

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners
From: Tom Champeau, Director, Freshwater Fisheries Management
Date: June 19, 2018
Subject: Staff Reports – Freshwater Fisheries Program

Purpose:

Provide an overview of the Freshwater Fisheries Program including several projects that staff are working on to develop scientific methodologies to evaluate stakeholder opinions, attitudes, behaviors, and values regarding freshwater resource management issues.

Summary:

The Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management (FFM) promotes Florida’s well-earned title of “Fishing Capital of the World” and monitors freshwater fish populations and anglers’ use of the resource. FFM engages anglers and other stakeholders to develop management plans for lakes, rivers and 80 Fish Management Areas, providing anglers with the best fishing anywhere and expanding the \$1.7 billion freshwater fishing economic impact. FFM has developed a private-public partnership through the TrophyCatch conservation and marketing program, which uses citizen science to provide valuable information that contributes to the management of Florida’s trophy bass fisheries. Special projects such as the high school fishing program and fishing and boating camps encourage responsible fishing practices and help bolster future generations’ understanding of and personal investment in the conservation of fish and wildlife resources. FFM recently completed management plans for two freshwater fish species which will be highlighted.

In developing research priorities and management plans for freshwater resources (lake and river habitat, sport and commercial fisheries, public access, etc.) it is challenging to have data of sufficient scientific rigor that includes the perspectives of the wide diversity of stakeholders that may be interested or impacted. The growth of Human Dimensions of Wildlife, a subset of conservation social science, has expanded, and more tools are available to enhance the methodologies needed to accurately incorporate social attitudes, processes, and behaviors related to how we maintain, protect, enhance, and use our natural resources.

FFM is using human dimension tools to gather better and more diverse stakeholder input from those who use and are interested in freshwater fisheries.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

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