

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

From: Thomas Eason, Director, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

Date: April 19, 2017

Subject: Black Bear Management Update

Purpose:

Provide the Commission an update on agency activities related to black bear conservation as outlined in the 2012 Black Bear Management Plan. The update will include information on bear populations, habitat conservation, conflict management efforts, and public outreach in Florida over the past year.

Summary:

In 2012, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) approved a plan that guides bear management and conservation in Florida. The plan divides Florida into seven bear management units that afford better local context and stakeholder engagement for conserving bear populations across the state, and organizes conservation actions into four main goals: population conservation, habitat conservation, human-bear conflict management and education and outreach. Considerable progress has been made in implementing the bear management plan over the past five years. Much has changed and been learned, with significant amounts of new data and information now available.

At their June 2016 meeting, the Commission asked staff to bring back an update to provide information on activities accomplished under each goal. The presentation will include statewide status and BMU-specific demographic research and modelling, habitat management and connectivity, trends in conflicts and BearWise efforts, and partner and stakeholder engagement.

Staff will continue to work with local bear stakeholder groups and the statewide bear technical assistance group as we move into the final five years of the plan.

Staff Recommendation:

This presentation is for informational purposes and any direction the Commission may want to provide staff.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Dr. Thomas Eason, Director, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation