

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

From: Tom Champeau, Director, Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management

Date: June 22, 2016

Subject: Consent Item: Clarification to Freshwater Tournament Permit Language in 68A-9.002(4)

Purpose:

The purpose of this amendment is to provide clarification and update the regulations regarding freshwater fishing tournaments.

Summary:

FWC is proposing to amend 68A-9.002(4), Permits to Take Wildlife or Freshwater Fish for Justifiable Purposes, to simplify and clarify the permitting process and to address specific questions regarding tournament size. FWC issues permits to allow anglers participating in a freshwater fishing tournament the ability to temporarily possess fish not meeting applicable size requirements. In order to receive a permit, the tournament ensures that all fish are live-released following the weigh-in, all fish are handled in accordance with FWC's guidelines, and post tournament reporting is completed.

During the process of developing the Black Bass Management Plan, stakeholders requested clarifications to the permitting process and a change in the minimum number of participants from ten to six. National bass fishing organizations require clubs to have a minimum of six active members in order to retain their status and participate in sanctioned events. While the current wording in 68A-9.002(4) does not prohibit the issuance of an exemption for a club with fewer than 10 members the proposed amendment would provide clarification for stakeholders.

Portions of the rule relating to the permitting and reporting process will also be updated. FWC has implemented an online permitting and reporting system, the proposed amendment would reflect the updated process and remove reference to outdated paper forms.

Staff Recommendation:

If the rule amendment is approved for both advertisement and final adoption, and if no additional public hearing is requested, then Commission staff will file the rule for adoption as allowed by s. 120.54(3) Florida Statutes, as soon as possible.

Staff Contact:

Tom Champeau, Division Director (presenter)