



Private Lands Deer Management Permit Program Summary April 4, 2013

This summary reflects changes to the proposed rule, as published, that will be requested by staff at the April 18, 2013 Commission Meeting.

Goal

The goal of this program is to better meet the needs and desires of private landowners and leaseholders regarding deer management. This would be done through a voluntary program that provides greater flexibility in herd and harvest management and promotes habitat conservation and hunting heritage efforts. The program would be for parcels of sufficient size to successfully implement herd and wildlife management measures and to reduce potential concerns of hunters on adjacent properties where management programs differ.

Program Description

The voluntary Private Lands Deer Management Permit program was developed at the request of private landowners and by working closely with them, to allow greater flexibility in deer hunting seasons and deer harvest opportunities within sustainable herd management goals for individual properties. Management plans would include actions to benefit wildlife habitat and could also include hunting heritage efforts. As a result, the greater public benefits of the program are (1) more and better wildlife habitat management, (2) more data on deer populations and harvest to increase understanding of deer management in Florida, and (3) more opportunities to get youth involved in hunting and other fish and wildlife related programs. FWC oversight of deer management, including approval of the management plan and appropriate monitoring measures, ensures accountability and stewardship of the wild deer population on behalf of the citizens of Florida.

The specific permit requirements and programs details would be as follows:

- A written Wildlife Management Plan (WMP) developed or approved by a Certified Wildlife Biologist (CWB; certified by The Wildlife Society) or developed through FWC's Landowner Assistance Program.
- Annual harvest recommendations for antlered and antlerless deer developed by a CWB that are intended to help reach the deer management objectives for the property
- FWC-approved survey standards (camera, spotlight or aerial surveys) must be used to estimate and monitor the deer population when harvest recommendations exceed either one (1) antlered deer per 150 acres or one (1) antlerless deer per 150 acres. Antlered and antlerless deer harvest recommendations may be submitted without

conducting a deer population survey in the year immediately following two consecutive years of deer population surveys, and in alternate years thereafter, provided the surveyed areas and survey methodologies are comparable between surveys. No deer population survey is required for approval of the harvest of a maximum of (1) antlered and one (1) antlerless deer per 150 acres.

- A minimum level of active habitat management, wildlife management and conservation-related activities for youth (e.g., FWC's Youth Hunting Program)
- A minimum size of 5,000 contiguous acres (cooperatives would be allowed)
- All deer harvested on the permitted property would be tagged and harvest information provided to FWC by April 1.
- If property is in more than one zone, the applicant may choose hunting dates from either of the two zones (but not both).
- Appropriate permits for archery, crossbow, or muzzleloading gun seasons would be required for all hunters participating during those zonal seasons, regardless of method-of-take used under the Private Lands Deer Management Permit program.
- The property would remain eligible to receive deer depredation permits.
- Applications submitted 45 or more days in advance of the zonal season start date would be processed before the start of the season. Applications will be processed as time allows for those submitted later.
- No state application fees are proposed.

Participation in the Private Lands Deer Management Permit program would allow:

- Hunters on the permitted property to use any legal method of take (archery, crossbow, muzzleloading gun and modern firearms) during the entire deer season. For example, firearms could be used during archery or muzzleloading gun season, etc.
- The permittee to designate the 128 hunting days in Zone A within the zonal start and end dates, with one break allowed. (Zone A has a 33-day break in the season that could be included in the 128 hunting days selected by the permittee.) Permittees in zones B, C, and D would have 128 hunting days, consistent with the respective zonal season dates.

Permit applicants would include the following types of information in the management plan:

Landowner and Property Information

- Landowner's name and contact information
- Lessee name and contact information (if applicable; landowner consent required)
- CWB's name, contact information, certification information and signature, if applicable
- Property map showing primary entrance
- Property size (acres)
- Location description using the Public Land Survey System (Section-Township-Range)
- Latitude/longitude (GPS) coordinates for approximate center of property
- Desired deer hunting dates for Zone A (up to 128 days within the starting and ending dates of the zonal deer season, with one break allowed)

- Landowner's signature and, if applicable, lessee's signature

Land Management Information

- Summary of land management objectives and wildlife habitat conservation goals for the permitted property
- Description of land uses and wildlife habitat(s) on the property and conservation practices conducted
- Maps, acreages and locations of proposed habitat management practices
- Current and desired future condition of wildlife habitat
- At least 4 of the following approved conservation/wildlife management practices, which are conducted annually and affect 10% or more of the permitted land:
 - o Deer population surveys
 - o Prescribed burning
 - o Silvicultural practices that benefit wildlife (thinning, herbicide, etc)
 - o Mechanical treatment (mowing, disking, roller chopping)
 - o Management for rare, threatened or endangered species
 - o Rotational grazing (land in reserve pasture)
 - o Allowing FWC or its partners to conduct wildlife surveys or research
 - o Wetland restoration or enhancement
 - o Conservation easements
 - o Food plots
 - o Wildlife openings
 - o Invasive vegetation management
 - o Host youth hunts or other Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network events
 - o Other

Deer Management Information

- Deer management goals
- If required, survey method used to estimate deer population density along with the survey results. Survey results may be submitted after the initial application depending on optimal survey timing for the permitted property.
- Harvest recommendation for antlered and antlerless deer