

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

From: Dr. Thomas Eason, Director, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

Date: April 14, 2016

Subject: Securing a New Model of Non-game Wildlife Conservation Funding

Purpose:

To provide the Commission an overview and update on a recent ongoing national effort to create a funding system for non-game wildlife conservation— *The Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources*.

Summary:

Established user-pay systems for hunters and anglers that provide funding for natural resource management have been a tremendous conservation success story for North America. However, thousands of species under state management jurisdiction that are not hunted or fished (non-game) have no comparable sustainable and predictable dedicated funding source in place to support their conservation. Since the mid 1970’s several national legislative efforts to secure dedicated conservation funding for non-game wildlife have been unsuccessful. Without sustainable and predictable funding, many states are unable to appropriately understand and implement management for non-game species that face declining populations – thus many are on a fast track for endangered species listing at the federal level. When federal listing occurs, regulatory uncertainty and conservation costs often increase significantly.

To address this issue *The Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources* was convened to exercise innovative, game-changing leadership to move forward a 21st century system of equitable conservation funding that will ensure fish and wildlife populations for generations to come.

Staff Recommendations:

This item is being presented for informational purposes and any discussion or direction that the Commission may have.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Brian Branciforte, Leader, Florida’s Wildlife Legacy Initiative