



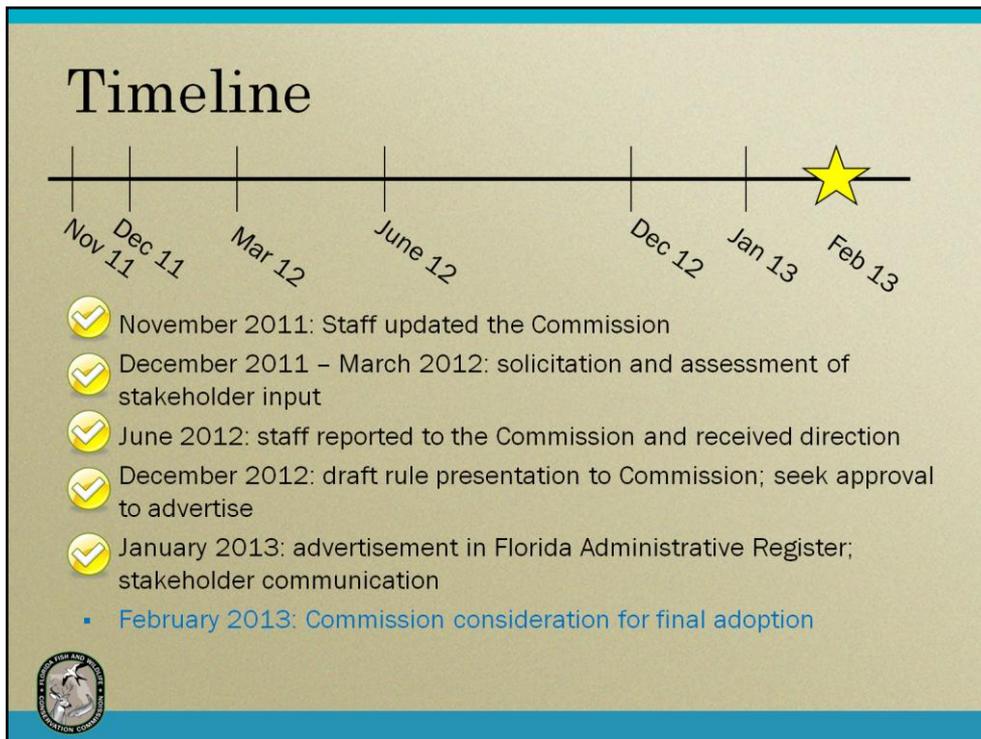
# Quota Hunt Program February 2013



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Division of Hunting and Game Management

Introduction:

This presentation covers final rule amendments and other changes to help improve the FWC quota hunt program.



Bold changes were made to Quota Hunt Program in 2009. Staff has updated the Commission on a regular basis and received guidance to move forward.

This timeline was presented at the November 2011 Commission meeting and shows where we are today.

Staff worked with stakeholders and listened to ideas on how to improve the current quota hunt program.

Staff reported back to the Commission in June and December 2012 and was provided direction to proceed with developing rule changes to accomplish this.

The approved draft rule changes were advertised in the Florida Administrative Register - January 2013.

The rule changes are now presented for final consideration.

## Outcomes of 2009 Changes

- Hunter participation has remained stable
- Sale of Management Area permits/licenses has not declined
- Guest permits are popular
- Deer and turkey harvest has not increased
- Most public comments have been positive, but improvements have been suggested



Hunter participation has remained relatively stable.

The sale of management area permits (and those licenses that include a WMA permit) have remained stable or increased over time.

Guest permits are well received.

On most areas, deer and turkey harvest has remained stable since prior to the changes in 2009. We did not see an increase in harvest due to guest permits.

We have received many positive comments on the new system, but improvements are needed. Some hunters say they are able to get permits for popular areas that they were unable to obtain in the past. New hunters are using the management area system and able to hunt popular areas. Some hunters still do not like the changes and prefer the old system. Many have suggested improvements.

## Recommendations for Improvement

- Revise guest permits to allow a different guest on different days
- Address returned & re-issued permits
- Review bag limits
- Continue to work with mobility-impaired hunters to allow additional permits
- Make the system easier to use & understand



Staff worked with stakeholders and heard the following:

- Guest permits should be more user friendly and permit holder should be able to take different guests on different days of the hunt.
- Improve the process for returning and re-issuing permits.
- Review bag limits and standardize as much as possible. Allow the guest and host to harvest a deer or turkey on those areas where possible.
- Continue to work with mobility-impaired hunters to allow additional permits.
- The system is too complex.

# Non-regulatory Improvements

- ✓ Improve website content
- ✓ Simplify quota instructions
- ✓ Introduce quota program in hunter education classes
- ✓ Provide more reminders of application dates
- ✓ Allow permit transactions from home



Staff is continuously making improvements to our website and procedures, based on customer feedback. Many suggestions from customers have already been implemented.

Instructions for how to apply for a quota permit are being improved and simplified.

The quota system will be addressed in Hunter Education classes and students will be instructed on how to apply.

Some stakeholders would like more reminders of application dates. This will be provided.

Quota permits and guest permits may now be applied for and printed at home, providing additional convenience to customers. This process will continue to be improved.

# Other Changes

- Reviewed bag limits on area by area basis and standardize where possible
- Allow host and one guest to harvest an animal, where possible
- Allow additional permits for some mobility-impaired hunts



Bag limits are set on each area, depending on game populations, management objectives, harvest pressure and sustainable yield.

Staff has reviewed bag limits and standardized where possible, allowing the host and one guest to harvest a deer or turkey. This was presented in specific area proposed rules.

Adjust deer or spring turkey bag limits –

**Southwest Region (68A-15.006):** Babcock Ranch Preserve; **(68A-15.061):** Arbuckle, Chassahowitzka, Hilochee, Hilochee Osprey Unit, Walk-in-the-Water; **(68A-17.005):** Lake Wales Ridge Royce Unit

**North Central Region (68A-15.062):** Bayard, Big Bend Snipe Island Unit, Cary, Hatchet Creek, Thomas Creek Kings Road Unit, Twin Rivers, Potts, Ralph E. Simmons; **(68A-17.005):** Fort White, Lafayette Forest

**Northwest Region (68A-15.063):** Apalachicola Bradwell Unit, Blackwater Hutton Unit, Box R, Chipola River - Altha Tract, Aucilla, Beaverdam Creek; **(68A-17.005):** L. Kirk Edwards

**South Region (68A-15.064):** Fisheating Creek, Picayune Strand, Spirit-of-the-Wild, John C. and Mariana Jones/Hungryland

**Northeast Region (68A-15.065):** Dunns Creek, Half Moon, Ocala, Matanzas, Etoniah Creek, Marshall Swamp, Ross Prairie, Three Lake Prairie Lakes Unit, Buck Lake, Ocklawaha River Gores Landing Unit, Tiger Bay Rima Ridge Unit

Mobility-impaired hunters often have sudden medical situations that prevent them from attending hunts. Staff proposes to allow a portion of the no-show permits to be issued prior to the hunt at the pre-hunt meeting or the check station on the following areas:

**Southwest Region:** Babcock Ranch Preserve

**North Central Region:** Suwannee Ridge

**Northwest Region:** Blackwater – Hutton Unit, Econfinia Creek

**Northeast Region:** Seminole Forest

This has been done as a pilot project in the Northwest Region and has worked well.

## 68A-15.005

### The proposed rule would:

- Allow the permit holder to take a different guest each day of the hunt
- Allow host to provide guest permit information



#### The proposed rule amendment would:

Allow a host to bring a different guest each day of the hunt. Currently, this is restricted to only one guest per hunt and the guest must apply for the permit using the host's information. The new system would issue a guest permit that contains the host's information with each quota. Guest information could simply be completed on the permit form and the guest could accompany the host, provided all required licenses and permits were in possession. Although the system would only track permit information on the host, this eliminates complexity and gives more freedom and flexibility to the host and the guest. The host would continue to be responsible for the guest, both host and guest would enter and exit the area together, share the same vehicle and share the bag limit.

## 68A-15.005

### The proposed rule would:

- Improve the process for returning quota permits so other hunters may use the opportunity
- Repeal sunset provisions in this rule



The proposed rule amendment would:

Allow unused permits to be returned electronically for re-issuance, so other hunters may utilize the opportunity. Currently, unused permits must be mailed to the Commission and postmarked prior to the hunt. This has resulted in many permits being received too late to be re-issued.

The return of preference points for unused permits was meant to be an incentive for those that returned permits in time to be re-issued. To incentivize the return of unused permits in time for them to be processed, advertised and re-issued, preference points would only be reinstated if received at least 10 days prior to the hunt.

Currently, returned permits are batched and re-issued on a monthly basis. Staff would be able to do this on a weekly basis with electronic return.

A final list of quota permit holders would be made available to Law Enforcement and check station staff prior to the hunt.

At the June 2012 Commission meeting, the Commission directed staff to draft rule language repealing the sunset provisions contained in this rule:

#### **Provision in 68A-15.005**

(6) Sunset of Revised Quota System.

*The Commission intends to sunset the rule amendments approved on February 4, 2009 and made effective May 1, 2009 that made changes to the quota hunt permit system prohibiting transferability of permits and allowing for guest permits. Therefore, Commission staff shall present at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting after November 1, 2012 draft rule proposals necessary to repeal those rule amendments unless prior to that deadline the Commission directs staff to prepare draft rules to repeal or amend the deadline in this subsection.*

# Requested Action for this Commission Meeting

- Approval of rule amendment to 68A-15.005 as advertised.



Request the Commission approve the proposed amendments for rule 68A-15.005, F.A.C., as advertised.