



MEMORANDUM

To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

From: George Warthen, Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management

Date: July 22, 2020

Subject: Consent Item: Alligator Hide Cutting Rule Amendments

Purpose: Obtain approval for amendments to Rule 68A-25.052, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), that will allow alligator hides to be cut into specified pieces.

Why: The rule amendments would afford the alligator industry flexibility in using portions of low-quality hides that would otherwise be undesirable in the marketplace.

Top Points:

1. The alligator hide marketplace has remained severely depressed for several years with only the highest quality hides having value.
2. Members of the alligator industry have requested a rule change to allow the cutting of raw, CITES-tagged hides into standardized pieces to aid their economic plight.
3. The number of alligator industry members likely to use this hide cutting option is low. However, this change is expected to improve the demand for naturally scarred hides of alligators taken from the wild by alligator trappers.
4. This is another change in support of the Alligator Management Program improvement process meant to allow stakeholders additional flexibility and opportunity to sustainably use this resource.

Affected Parties:

Alligator farmers, alligator meat processors, alligator hide buyers, and alligator trappers.

Summary:

Staff engaged the alligator industry and other interested stakeholders to assess options for dealing with the long-term, severely depressed alligator hide marketplace. In response to strong, positive feedback from the industry and stakeholders, staff is proposing to allow raw CITES-tagged hides be cut into no more than four industry-standard pieces (after providing the Commission with specified notice ahead of time), which are only to be used domestically or, consistent with the Code of Federal Regulations, exported from the U.S.. Proposed revisions will require cut hides to have a tamperproof tag with a unique serial number affixed to each piece and record of the serial number along with the intact hide's originating CITES tag number and type of cut hide piece. Records of the disposition of cut hide pieces will be required to be retained for a specified time period, and all recorded information will be required to be provided to FWC.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the proposed rule amendment for advertising and file for adoption as soon as possible without further public hearing.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

George Warthen, Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management
Harry J. Dutton, Game Management and Public Hunting Section Leader