

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners
From: Curtis Brown, Director, Division of Law Enforcement
Date: December 6, 2017
Subject: Draft Rule – Commercial and Private Hunting Preserves and Game Farms

Purpose:

Staff will present proposed amendments to rule language for the operation of commercial and private hunting preserves (preserves) and game farms which will clarify permitting and facility requirements, reduce ambiguous terms throughout, and reduce the risk of escapes, which addresses disease concerns with captive wildlife being introduced into the wild populations.

Summary:

Commission rules which regulate preserves and game farms have been in place since 2005 and 2009. In response to stakeholder concerns regarding some of the current rules staff formed a Technical Assistance Group (TAG) and met with them four times to solicit feedback and discuss those concerns. The TAG consisted of industry experts, staff from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), staff from FWC, and staff from the Florida Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI).

These efforts have culminated in the development of draft rules that would modify the current regulations for game farms and preserves. The proposed amendments will provide clear requirements for fencing, caging and animal welfare. Consistency will be increased by defining terms and clearly identifying fencing requirements and application requirements. To ensure the wellbeing of captive wildlife kept on preserves, the mandatory area for the wooded and grassy areas has been increased proportionate to hunt preserve size.

Rule changes focused on reducing the risk of escape of exotics into the wild populations, as well as specifying requirements for permit applications and the facilities being permitted. Clear language will improve consistency of enforcement statewide. Detailed language is provided in attachments for this agenda item.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval for advertising the proposed amendments to Rule 68A-12.011 and Rule 68A-12.010, F.A.C. Publication of the draft rules would be as soon as possible with a final public hearing set for the February Commission meeting.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

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