

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, August 17, 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, Chad Dacus, Larry Pugh, Jason Thompson, and counsel, Doug Mann and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorneys General.

Chairman Deviney gaveled the meeting to order at 2 p.m. The Chairman welcomed special guest, Jordan Coopwood, Commissioner Scott Coopwood's son, to the Commission meeting.

OPENING PRAYER

Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director, opened the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the minutes of the July 20, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the agenda for August 17, 2016 was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Brad Baugh, co-administrator for the Mississippi Alligator Hunters' Facebook page, gave historical highlights of the past 11 years of alligator hunting in Mississippi. He came representing the 1,035 alligator hunters who are members of his Facebook page. His observations provided positive reinforcement for the Alligator Program and all the progress and improvements which have been initiated since its inception. He added that alligator hunting is a team sport with the average team size over the past four years being four members. In 2015, 3,646 people participated in alligator hunting. Women are increasingly joining in on the hunt as well. The majority of hunters do not get a permit but most do get the opportunity to go hunting on a team. Mr. Baugh stated that he would continue to support this program.

Chairman Deviney thanked Mr. Baugh for his comments and support.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of July 2016. Total sales are four percent higher than last July.

Highlights of Thompson's report are listed below:

- Resident License Sales – up \$34,000 (10% increase)
- Sportsman Licenses – up \$25,000
- Small Game Licenses - up \$10,000
- Nonresident licenses sales – up 6%
- Total licenses sold - up 3%
- One-day Freshwater Fishing Licenses - up 8%
- Three-day Freshwater Fishing License – up 18%
- Permits – down 14%
- Lifetime License category – up 33%

MUSEUM

PROPOSED 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 5, Chapter 2, Rules 2.2 and 2.3:

Charles Knight, Director, Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, requested permission to present both rule changes concerning snapping turtles and then seek a vote from the Commission. The Chairman yielded to Knight's request.

- **Rule 2.2 – Regulations regarding Turtles and Tortoises**

In Mississippi the common snapping turtle and the alligator snapping turtle are both declining. MDWFP biologists are recommending that a permit be required for captive propagation of the snapping turtle.

- **Rule 2.3 – Regulations regarding Non-game Wildlife in Need of Management**

Any alligator snapping turtles encountered at a commercial catfish pond or processing plant must be immediately reported to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Radio Room. Agents of MDWFP will pick up turtle(s) and release into the wild.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, Proposed Rules 2.2 and 2.3 were approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

FISHERIES**PROPOSED Rules 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 3, Chapter 3:**

Larry Pugh, Director of Fisheries Bureau, presented the following rule changes.

- **Rule 3.1 – Commercial Fishing Regulations**

This rule change allows 3.5 inch gillnets to be fished in all interior waters (lowered from 4 inches); border waters with LA, AL, and TN will still be 3 inches per reciprocal agreement. Closed commercial harvest on Lake Susie and Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge because of fish consumption advisories issued by Department of Health and Environmental Quality. Removed language that prohibited the use of gillnets and trammel nets in waters that are open to paddlefish harvest because of large Harvest Management Units.

- **Rule 3.2 – Commercial Paddlefish Regulations**

This rule change created Harvest Management Units (HMU) instead of zones. HMUs are managed using a basin wide approach and larger than previously used zones. HMUs will be used to define the periods that commercial paddlefish harvest is open.

- **Rule 3.4 – Paddlefish HMU's Open Periods and Quotas**

Delineated waters open to paddlefish harvest into Harvest Management Units. Established dates and HMUs that are open to Paddlefish harvest. HMUs will not be open at the same time.

- **Rule 3.5 – Paddlefish Permit Applications**

Created Harvest Management Units instead of zones. Corrected dates from 2016 to 2017.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, Proposed Rules 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, and 3.5 were approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

Eagle Lake Boat Ramp Closure – August 19-20, 2016

Mr. Pugh presented a request from Warren County to close the Boat Ramp at Eagle Lake on August 19th & 20th for the "Gator Bait Triathlon" from 3 p.m. on Friday, to Noon on Saturday. There are other locations open for boat launching.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the request to close the boat ramp at Eagle Lake was approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

WILDLIFE

TEMPORARY and PROPOSED Rules 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1:

Chad Dacus, Director of Wildlife Bureau, presented the following rule changes.

- **Rule 1.24 – Twin Oaks Regulations**

This rule change was requested in order to correct a typo for Opening date for Raccoon, Opossum & Bobcat Season to reflect December 18, instead of December 28.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, Temporary and Proposed Rule 1.24 were 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, banding ducks, and update on cadet class. No action was required of the Commission.

Reinstatement Requests

Colonel Adcock presented the following two reinstatement requests. All violators had taken their Hunter Education classes and paid their fines. Adcock asked that each come forward and state the circumstances of their arrest before the Commission. Following each statement a motion was made by the Commission.

- ***Jonathan Massey, Ethel, MS***

Massey was arrested for headlighting on a public road. He stated that he knew that it was illegal to have a loaded gun in his truck. Colonel Adcock recommended reinstatement this one time only.

MOTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, Massey's license was reinstated by unanimous consent.

- ***Clayton Jarrell, Pascagoula, MS***

Jarrell was arrested for headlighting in August, 2014 and has paid \$2,100 in fines. His cousin shot a deer from the road but he took responsibility for being there. Colonel Adcock recommended reinstatement this time but not a second time.

MOTION: Upon motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the reinstatement of Jarrell's license.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was presented.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. at 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39211.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Director stated that there was need for a brief Executive Session.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session.

Counsel announced that the meeting was closed to determine the need for an Executive Session to discuss transactions in land and the location/relocation of a business or industry. The room was cleared.

The Commission determined that Executive Session was needed for discussions regarding transactions in land and the location/relocation of a business or industry. Upon motion made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session.

Counsel exited the meeting to announce to anyone waiting outside the meeting room, that the Commission had entered Executive Session for the stated reasons.

Dr. Polles informed the Commission of the possibility of partnering with the Nature Conservancy to obtain a sizeable tract of land in South Mississippi adjacent to one of the WMAs in that area. Discussion followed regarding current market prices, the prospective Sellers, and funding. The project was received favorably; however, no action was required of the Commission at this time.

Dr. Polles then updated the Commission on the pending construction of a public shooting facility at the Charles Ray Nix WMA in Panola County. No action was required of the Commission.

There was no further business for Executive Session.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to exit Executive Session and open the meeting.

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.



Billy Deviney, CHAIRMAN



Date



Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date