



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – DISTRICT FIVE

GOPHER TORTOISE SURVEY, PERMITTING, AND RELOCATION
Marion County, Florida

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

CLIENT PROFILE

Prime Contractor – STV, Inc.

Client – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Five

PROJECT OVERVIEW

MSE teamed with STV (project prime) to provide ecological consulting services for surveying, permitting, and relocation of gopher tortoises for the State Road 35 Improvements (from SE 9th Place to south of SR/CR 464) project. In addition to the existing right-of-way, six pond sites were also evaluated. A total of 126 potentially occupied gopher tortoise burrows were identified within the project limits, and 62 tortoises were captured and successfully relocated.

CHALLENGES

- Meeting project schedule based on design/build requirements and weather conditions for tortoise transport
- Managing field activities and maintaining safe working conditions during the excavation of burrows

THE MSE APPROACH

In accordance with the project schedules, goals, and objectives, MSE assembled a team of experienced ecologists and developed a project schedule and site safety plan that would meet project goals and exceed client expectations.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Review and approval of GIS and remote sensing by agency personnel, resulting in considerable savings for field activities
- Successful project permitting – on time and within budget
- Personnel safety maintained during excavation of 126 gopher tortoise burrows

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Natural resources planning
- Wildlife species assessments
- Agency permitting and coordination

- *Identified and excavated 126 gopher tortoise burrows*
- *Relocated 62 gopher tortoises*



Gopher tortoise



Active gopher tortoise burrow



Gopher tortoise burrow excavation