

Florida city tries to save rare tortoises

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The city of Minneola wants developers to try to save rare tortoises before buying permits to kill them.

The Orland Sentinel says the Central Florida city may become the first in the area to make developers try harder to save threatened gopher tortoises from bulldozers.

Since 1991 the state has issued so-called "take" permits for tens of thousands of tortoises, allowing developers to kill the creatures, which are considered a species of special concern, the newspaper said.

The city is considering a plan that could require developers to pursue all options to protect or move tortoises from construction sites before buying a permit to kill them.

City officials say state regulations make it too easy to destroy the tortoises and their habitats, the newspaper said.

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