

Meeting Date
May 26, 2016



AGENDA	
Section	Citizen Request
Item No.	VI F 2

**AGENDA REPORT**  
*BREVARD COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS*

SUBJECT:	Resolution to ban Florida black bear hunting in Brevard County
DEPT/OFFICE:	Joan Davis, 426 Beaugard Ave NE, Palm Bay, Florida 32907

Requested Action:  
 Pass resolution banning Florida black bear hunting in Brevard County similar to Volusia County resolution banning bear hunting, passed unanimously on 5/5/16. See attached Volusia County resolution.

Summary Explanation & Background:

I am respectfully requesting the Brevard County Commission take up a request to ban black bear hunting in our county at your May 26, 2016 meeting. Last October, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission conducted an ill-advised bear hunt that killed a reported 304 bears without benefit of a completed count of # of bears in Florida. Over 75% of Floridians were opposed to the hunt. 3,778 permits were sold to "harvest" 320 bears. Florida's bears had protected status for 21 years and had no fear of humans. What ensued was a disaster for our bears. Cubs as small as 40 lbs. were killed, several dozen lactating females were killed (leaving behind cubs too young to fend for themselves). Eye witness reports on the ground reported serious violations (such as pre baiting) and underweight bears. What was supposed to be a week-long hunt had to be stopped by the FWC in 2 days when 304 bears were recorded killed. The FWC would have you believe that the hunt was a "success" but many hundreds of volunteer bear monitors at the weigh stations all around the state will tell you differently. Thousands of activists, environmentalists, wildlife conservationists, journalists and politicians who care about protecting our iconic Florida black bear are committed to ending this indiscriminate, unscientific hunting. In spite of overwhelming opposition, the FWC is poised to approve another bear hunt this year at their June 22-23, 2016, meeting in Apalachicola. We have been attending their meetings and speaking out against this. These resolutions are very important to be reviewed and passed BEFORE June 22. Please add this item to your May 26 agenda so we can appear before the Commission in support of this resolution.

Municipalities that have passed Bear Hunt Ban Resolutions as of May 5, 2016:  
 COUNTIES: Miami -Dade population 2,617,000+, Volusia population 500,800  
 CITIES: Safety Harbor pop.17,139+, Biscayne Park pop. 3,000+, Palmetto Bay pop. 25,000, South Miami pop 12,000+, Pinecrest pop. 19,000+, Cutler Bay pop. 43,000+, Clermont pop 30,000+, Davie pop. 97,000, Deltona pop. 86,890, Cape Coral pop. 166,000+, Eustis pop. 19,214, Fort Myers pop. 68, 190+, Sarasota pop. 390,500  
 Current total of population represented = 4, 094,733  
 (Hillsborough, Pinellas & Seminole Counties have ban resolutions on their agendas to be heard before June 22).

Clerk to the Board Instructions:

Exhibits Attached: **Exhibit A; Exhibit B**

Contract /Agreement (If attached): Reviewed by County Attorney    Yes     No     PR

County Manager	Assistant County Manager, Frank Abbate	Department Director / Extension
Stockton Whitten	Assistant County Manager, Venetta Valdengo	



Tammy Rowe, Clerk to the Board, 400 South Street • P.O. Box 999, Titusville, Florida 32781-0999

Telephone: (321) 637-2001  
Fax: (321) 264-6972  
Tammy.Rowe@brevardclerk.us

May 27, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Stockton Whitten, County Manager

RE: Item VI.F.2., Citizen Request by Joan Davis for a Resolution to Ban Florida Black Bear Hunting in Brevard County

The Board of County Commissioners, in regular session on May 26, 2016, acknowledged request by Joan Davis, and took no action on request for resolution to ban Florida Black Bear Hunting in Brevard County.

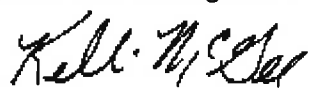

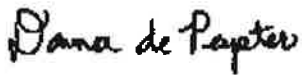

Your continued cooperation is always appreciated.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
SCOTT ELLIS, CLERK

Tammy Rowe, Deputy Clerk

/cm

<b>Date:</b> 05/05/2016		<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>		<b>Item:</b> 28
<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Resolution	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<b>Department:</b> Growth And Resource Management				
<b>Division:</b> Environmental Management				
<b>Subject:</b> Resolution urging the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to reinstate the prohibition on hunting Florida black bear.				
Kelli McGee Director Growth and Resource Management  Department Approval		<b>Legal</b>  Jamie E. Seaman County Attorney 	<b>County Manager's Office</b>  Donna de Peyster Deputy County Manager 	
Ginger Adair Director Environmental Services  Division Approval		<b>Approved as to Form and Legality</b>		
<b>Council Action:</b>				
<b>Modification:</b>				
<b>Account Number(s):</b> NA				
<b>Total Item Budget:</b> NA				
<b>Staff Contact(s):</b>		<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Ext.</b>	
Kelli McGee		386 822 5013	12000	
Ginger Adair		386 736 5927	12059	
<b>Summary/Highlights:</b> In 2012, the Florida black bear was removed from the state threatened species list and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) adopted a bear management plan with the objective to maintain or increase the current bear population in the central bear management unit (BMU), which includes Volusia County.  Volusia County has made a significant commitment to protect natural habitat suitable for bears through regulatory and land use protections and through the award winning Volusia Forever land acquisition and management program.  The population of the Florida black bear has increased approximately 19% within our region since 2002, but is still near or below the identified minimum target population, and significantly below the maximum carry capacity in our area.  In 2015, FWCC authorized a limited bear hunt in Florida, with a target bear harvest objective of 320 bears statewide, 100 in our region. The actual number of bears killed was 304, with 143, or 47% of the statewide total in our BMU. The over harvest of bears within our BMU is inconsistent with the stated population goal in the bear management plan.				

At county council direction, staff has prepared a resolution urging the FWCC to reinstate the prohibition on bear hunting in the state, and/or within our BMU. Volusia County remains committed to protecting our natural habitats and the wildlife that inhabit them.

**Recommended Motion:** Approval.

**Exhibit B**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2016-\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF VOLUSIA COUNTY, FLORIDA, URGING THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO REINSTATE THE PROHIBITION ON BEAR HUNTING THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND FOCUS MORE ATTENTION ON REMOVING CONFLICTS BETWEEN BEARS AND SUBURBAN AREAS THROUGH DETERRENT TECHNIQUES; ALTERNATIVELY, URGING THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO, AT A MINIMUM, PROHIBIT FUTURE BEAR HUNTS IN THE CENTRAL BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT OF THE STATE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

WHEREAS, the County of Volusia has made significant commitments to protect natural habitats, including but not limited to habitat for bears through regulatory and land use protections, and through the award winning “Volusia Forever” program; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the State Constitution, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (“Commission”) has regulatory and executive powers over wild animal life, which includes the regulation of bear hunting; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the Commission approved the Florida Black Bear Management Plan to conserve the state’s largest land mammal, which created seven Bear Management Units (“BMU”) which are geographic locations bounded by county and/or state borders with one of the seven Florida black bear subpopulations within it; and

WHEREAS, the goal of a BMU is to provide a defined area within which the Commission can have a community-focused effort to effectively manage and conserve Florida black bears; and

WHEREAS, the County of Volusia is located within the Central BMU, which has established a minimum subpopulation objective of one thousand thirty (1,030) Florida black bears; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Black Bear Management Plan provides that the management objective is to maintain or increase the current Florida black bear population within the Central BMU; and

WHEREAS, while the Florida black bear population has increased in the Central BMU by nineteen (19%) percent, this increase is less than the population increases measured in each of the state’s six other BMUs for the last two years; and

WHEREAS, the Commission estimates that available Florida black bear habitat within the Central BMU is three times greater than required to support the minimum subpopulation objective of one thousand thirty (1,030) Florida black bears, which means the biological carrying capacity of the Central BMU may be as high as three thousand (3,000); and

WHEREAS, in June 2015, the Commission approved bear hunting in certain BMUs throughout the state, including East Panhandle BMU, North BMU, Central BMU, and South BMU, reversing the statewide ban on bear hunting that had been in place since 1994; and

WHEREAS, the Commission approved bear hunting without the benefit of a statewide bear count that was slated for completion in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the authorized week-long limited bear hunt harvest objective was three hundred twenty (320) bears, with one hundred (100) within the Central BMU, a total of three hundred four (304) bears were killed in just the first two days; and

WHEREAS, the first bear hunt in twenty-one (21) years was ended early because the number of Florida black bears killed in the East Panhandle BMU was three times the established quota, and the number of bears killed in the Central BMU—one hundred forty-three (143) bears—exceeded the limit by over forty (40%) percent; and

WHEREAS, accounts of unreported killings, bears suffering a slow death, and the killing of lactating bears, which was forbidden, likely increased the death toll and reduced the Florida black bear population in the Central BMU to approximately nine hundred twenty-seven (927) individuals, below the stated minimum population target of one thousand thirty (1,030), and well below the biological carrying capacity in the Central BMU; and

WHEREAS, twenty-one (21) bears were harvested in the County of Volusia, which accounted for fifteen (15%) percent of the total for the Central BMU; and

WHEREAS, the black bear is the only bear found in Florida and is estimated to have a total population of approximately three thousand (3,000) throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, the black bear population is not sufficient to sustain hunting throughout the state, having been listed as a threatened species until 2012; and

WHEREAS, black bears tend to avoid confrontation with humans; and

WHEREAS, although bears foraging for food may lead to their unintentional presence in suburban areas, precautionary methods may help prevent their return; and

WHEREAS, the Commission Director of the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation, Thomas Eason, noted that the more than two decades of no bear hunting has made Florida black bears “relatively naïve” to the dangers of hunters; and

WHEREAS, the Commission should prohibit bear hunting statewide and focus on providing “bear-proof garbage cans” and reducing palmetto berry harvests in bear habitats instead; and

WHEREAS, if the Commission insists on conducting a future bear hunt, the Central BMU, which includes the County of Volusia, should be excluded.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF VOLUSIA COUNTY, FLORIDA, IN OPEN MEETING DULY ASSEMBLED IN THE**

**THOMAS C. KELLY ADMINISTRATION CENTER, DELAND, FLORIDA, THIS \_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 2016, AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** Urges the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to reinstate the prohibition on bear hunting throughout the State of Florida and focus more attention on removing conflicts between bears and suburban areas through deterrent techniques.

**SECTION 2.** Alternatively, urges the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to, at a minimum, prohibit future bear hunts in the Central Bear Management Unit.

**SECTION 3.** Directs the County Manager to send a certified copy of this resolution to the Governor, Senate President, House Speaker, the Chair and Members of the Volusia State Legislative Delegation, and the Commissioners and Executive Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

**SECTION 4.** Directs the County's state lobbyists to advocate for the legislative action set forth in Sections 1 and 2 above.

**SECTION 5.** This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

**DONE AND ORDERED IN OPEN MEETING**

COUNTY COUNCIL  
VOLUSIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jason P. Davis, County Chair

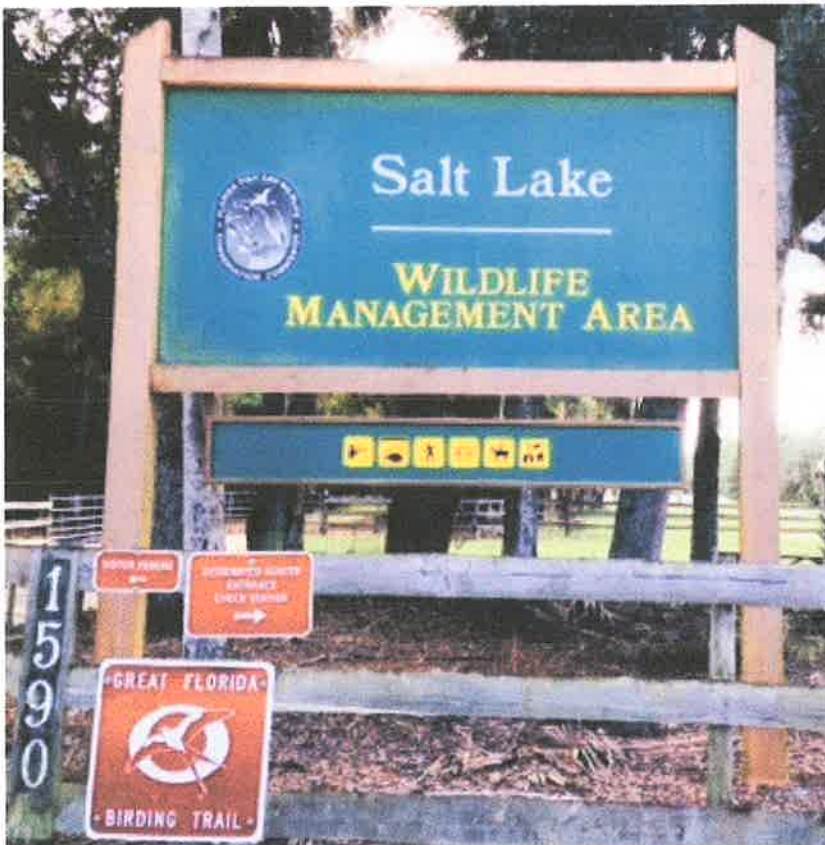
ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
James T. Dineen, County Manager

Emily Nice – Bear Hunt Monitor



Salt Lake WMA surrounding area



Salt Lake – hiking, horseback riding, bird watching

Item VI(F)(2)  
Citizen Request - Resolution  
to ban Florida Black  
Bear Hunting in Brevard  
County, FL.



Bear #2



Bear #3



Bear #4 – lactating female