

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

From: Major Richard Moore, Section Leader, Division Law Enforcement

Date: June 24, 2015

Subject: Consent Agenda Item: Withlacoochee River Boating Restricted Areas

Purpose:

This proposal would update the Withlacoochee River Boating Restricted Areas flood rule. Maps and legal language associated with the rule would be modified to better identify the regulated areas within the river during flood events. The portions of restricted areas that have been identified as not needing additional protection due to lack of public safety concerns would also be eliminated.

Summary:

The purpose of boating restricted zones is to protect the safety of the public if such restrictions are necessary based on boating accidents, visibility, hazardous currents or water levels, vessel traffic congestion or other navigational hazards. The Withlacoochee River Boating Restricted Areas rule needs to be updated because the location identifiers (canoe mile markers) are no longer in existence and can no longer be used as points of reference for the restricted zone boundaries. As such, the modifications proposed would include changing these identifiers to Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) coordinates coupled with physical landmarks that are more identifiable within the legal language of the rule. As a part of staff evaluation of the rule we also researched whether the length of the zones as described in the rule was appropriate based on public safety conditions. It was found that several of the zones could be scaled back due to the absence of maritime infrastructure or public safety concerns associated with upland structures. The effect of this proposal should be better public compliance, better waterway marking, and a reduction in regulation where appropriate.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the publication of the proposed rule and filing of the rule for adoption, unless an additional hearing is requested.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter

Major Richard Moore, Section Leader, Division of Law Enforcement