



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

CONCERNING EUTHANSIA OF BLACK BEARS

Prepared by:

Large Carnivore Working Group
of the
Wildlife Resources Committee

This Memorandum of Understanding was prepared by the Large Carnivore Working Group of the Wildlife Resources Committee for the Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies. This document formalizes support to responsible jurisdictions when that jurisdiction has determined that a black bear, or bears, should be euthanized. This document does not constitute an obligation on the part of any signatory to utilize euthanasia in any particular case. This document was adopted by the Wildlife Resources Committee on October 19, 2014 in Destin, Florida and was subsequently adopted by the SEAFWA Board of Directors on May 14, 2016 in North Carolina.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Between

ALABAMA DIVISION OF WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES

And

ARKANSAS GAME AND FISH COMMISSION

And

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

And

GEORGIA WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION

And

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES

And

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

And

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS

And

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

And

NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

And

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

And

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

And

TENNESSEE WILDLIFE RESOURCES AGENCY

And

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

And

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES

And

WEST VIRGINIA DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

I. PURPOSE

The state wildlife agencies that comprise the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) share a common concern for the development and implementation of sound resolutions to bear-related incidents involving humans. Each agency, operating under independent authority, has responsibility for the management of American black bears (*Ursus americanus*) within their respective jurisdiction.

The intent of this MOU is to provide formal support to responsible jurisdictions when they have determined that a black bear, or bears, should be euthanized. This MOU will simplify agency responses and avoid unnecessary delays and complications that result from ongoing requests to pursue non-lethal alternatives to euthanasia.

Signature of this MOU does not constitute an obligation on the part of any signatory to utilize euthanasia in any particular case. Each signatory party retains decision-making authority to manage black bears within their respective jurisdictions.

II. BACKGROUND

Over the last two decades, black bear populations have expanded in both abundance and range throughout much of the SEAFWA geography, resulting in increased human-bear interactions throughout many portions of their southeastern range. In addition, concurrent human population growth has resulted in increased fragmentation of and encroachment into existing bear habitat.

Ultimately, professional experience and expertise of wildlife biologists and managers are employed to ensure optimum management resolutions to human-bear interactions within respective jurisdictions. Increasingly, however, managing agencies must contend with external entities that place greater emphasis on the fate of individual bears than on responsible population-level management decisions. This conflict arises when a jurisdictional agency identifies euthanasia as the most appropriate resolution for a particular incident.

III. AUTHORITIES

This Memorandum of Understanding is entered into by and between all members of the SEAFWA within the contiguous United States, which includes the following state agencies: the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; Arkansas Game and Fish Commission; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources; Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks; Missouri Department of Conservation; North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission; Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation; South Carolina Department of Natural Resources; Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency; Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries; and West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

The parties to this agreement mutually agree to the following:

WHEREAS: SEAFWA member agencies have statutory authority for the sound management of black bear populations; and

WHEREAS: Black bears are recognized as an important species from an ecological, recreational, aesthetic, and economic standpoint; and

WHEREAS: Black bear populations have become established within every member state of the SEAFWA geography; and

WHEREAS: Increasing bear densities in portions of the SEAFWA geography are resulting in expansion of black bears into previously unoccupied habitats; and

WHEREAS: Expanding black bear populations have resulted in increased human-bear interactions in which euthanasia may be identified as an appropriate resolution action; and

WHEREAS: Euthanasia is a biologically feasible option and appropriate management tool for certain incidents involving black bears;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the SEAFWA member agencies hereby advocate that parties to this agreement:

1. Support the use of euthanasia when deemed an appropriate management action; and
2. Respect the authority of each member agency when lethal actions are employed; and
3. Agree that when a responsible jurisdiction determines that euthanasia is the appropriate management action for a black bear, no signatory agency, or entities permitted by the same, will accept that individual animal for release, rehabilitation, or other captive purpose.

V. STATEMENT OF NO FINANCIAL OBLIGATION

Signature of this MOU does not constitute a financial obligation on the part of any signatory. Each signatory party is to use and manage its own funds in carrying out the purpose of this MOU.

VI. AMENDMENTS

This MOU may be amended at any time by mutual agreement of the parties in writing.

VII. TERMINATION

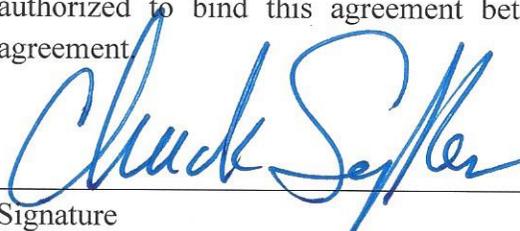
This MOU may be terminated by any of the parties upon thirty (30) days written notice to the other parties.

VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE AND DURATION

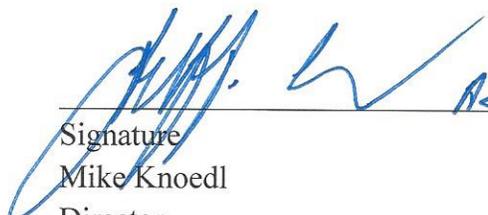
This MOU will be in effect upon date of final signature and will continue until April 30, 2020.

VIII. ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL OF AUTHORIZING OFFICIALS

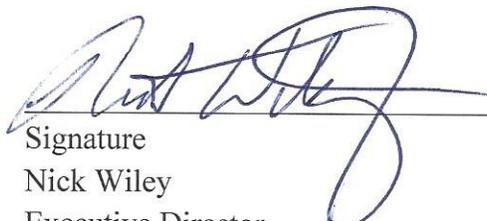
This MOU is subject to the terms and conditions as stated. The parties verify that they are authorized to bind this agreement between parties and that they accept the terms of the agreement



 Signature Date
 Chuck Sykes
 Director
 Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries



 Signature Date
 Mike Knoedl
 Director
 Arkansas Game and Fish Commission



 Signature Date
 Nick Wiley
 Executive Director
 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

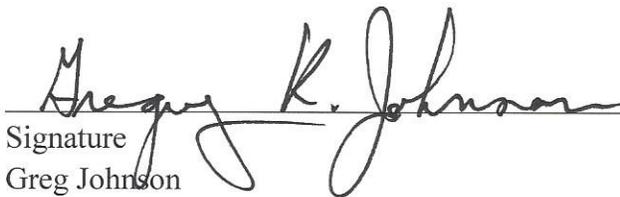


Signature

Dan Forster
Director
Georgia Wildlife Resources Division

5/14/16

Date

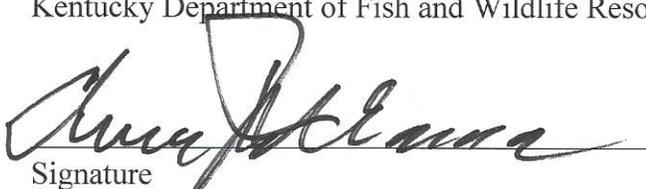


Signature

Greg Johnson
Commissioner
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

5/14/16

Date

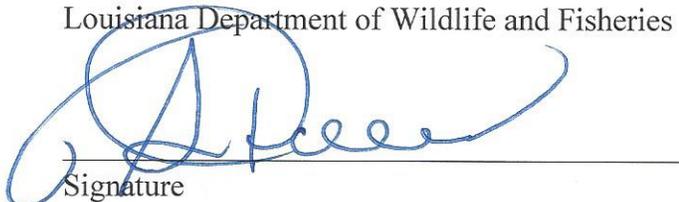


Signature

Charles J. Melancon
Secretary
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

5.14.16

Date

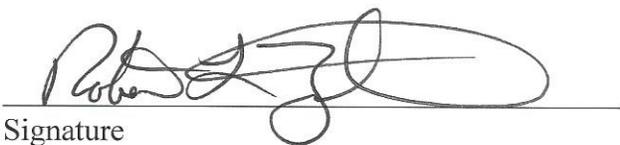


Signature

Dr. Sam Polles
Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks

6/14/2016

Date



Signature

Bob Ziehmer
Director
Missouri Department of Conservation

May 27, 2016

Date



Signature

Gordon Myers
Executive Director
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

5-14-16

Date

Wade Free

Signature

for Richard Hatcher

Director

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

5-14-16

Date

Alvin Taylor

Signature

Alvin Taylor

Director

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

5-14-16

Date

Ed Carter/BW

Signature

Ed Carter

Executive Director

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

5-14-16

Date

Carter Smith

Signature

Carter Smith

Executive Director

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

5-14-16

Date

Bob Duncan

Signature

Bob Duncan

Executive Director

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

5/14/16

Date

Paul Johansen

Signature

Paul Johansen

Chief

West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Section

6/9/14

Date