

## **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding**

### **Proposed Statewide Registration for Deer-dog Hunting on Private Lands**

Prepared April 14, 2005

#### **What are the basic elements of this proposed private lands registration program?**

- 1) All private lands where dogs are used to hunt deer must be registered.
- 2) Landowner permission to deer-dog hunt must be provided to get registered if the applicant is not the landowner. A letter or hunting lease will suffice in most cases.
- 3) All dogs used to hunt deer on registered private lands must have registration number on or attached to their collar.
- 4) All hunters using dogs to hunt deer on registered private lands must have a copy of the registration in their possession while hunting with dogs.
- 5) Individual hunters would be responsible for controlling dogs and keeping them on the registered property. Violations would not result in action against the hunting club or property.

#### **How is the proposed private lands registration program different from the proposed permitting program we heard about last year?**

Many people were concerned about the proposed permitting program because it would have required a permit for deer dog hunting on private lands. If any of the permit provisions or rules associated with deer-dog hunting on the property were violated a certain number of times, the permit could have been revoked meaning no one would be able to use dogs to hunt deer on that property for a certain number of years. Many people asked for a rule that would result in action or penalties against the individual rather than the property or the hunting club. People did not want to see a loss of deer-dog hunting opportunity on private lands due to the actions of a few.

The proposed statewide registration program would require registration for deer dog hunting on private lands. It is different from the permitting proposal because any violations associated with deer-dog hunting would result in action against the individual responsible for the hunting dogs rather than the property or the hunting club. There would be no FWC action associated with violation of FWC rules that could result in loss of deer-dog hunting opportunities on any private property under this registration program.

#### **Why are you considering going statewide with this registration program?**

FWC staff believes registration is an effective tool in managing deer-dog hunting to reduce associated complaints and conflicts, particularly to stop problems associated with deer dogs trespassing across private properties where the hunters do not have permission to hunt.

#### **Who would be required to get a registration?**

Any person, group, or hunting club who wants to use dogs to hunt deer on private lands. The registration can be in the name of the landowner, a lessee, a hunting club representative, or anyone else who has permission to deer-dog hunt on the property.

**Is registration required for deer-dog hunting on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) or Wildlife and Environmental Areas (WEAs)?**

No, the registration is not required for hunting on WMAs or WEAs or any other lands owned or managed by public or governmental agencies. Deer-dog hunting is normally regulated by specific rules on these public lands.

**Would registration be required for raccoon, fox, or hog hunting with dogs on private lands or use of dogs for trailing wounded game on private lands?**

No, registration would only be required for the use of dogs for deer hunting on private lands. Use of a dog on a leash to trail wounded game would not require registration on private lands.

**When would the registration requirements begin?**

Under the current proposal, registration would be required for anyone who wants to use dogs to hunt deer on private lands beginning this upcoming deer-dog training and hunting seasons for private lands. Registration applications would become available soon after the June 15, 2005 Commission meeting.

**Will the registration cost anything?**

No, the registration will be at no cost to the hunter.

**If the registration program is implemented statewide, where would a hunter get a deer-dog hunting registration application?**

Applications would be available at FWC regional offices and through the FWC website (MyFWC.com).

**Does the landowner have to sign the registration application?**

No, the landowner does not have to sign the registration application, but the applicant must include some form of documentation with the application that has a signature from the landowner or his agent and provides permission for you to deer-dog hunt on the property. This form of documentation can be a letter or hunting lease.

**How do I put the registration number on the collar of my hunting dogs?**

The registration **number** provided by FWC can be on the collar or attached to the collar and must be clearly visible and readable. There are lots of ways the number can be put onto or attached to the dog collar. Some of these ways include writing or printing the number on the collar using ink or paint; engraving the number on a metal tag that is

riveted to the dog's collar; or engraving a number on a metal tag that is clipped to the dog's collar with a strong metal clip.

**Does this registration number have to be on the dogs collar and worn by the dog at all times?**

Not at all times, but the registration number must be on or attached to the dogs collar and that collar must be on the dog at all times that dog is being used to hunt deer on private lands where you are registered to hunt deer with dogs.

**If dogs have to have the registration number on their collar when deer hunting, what type of violation would it be for hunting with unmarked dogs?**

This would be a second degree misdemeanor charge for the person responsible for and using the dogs for deer hunting.

**Why not have a minimum acreage for registration like Georgia has for permitting?**

The results of the pilot registration program implemented last season did not indicate any problems associated with the size of the registered property, so FWC staff are not recommending a minimum acreage at this time.

**Would the registration requirements be enforceable?**

The results of the pilot registration program indicates that the registration rules are enforceable and do provide very effective new tools for addressing conflicts and complaints associated with deer dog hunting.

**What if a person is hunting deer with dogs on a registered property and one or more dogs leaves the registered property?**

It is possible that this would be a violation of the registration rules and could result in a second degree misdemeanor charge against the person responsible for and using the dogs for deer hunting. Hunters would be required to keep their dogs on the property where they are registered to deer hunt.

**Deer-dog hunting is a southern tradition and heritage in Florida. Will this new requirement harm or hinder the future of deer-dog hunting in Florida?**

FWC respects the tradition and heritage of dog hunting. There are currently only 9 states that allow use of free running dogs for deer hunting, and they are all located in the southeast. The proposed registration program is an effort to help preserve this tradition for future generations. Note: Of those 9 states only 2 (Florida and Mississippi) allow use of free running dogs for deer hunting on private lands statewide. All others have closed portions of the state.

**If FWC receives complaints about a registered property, will that landowner be contacted?**

Any complaint would have to be investigated and verified by FWC. If the complaint is verified and a violation has occurred, the landowner will probably be notified. This would help resolve any complaints or conflicts before they get out of hand and result in more serious problems.

**Can a registration be revoked?**

Yes, if it was determined that the applicant provided fraudulent information on the application or in the required supporting documentation. Should revocation become necessary, it would be handled via processes provided in Chapter 120 of Florida Statutes.

**What would the violation be for persons deer hunting with dogs without the proper registration?**

It would be a violation of the registration rule resulting in a second degree misdemeanor charge against the individuals using dogs to hunt deer on private lands that are not registered, even if that individual has permission from the landowner to hunt those lands.

**When will a final decision be made?**

Public meetings will be held to discuss the proposed rule during the month of May. The final rule proposal will be considered along with final public comment at the June 15-17 Commission meeting in Daytona Beach.