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