

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

2 p.m.

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

PRESENT: Commission Chairman William "Billy" Deviney, Commissioners Clay Wagner, Bill F. Cossar, Scott Coopwood, and Robert Taylor.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden, Larry Castle, Jennifer Head, Colonel Steve Adcock, Jason Thompson, and counsel, Doug Mann and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorneys General.

Chairman Deviney gaveled the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER

Larry Castle, Director of Technical Programs, opened the meeting with prayer.

OATH OF OFFICE

Robert Taylor, having been appointed by Governor Phil Bryant to serve a five year term beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2021, was sworn into office by Notary Sharon Polzin.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the minutes of the June 22, 2016 Regular Meeting were unanimously approved.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the minutes of the Special Meeting held on July 11, 2016 were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director, requested two additions to the July 20, 2016 agenda under OTHER BUSINESS, namely, Alligator Permit Sales and FY18 MDWFP Budget.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the agenda for July 20, 2016 was unanimously approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- **David Smith**, President, Mississippi Hunting Dog Association, expressed his confusion on knowing whom to contact concerning the rules for hunting in the National Forests. He also requested a contact person at MDWFP to answer questions.

Dr. Polles informed Mr. Smith that anything with National Forests goes through the federal chain of command. The first link is the State (Mississippi) Supervisor for the U.S. Forest Service, second is the Atlanta Office, and the final link is the Washington Office. Dr. Polles designated himself, Larry Castle, Director of Technical Programs, and Chad Dacus, Director of Wildlife Bureau, as contact persons to answer his questions.

- **Senator Mike Seymour** read a statement listing concerns with the U. S. Forest Service, MDWFP rules and regulations, and law enforcement citations against dog hunters. Dr. Polles replied to Senator Seymour's statements concerning law enforcement and stated that there are always two sides to a story and sometimes three. Dr. Polles requested that Senator Seymour sit down with relevant staff and discuss the law enforcement issues. Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director, stood up and offered to meet with the Senator, any of his constituents and the Law Enforcement Command Staff right then and there. Mr. Cook further stated that the law enforcement officers at MDWFP risk their lives every day on behalf of the citizens in Mississippi, and take allegations of frivolous enforcement activity very seriously. Senator Seymour stated that he would indeed like to meet immediately following the Commission meeting.
- **Representative Doug McLeod** thanked the Commission for the letter he received in the mail recently and stated that he relied on this Commission to protect the hunting in Mississippi. He brought up issues with killing hogs and transportation of hogs in his area. Rep. McLeod suggested keeping the lines of communication open between David Smith (Miss. Dog Hunters Association) and MDWFP with a yearly meeting.

Chairman Deviney thanked Representative McLeod for coming and stated that he is always welcome to come to the monthly MDWFP Commission meetings.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of June 2016. He stated that FY16 closed out on a good note generating over \$16,000,000 in revenue, 37% of this amount was collected from Louisiana residents totaling over \$6,000,000.

Highlights of Thompson's report are listed below:

- Resident License Sales are down less than 1%
- Small Game Licenses - over 91,000 licenses sold (2,700 more than last year)
- Three-day Fresh Water Fishing License – up 3%
- Shooting Range Permits Sold – up 10%

- Sr. Exempt Licenses - up 10% (3,300 residents purchased licenses)
- Non-resident licenses ended similar to last year – generating over \$9,000,000
- All Game Licenses – generated \$5,000,000
- Permits - up 62% in sales
- Lifetime License category – up 4% (\$23,000)

PARKS

FINAL 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 6, Chapter 1 – Rules & Regulations for Miss. State Parks **Rule 1.2 – Section T. – Firearms, Fireworks, and Explosives**

Jennifer Head, Director of State Parks, stated that this rule was up for final passage. No comments were received and staff recommended approval.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, Final Rule 1.2 was approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

FY 2018 MDWFP BUDGET REQUEST

Dr. Polles requested to move consideration of the MDWFP FY18 budget from Other Business to now, following the Parks request. The Commission unanimously concurred with his request and this item was brought before the Commission for consideration.

Jennifer Head requested approval of the overall MDWFP FY18 operating budget request in the amount of \$84,940,313. The increases presented are as follows:

- Parks improvements: \$3,850,000
- Museum Outreach Education: \$285,000 (Education Enhancement Funds)
- Restoration of General Funds: \$812,407
- Restoration of Special Funds: \$67,002

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the FY18 MDWFP budget request was approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

FISHERIES

Monroe County Board of Supervisors Request to Rename Hwy 278 Landing

Larry Pugh, Director of Fisheries Bureau, presented a Resolution from the Monroe County Board of Supervisors requesting MDWFP to name a boat ramp facility, located at the crossing of U. S. Highway 278 over the Old Channel for the Tombigbee River in Monroe County, Mississippi, in memory and honor of Thomas “Tommy” Thornton of Amory. Mr. Thornton was an avid outdoorsman and supporter of Wild Turkey Federation, MDWFP, and Ducks Unlimited.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the request to name a boat ramp facility at Hwy 278 Landing in honor of Thomas Thornton was approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Citation Report

Colonel Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented a handout which highlighted violations, shooting range attendance, and Governors 5K Run. No action was required of the Commission.

OTHER BUSINESS

Alligator Permit Report

Ricky Flynt, Alligator/Furbearer Coordinator, presented details of the on-line sale of Alligator Permits held July 25, 2016. His presentation began with a history of Alligator permit sales. Over the years the process in getting permits has changed in response to public comment, as well as staff evaluation of how things are progressing each year. Flynt started preparing customers for the alligator permit process in February, 2016, through a number of media outlets, including radio, television, magazine and newspaper articles. Six thousand users were vying for 900 permits on July 25th. All 900 were sold within 45 minutes, the same time frame as last year.

ACTION: Chairman Deviney requested a working session in the near future, for the Commission and staff to investigate best methods for the sale of Alligator Permits in the State of Mississippi.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, August 17, 2016 at 2 p.m. in the Commission Conference Room located at 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39211.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Polles reported that there was no need for an Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Cossar made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn.

Chairman Deviney gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



Charles Deviney, CHAIRMAN

8/17/16

Date



Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN

Date