

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Governing Board Members

**THROUGH:** Kenneth G. Ammon, P.E., Deputy Executive Director, CERP

**FROM:** Ruth Clements, Department Director, Land Acquisition and Land Management

**DATE:** April 12, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Authorize the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to Establish Stormwater Treatment Areas STA-1W and STA-5 as Alligator Management Units and Allow FWC to Manage Alligator Harvests during the 2007 Alligator Harvest Season, subject to certain terms and conditions

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends authorizing the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to establish Stormwater Treatment Areas 1W (STA-1W) and 5 (STA-5) as Alligator Management Units and allow FWC to manage alligator harvests at STA-1W and STA-5 during the 2007 Alligator Harvest Season, subject to certain terms and conditions; providing an effective date.

**Background:** The STA managers and the Land Stewardship Division have benefited from the duck hunting experiences and have reviewed the impacts of the hunts that were authorized for STA-1 West, STA-3/4 and STA-5 in the 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 waterfowl hunt seasons. Based on these experiences and additional consultation with the STA managers, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission ("FWC") staff and hunting user groups, one limited alligator test hunt was conducted during the 2006 alligator harvest season in STA-5. This operation did not have any obvious adverse impact on the area and did not interfere with the operation of STA-5.

As in the previous (2006) alligator harvest season, restrictions and procedures will be implemented to ensure the security of the District's facilities and protect the safety of the participating hunters. Permits specific to the area will be free and issued by the FWC as part of the normal alligator harvest program giving all interested individuals a chance to hunt these areas. Hunters will purchase the usual license and tags normally required to participate in an alligator harvest. A maximum of one hundred (100) permits for STA-1W and fifty (50) permits for STA-5 will be issued by FWC. Only two (2) alligators may be harvested per permit holder.

Hunters will not be allowed to use air boats, other motorized boats, or all terrain vehicles during the hunt. An FWC officer will be on site while the hunt is conducted. To facilitate these hunts, SFWMD will provide funding for the FWC officer as a security detail. The hunts will take place during not more than ten (10) weekends during the 2007 season, with hunt hours on Friday and Saturday nights only, from sunset to sunrise as is common with alligator hunting.

**How this helps meet the District's Mission:** The establishment of STA-1W and STA-5 as Alligator Management Units will expand the allowable public uses on District lands without compromising the District's responsibility to protect the resources as required by legislative mandates and District policy.

**This Board item impacts what areas of the District, both resource areas and geography:** This activity will take place in Palm Beach and Hendry Counties and will affect STA-1W and STA-5 of the Everglades Program.

**What concerns could this Board item raise?**

Use of bangsticks, a firearm device, in an area with sophisticated equipment could be hazardous to the treatment process. However, past experience with alligator hunts in STA-5 managed by the FWC have not created any concerns for staff.

**Why should the Governing Board approve this item?**

Expanding the allowable recreation activities is consistent with the Everglades Forever Act and District policy.

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