

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

**From:** Diane R. Eggeman, Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management

**Date:** February 9, 2017

**Subject:** Final Rule Changes for Hunting 2017-2018

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## **Purpose:**

Staff will recommend adoption of previously approved rule amendments to revise select statewide hunting regulations, and specific area regulations on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), Wildlife and Environmental Areas (WEAs) and Miscellaneous Areas and to conform hunting dates to calendar year date changes. Two changes to the advertised amendments will be requested.

## **Summary:**

Staff proposed rule amendments at the November 2016 Commission meeting that would 1) establish a new wildlife management area (395 acres) as the first tract of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Everglades Headwaters WMA with rules consistent with Arbuckle WMA; 2) re-establish statewide regulations for the spring turkey season in Holmes County; 3) increase the cost of a Gulf Hammock WMA Recreational Use Permit from \$275 to \$417 at the request of the landowner; 4) re-establish the upland portions of Tenoroc Fish Management Area (FMA) as the Tenoroc Public Use Area; 5) require a quota permit for the entire general gun season on the Pipeline Unit (5,000 permits, exemptions allowed) of Ocala WMA at the request of the cooperator; 6) provide additional opportunities for hunting small game (quail, rabbit, squirrel and migratory birds) with any dog during small game season on 62 areas; 7) shift hunting season dates on 7 areas; 8) add nighttime raccoon hunting on 1 area; 9) add a youth spring turkey hunt on 1 area; 10) increase the number of days when squirrel are legal to take on 1 area; 11) expand when coyote is legal to take on 1 area; 12) establish new wild hog hunts on 6 areas; 13) expand the general gun season on 1 area; 14) expand the archery season on 2 areas; 15) clarify what game are legal to take on 2 areas; 16) expand or adjust the legal methods of take on 4 areas; 17) provide additional opportunities for hunting wild hogs on 2 areas; 18) establish or expand small game seasons on 2 areas; 19) remove a unit designation on 1 area; 20) revise or remove restrictions on where hunting is allowed on 2 areas; 21) change the quota permit issuance method on 1 area; 22) remove the quota permit requirement on 1 area; 23) clarify permit requirements on 1 area; 24) provide additional days of scouting on 1 area; 25) provide additional days for hunting equipment to be taken onto the WMA on 1 area; 26) modify camping rules on 3 areas; 27) specify when access is allowed within established recreational areas on 5 areas; and 28) provide additional vehicle access during hunting season on 2 areas.

Staff is also requesting changes to 3 rules presented at the November 2016 Commission meeting. We are recommending changes to Rule 68A-15.062, F.A.C. to allow vehicular access on an approximately 2,230 acre new addition to Cypress Creek WMA and to clarify proposed rules that would provide additional opportunities for small game hunting; changes

to Rule 68A-17.005 F.A.C. to clarify proposed rules that would provided additional opportunities for small game hunting; and changes to Rule 68A-15.006 to address feedback we received from JAPC.

FWC staff has been and is continuing to gather input on all proposed rule amendments via an online poll. Thousands of comments have been received to date and are generally supportive of most proposals.

**Staff Recommendation:**

(a) Approve a Notice of Change to Rule 68A-15.062, F.A.C. to clarify rule language and allow vehicular access on a new approximately 2,230 acre addition to Cypress Creek WMA; (b) Approve a Notice of Change to Rule 68A-17.005, F.A.C. to clarify rule language; (c) Approve a Notice of Change to Rule 15.006, F.A.C. to address feedback received from JAPC and (d) Adopt all other final rule amendments as advertised.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Paul Scharine, Public Hunting Areas Program Coordinator, Division of Hunting and Game Management