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Four-way suit threatens Miami Wilds water park's progress


Written by Gabriela Henriquez Stoikow on August 23, 2022

The Miami Wilds waterpark planned beside Zoo Miami may suffer another setback in its schedule, as four conservation groups say they plan to sue the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service arguing violations of the Endangered Species Act related to the project.

The Center for Biological Diversity, Bat Conservation International, the Miami Blue Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association and the Tropical Audubon Society wrote to the services arguing that both failed to complete a step called Consultation Process.

The process provides that federal agencies must consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service when any project they authorize could affect a listed species or designated critical habitat.

The National Park Service in February released deed restrictions on 67 county-owned acres, where the 27.5-acre Miami Wilds water park is to rise. Miami-Dade County



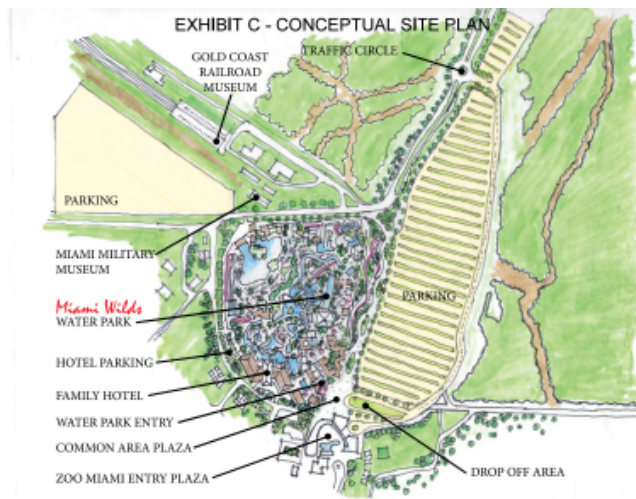
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subsequently signed a lease in June with developer Miami Wilds LLC for the construction.

The non-profits are arguing that release of the deed restrictions without a previous Consultation Process puts at risk species including the endangered Florida bonneted bat, endangered Miami tiger beetle, endangered Bartram's scrub-hairstreak, endangered Florida leafwing, threatened eastern indigo snake, and federally listed plants.

"To remedy the Endangered Species Act violations, the Park Service must withdraw its release of restrictions on the Miami Wilds site and immediately review the species impacts of the project," said Florida Director & Senior Attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity, Elise Bennett.

Miami Today reached the US Wildlife Service to verify if it had completed the Consultation Process per the previous request of the National Park Service, but Jennifer M. Koches, public affairs specialist, said the service does not comment on pending litigation.

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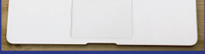
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