

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Governing Board Members

FROM: Stephen M. Collins, Real Estate & Land Management

DATE: May 12, 2022

SUBJECT: Authorization for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to Establish STA 1 East as an Alligator Harvest Unit and Manage Public Alligator Hunting on the Property Pursuant to Public Use Rule 40E-7.527, Florida Administrative Code

Agenda Item Background:

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is supportive of establishing STA 1 East as an Alligator Harvest Unit and managing alligator hunting activities on the property in accordance with State and Federal regulations and with the District's approval. Alligator hunting in STA 1 East would be managed through a quota permit process to regulate the number of people allowed to participate in the hunt and with rules and regulations similar to those adopted for the management of on-going alligator hunts in STA 1 West, STA 2, STA 3/4 and STA 5/6. The proposed alligator hunts in STA 1 East would begin during the fall of 2023 to align with the Commission's quota permitting schedule. Wounded warrior and youth alligator hunts could be scheduled during the summer/fall of 2022 due to an alternative permitting process used by the Commission to administer these types of specialty hunts.

District staff has received requests from recreational groups, the public, and the Commission indicating that there is a strong public interest in opening this area for alligator hunting.

Core Mission and Strategic Priorities:

Additional Item Background:

Construction activities that have restricted public access in the 6,552-acre Stormwater Treatment Area ("STA") 1 East property located in Palm Beach County have recently been completed. The agenda item proposes to authorize the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission ("Commission") to establish STA 1 East as an Alligator Harvest Unit and manage public alligator hunting opportunities on the property in accordance with Public Use Rule 40E-7.527, Florida Administrative Code.

Portions of the STA 1 East property are currently open to the public for a variety of nature based recreational activities including hiking, biking, fishing, and wildlife viewing during daylight hours from Friday through Monday. Alligator hunting has proven to be a popular and project compatible recreational activity in the STAs but has not been authorized in STA 1 East due to construction activities that have restricted the vehicle access necessary to successfully administer alligator hunting on the property. With the completion of these construction activities, the public access is now available to support adding alligator hunting as an additional recreational use in STA 1 East.

The Commission supports establishing STA 1 East as an Alligator Harvest Unit and managing alligator hunting activities on the property in accordance with State and Federal regulations and with approval from the South Florida Water Management District. Alligator hunting in STA

1 East would be managed through a quota permit process to regulate the number of people allowed to participate in the hunt and with rules and regulations similar to those adopted for the management of on-going alligator hunts in STA 1 West, STA 2, STA 3/4 and STA 5/6. The proposed alligator hunts in STA 1 East would begin during the fall of 2023 to align with the Commission's quota permitting schedule. Wounded warrior and youth alligator hunts could be scheduled during the summer/fall of 2022 due to an alternative permitting process used by the Commission to administer these types of specialty hunts. District staff has received requests from recreational groups, the public, and the Commission indicating that there is a strong public interest in opening this area for alligator hunting.

Core Mission and Strategic Priorities:

This Governing Board item supports the District's core mission and strategic goals by allowing for public recreation consistent with Section 373.1391, Florida Statutes. The Real Estate and Land Management Division is responsible for implementing this item and administering public recreation on District lands.

Funding Source:

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Stephen Collins, smcollins@sfwmd.gov, 561-682-2959

ATTACHMENTS:

[Resolution No. 2022-0507](#)

[Exhibit A](#)