



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner
The Capitol □ Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800

Please Respond to:

February 5, 2008

Memorandum:

TO: Colonel Darrel Liford, Director, Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement

Through: Lt. Colonel Lou Leinhauser, Assistant Director, O.A.L.E.

From: Major Allan R. Johnson, Chief, Bureau of Investigative Services

Subject: Wildfire occurring in Polk County January 8, 2008.

On January 8, 2008, a wildfire occurred in the Hilochee Wildlife Management Area – Osprey Unit, located in North Polk County. The property is located on the northern side of I-4 near Old Grade Road, and is owned / controlled by the Florida Fish and Wildlife and Conservation Commission. The cause of the fire was suspected to be an escaped control burn being conducted by FWC.

The fire was investigated by the Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement and an independent multi-agency review team empanelled by the Division of Forestry. The conclusions of the investigation are as follows:

1. The wildfire that occurred on January 8, 2008 was a result of a controlled burn that was being conducted FWC on their property.
2. The burn was authorized and conducted in accordance with Chapter 590.125(3)(b), as a Certified Burn.
3. Based upon all available facts and information the cause of the wildfire appears to be an unpredictable change in weather that caused the prescribed fire to burn erratically which resulted in spot fires outside of the established boundary lines of the prescribed burn.
4. Based upon all available facts and information there does not appear to be any evidence of criminal violations or gross negligence on behalf of the FWC Personnel involved in the burn.

