

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

From: Morgan Richardson, Director, Hunting and Game Management

Date: September 26, 2018

Subject: Consent Agenda: Draft Rule - Private Lands Deer Management Permit Program

Purpose:

Present the Commission with a proposed amendment to Rule 68A-13.004, F.A.C., that clarifies the eligibility criteria for property to be enrolled in the Private Lands Deer Management Permit Program (PLDMPP). The proposed draft rule amendment would make it clearer that property with breaks in continuity (such as from a road, waterway or easement) is eligible for enrollment in the PLDMPP.

Summary:

The PLDMPP is an innovative deer management program for landowners or their lessees that provides greater flexibility in herd and harvest management and promotes conservation and hunting heritage efforts on private lands. Program participants are required to complete a minimum level of habitat conservation practices annually that not only improves white-tailed deer habitat, but the habitat for a host of other game and non-game species. Benefits to enrollment in this program include greater flexibility in deer hunting seasons and deer harvest opportunities to enhance land managers' ability to reach deer herd management goals. The permit allows participants to use any legal method of take during the 128-day zonal deer season. For example, rifles may be used during the zonal archery, crossbow or muzzleloading gun season in addition to the regular antlered deer season. The permittee may designate the 128 hunting days in Zone A within the zonal start and end dates, with one break allowed. (Zone A has a 33-day break in the season that could be included in the 128 hunting days selected by the permittee.) Permittees in zones B, C, and D would have 128 hunting days, consistent with the respective zonal season dates.

The current rule language regarding property eligibility requirements is unnecessarily constraining and is impeding the desired enrollment of lands otherwise suitable for inclusion in the PLDMPP.

Staff Recommendation:

Approval of the proposed amendment. If approved, the amendment would be advertised and filed for adoption without further public hearing, unless requested by a member of the public.

Staff Contact:

Cory Morea, Deer Management Program Coordinator, Division of Hunting and Game Management