Welcome

Thank you for joining us tonight

- Please sign in on the Sign In sheets
- Pick up comment cards at the registration table

Please turn your cell phones to silent
Collaborating to Improve Dog Hunting Stewardship on the Ocala National Forest

Honoring the Past and Ensuring a Future
Why we are here...

We need your help

- Short presentation
- Hold and bring your ideas to the tables

Honoring the Past and Ensuring a Future
To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

"Caring for the land and serving people."
Managing fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people.
The Ocala National Forest

- One of the first designated Wildlife Management Areas in Florida
- Currently provides variety of deer, fox, turkey and small game hunts
The Forest provides vital wildlife habitat and multiple recreational opportunities. More people in Central Florida means more visitors and potentially more overlapping activities. The Forest provides vital wildlife habitat and multiple recreational opportunities.
Population Pressures on the Ocala NF

• Population in the counties around the Ocala has increased approximately 380,000 since 2010

• Population growth of 21% predicted by 2030

• Nearly 2 million visitors / year

• Over 45,000 homes are located within the forest boundary

County population changes within 60 miles of the Ocala National Forest
There are very few places you can go on the forest and not be near a road

- Approximately 1270 miles of numbered roads designated back in 2008.
- Over 70% of the Forest is within ¼ mile of a road.
- Roads impact the health, diversity, and productivity of the forest.
- If an area doesn’t have a numbered road, there was a reason for it.
What is resource damage?

- Disturbance to wildlife
- Destruction of wildlife habitat
- Erosion
- Spread of invasive species
- Damage to cultural sites
FS designated roads to stop resource damage but the problems continue…

- Between 2008 & 2010, all unauthorized travel-ways were revegetated and closed in Paisley / Shockley area of the Forest.
  - Cost of $500,000
  - Work Days – 80

- Spring 2016 Road Survey found
  - 60% of the closed travel-ways had been re-opened
  - With approximately 80 new travel-ways coming off of main roads.
Unauthorized use causes problems that are expensive to restore

Trespass on OHV Trail

Vegetation Lost

Wetlands Damaged
Forest problems that need your help:

- Driving on closed roads / cross-country
- Blocking roads during a hunt
- Casting dogs into closed areas
- Trespassing on private land
- Littering / dumping
- Vandalism
- Confrontations with other forest users
Other Forests have...

Desoto National Forest
- Implemented dog permitting system

Francis Marion National Forest
- Dog hunting on Wednesday and Saturday only
- Rotating block hunting

Osceola National Forest
- Moved over 5,000 acres from dog hunting to still hunting

Kisatchie and Conecuh National Forests
- Banned dog hunting from the forest due to resident complaints
Continued resource damage could force these options…

- More road closures in sensitive areas
- Targeted law enforcement
- Reduced dog season
- Smaller dog hunt area
- Additional regulations for the dog hunt area
- And the last resort: Eliminate dog hunting
Getting on the right path

Ocala WMA proposal for 2017 and 2018

• Re-implement the quota permit system

  • By landowner request

  • To communicate better with dog hunters and give them a voice

  • No limit on the number of hunters or opportunities

  • For entire general gun season in the Ocala Pipeline Unit
Here's how you can help

• Report Violators
• Pass along the message of resource protection

1-888-404-3922
How you can help…

• Know where you are on the Forest
  • Get the free Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM)
  • Visit the Know where to Go table

• Only drive on numbered or named roads
How you can help…

• Don’t open closed roads

• Pack it in – pack it out
Help others to...

- Respect the Environment & Wildlife
- Report illegal activities immediately
- Respect Property & Landowners
- Show Consideration of Non-Hunters
- Know and Obey the Law
Some of the next steps are…

• Having meetings twice a year with dog hunting club officers (pre and post hunt).
• Work together with dog hunting groups on road closure efforts.
• Continued enhanced reporting of illegal road use.
• Better communication about temporary closures around Pinecastle Range, watershed restoration projects, and rule changes.
Please visit the information tables and leave your suggestions and comments with us.

Help Preserve Your Heritage

Thank you for coming tonight