

Hunt Preserves and Game Farms



Final Public Hearing – Consent Agenda
September 26, 2018



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Version 1

This presentation will summarize proposed final rule amendments to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) regulations for hunt preserves, Rule 68A-12.010 (F.A.C.) and game farms, Rule 68A-12.011 (F.A.C.).

The proposed final rules for these Chapters will increase consistency of enforcement, reduce the risk of escape of exotics into the wild, and clarify facility and application requirements. Staff is additionally requesting two changes to the advertised rule language.

Division: Law Enforcement

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Report date: September 26, 2018

Photo: White tail deer – image from google

Background

- Regulations governing the operation of private hunting preserves were first adopted in 1979 and last amended in 2005
- Regulations Governing the Establishment and Operation of Game Farms were created in 2009
- Draft rule language was presented at the June Commission Meeting
 - All 5 speakers during public comment supported the proposed draft rules
 - Staff has received no comments in opposition of the draft rule language since the June meeting

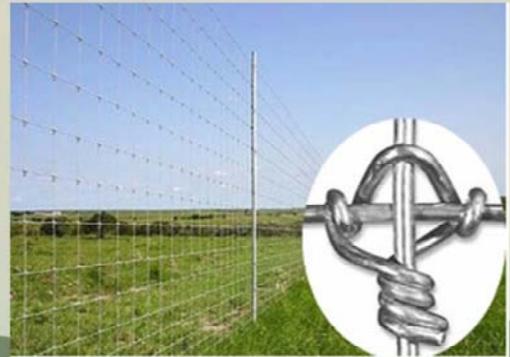


Staff was approached by industry who expressed an interest in updating current regulations for game farms and hunt preserves. Upon internal review of the regulations, staff identified several areas that needed updates and decided drafting language to both rules would benefit FWC, industry and Florida's native whitetail population.

There are approximately 66 licensed blanket hunt preserves which are commercial operations where an individual does need a separate hunting license, 190 private hunting preserves where all appropriate licenses are necessary and the landowner does not charge a fee, and approximately 453 game farms which are utilized for the rearing and propagation of game licensed in Florida.

Objectives for Revised Rules

- Reduce the risk of non-native wildlife being introduced into the wild
- Define terms for consistency
- Clarify license requirements
- Remove obsolete language that allows for the release of captive-reared ducks
- Specify fencing materials and construction



The proposed fencing language will make perimeter fencing on game farms and hunting preserves more resilient to failure and more likely to contain the animals within.

Including definitions in the rules will provide clarity to terms and improve consistency throughout the industry. In the existing rules terms such as “deer-proof fence,” “shade,” and “woody vegetation” are not defined and varying interpretations has lead to inconsistencies both at the facility and enforcement level.

Qualifications for receiving a game farm or hunting preserve licenses have been standardized across both rules.

Currently there are no longer any licensees who have or would qualify for an endorsement to release captive-reared ducks on hunting preserves. There was a small handful of endorsements issued in 1998 allowing the release of captive reared ducks on licensed hunting preserves. Those endorsements were allowed to continue as long as they had continuous and sustained releases. Staff has thoroughly researched former holders of the endorsement and determined that there are no longer any individuals who qualify for the endorsement.

***Staff is requesting changes to two proposed rule amendments presented at the June 2018 Commission meeting. There is a typographical change amending “applicants” to “applicant’s” and another modification which will allow for any government-issued photo ID to be provided on an application instead of requiring a Driver’s License.**

Photo- Google

Proposed Fencing Materials and Design



The photograph on this slide shows how a fence would be constructed under the new proposed regulations.

- Single panel fencing made of high tensile class III galvanized wire with fixed knots
- Single construction posts, securely anchored and braced
- No greater than 7 inches between manufactured knots

Photo image from Pinterest/Google

Grandfather Language for Existing Facilities

- Existing facilities would have two years to come into compliance with new fencing requirements
- Specific exemptions in draft rules for facilities with single and multi-panel fencing, for example:
 - 12.5 gauge or strength-equivalent material
 - Solid, single posts to keep fence properly stretched
 - Fence maintains 8 foot height
 - Mesh openings no greater than 7 inches
 - Fence panels connected with strength-equivalent material
 - Free of gaps and prevents escape



Grandfather Language for existing facilities is similar in both rules:

Facilities with existing single panel fencing: do not need to update their fencing if it is

- 12.5 gauge or strength equivalent
- Have mesh openings no greater than 7 inches apart and free of gaps
- attached to posts in a manner that ensures the fence maintains an above ground 8-foot vertical height and prevents escape
- posts are a solid, singular construction, securely anchored, no greater than 25 feet apart and braced at corners to keep fence properly stretched

Facilities with existing double panel fencing: Will meet the standard if material is 12.5 gauge or strength equivalent and:

- connected with strength equivalent material or greater at intervals no greater than 18 inches apart
- Have mesh openings no greater than 7 inches apart and free of gaps
- attached to posts in a manner that ensures the fence maintains an above ground 8-foot vertical height and prevents escape
- and posts are of solid, singular construction, securely anchored, no greater than 25 feet apart and braced at corners to keep fence properly stretched

Staff Recommendation

- Approval of rules as advertised
- Approval of 2 Notices of Change for Rules 68A-12.010 (F.A.C.) and Rule 68A-12.011 (F.A.C.).
 - Correct a typographical error
 - Allow for any government-issued photo ID to be provided on an application

*If approved, rules will be effective
January 1, 2019.*



Staff has provided a complete strike through and rewrite version of both rules due to the amount of language changes and additions.

Photo: Elk. image from FWC