

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

From: Diane R. Eggeman, Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management

Date: November 16, 2016

Subject: Proposed Rule Changes for Hunting 2017 – 2018

Purpose:

Present draft rule amendments to revise select statewide hunting regulations, and specific area regulations on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), Wildlife and Environmental Areas (WEAs) and Miscellaneous Areas and to conform hunting dates to calendar year date changes.

Summary:

Draft rule amendments will be presented to 1) establish a new wildlife management area (395 acres) as the first tract of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Everglades Headwaters WMA with rules consistent with Arbuckle WMA; 2) re-establish statewide regulations for the spring turkey season in Holmes County; 3) increase the cost of a Gulf Hammock WMA Recreational Use Permit from \$275 to \$417 at the request of the landowner; 4) re-establish the upland portions of Tenoroc Fish Management Area (FMA) as the Tenoroc Public Use Area; 5) require a quota permit for the entire general gun season on the Pipeline Unit (5,000 permits, exemptions allowed) of Ocala WMA at the request of the cooperator; 6) provide additional opportunities for hunting small game (quail, rabbit, squirrel and migratory birds) with any dog during small game season on 62 areas; 7) shift hunting season dates on 7 areas; 8) add nighttime raccoon hunting on 1 area; 9) add a youth spring turkey hunt on 1 area; 10) increase the number of days when squirrel are legal to take on 1 area; 11) expand when coyote is legal to take on 1 area; 12) establish new wild hog hunts on 6 areas; 13) expand the general gun season on 1 area; 14) expand the archery season on 2 areas; 15) clarify what game are legal to take on 2 areas; 16) expand or adjust the legal methods of take on 4 areas; 17) provide additional opportunities for hunting wild hogs on 2 areas; 18) establish or expand small game seasons on 2 areas; 19) remove a unit designation on 1 area; 20) revise or remove restrictions on where hunting is allowed on 2 areas; 21) change the quota permit issuance method on 1 area; 22) remove the quota permit requirement on 1 area; 23) clarify permit requirements on 1 area; 24) provide additional days of scouting on 1 area; 25) provide additional days for hunting equipment to be taken onto the WMA on 1 area; 26) modify camping rules on 3 areas; 27) specify when access is allowed within established recreational areas on 5 areas; and 28) provide additional vehicle access during hunting season on 2 areas.

FWC staff has been and is continuing to gather input on all proposed rule amendments via an online poll. Thousands of comments have been received to date and are generally supportive of most proposals.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the proposed rule amendments for advertising and direct staff to return in February 2017 for final adoption. Staff also appreciates any direction or guidance from the Commission as we continue working with the public.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Paul Scharine, Public Hunting Areas Program Coordinator, Division of Hunting and Game Management