Caracara Prairie Preserve Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site Policy

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The following is a descriptive policy regarding the Caracara Prairie Preserve Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site.

1. The Caracara Prairie Preserve Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site shall be permitted, managed and monitored according to the most current Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) gopher tortoise permitting guidelines http://myfwc.com/docs/LicensesPermits/PW_GopherTortoisePermitGuidelines.pdf

2. The Caracara Prairie Preserve Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site shall only accept gopher tortoises being relocated from development projects occurring within Collier County (Donor Sites).

3. Gopher tortoises from both public agency development projects (such as but not limited to: Collier County government projects, Florida Department of Transportation projects, Collier County School Board projects, charter school projects) and private entity development projects occurring within Collier County shall be accepted at The Caracara Prairie Preserve Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site; however, tortoises accepted from private entity Donor Sites shall not comprise more than 75% of the total number of gopher tortoises relocated to the recipient site.

4. Conservation Collier staff shall maintain a ledger tallying gopher tortoise vacancies at the Caracara Prairie Preserve Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site.

5. Upon an inquiry from a possible Donor Site, Conservation Collier staff shall coordinate with the Growth Management Division and review the ledger. If the estimated number of tortoises anticipated from the Donor Site is acceptable, staff shall send a Reservation Letter to the Donor Site – see Reservation Letter template attached.

6. Donor Sites shall be responsible for the transport of all relocated tortoises to the Caracara Prairie Preserve Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site.

7. Once on site, relocated tortoises shall be received and marked by a FWC authorized and Collier County approved gopher tortoise agent – either an Environmental Consultant retained by Collier County or a Collier County employee.
8. The FWC authorized and Collier County approved gopher tortoise agent reserves the right to deny access to any unhealthy tortoises delivered to the Caracara Prairie Preserve Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site.

9. Donor sites shall be required to negotiate a Gopher Tortoise Receiving Activities Fee (separate from the Conservation Collier Recipient Fee) with the FWC authorized and Collier County approved gopher tortoise agent.

10. After relocations are complete, Conservation Collier staff shall monitor and maintain gopher tortoise fencing according to FWC most recent guidelines.

Caracara Prairie Preserve (Conservation Collier Recipient Site) Recipient Fee schedule

$765 per gopher tortoise for public projects*

$1,138 per gopher tortoise for private projects**

*Recipient fee collected per gopher tortoise represents the following management costs of the recipient site in perpetuity: County staff time, temporary fencing, monitoring, and permitting fees. Recipient fee does not include the Gopher Tortoise Receiving Activities Fee.

**Recipient fee collected per gopher tortoise represents the following management costs of the recipient site in perpetuity: County staff time, exotic plant control, mowing, temporary fencing, monitoring, and permitting fees. Recipient fee does not include the Gopher Tortoise Receiving Activities Fee.