



This presentation covers the major proposed rule changes related to hunting and to FWC-managed public areas. Full summaries of all proposed rule changes, including nonsubstantive technical changes and annual calendar adjustments, are included in the additional background material.

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Report date: October 20, 2014

Rule Development

April – July 2014: reviewed proposals received from staff and the public

August – October 2014: solicited and assessed stakeholder input

November 2014: Commission review; approve to advertise

December 2014: advertise in Florida Administrative Register; communicate with stakeholders

February 2015: Commission considers adoption



FWC staff received approximately 155 requests for changes from the public, staff, and cooperators. Some of these ideas were proposals for change to publications, policies, or other non-rulemaking issues. Staff recommended approximately 90+ of the ideas for rule changes. The public has had an opportunity to directly submit comments to staff over the internet prior to the November and February Commission meetings.

Establish New Area

Escribano Point WMA

Lead Manager = Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission

County = Santa Rosa

Total Acres = 4,017



NEW

Proposed rules (68A-15.063) would:

- Establish archery, general gun, muzzleloading gun, and spring turkey hunts with quotas
- Establish small game hunting season without quota
- Allow fishing and frogging year-round
- Manage public access and vehicles



Escribano Point WMA (new) – establish a new WMA (4,017 acres) that includes all seasons and regulations from that portion of Yellow River WMA known as the Grassy Point area, except that camping in designated campgrounds is allowed by permit only. This includes establishing the following seasons and regulations: 2 archery hunts (7 and 9 days; quota of 10, no exemptions); 3 general gun hunts (4, 4, and 5 days; quota of 5, no exemptions); a 3-day muzzleloading gun season (quota of 10, no exemptions); four 3-day spring turkey hunts (quota of 5, no exemptions); a 9-day small game season; fishing and frogging year-round; allow the take of all legal game, fish, frog and furbearers; prohibit the harvest of antlered deer not having at least 1 antler with 2 or more points, except by persons less than 16 years of age; prohibit hunting with dogs, other than bird dogs or retrievers; prohibit the possession or consumption of intoxicating beverages; prohibit the use of all-terrain vehicles; and allow vehicles only on named and numbered roads.

Specific Area Rule Changes

Expand Spring Turkey Hunting Hours

- Currently, turkey hunting on FWC-managed lands is from one-half hour before sunrise until 1:00 pm
- Online poll indicated hunter support for all-day hunting, consistent with statewide rules (one-half hour before sunrise until sunset)
- Expanded hours proposed for 16 areas:



This page and the next one summarize the remaining substantive, area-specific rules contained in this rule-change package (details are in the background report).

Expanded hunting hours for spring turkey seasons:

Southwest Region (68A-15.061): Chassahowitzka, Hilochee

North Central Region (68A-15.062): Andrews, Big Bend – Snipe Island Unit

Northwest Region (68A-15.063): Box-R, Joe Budd, **(68A-17.005):** L. Kirk Edwards

South Region (68A-15.064): Dinner Island Ranch, Fisheating Creek, J.W. Corbett

Northeast Region (68A-15.065): Caravelle Ranch, Guana River, Half Moon, Salt Lake, Three Lakes Prairie Lakes Unit, Triple N Ranch

Specific Area Rule Changes

New Hunting Opportunity

- 23 areas: add hunts, days, species or methods of take to existing hunts, or increase quotas

Reduced Hunting Opportunity

- 1 area: reduce quotas



New Hunting Opportunity - Increases to hunt types, number of days, number of quota permits, or number of species to hunt:

Southwest Region (68A-15.061): Fred C. Babcock/Cecil M. Webb, Green Swamp, Hilochee; **(68A-15.006):** Babcock Ranch Preserve

North Central Region (68A-15.062): Big Bend – Snipe Island Unit, Big Shoals, Cary, Citrus, Cypress Creek, Flying Eagle, Jennings Forest, Little River, Raiford, Twin Rivers
(68A-17.005): Lafayette Forest, Watermelon Pond

Northwest Region (68A-15.063): Apalachicola – Bradwell Unit, Blackwater, Joe Budd, Lafayette Creek, Pine Log; **(68A-17.005):** L. Kirk Edwards

South Region (68A-15.064): Picayune Strand

Reduced Hunting Opportunity:

Northeast Region (68A-15.065): Half Moon – reduction in quota

Specific Area Rule Changes



Other Rules

- 30 areas: revise rules concerning roads, vehicles, horses, access, dogs, check stations, or camping
- 6 areas: adjust hunt types and dates

Other Rules:

Roads, vehicles, horses, dogs, access, check stations, or camping -

Southwest Region (68A-15.061): Arbuckle, Hilochee, Walk-in-the-Water;
(68A-17.005): Little Gator Creek, Moody Branch Mitigation Park

North Central Region (68A-15.062): Big Bend Snipe Island Unit, Cary, Devil's Hammock, Goethe, Gulf Hammock, Jennings Forest, Lochloosa, PotashCorp-White Springs, Twin Rivers; **(68A-17.005):** Watermelon Pond

Northwest Region (68A-15.063): Apalachicola, Blackwater, Chipola River, Choctawhatchee River, Econfina Creek, Escambia River, Pine Log

South Region (68A-17.005): John C. and Mariana Jones/Hungryland, John G. and Susan H. Dupuis, J. W. Corbett

Northeast Region (68A-15.065): Buck Lake, Caravelle Ranch, Guana River, Lake George - Dexter Mary Farms Unit, Triple N Ranch

Adjust hunt types and dates -

Southwest Region (68A-15.061): Green Swamp, Hickory Hammock, Hilochee

Northwest Region (68A-17.005): L. Kirk Edwards

Northeast Region (68A-15.065): Caravelle Ranch, Lake Panasoffkee

Public Input

- Improved online poll for receiving public comments – number of persons commenting greatly increased
- Summaries of rule proposals regarding hunting and FWC-managed areas available for public comment online, August 14 – October 7
- Stakeholders notified through email and social media
- Over 6,300 individuals provided input



Summaries of all rule proposals regarding hunting and FWC-managed areas were posted online from August 14 – October 7 with instructions and request to make comments. Staff employed a new method for receiving online comments. The opportunity to comment was advertised and made available through FWC's HuntFlorida Facebook page. Email blasts were sent via GovDelivery (FWC's email news group service), and staff sent group emails to known stakeholders and stakeholder groups, who we thought might be interested. Over 100,000 individuals were notified by email. Staff also made phone calls to known stakeholder leaders, informing them of the proposed changes and where they could make comments. These efforts combined resulted in over 6,300 individuals providing input. Changes to rule proposals in response to public input were evaluated and made.

Staff Recommendation



- Approve proposals for rule amendments for advertising in the Florida Administrative Register
- Provide direction or guidance for staff as we continue working with the public
- Consider for final adoption at February 2015 Commission meeting



If approved as final rules in February, 2015, they would take effect July 1, 2015.