MEMORANDUM

To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners
From: Colonel Curtis Brown, Director, Law Enforcement
Date: December 11, 2019
Subject: Consent Agenda – Amendment to Astor Flood Zone Boating Restricted Area

Purpose:
Obtain approval for an amendment to Rule 68D-24.018, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), that will change the trigger for a flood stage boating restricted area in the St. John’s River in Astor.

Why:
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has changed the flood stage from 2.8 feet to 2.3 feet.

Top Points:
1) Following the flooding from Hurricane Irma in 2017, NOAA conducted flood surveys and met with emergency managers from Lake and Volusia counties. The flood levels were adjusted from a gauge reading of 2.8 feet down to 2.3 feet at Astor after assessing the impacts along with the information and recommendations received from those emergency managers.
2) This change will be consistent with NOAA’s determination of when flood stage is reached in Astor.

Affected Parties:
Local residents along the St John’s River and boaters who utilize the waterway.

Summary:
In order to protect the boating public from dangers due to visibility, hazardous currents or water levels, vessel traffic congestion, or other navigational hazards, a boating restricted area can be established by rule pursuant to Section 327.46, Florida Statutes. In 1993, an idle speed no wake boating restricted area extending from a line drawn perpendicular to the centerline of the St. Johns River 50 feet north of the confluence of the South Moon Canal and the St. Johns River south to a line drawn perpendicular to the centerline of the St. Johns River extending 2,125 feet south of the S.R. 40 (Astor) bridge was created from shoreline to shoreline in the St. Johns River in Astor, Florida. This boating speed restriction only becomes effective at flood stage. Historically, this boating restricted area had a flood stage restriction height at 2.8 feet, but NOAA changed the flood stage from 2.8 feet to 2.3 feet. This amendment will reflect the change made by NOAA. This change is specific to the Astor Flood Zone and does not affect other Flood Zones along the St. John’s River.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of the proposed rule amendment with permission to publish and file the rule for adoption without further public hearing unless requested.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:
Major Rob Rowe, Section Leader, Boating and Waterways, Division of Law Enforcement