

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

2 p.m.

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

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

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

Chairman Rigdon gavelled the meeting to order and welcomed Senator Mike Seymour and House WFP Committee Chairman Scott Bounds to the meeting.

OPENING PRAYER

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

MINUTES

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

AGENDA

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, the agenda for May 18, 2016 was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nita Ashley was the spokesperson representing a group who fish at Lake Washington. She made three comments concerning fishing at Lake Washington: (1) She requested that the rules be amended so that YoYo's can be left unattended while going to lunch between 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; (2) Her second request was to keep the crappie 10 inch minimum length instead of increasing it to 11 inches; (3) The third request was to allow YoYo's to be kept out overnight. She added that a loop could be tied in the line so that the fish will not be suspended above the waterline and die overnight.

The Commission requested that Larry Pugh, Director of Fisheries Bureau, respond to Ms. Ashley's comments. Pugh stated that Lake Washington is the second most popular crappie fishing lake in the nation. Due to this popularity, it has become very territorial. The YoYo mandate was established in July, 2001 and is not a new rule. Only three comments were received pertaining to this rule change; one from Ms. Ashley and one wanting to get rid of YoYo's entirely. MDWFP biologists have met many times with the public this past year to see how to make fishing improvements at Lake Washington. A vast majority of the people attending these meetings supported to increase the minimum length limit to 12 inches. The staff recommendation to increase the minimum crappie length to 11 inches was made to protect the resource. Pugh recommended keeping the 11 inch minimum in place for one more season and come back to see if the regulation is working or not.

No action was taken at this time.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of April 2016. Total revenues were up \$54,000.

Highlights of Thompson's report are listed below:

- Resident License Sales – sold over 63,000 small game fresh water fishing licenses, 4,700 more licenses than last year
- Senior Exempt Licenses – 2,700 licenses sold, 60% increase
- Shooting Range permits – 2,300 permits sold
- Non-resident sales - down less than 1%
- Annual All Game – Up \$65,000
- WMA permit sales – up 2%
- Three day Freshwater licenses – up 7%
- One day Freshwater licenses – up 4%
- Other Licenses category – up \$108,000, 61% increase
- Lifetime License category – up \$26,000, 5% increase

WILDLIFE

Chad Dacus, Director of Wildlife Bureau, presented a letter to each member of the Commission summarizing the thirteen comments received this past month concerning deer and turkey hunting. A copy of each comment was emailed and/or mailed to each Commissioner as well.

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

- Rules 1.1 – 1.44 Basic Regulations for all WMA's
Dacus distributed a handout with changes made to five WMA rules presented at the April meeting. These changes reflected typos and errors in Rule 1.12, 1.24, 1.26, 1.40, and 1.43.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, WMA Final Rules 1.1 through 1.44 were approved unanimously by the Commission as amended.

FINAL 40 Miss. Admin. Code, Part 2, Chapter 2 – Deer

- Rule 2.2 – Deer Seasons and Bag Limits

Dacus presented Rule 2.2 and noted no changes were made since April.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, Final Rule 2.2 was approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

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

- Rule 3.1 – Wild Turkey Seasons and Bag Limits

Dacus presented Rule 3.1 and noted no changes were made since April.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, Final Rule 3.1 was approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

PROPOSED 40 Miss. Admin. Code, Part 2, Chapter 2 – Deer

- Rule 2.7 – Carcass Importation

Dacus presented Proposed Rule 2.7 and stated that this rule was modeled after Alabama, Arkansas, and Tennessee laws. An exception was made for land between levees in Arkansas.

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

FISHERIES

FINAL 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 3, Chapter 1 – General Fisheries Rules

- Rule 1.3 – Regulations regarding Sportfishing

Larry Pugh, Director of Fisheries Bureau, stated that comments were received. Staff recommended approval of Rule 1.3, with some changes, as presented.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, Final Rule 1.3 (with changes) was approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

- **Rule 1.4 – Statewide Creel Limits**

Pugh informed the Commission that 29 comments had been received with 28 supporting the Ross Barnett (bass) increase to 14 inch minimum. Pugh would like to make one change, which would remove the 18 inch Maximum Length Limit at Lake Mary Crawford.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, Final Rule 1.4 (with changes) was approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

Permit Fee Waiver Requests

Three special events have been planned for the following state parks and state lake. Pugh requested waiver of the fishing permit fees for attendees of these camps.

- Paul B. Johnson State Park – Family Fish Camp - May 21
- Lake Lamar Bruce – Family Fish Camp - June 25
- Percy Quin State Park – Camp Sunshine - July 7-8

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, Permit Fee Waiver requests were approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.

PARKS

PROPOSED 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 6, Chapter 1 – Rules & Regs for Miss. State Parks

- **Rule 1.2 .T. – Firearms, Fireworks, and Explosives**

Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General, informed the Commission that language in this rule was amended in order to be in compliance with House Bill 786, the “Church Protection Act,” which also includes language generally referred to as “constitutional carry.”

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

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Citation Report

Colonel Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, thanked the Commission for attending the Fallen Officer Memorial Service earlier that day.

Col. Adcock presented a handout which highlighted violations and shooting range attendance.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was presented

NEXT MEETING DATE

Next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, June 22, 2016 at 2 p.m. in the Commission Conference Room located 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 Executive Session.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session. The Commission determined that Executive Session was needed for discussions regarding transactions in land and ongoing investigations of a law enforcement agency. Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session.

Dr. Polles and Larry Castle updated the Commission on efforts to purchase properties adjacent to existing WMAs. Specifically, they informed the Commission that the owners of a tract in Alcorn County had made a counter-offer to the Commission's offer the preceding month. Inasmuch as the counter-offer was under the appraised fair market value, staff recommended accepting the counter-offer.

The Commission approved accepting the counter-offer by acclamation without need for motion or second.

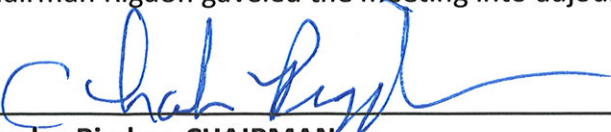
Larry Castle informed the Commission about a potential enforcement action on a non-registered wildlife enclosure in Lauderdale County. To date, efforts to engage the owner about going into the facility to inspect had met with some resistance. Castle and Colonel Adcock informed the Commission in case the situation required obtaining a search warrant and more direct action. The Commission urged staff to try to deal with the owners and obtain consent rather than resorting to more aggressive tactics.

No action was required of the Commission.

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 Rigdon gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



Charles Rigdon, CHAIRMAN



Date



Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN

Date