

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: June 14, 2007

SUBJECT: Authorization for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to establish Stormwater Treatment Areas 1 West, 3/4 and 5 as Public Small Game Hunting Areas and Manage Waterfowl Hunts During the 2007-2008 waterfowl hunting season

Recommendation:

Approve a Resolution authorizing the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission ("FWC") to establish Stormwater Treatment Areas ("STA's") 1 West, 3/4 and 5 as Public Small Game Hunting Areas and manage waterfowl hunts at STA-1 West, STA-3/4 and STA-5 during the 2007-2008 waterfowl hunting season; providing an effective date.

Background:

The STA managers and the Land Stewardship Division reviewed the waterfowl hunts authorized for STA-5, STA-1 West and STA-3/4 in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 for any potential impacts to the operation of the STA's. Based on this review, managed weekend hunting did not appear to interfere with the operation or function of the STA's. Additional consultation with the STA managers, the FWC staff and hunting related user groups support continuing the waterfowl hunt program in the STA's. In addition to hunting, these areas will also be considered for certain passive recreational uses, such as organized bird watching tours, during the 2007 - 2008 waterfowl hunting season.

As in the previous years, restrictions and procedures will be implemented to ensure the security of the District's facilities and protect the safety of the participating hunters. No-cost hunting permits will be issued by the FWC on a first-come, first-served manner giving all interested individuals a chance to hunt these areas. The number of permits issued for STA-3/4 and STA-5 will be increased slightly for the 2007- 2008 season as recommended by the FWC and user groups and as discussed at the post-waterfowl season evaluation meeting and subsequent Recreational Issue Workshops. It is estimated that almost 5,000 people will be able to hunt these areas. This represents 25% of the 20,000 licensed duck hunters in the state.

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How this helps meet the District's Mission: The establishment of these areas as Public Small Game Hunting Areas will provide opportunities for public waterfowl hunting 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-1 West, STA-3/4 and STA-5 of the Everglades Program.

What concerns could this Board item raise?

Use of firearms in an area with sophisticated monitoring equipment could be viewed as a concern in regards to the operation and maintenance of such equipment. However, past experience with administering FWC managed hunts in STA-5, STA-1 West, and STA 3/4 has demonstrated that these hunting related activities have not resulted in any damage to District owned equipment in the STA's.

Why should the Governing Board approve this item?

Such recreation activity has proven very popular with the public and is consistent and supported by the Everglades Forever Act as well as District policy.

RC/bk