

MEMORANDUM



TO: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

FROM: Colonel Curtis Brown, Director, Division of Law Enforcement

DATE: April 13, 2016

SUBJECT: Derelict Vessel Removal Grants Rule, 68-1.003(7), FAC

Purpose:

Request approval to advertise amendments to the Derelict Vessel Removal Grants Rule, Chapter 68-1.003(7) Florida Administrative Code (FAC) which will update the rule to conform to current standards for issuing grants and provide guidelines for this program. The request is also to file the rule for adoption if no additional hearing is requested.

Summary:

Derelict vessels have become a growing concern among local governments, boating organizations and a variety of governmental entities, and FWC has been working with concerned parties to identify possible solutions over the past year. Dedicated state funds for derelict vessel removals have been very limited for many years, and concerned organizations and local governments strongly encouraged FWC to seek \$1.5 million in state funding during the recent Legislative Session. The current budget adopted by the Legislature contains a \$1.4 million appropriation to FWC for this purpose.

The current Derelict Vessel Removal Grants Program, as delineated in Chapter 68-1.003(7), FAC, is inadequate for the distribution of the anticipated grant funds in a manner consistent with the recommendations developed through recent public input. Amendments are needed to update the rule and incorporate new guidelines for the grant awards and use of these funds. Changes to the rule will also establish matching fund requirements and ensure effective collaboration with the Inland Navigation Districts related to their funding available for this purpose.

Funding is proposed to be awarded in two distinct categories: 1. Projects which will remove vessels for which there is imminent danger creating an urgency for removal, such as those leaking contaminants or creating an immediate hazard to navigation, and, 2. Projects which will remove vessels where there is no immediate need and therefore a competitive application process, similar to that used for the Florida Boating Improvement Grants, can be used to make awards.

Staff Recommendations:

Staff recommends approval to advertise the proposed amendments to Chapter 68-1.003(7), FAC, and file the rule for adoption as soon as possible if no additional hearing is requested.

Staff Contact and /or Presenter:

Major Richard Moore, Section Leader, Boating and Waterways Section, Division of Law Enforcement