

**RESOLUTION**

of the

**SEMINOLE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**URGING THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO REINSTATE THE PROHIBITION ON BEAR HUNTING THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF FLORIDA, AND TO INSTEAD FOCUS ITS EFFORTS ON REDUCING HUMAN-BEAR CONFLICTS THROUGH DETERRENT TECHNIQUES AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT; ALTERNATIVELY URGING THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO, AT THE VERY LEAST, PROHIBIT FUTURE BEAR HUNTS WITHIN THE CENTRAL BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT OF THE STATE.**

**WHEREAS**, the Florida black bear is the only bear found in Florida, and is estimated to have a statewide population of approximately 4,350; and

**WHEREAS**, as recently as 2012, the Florida black bear was included on Florida's Endangered and Threatened Species List; and

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

**WHEREAS**, in June 2015, the FWC approved bear hunting in certain regions within the State of Florida, including the East Panhandle, North, Central, and South Bear Management Units (BMUs), reversing the statewide ban on bear hunting in place since 1994; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2015 bear hunt was approved by the FWC prior to receipt of the results of a statewide bear count that was slated for completion in 2016; and

**WHEREAS**, the first hunt in 21 years was ended early following the killing of a total of 304 bears in the first two days of the planned week-long hunt; and

**WHEREAS**, the number of black bears killed in the Central BMU exceeded the established hunt quota by forty-three percent (43%), with thirty-nine percent (39%) of those kills occurring on public land; and

**WHEREAS**, Seminole County is located within the Central BMU, which has an estimated sub-population of 825-1,250 black bears; and

**WHEREAS**, the FWC's Florida Black Bear Management Plan (2012) indicates that there is sufficient potential bear habitat on Conserved Lands within the Central BMU to support 1,273 bears; and

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

**WHEREAS**, although bears foraging for food may result in an unintentional presence in suburban areas, precautionary methods are proven to help prevent their return; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 8, 2015, Seminole County enacted the Seminole County Urban Bear Management Ordinance, the first ordinance in the State of Florida aimed at managing human-bear conflicts; and

**WHEREAS**, since enactment of the Seminole County Urban Bear Management Ordinance, the FWC confirms that the number of reported human-bear conflicts within Seminole County has declined significantly; and

**WHEREAS**, if the FWC elects to pursue a future bear hunt, the Central BMU should be excluded,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA, THAT:**

**Section 1.** The Board hereby urges the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to reinstate the prohibition on bear hunting throughout the State of Florida, and to


instead focus its efforts on reducing human-bear conflicts through deterrent techniques and habitat management.

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

**Section 3.** The County Manager is hereby directed to send a certified copy of this resolution to the Governor, Senate President, House Speaker, the Chair and Members of the Seminole County State Legislative Delegation, and the Commissioners and Executive Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

ADOPTED this 24<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2016.

ATTEST:

  
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MARYANNE MORSE  
Clerk to the Board of  
County Commissioners of  
Seminole County, Florida

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: \_\_\_\_\_

  
JOHN HORAN, Chairman

CMO  
5/13/16  
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