Background Report
Draft Rule 68A-15.061
Agenda Item 10A
February 21, 2019

DRAFT RULE

RULE NO: 68A-15.061 **RULE TITLE:** Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas – Southwest Region.

PURPOSE AND EFFECT: The purpose of the proposed rule amendment is to revise specific area regulations on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the Southwest Region and conform to calendar year date changes. The effect of the proposed rule amendment will be to enable the agency to better manage fish and wildlife resources and public use on WMAs.

SUMMARY: The proposed rule amendment would adjust season dates to conform to calendar year changes and revise specific area regulations on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the Southwest Region as follows:

Arbuckle WMA – change the name of "Gulfstream Tract" of the Everglades Headwaters WMA to "Arbuckle Unit" of the Everglades Headwaters WMA.

Avon Park AFB WMA – legal shooting hours for spring turkey will remain ½ hour before sunrise until 1 p.m.

Babcock/Webb WMA – require a permit for camping within designated campgrounds. A permitting system will eliminate the first-come, first served line-up in advance of the campground opening and reduce unsafe conditions when the line backs up to the highway.

Chassahowitzka WMA – prohibit public access from 1½ hours before sunrise until 1½ hours after sunset, except for registered SCUBA divers and during periods open to hunting.

Green Swamp WMA – allow camping equipment to remain on the area between archery and general gun season; and allow kitchen stoves to be used outside of mobile campers while camping.

Green Swamp West WMA - legal shooting hours for spring turkey will remain ½ hour before sunrise until 1 p.m.

KICCO WMA – establish a 2-day youth turkey quota hunt (5 no-cost quota permits, no exemptions).

Hilochee WMA, Osprey Unit – expand small game season from 12 to 21 days; and shift small game season dates to begin the day following the close of the wild hog-dog season.

Additionally, the proposed rule amendment would provide non-substantive technical changes, such as grammatical corrections, language standardization, or clarification of an existing rule.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE PROPOSED RULE IS AS FOLLOWS:

68A-15.061 Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas – Southwest Region.

(1) Green Swamp Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. General gun – December 7 ~~1~~ through February 2 ~~January 27~~.

2. Archery – November 1 ~~October 26~~ through December 1 ~~November 25~~, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only and Thanksgiving Day.

3. No change.

4. Wild hog-dog – October 3-6 ~~September 27-30~~ and 10-13 ~~October 4-7~~.

5. Spring turkey – March 21 ~~16~~ through April 26 ~~21~~.

6. No change.

(b) No change.

(c) Camping: Allowed by permit only and only within the designated campsites at the Rock Ridge Road and 471 campgrounds. Camping is allowed at both campgrounds during archery, general gun, wild hog and spring turkey seasons. Camping is allowed only at the Rock Ridge Road campground during the fishing and frogging season and

only at the 471 campground during the small game season. Camping permits are non-transferable. Camping along the Green Swamp Hiking Trail (Florida Trail) is prohibited except by written permission from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. ~~Kitchen stoves,~~ R~~r~~efrigerators and freezers, unless contained in mobile campers, are prohibited. Lumber, sheet metal or other building materials is prohibited. The alteration, defacing, moving or tampering in any way with official markings of campsites is prohibited. The use or operation of electrical generators powered by an internal combustion engine is prohibited within the campgrounds from 10:00 p.m. until 4:00 a.m. A legible copy of the camping permit or the permittee's name and permit number must be visibly affixed to camping shelters. Camping equipment must be removed by 8:00 p.m. on the last date listed on the camping permit, except for days between archery and general gun. Only tents, trailers or self-propelled camping vehicles may be used for camping.

(d) No change.

(2) Green Swamp Wildlife Management Area – West Unit.

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-still – October 11-13 ~~5-7~~.

2. Wild hog-dog – October 23-25 ~~17-19~~.

3. Special-opportunity archery – December 7-10 ~~1-4~~ and 19-22 ~~13-16~~.

4. Special-opportunity general gun – January 23-26, ~~17-20, 28-31 and~~ February 3-6 and 12-15 ~~6-9~~.

5. Special-opportunity turkey – March 21-24 ~~16-19, 25-28~~, March 30 through April 2, April 4-7, 13-16 ~~8-11~~ and 18-21 ~~13-16~~.

6. Small game – February 21-23 ~~22-24~~ and February 28 through March 1 ~~1-3~~.

7. through 8. No change.

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, fish, frogs and furbearers. Turkey may be taken only during the special-opportunity turkey hunts and only from one-half hour before sunrise until 1 p.m. One gobbler (or bearded turkey) may be taken per special-opportunity spring turkey permit. One antlered deer may be taken per special-opportunity deer permit. Antlerless deer may be taken by antlerless deer permit only. Taking of antlered deer not having at least one antler with four or more points is prohibited. Only wild hog may be taken during the wild hog seasons.

(c) through (d) No change.

(3) Fred C. Babcock/Cecil M. Webb Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September 14-18 ~~8-12~~.

2. Bird dog training – Bird dogs may be trained in the bird dog training area September 21 ~~15~~ through February 16 ~~10~~ and bird dogs may be trained in the remainder of the area during the small game season except the field trial and Boy Scout areas.

3. General gun –November 9-17 ~~3-11~~.

4. Small game – November 18 through December 1 ~~12-25~~ and on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays only December 4 ~~November 28~~ through January 19 ~~13~~.

5. Field trial quail – January 25-26 ~~19-20~~.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) No change.

(c) Camping: Prohibited, except in designated campgrounds by permit as provided by paragraph 68A-15.004(8)(a), F.A.C. .~~Allowed at a designated campground only. Camping is allowed after 8:00 a.m. one day prior to archery season until 6:00 p.m. one day after archery season and continuously after 8:00 a.m. eight (8) days prior to the opening of general gun season until the last day of the small game season. During the remainder of the year, camping is allowed from 5:00 p.m. Friday to 9:00 p.m. Sunday and on Memorial Day, Independence Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Labor Day. Camping equipment shall be allowed on the area only when camping is allowed. The name, address and telephone number of the person responsible for each campsite shall be visibly affixed to camping shelters~~.

(d) No change.

(4) Fred C. Babcock/Cecil M. Webb Wildlife Management Area – Yucca Pens Unit.

(a) Open season:

1. Muzzleloading gun – October 18-20 ~~12-14~~.

2. General gun – ~~October 27 through~~ November 2-10 ~~4~~.

3. Small game – November 13 ~~14~~ through January 12 ~~13~~ on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays only and the Friday after Thanksgiving Day.

4. through 5. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(5) Upper Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-dog – November 12-14 ~~6-8~~.

2. Archery – December 7-8 ~~1-2~~, 14-15 ~~8-9~~, ~~and 29-30 and~~ January 4-5 ~~5-6~~ and 11-12.

3. Muzzleloading gun – January 18-19 ~~12-13~~, 25-26 ~~19-20~~, ~~26-27 and~~ February 1-2 ~~2-3~~ and 8-9.

4. Small game – February 15-16 ~~16-17~~, 22-23 ~~23-24~~ and February 29 through March 1 ~~2-3~~.

5. Spring turkey – March 25-26 ~~20-21, 27-28~~, April 1-2 ~~3-4~~, 8-9, ~~10-11~~ 15-16 and 22-23 ~~17-18~~.

6. No change.

(b) No change.

(c) Camping: Prohibited except at the designated campsite from 8:00 a.m. one day prior to each archery, ~~and~~ muzzleloading gun and spring turkey hunt until 8:00 p.m. on the last day of each hunt; from 3:00 p.m. one day prior to each wild hog-dog and small game hunt until 8:00 p.m. on the last day of each hunt; ~~from 8:00 a.m. one day prior to each spring turkey hunt until 5:00 p.m. on the last day of each hunt;~~ or by written permission from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Only tents, trailers or self-propelled camping vehicles may be used for camping. Camping equipment is prohibited on the area except during periods when camping is allowed.

(d) No change.

(6) Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October 12 ~~13~~ through November 1 ~~2~~.

2. Muzzleloading gun – December 7-15 ~~8-16~~.

3. Small game – January 4-5 ~~5-6~~ and 25-26 ~~26-27~~.

4. Spring turkey – March 24-26 ~~19-21~~ and April 7-9 ~~2-4~~.

5. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(7) KICCO Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September 14 ~~15~~ through October 13 ~~14~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.

2. Muzzleloading gun – October 19-20 ~~20-21~~ and 26-27 ~~27-28~~.

3. Wild hog-still – November 9 ~~10~~ through December 8 ~~9~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.

4. Small game – December 14 ~~15~~ through January 19 ~~20~~.

5. Spring turkey – March 21 ~~16~~ through April 19 ~~14~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.

6. Youth turkey – March 14-15.

6. renumbered 7. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(8) Hickory Hammock Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-still – September 13-15 ~~14-16~~, 20-22 ~~21-23~~ and January 10-12 ~~11-13~~.

2. Archery – October 11-13 ~~12-14~~.

3. Muzzleloading gun – October 19-21 ~~20-22~~ and 23-25 ~~24-26~~.

4. General gun – November 2-4 ~~3-5~~.

5. Small game – November 11-24 ~~12-25~~ and January 20 ~~21~~ through March 1 ~~3~~.

6. General gun for mobility-impaired – December 7-8 ~~8-9~~.

7. No change.

8. Spring turkey – March 26-28 ~~21-23~~ and April 16-18 ~~11-13~~.

9. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(9) Walk-in-the-Water Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September 28-29 ~~29-30~~, September 30 through October 3, October 4-6 ~~1-4~~, 7-10 ~~5-7, 8-11~~ and 11-13 ~~12-14~~.

2. Muzzleloading gun – November 30 through December 1, December ~~1-2,~~ 2-5 ~~3-6~~ and 6-8 ~~7-9~~.

3. Wild hog-still – January 11-19 ~~12-15 and 16-20~~.

4. Small game – February 1-9 ~~2-10~~ and February 22 ~~23~~ through March 1 ~~3~~.

5. Spring turkey – March 31 through April 2 ~~26-28~~.

6. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(10) Hilochee Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Youth turkey hunt – March 14-15 ~~9-10~~.

2. Spring turkey – March 27-29 ~~22-24~~ and April 10-12 ~~5-7~~.

3. Muzzleloading gun – February 21-23 ~~15-17~~.

4. Wild hog-still – November 22-24 ~~16-18~~, ~~November 30 through~~ December 6-8 ~~2,~~ and ~~December~~ 20-22 ~~14-16~~.

5. Small game – January 3-19 ~~4-20~~.

6. Archery – February 14-16 ~~8-10~~.

7. No change.

8. Raccoon – August 8 ~~2~~ through September 29 ~~23~~ (from 1.5 hours before sunset on Thursday until 1.5 hours after sunrise on Sunday).

(b) through (d) No change.

(11) Lake Marion Creek Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October 19-21 ~~13-15~~ and 25-27 ~~19-21~~.

2. Muzzleloading gun – November 29 through December 1 ~~23-25~~.

3. General gun – January 24-26 ~~18-20~~ and February 7-9 ~~1-3~~.

4. Small game – January 3-5 ~~4-6~~ and 10-12 ~~11-13~~.

5. Wild hog-still – December 13-15 ~~7-9~~ and 27-29 ~~21-23~~.

6. Youth turkey hunt – March 14-15 ~~9-10~~.

7. Spring turkey – March 21-23 ~~16-18~~, ~~March 29-31 and~~ April 3-5 and 17-19 ~~12-14~~.

8. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(12) Avon Park Air Force Range Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September 14 ~~15~~ through October 13 ~~14~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

2. Muzzleloading gun – October 19 ~~20~~ through November 1 ~~2~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

3. General gun – November 2 ~~3~~ through January 19 ~~20~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

4. Small game – November 9 ~~10~~ through March 1 ~~3~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

5. Youth turkey hunt – March 14-15 ~~9-10~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

6. Spring turkey – March 21 ~~16~~ through April 26 ~~21~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

7. Antlerless deer – November 23-29 ~~17-23~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

8. through 10. No change.

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, fish, frogs, turtles, and furbearers. Antlered deer, wild hog, and quail may be taken only during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee. Taking of antlered deer not having at least one antler with three or more points or one antler with a main beam of ten inches or more in length is prohibited, except by persons less than 16 years of age in those areas and during those days as specified by the Installation Commander or a designee. Gobblers or bearded turkeys may be taken during the spring turkey season from one-half hour before sunrise until 1 p.m. or as specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

(c) through (d) No change.

(13) Croom Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Muzzleloading gun – October 19-21 ~~20-22~~.

2. General gun – November 2-24 ~~3-25~~.

3. Small game – November 25 ~~26~~ through March 1 ~~3~~.

4. Spring turkey – March 24-26 ~~19-21~~, April 7-9 ~~2-4~~ and 21-23 ~~16-18~~.

5. Fox, raccoon and bobcat – December 12 ~~13~~ through March 8 ~~10~~. Hunting is allowed from 5:00 p.m. Thursday to sunrise Sunday with dogs only. Taking wildlife with guns is prohibited during this season.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(14) Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September 14 ~~15~~ through October 13 ~~14~~.

2. Muzzleloading gun – October 19-21 ~~20-22~~.

3. General gun – November 2 ~~3~~ through December 29 ~~30~~.

4. Wild hog-dog – January 10-12 ~~11-13~~ and 17-19 ~~18-20~~.

5. through 6. No change.

7. Youth turkey hunt – March 14-15 ~~9-10~~.

8. Spring turkey – March 27-29 ~~22-24~~, April 10-12 ~~5-7~~ and 24-26 ~~19-21~~.

9. Raccoon – January 30 ~~31~~ through February 23 ~~24~~ and April 30 through May 24 ~~2-26~~ (from 1.5 hours before sunset on Thursday until 1.5 hours after sunrise on Sunday).

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, fish, frogs and furbearers (except bobcat and otter). During the archery season, the take of antlerless deer shall be by antlerless deer permit only. Taking of antlered deer not having at least one antler with two or more points is prohibited, except by persons less than 16 years of age. During the spring turkey season, one gobbler (or bearded turkey) may be taken per person, but not more than two per quota permit. ~~Gobblers or bearded turkeys may be taken during the spring turkey season from one-half hour before sunrise until sunset.~~ Only wild hog may be taken during the wild hog-dog season. Waterfowl and coot may be taken on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays only. During the raccoon season, only raccoon and opossum may be taken.

(c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. Public access is prohibited from 1.5 hours after sunset until 1.5 hours before sunrise, except for registered SCUBA divers and during periods open to hunting.

2.~~1. Dogs are prohibited south of County Road 550.~~ Hunting with dogs other than retrievers or bird dogs is prohibited west of the Main grade, on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service portion of the property. Hunting with dogs other than retrievers or bird dogs is prohibited east of Swamp Grade, except during the wild hog-dog season. Dogs with a shoulder height greater than 17 inches are prohibited in that portion of the area lying east of the Main grade and west of the Swamp grade, except during the wild hog-dog and raccoon seasons when dogs are allowed east of

Main Grade.

2. through 7. renumbered 3. through 8. No change.

~~8. The possession or consumption of intoxicating beverages is prohibited south of County Road 550.~~

~~9. Public access is prohibited from sunset to sunrise south of County Road 550.~~

10. through 14. renumbered 9. through 13. No change.

(e) No change.

(15) Hilochee Wildlife Management Area – Osprey Unit.

(a) Open season:

1. Family hunt – November 15-17 ~~9-11~~.

2. Wild hog-still – November 29 through December 1 ~~23-25~~.

3. Wild hog-dog – December 13-15 ~~7-9~~ and January 10-12 ~~4-6~~.

4. Small game – January 13 ~~24~~ through February 2 4.

5. Archery – February 14-16 ~~8-10~~.

6. Muzzleloading gun – February 21-23 ~~15-17~~.

7. Youth turkey hunt – March 14-15 ~~9-10~~.

8. Spring turkey – April 17-19 ~~12-14~~ and 24-26 ~~19-21~~.

9. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(16) Weekiwachee Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October 12-17 ~~13-18~~, November 9-14 ~~10-15~~, December 7-12 ~~8-13~~, January 11-16 ~~12-17~~ and February 8-13 ~~9-14~~.

2. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(17) Lower Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Family hunt – December 13-15 ~~7-9~~, January 17-19 ~~11-13~~, January 31 through February 2 ~~25-27~~ and February 14-16 ~~8-10~~.

2. Youth turkey hunt – March 27-29 ~~22-24~~ and April 10-12 ~~5-7~~.

3. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(18) Everglades Headwaters Wildlife Management Area – Arbuckle Unit ~~Gulfstream Tract~~. The regulations contained in subsection 68A-15.061(6), F.A.C., not in conflict with specific area regulations, shall apply to this area.

(19) Everglades Headwaters Wildlife Management Area – Hatchineha Unit.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October 19-25 ~~13-19~~ and November 9-17 ~~3-11~~.

2. Muzzleloading gun – November 29 through December 1 ~~23-25~~.

3. Family hunt – December 27-29 ~~21-23~~.

4. General gun – January 24-26 ~~18-20~~ and January 30 through December 2 ~~24-27~~.

5. Small game – February 1-27 ~~2-28~~.

6. Youth turkey hunt – March 14-15 ~~9-10~~.

7. Spring turkey – March 26-29 ~~21-24~~ and April 1-5 ~~27-31~~.

8. through 9. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 5. No change.

6. Shooting hours shall be from one-half hour before sunrise until one-half hour after sunset ~~(except during spring turkey season when shooting hours shall be from one-half hour before sunrise to 1:00 p.m.)~~.

7. through 8. No change.

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

Rulemaking Authority Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const., 379.2223, 375.313 FS. Law Implemented Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const., 379.2223, 375.313 FS. History–New 6-21-82, Amended 7-1-83, 11-17-83, 7-5-84, 10-1-84, 7-1-85, 9-19-85, 5-7-86, 5-10-87, 6-8-87, 10-8-87, 5-1-88, 7-1-89, 7-1-90, 7-1-91, 7-2-91, 7-1-92, 8-23-92, 7-1-93, 7-1-94, 7-1-95, 7-1-96, 9-15-96, 6-1-97, 8-7-97, 7-1-98, 10-20-98, 12-28-98, 7-1-99, Formerly 39-15.061, Amended 12-9-99, 3-30-00, 7-1-00, 7-1-01, 5-13-02, 5-25-03, 7-1-04, 7-1-05, 7-1-06, 7-1-07, 7-1-08, 7-1-09, 7-1-10, 7-1-11, 7-1-12, 7-1-13, 7-1-14, 7-1-15, 7-1-16, 7-1-17, 9-14-17, 7-1-18, 8-9-18, 7-1-19.