

Burnt Store Corridor Coalition (BSCC)

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BURNT STORE COLONY

BURNT STORE LAKES

BURNT STORE MARINA

BURNT STORE MEADOWS

BURNT STORE VILLAGE

EAGLE POINT

NORTHWEST CAPE CORAL ASSOCIATION

PARK HILL

PIRATE HARBOR

RIVER HAVEN

SEMINOLE LAKES

WOODLAND ESTATES

Burnt Store Corridor Coalition (BSCC) Begins Environmental Study

Jokes about a Roadkill Cookbook sound funny, but there's nothing funny about the number of wildlife species killed trying to cross Burnt Store Road. Ashley Cook, the Park Manager of the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, documented vehicular animal kills over 11 days at the end of July-early August in conjunction with a BSCC request. Her reporting showed evidence of 23 animal killings on a 12-mile stretch of Burnt Store Rd over that brief time frame. Those carcasses able to be identified were opossums, raccoons, an anhinga (a large waterbird) and a turtle, but another half of those killed were too mangled to be identifiable. Among the most recent victims have been an immature male bobcat and gopher tortoise. Over a year's time that would represent more than 800 wildlife kills on just this section of roadway. The surveyed range was the 12-mile stretch from Janis Road at Burnt Store Road in Lee County, just before the Burnt Store Marina heading north, to the entrance of the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center in Charlotte County.

"With wild spaces currently on both sides of Burnt Store Road, native animals will cross the busy highway to access both areas," Ashley Cook explains. "More research needs to be done to compare the data to other areas, however, it does show the negative impacts on the surrounding wildlife. It also shows that visitors, commuters, and residents encounter animals on the roads daily. As an environmental center, our main focus is its impact on wildlife, but for others more geared toward real estate, tourism, etc., these collisions with animals are dangerous, and encountering deceased wildlife along the roads is unsightly. We must prioritize utilization of wildlife corridors, road underpasses, and signage for areas crossed by wildlife."

John Fleming, Chairman of the BSCC notes, "The Burnt Store Area Plan, a 2005 public/private cooperative study set down a plan for future improvements to transportation, utilities, environmental linkages, water management and land use along the Burnt Store Corridor and surrounding areas. It included that 'in widening Burnt Store Road, it is recommended that a wildlife crossing be constructed of a sufficient size to accommodate small-to-medium-size animals.' This recommendation was not followed through on with Charlotte County expansion of Burnt Store Road."

"All future developments will make a major impact on this area that we will have to live with." states John Fleming, Chairman of the BSCC. "This is the time to do a new study. There's still time before

we are built out, but time is ticking away.” **The Charlotte County Commissioners will meet on this Tuesday, the 18th, at 9am in the Commission Chambers to discuss a new Burnt Store Area Plan.**

As noted above, the previous study covered the effects and potential solutions for wildlife but also the other important concerns of traffic safety and future water management. The BSCC is a coalition made up of over 10,000 residents in 12 communities that border the Burnt Store Corridor whose mission is to guardian these efforts. To support the initiative for a new public/private study, please sign our petition <https://www.change.org/ProtectWildlifeonBurntStoreRoad> or scan code.

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