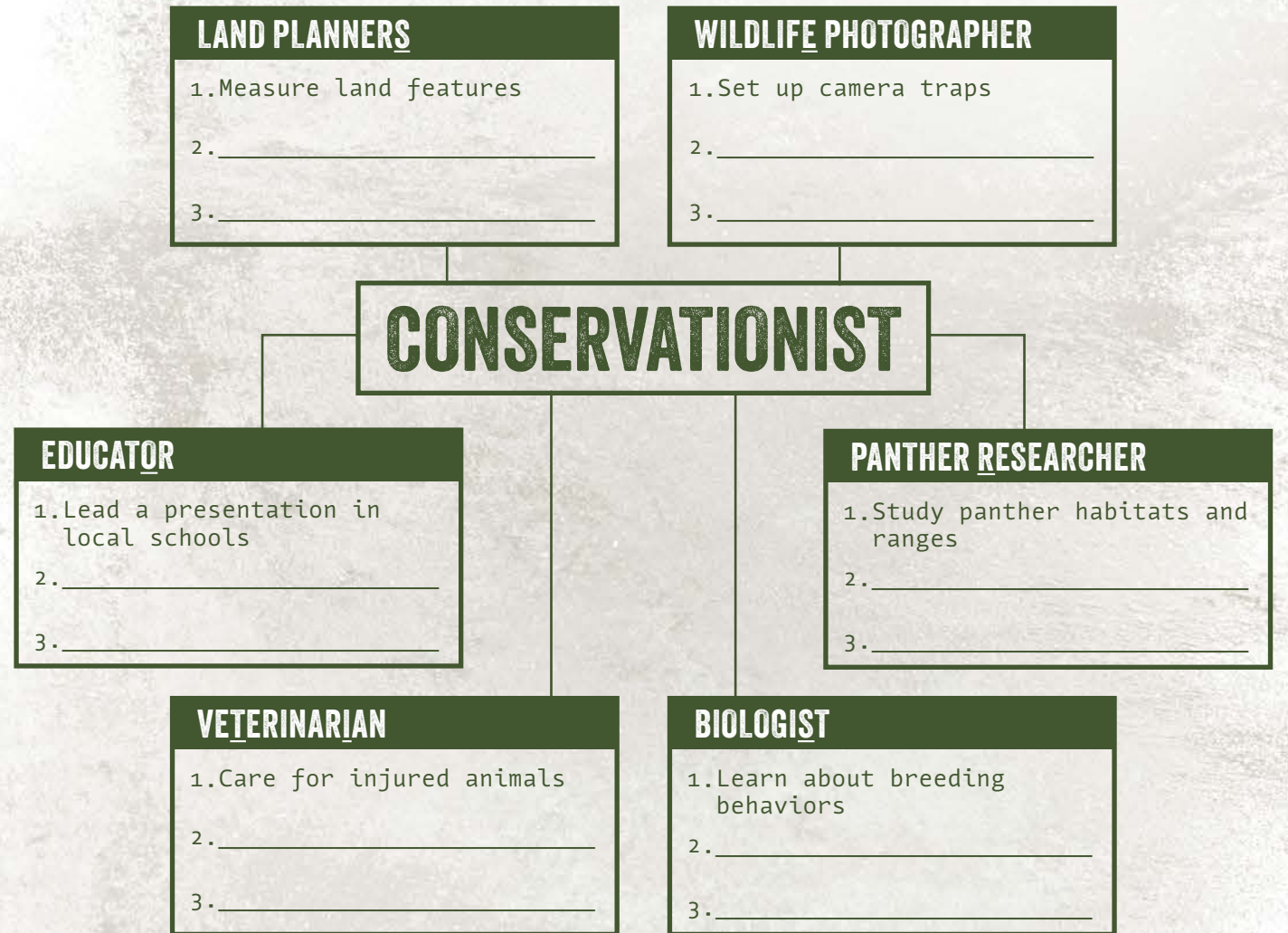


Veterinary technician Ashley Flaig positions an x-ray machine to capture images of a panther kitten.



SEE HOW CONSERVATIONISTS MAKE AN IMPACT

There are many roles that contribute to the conservation of animals like the Florida panther. Each role requires its own unique set of tasks and skills. We've listed some to get you started. What other tasks and skills are needed? Write them in the spaces provided.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Seven letters in the roles above are underlined. Can you unscramble the letters to complete the sentence on the right?

The job of all conservationists is to share _____ about the species they are protecting.

Field Notes: Now that you've completed the section above, which role interests you most? Consider your own skills and talents, and how you might apply them to that role.

Answers: stories

PROOF OF THE PANTHER

To capture the never-before-seen footage in “Path of the Panther,” filmmakers created custom studios-in-the-woods that included professional cameras, lights, and an infrared beam that allows passing animals to take their own pictures. Using this technology aids wildlife research and conservation and raises awareness of the habitat needed to save Florida wildlife.

Camera traps are not the only way to track the movements of animals throughout an area. Scientists also look for and follow clues that animals leave behind—like tracks or animal poop, also called scat. With just tracks and scat, biologists can determine what species have visited an area and if it’s male or female, adult or juvenile.

While these conventional tracking methods may eventually lead a researcher to an animal, GPS collars help pinpoint locations more easily. GPS collars, similar to what a dog or cat may wear, contain technology that tracks their location via satellite. When data over a long period of time is needed, these collars allow scientists to monitor their movements.

Tracking animals in any form helps us learn more about animals and their needs. It is a great way to practice observation skills and gain a deeper understanding of the environment around you.



Camera traps photograph animals sneaking through a barbed-wire boundary.

TRACK A FLORIDA PANTHER

Conservationists set up three camera traps along the Florida Wildlife Corridor and each one captured a photo of a different Florida panther. Can you identify which panther was captured by which camera trap based on the clues provided?

OBSERVATION NOTES

PANTHER “BABS”

- Adult female
- Seen with two young

PANTHER “GLADE”

- Large male
- Known to cross the river

PANTHER “CAYNE”

- Last seen eating a deer



IDENTIFY THE PANTHERS



Answers: Camera 1 - GLADE, Camera 2 - CAYNE, Camera 3 - BABS

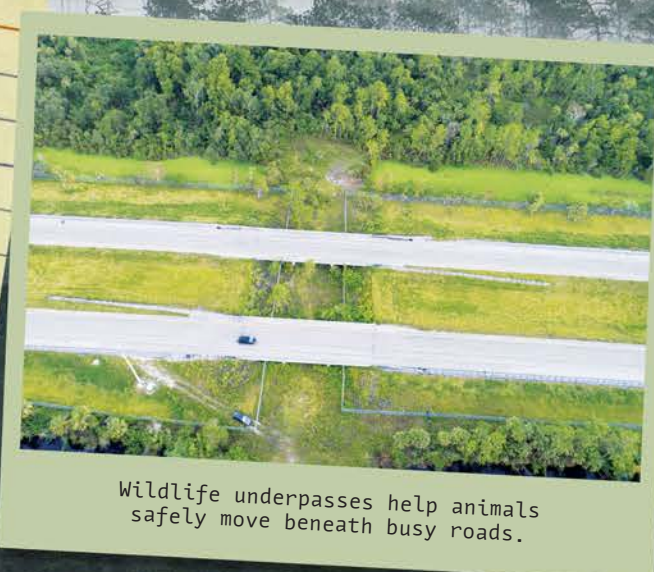
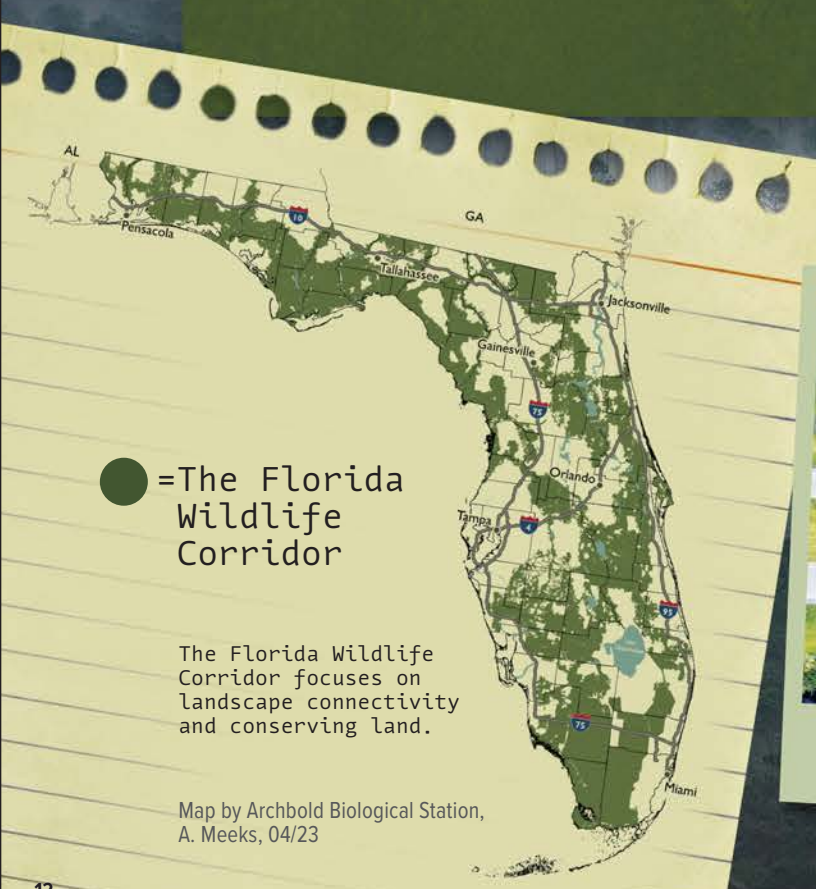
Field Notes: Anyone can learn how to track an animal! Go on a nature walk with your friends and family to look for clues that may tell you about the animals that share the area. Can you find any footprints, feathers or fur?

PRESERVATION OF THE PANTHER

Animals large and small need space to move from one area to another. When infrastructure like roads or buildings are created, animal habitats can become smaller or at risk. Wildlife corridors are protected areas that provide crossings or pathways for animals. These corridors include food, shelter and protection from human conflict for many species in developed regions around the world.

The Florida Wildlife Corridor is nearly 18 million acres, or about one-third of the state. Currently, only 10 million of the 18 million acres of the corridor is protected land, with the rest being private working land of ranchers and farmers. To secure the remaining area as protected and ensure the success of the Florida panther within the corridor, conservationists must use a variety of methods to learn more about the panther and to share that knowledge with the community. From conducting research to bringing awareness to residents to collaborating with stakeholders like ranchers and local officials, wildlife corridors take a lot of time and effort to be established.

On the next page, step into the shoes of a conservationist to understand the outcomes of different actions involved in creating wildlife corridors and how they all help to support the successful conservation of a species.



Wildlife underpasses help animals safely move beneath busy roads.

The Florida Wildlife Corridor focuses on landscape connectivity and conserving land.

Map by Archbold Biological Station, A. Meeks, 04/23

CREATE A PROTECTED PASSAGEWAY

It takes many actions from a dedicated community to protect wildlife corridors. Each of these actions has an important outcome that can help preserve habitat for wildlife. Match the actions and outcomes below to advocate for a wildlife corridor for your favorite species.

ACTION	OUTCOME
Creating education programs  1	A Visually displays which areas of land are protected to members of a community.
Designing and installing signage  2	B Helps researchers understand the location and behavior of a species through photography.
Speaking at a town meeting  3	C Collects critical data from research equipment and monitors the protected areas.
Conducting a field study of the area  4	D Provides understanding of where to establish protected areas based on which areas are frequented by the species.
Installing camera traps and monitoring wildlife  5	E Brings awareness to participants about a species or conservation issue.
Hiring a small staff to maintain the camera trap  6	F Persuades lawmakers and stakeholders in a community to support a project.

Field Notes: Often wildlife corridors take many years and lots of collaboration to become a reality. Reflect on your favorite species and the actions you would take to create a wildlife corridor for them. What actions would be a priority based on their outcomes? Circle your top 3.

ANSWERS:
1E, 2A, 3F, 4D, 5B, 6C

Photos this page:
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PRIDE OF THE PANTHER

Betty Osceola is a member of the Panther clan, which is considered to be a warrior clan of the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida. Indigenous, or native tribes, like the Miccosukee or Seminole Tribes of Florida not only have a respect for the Florida panther as an animal but also as a symbol in their culture. The panther represents strength and protection of one's family and their community.

Being a steward, or protector, of the land and the plants and animals that call it home is an important part of indigenous life and one that is passed down from generation to generation. In having pride for their land and all that exists within it, indigenous knowledge can help researchers learn more about animals in the area. This understanding is crucial to protecting and preserving species like the Florida panther for years to come.

Think about a species important to you and your community. Reflect on how you came to learn about it and how you can continue this tradition of stewardship as a way to preserve it.

Morgan Yates, a member of the Panther clan of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, walks beneath her favorite wild grapefruit tree near her home at the Brighton Reservation.



Betty Osceola sits on an ancestral tree island in the Everglades.



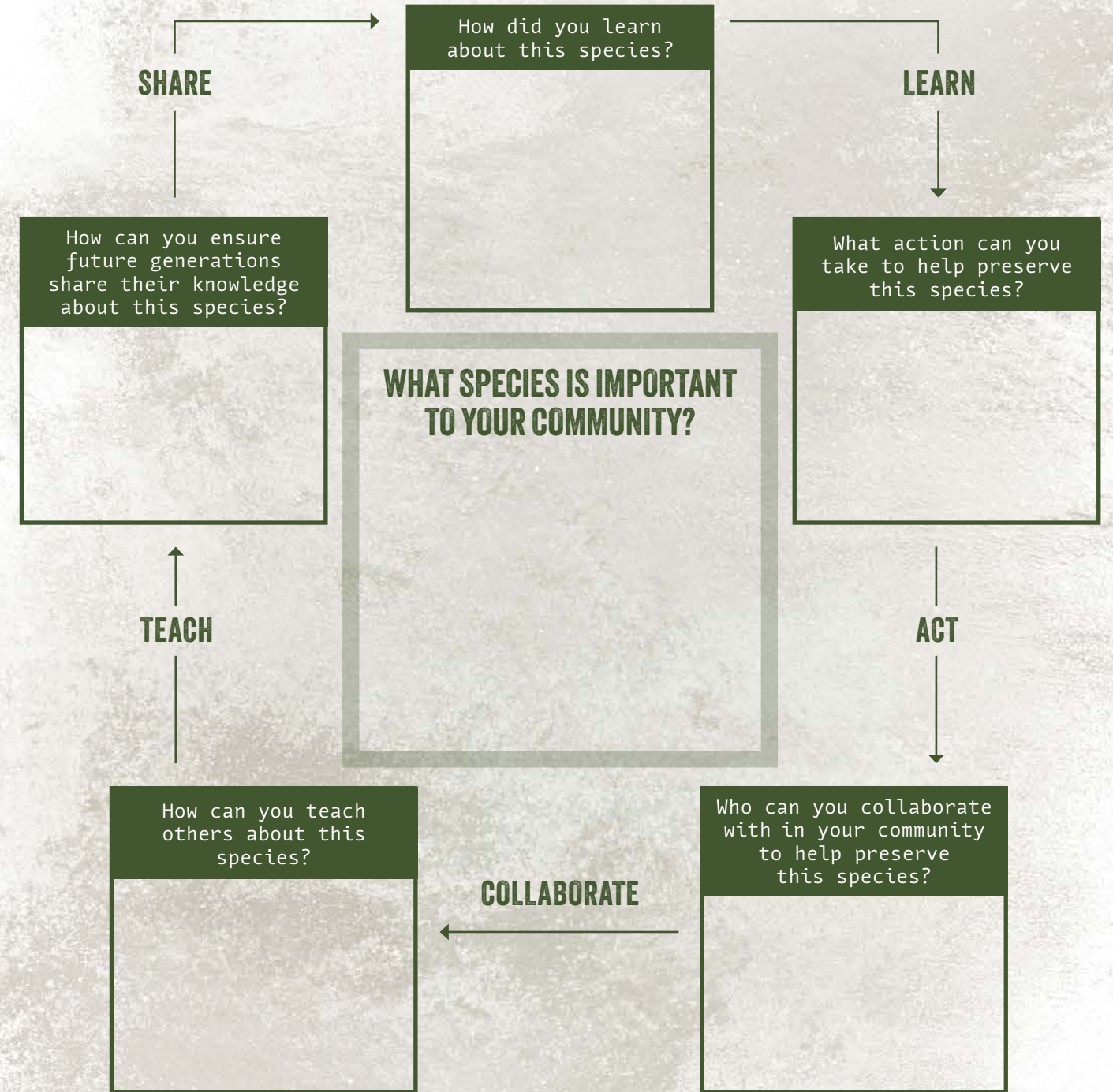
From his saddle at the Big Cypress Reservation, Cane Jumper's hands display "Native Pride."



Bobcats are the other species of wildcat that share trails with panthers.

REFLECT ON SPECIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Just as the indigenous tribes of Florida pass along information and traditions related to the Florida panther, you too can become a steward of wildlife and wild places. Respond to the questions below using words or drawings to understand how you pass along knowledge of plants and animals in your community.



Field Notes: Remember, learning and sharing with others is the first step to conservation action!



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