

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, November 14, 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; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden; Jennifer Head; Charles Knight; Col. Steve Adcock; Larry Pugh; Russ Walsh; and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

Educational Sessions are for informational purposes only. Commission action on any topic may only be taken during a regular business session.

STATE FISHING LAKE PROPERTY ENCROACHMENTS UPDATE

Larry Pugh, Director of Fisheries Bureau, presented a PowerPoint presentation and handout highlighting encroachments on four of the state's 20 lakes; namely, Lake Mary Crawford, Lake Bogue Homa, Lake Jeff Davis, and Lake Prentiss Walker. The encroachments in these cases are the construction of unauthorized piers on state property used for private purposes. These lakes are surrounded by private dwellings with a view of the lake. Pugh presented pictures and maps of the property lines and where unauthorized piers had been built. The past five years the Fisheries Bureau has been locating/marketing property lines and identifying encroachments.

Pugh does not know how this happened in the past but is making sure that unauthorized construction on state property does not happen in the future. The question placed before the Commission was how to proceed with encroachments which were historically in place. Pugh is looking into how other agencies handle this problem; such as Pat Harrison Waterway, Corps of Engineers, Tombigbee River Valley Water Management District, and U.S. Forest Service. Different options to handling this were discussed.

WMA REPORT

Scott Baker, WMA Habitat Program Coordinator, presented a PowerPoint presentation on Timber Assessments on state parks, lakes, and WMAs.

Baker also gave a presentation on 2018 Habitat Projects:

1. Prescribed Burning
2. Invasive Species Assessment/Management
3. Timber Management

4. Storm Damage Salvage
5. Wildlife Openings

A WMA WATERFOWL REPORT handout was distributed. It showed water levels and waterfowl abundance estimates on 14 WMAs. Muscadine Farms and Howard Miller WMAs currently have the best showing of waterfowl. According to a comparison of November 2018 aerial waterfowl survey estimate to the long-term average for November, mallards have 27.3% increase, other dabblers are down -27.85%, and diving ducks down -31.45%.

The 2018 WMA FOOD PLOT STATUS REPORT was handed out revealing 100% completion on 40 WMA food plots by the end of November.

With no other items to be presented, the Educational Meeting was adjourned. The Commission took a break until 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; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden; Jennifer Head; Charles Knight; Col. Steve Adcock; Larry Pugh; Russ Walsh; and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General. Chairman Cossar welcomed guests, Senator Mike Seymour, and Representative Scott Bounds, Chairman of the House Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Committee.

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

OPENING PRAYER

Commissioner Billy Mounger opened the meeting with prayer.

NEW COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

The Executive Director, Dr. Sam Polles, presented MDWFP's new Communication Director, Warren Strain. Warren comes from the Mississippi Department of Public Safety where he served as Communications Chief and spokesman for 13 agencies including the Highway Patrol, Bureau of Narcotics, and state Crime Laboratory. As a former award-winning journalist for three Jackson television stations, he brings to this position a wealth of knowledge and experience. A round of applause followed as Warren shook hands with each Commissioner.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the minutes of the September 19, 2018 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the minutes of the October 11, 2018 Special Commission Teleconference meeting were unanimously approved.

AWARD PRESENTATION

Dr. Craig Orgeron, Executive Director of MS Department of Information Technology Services (ITS), came forward and congratulated the MDWFP staff for winning the Center for Digital Government 2018 State Government-to-Citizen Experience award for the development of the "MDWFP Hunting and Fishing Mobile App". This free app allows hunters and anglers real-time interactive digital licenses, push notifications, on-the-go license purchases, sunrise/sunset timer, hunting/fishing reports, mapping, and feeding times. The real time digital licensing is a first of its kind for the State of Mississippi.

The Center for Digital Government recognizes and celebrates states, cities, and counties that have excelled in radically improving the public's experience of government and are pushing the boundaries by delivering cutting edge technology. Orgeron stated that the MDWFP Hunting and Fishing app won First Place out of submissions from all 50 states. He presented the framed award to Executive Director, Dr. Sam Polles. Dr. Polles asked the creators of this app to stand; namely, Curtis Thornhill, Michael McRae, Jason Price, and Eric Barnes. Applause followed.

Dana Wilson, President, Mississippi Interactive (MSI), came forward to present two of the nine Communicator Awards MDWFP has garnered in recent months for the new mobile app, "MDWFP Hunting and Fishing", and website, "www.mdwfp.com". All nine awards are listed below.

- Communicator Award of Distinction:
 - Best Mobile Experience: MDWFP Hunting & Fishing
 - Mobile Sports App: MDWFP Hunting & Fishing
 - Features – Integrated Mobile Experience: MDWFP Hunting & Fishing
 - Features – Best Visual Design: MDWFP Hunting & Fishing
 - Websites – Government: mdwfp.com
 - Features – Structure and Navigation: mdwfp.com
- Hermes Honorable Mention – mdwfp.com
- Davey Award:
 - Mobile Features; Best User Experience – MDWFP Hunting & Fishing
 - Mobile Features; Sports and Recreation – MDWFP Hunting & Fishing

The Communicator Award is the leading international award program recognizing big ideas in marketing and communications. Wilson stated that the Communicator Awards are judged by top-tier professionals from acclaimed media, communications, advertising, creative and marketing firms, such as Disney, The Ellen Degeneres Show, Estee Lauder, Lockheed Martin, MTV Networks, Yahoo!, etc.

Dr. Polles again complimented the staff for their teamwork and thanked MSI for partnering with MDWFP to make MDWFP a technology leader in the state's conservation efforts. Applause followed.

AGENDA

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner moved to approve the agenda for November 14, 2018, Commissioner Coopwood seconded the motion and the motion carried.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration Division, presented the License Sales Report for the month of October 2018. The total revenue for the end of October is down 3% and license sales down 1%.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – down 5%
 - Senior Licenses – up 6%
 - Youth Exempt Licenses – up 4,100
- Non-resident licenses – down 3%
 - Small Game Hunting – up 4%
 - 7-day Small Game – up 18%
 - Freshwater Fishing – up 6%
 - 3-day Freshwater Fishing – up 8%
 - 3-day All Game Hunting – up 4%
 - 7-day All Game Hunting - up 19%
- Permit category – same as last year
- Lifetime Licenses – up 25%, 78 more licenses sold

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lindsey Lemmons, Executive Director, MS Wildlife Federation

Ms. Lemmons came on behalf of the MS Wildlife Federation to voice the following:

- Support for the proposed rule on Turkey Harvest Reporting
- Support the banning of supplemental feeding during turkey season to prevent the baiting of wild turkeys.
- Support a statewide ban on supplemental feeding due to the risk of spreading wildlife diseases.
- Support pro-active measures for Chronic Waste Disease
- Support proposed rule on enclosures
- Commend staff on effective management

WILDLIFE

Chronic Waste Disease (CWD) Update

Russ Walsh, Wildlife Staff Officer, distributed the booklet, "CWD RESPONSE" which highlighted CWD Response Operations from February 9 – September 30, 2018. Since the last regularly scheduled Commission Meeting in September, two more deer have tested positive for CWD; one in Pontotoc County on October 8, and a second deer in Issaquena County on November 1. The two deer in Issaquena County were about 6 miles apart.

MDWFP hosted a public meeting at North Pontotoc Attendance Center on Thursday, November 8. Biologists and Law Enforcement officials were available to answer questions. Around 500 people attended, as well as, those who attended on-line. It was a positive meeting and well engaged.

In the past eight months the MDWFP staff have conducted the following in response to the CWD Response Plan:

- Sampled 608 deer; with another 370 samples submitted since October 1
- Traveled 52,152 miles
- 3,658 operation hours on CWD
- 3 public meetings
- 30 media interviews
- 40 presentations
- 2 training sessions

The Executive Director complimented the staff on their dedication and all the extra hours that have been required to monitor CWD, in addition to their regular duties.

Walsh thanked House WFP Chairman Scott Bounds and all Legislators for the CWD testing machine at the laboratory facility in Pearl, MS, that the Legislature funded. This has saved shipping costs and provided a less expensive process for testing the samples.

The \$600,000 expense this year for CWD testing, which was not funded by the Legislature, is currently coming out of the MDWFP general fund budget. Chairman Cossar encouraged House Chairman Bounds and Senator Seymour to rally their respective lawmakers to pass CWD funding for the next fiscal year.

FINAL – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 8 – Regulations regarding Animals in Captivity & Enclosures:

- **Rule 8.2 – Regulations for Enclosures Preventing the Free Ingress & Egress White-tailed Deer**

Walsh stated that a few comments had been received and all were positive. He presented the following amendments to Rule 8.2:

Section B – High Fenced Enclosures

- 2.(a) The owner of a high-fenced enclosure containing white-tailed deer must notify the MDWFP of the existence of the enclosure and register the enclosure with the MDWFP in order to obtain an annual permit that will be valid from July 1 through June 30.
- 3.(a) The confinement of white-tailed deer in high-fenced enclosures less than 300 acres and constructed prior to 2008, may be allowed if the applicant notified and registers the enclosure with the MDWFP.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved Final Rule 8.2 as amended.

FINAL – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 3 – Wild Turkey:

- **Rule 3.4 – Mandatory Harvest Reporting for Wild Turkeys**

Walsh stated that there were no changes or amendments. He had received comments, 75% of them were positive.

Upon passing, this rule will require hunters to report their turkey harvests to MDWFP.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission unanimously approved Final Rule 3.4 as presented.

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

- **Rule 2.8 – Prohibition on Use of Natural Cervid Urine**

This rule mandates that beginning on July 1, 2019 hunters will be required to implement synthetic only deer urine for hunting purposes.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved Final Rule 2.8 as presented.

Duck Stamp Projects

The following Waterfowl Conservation Groups had representatives present. Each came forward and voiced their requests for Duck Stamp Funding for 2018-19.

- **Delta Waterfowl – Jeff Howell, Vice President of Development**

Jeff Howell passed out Delta Waterfowl's "2018 Closeout Report and Proposal for 2018-2019 Funding Request". Howell thanked the Commission for prior year support and requested \$100,000 on behalf of Delta Waterfowl to be used for the following projects:

1. North Dakota Working Wetlands Project with goal of incorporation into 2018 Farm Bill (\$50,000)
2. Delta Adopt a Pothole Program (\$50,000)
3. Continued assistance with advertising and administering Mississippi's Delta Private Land Winter Water Initiative

- **Ducks Unlimited – Dave Kostersky, Manager of State Grants, DU Canada**

Dave Kostersky handed out an overview of their program entitled "*April 2017 to March 2018 Conservation Report*" and a magazine, *Conservator*, to the Commission. Kostersky requested MDWFP to partner again with Ducks Unlimited by providing for the following project and thanked the Commission for their support:

1. Saskatchewan Parklands Habitat Conservation in Canada (\$125,000)
This is the priority area and the best return on your investment.

Ed Penny, Director of Public Policy, Southern Region, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., stated that over the past five years Ducks Unlimited has spent \$12.2 million in the State of Mississippi and \$8.7 million on WMAs. He emphasized the importance of this investment in the Saskatchewan Parklands in Canada stating that the U.S. Department of Agriculture takes care of habitat in the states, but no funds are allocated by the Canadian government. There is no farm bill in Canada.

- **Mississippi State University – Stephen Clements, Masters Student in Waterfowl and Wetlands Conservation**

Stephen Clements introduced himself and extended an apology on behalf of Dr. Brian Davis, who was unable to attend. Clements thanked everyone for their continued support of the MSU Waterfowl Program and presented a handout to the Commission outlining their proposal for 2018-19.

MSU requested \$41,407 in Duck Stamp funds to be used toward project completion and publications of Dr. Jessica Klassen. Dr. Klassen presented her study last year to the Commission and this year's funds will be concluding her evaluation project of the MDWFP Waterfowl Program's overall waterfowl conservation efforts with ongoing statistical analyses, data analysis, publication preparation, and conference travel.

MDWFP STAFF 2018-19 DUCK STAMP FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Houston Havens, Waterfowl Program Coordinator, thanked the Waterfowl Conservation groups for their comments and presented the following staff recommendations for distribution of duck

stamp proceeds for the full amount requested with a stipulation that we will designate by line item how the funds are to be spent.

<u>Project</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Project Description</u>
DU & DU Canada	\$125,000	\$125,000	Continue funding of Eastern Saskatchewan Parklands NAWCA Project; funds will be matched 3:1 with other agency and DU funds.
Delta Waterfowl	\$100,000	\$100,000	Continue funding for N. Dakota Working Wetlands initiatives with goal of incorporation into Farm Bill (\$50,000); funding for Adopt a Pothole Program – perpetual wetland easement in Manitoba (\$50,000); plus continued assistance in advertising and administering Mississippi Private Land Wetland Incentive Program.
MSU Research	\$ 41,407	\$ 41,407	Final year of project to evaluate the MDWFP Waterfowl Program's overall waterfowl conservation efforts through analysis of aerial survey and other long-term data.
WMA Wetland Management & Enhancement Projects	\$156,000	\$156,000	This is increased from last year due to some projects being carried over to the next year. Provide funds to WMAs as needed to supplement annual waterfowl habitat management and infrastructure as they arise. Continued work on Sunflower WMA green-tree reservoirs. Sky Lake, Malmaison, and O'Keefe WMAs improvements can be used as Feder Aid or NAWCA match.
Private Lands Wetland Enhancement Projects	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	Funding for private lands winter water project in strategic areas of the Mississippi Delta (i.e., adjacent to or near Wildlife Mgmt. Areas). Funds spent would be used as match for future wetland work. Leftover funds from last year will be carried over to this year.
Aerial Waterfowl Surveys	\$ 22,000	\$ 22,000	Funding increased to include 4 surveys of winter waterfowl abundance in MS Delta; Delta Wildlife also funding.
Waterfowl Program Travel	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	Provide funds for MDWFP staff to attend regional and national meetings related to waterfowl and wetlands.
Mississippi Flyway Council Dues & Cooperative Projects	<u>\$ 17,254</u>	<u>\$ 17,254</u>	Annual dues to MS Flyway Council, annual contributions to MS Flyway banding, & other cooperative waterfowl projects.
TOTAL	\$545,661	\$545,661	

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, funds for 2018-19 Duck Stamp projects were unanimously approved as recommended by staff, contingent upon further discussion with the recipients about, and the recipients' acceptance of, any restrictions on how the funds are to be spent.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Update

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented a handout to the Commission which highlighted license violations, compliance checks, shooting range attendance at McHenry and Turcotte, and construction updates at McIvor Shooting Range. Officers assisted during the month at the Super Hunt, Attala County Magnolia Records scoring event, and hunting safety exhibitions at the Tupelo Jakes event.

Non-compliant Enclosures since 2017

Adcock presented two enclosures which had not met the July 15 deadline for sampling and permit fees since 2017. One enclosure is in Rankin County (949 acres) and one in George County (325 acres).

MOTION: By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission unanimously authorized MDWFP law enforcement and technical staff to proceed with all necessary measures to bring these facilities into compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

OTHER BUSINESS

Executive Order

Counsel advised the Commission that the Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan was initiated by Executive Order on November 1, 2018, for a Containment Zone in North Mississippi (Pontotoc County, Union County, and all of Lee County lying West of US Highway 45). The Executive Director was acting on behalf of the Commission, and a vote ratifying the Executive Order is required to be spread upon the minutes for posterity.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously ratified all actions to date on the Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan. A signed copy of the Executive Order which was ratified has been appended to the minutes.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, December 12, 2018. There will be no Educational Session. The Business Session will begin at 1:30 p.m. The meeting will take place at 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman asked if there as a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Director stated that there was no need for an Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Wagner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, and the motion carried.

Chairman Cossar gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



Bill F. Cossar, CHAIRMAN



Date



Scott Coopwood, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

In Re: Implementation of Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan – North Mississippi.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

PURSUANT TO the authority set forth in MISS. CODE ANN. §§49-7-58(3); 49-7-58.1; and 49-7-58.2, and the plenary authority of the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks over the prevention of the introduction of Chronic Wasting Disease (“CWD”) set forth therein, I find as follows:

1. On or about October 8, 2018, biologists of the MDWFP Wildlife Bureau received information that a white-tailed deer taken in Pontotoc County, exhibited symptoms of CWD. Testing confirmed that the subject deer was indeed CWD-positive.
2. The animal in question was taken in Pontotoc County, Mississippi, by a private landowner because the animal was exhibiting aggressive and erratic behavior.
3. Pursuant to the CWD Response Plan, working from the site of the discovered animal outward, the containment zone to be implemented will consist of all of Pontotoc and Union Counties, and all of Lee County, west of Highway 45.

THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority set forth above, and on behalf of the Commission, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that the CWD Response Plan is hereby implemented for a Containment Zone in North Mississippi. The Containment Zone is defined as:

- Pontotoc County
- Union County; and
- All of Lee County lying West of US Highway 45.

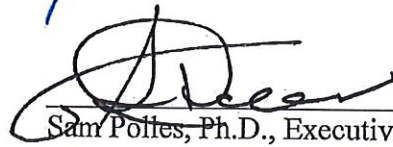
Private landowners, hunting clubs, and hunters within the containment zone are asked to bring harvested deer to an MDWFP designated site or sites for collecting test samples and testing for CWD.

Any enclosures which prevent the free ingress and egress of white-tailed deer and lying within the containment zone, will be required to collect extra samples as determined by the Wildlife Bureau.

All supplemental feeding of wild animals outside of enclosures, within the containment zone, is hereby suspended until further notice.

For additional information and/or periodic updates, please go to www.mdwfp.com.

SO ORDERED, this the 15th day of November, 2018.



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