

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Tuesday, July 17, 2018

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211

8:30 a.m. Educational Session / 9:30 a.m. Business Session

EDUCATIONAL SESSION – 8:30 AM

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Michael Bolden; Jennifer Head; Curtis Thornhill; Col. Steve Adcock; Larry Pugh; Russ Walsh; and Jason Thompson.

Educational Sessions are for informational purposes only. No Commission action is taken on any topic. Items requiring Commission action are brought forward during the Business Session.

FY20 MDWFP Budget

Jennifer Head, Director of Parks, presented a summary of the FY2020 MDWFP budget broken down by Special Fund and General Fund for each Bureau. It was noted that each state agency presents their budget request in August to the Legislative Budget Office.

The Commission will be asked to vote on the budget during the Business Session.

FY18 MDWFP Profit/Loss as of June

Jennifer Head also presented a report on the agency revenue and expenditures by each Bureau. Several ideas were presented to the Commission for possible ways to increase revenue, some would require Legislative approval.

Members of the Commission requested a Quarterly Review of the MDWFP Profit/Loss Report and suggested that MPWFP investigate the European United Compliance Community as an option to strengthen and unify data.

There being no further business, the Educational Session was adjourned. The Commission took a short break before reconvening at 9:30 a.m. for the Business Session.

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MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SESSION – 9:30 AM

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Michael Bolden; Jennifer Head; Curtis Thornhill; Col. Steve Adcock; Larry Pugh; Russ Walsh; Jason Thompson; Charles Knight; and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

Chairman Cossar, having noted for the minutes that a quorum was present, gavelled the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

OPENING PRAYER

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

OATH OF OFFICE

Clay Wagner, having been re-appointed by Governor Phil Bryant to serve a new five-year term beginning July 1, 2018 and ending June 30, 2023, was sworn into office by Notary Sharon Polzin.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the minutes of the June 20, 2018 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

Chairman Cossar asked if there were any changes to the agenda. The Director requested for OTHER BUSINESS to be moved and taken up after EXECUTIVE SESSION.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner moved to approve the agenda for July 17, 2018 as amended, Commissioner Coopwood seconded the motion and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Michael Bolden, Director of Administrative Services, asked Tom Gerity and Major Brian Ferguson to come forward. **Tom Gerity**, Unit Liaison Representative for the MS Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, and **Major Brian Ferguson**, MDWFP Director of Support Services, entered the room with a surprise announcement. Gerity informed the Commission that Major Ferguson has served in the National Guard and Reserve for the past 20 years including three deployments. Last year Ferguson nominated MDWFP Executive Director Dr. Sam Polles and former Deputy Executive Director Robert Cook for the "PATRIOTIC EMPLOYER" award from the Department of Defense's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). Ferguson expressed his appreciation for his employers' continued encouragement during his various military assignments in the MS National Guard and Reserve, as well as, supporting his career with the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. A plaque was presented to both Polles and Cook. A round of applause followed for both directors and then for Major Ferguson.

Special guests, Representative John Corley and Chris Huges, arrived during the "Patriotic Employer" award presentation and were welcomed by Chairman Cossar.

Kelly MacNeely came forward and brought river stages and flood pictures, maps, and charts for the Commission to take into consideration on the potential purchase of property in the Delta area. The Commission thanked Mr. MacNeely for his comments.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of June 2018. The total revenue for the end of FY18 is down 1.7% from FY17. Louisiana sales made up 35% of the revenue for FY18.

Highlights of Thompson's report are listed below:

- Non-resident licenses – up \$65,000
- NR Small Game Hunting – up 2%
- NR 7 Day Small Game – up 4%
- NR All Game – up 2%
- Permit category – 927 alligator permits sold generating \$208,525 (4,000 applicants)
- Lifetime Licenses – up 2%

WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Projects

Russ Walsh, Wildlife Executive Staff Officer, presented the Commission with a spiral-bound booklet, Wildlife Management Area Projects-July 2018, highlighting numerous WMA projects underway and/or completed across the state, including habitat management; plantings for

migratory birds and seasonal forage; new and refurbished infrastructure; and wildlife damage management.

FINAL – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1 – WMA Regulations:

Rule 1.43 – Canemount WMA Regulations

Walsh stated that there were no changes made since last month and no comments have been received. He recommended approval.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved Final Rule 1.43 as presented.

PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 2 – White-tailed Deer:

• **Rule 2.4 – Supplemental Feeding of Wild Animals Outside of Wildlife Enclosure**

Walsh stated that the restricted area for supplemental feeding has been narrowed down to portions of Issaquena and Sharkey counties and all of Warren County. The ban has been lifted off the other counties.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved Proposed Rule 2.4 as presented.

• **Rule 2.7 – Prohibition on Cervid Carcass Importation to Protect Mississippi from Chronic Wasting Disease**

Walsh stated that cervid carcass may not be transported outside of the CWD Zone.

The Commission stipulated that the public should be notified of all changes with one week of social media.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved Proposed Rule 2.7 as presented.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update

CWD Regulations and Best Management Practices – 2018-19 Deer Hunting Season Recommendations

Walsh presented a proposed CWD tri-fold pamphlet for the 2018-19 deer hunting season. The pamphlet includes information about the proposed supplemental feeding and carcass transportation ban area; best management practices for handling, processing, and disposal of harvested deer; and CWD sampling collection locations, times, and procedures. Freezers will be provided at each collection site for hunters to deposit deer heads.

Mississippi 2018/19 CWD Sampling Plan

Walsh distributed a handout which outlined the strategy for collecting 5,000 samples statewide. A map of counties was included with target sample numbers derived from risk assessment in CWD Response Plan. Samples will be taken from DMAP clubs, drop-off locations, WMAs, NWRs, reported diseased deer, taxidermists, road-kills, and incidental hunter kills. The MSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab will receive the samples weekly. Results from hunter-killed deer will be posted on www.mdwfp.com/cwd. Sampling efforts will be re-evaluated mid-season and altered if necessary.

Walsh added that with only one case of CWD detected so far, it is likely Mississippi caught this on the front end and made an aggressive stance to remove it. An infected deer's saliva is the most aggressive means to spread the CWD prions. Shared food and water sources exposures healthy animals to CWD prions shed by diseased deer.

Walsh distributed a handout highlighting shared information at a "CWD Roundtable" between Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Emphasized at the meeting was the importance of hunters reporting what they see. Hunters are our eyes and an important resource in finding, detecting, and eradicating CWD.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Update

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented a handout which highlighted citations, shooting range attendance, Mclvor Phase II construction update, officers teaching boating safety classes, and officer support at special summer events, such as Tippah County Conservation Day.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Director stated that there was need for Executive Session to discuss transactions in real property.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner made a motion to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session to discuss transactions in real property. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting.

Counsel announced to those present that the meeting was now closed to determine the need for Executive Session to discuss transactions in real property.

The meeting was closed and the room cleared.

Discussion followed.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss transactions in real property. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session.

Counsel announced to those present outside the meeting room that the Commission had entered Executive Session to discuss transactions in real property.

Dr. Polles informed the Commission that the agency had performed all steps necessary to close the purchase of the Issaquena County property as originally presented to the Commission by the Secretary of State. The grant proceeds from the USFWS have been wired into the escrow account and the purchase should be closed before end-of-business today. Once the sale is closed, staff recommends that the area be closed pending development of a management plan and determination of staffing needs.

A brief discussion followed.

There was no need for Commission action during Executive Session, nor were there any other items for discussion.

ACTION: There being no further items for discussion in Executive Session, Commissioner Coopwood made a motion to open the meeting. Commissioner Mounger seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to open the meeting.

Counsel announced to any members of the public outside the meeting that the Commission had exited Executive Session and opened the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1 – Wildlife Management Areas:

Rule 1.46 – “Steele Bayou” WMA Regulations

Counsel announced that MDWFP, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration, had acquired approximately 17,816 acres located in Warren and Issaquena Counties from the Anderson-Tully Company on July 16, 2018. The land will be managed by MDWFP as a state wildlife management area, tentatively titled “Steele Bayou Wildlife Management Area”. This property is a matrix of bayous, cypress sloughs, and well-managed bottomland hardwoods.

This proposed rule will formally close this property to public hunting and fishing, pending assessment and development of a comprehensive management plan. It is anticipated that the WMA will be open to public hunting and fishing by or before the 2019-2020 hunting season.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission unanimously to approve Proposed Rule 1.46 as presented.

MDWFP Budget for FY 2020

Jennifer Head, Director of State Parks, presented the MDWFP FY2020 budget request for approval (authority only).

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission unanimously approved the 2020 MDWFP budget request as presented.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, August 15, 2018. The Educational Session will begin at 8:30 a.m. followed at 9:30 a.m. with the Business Session. These events will take place at JP Coleman State Park, 613 CR 321, Iuka, MS 38852.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Cossar gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



Bill F. Cossar, CHAIRMAN



Date



Scott Coopwood, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date