

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, April 16, 2014

2 p.m.

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

PRESENT: Chairman John C Stanley IV, Commissioners Bryan Jones, Charles Rigdon, William "Billy" Deviney, and Clay Wagner.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Larry Castle, Libby Hartfield, Michael Bolden, Larry Pugh, Chad Dacus, Jason Thompson, Col. Steve Adcock, and Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

Chairman John C Stanley IV welcomed Chairman Giles Ward, Senate WFP Committee; Chairman Scott Bounds, House WFP Committee; and Bill F. Cossar.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the minutes of March 6, 2014 were unanimously approved as presented.

TODAY'S AGENDA

Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director, requested deletion of Mr. James Wetzel under "Public Comments" and adding Randy Watkins, as he presents a Golf Update under "Other Business."

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Jones, today's agenda was unanimously approved as amended.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

License Sales Report

Mr. Jason Thompson, License/Boat Registration Division Director, presented the following License Sales Report for the month of March, 2014.

He reported the following cumulative sales (comparing March, 2014 to March, 2013):

- Overall dollar sales are up over \$126,000
- Resident sales down 1%
- 317 more senior exempt licenses sold than last year
- Non-resident category up \$228,500
- Non-resident All Game category up \$122,000
- 7-day license sales up \$60,000
- Other License category up \$11,000

FINAL Rule (40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 1, Chapter 8)

- Rule 8.4 Non-resident Hunting & Fishing License & Fee Program
Thompson reported that no changes or comments were received.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, the FINAL Rule 8.4 above was unanimously approved.

FISHERIES

Fisheries Bureau Awards

Mr. Larry Pugh, Fisheries Bureau Director, had the honor of presenting awards to the following employees who made outstanding contributions in their line of work for 2013:

Keith Meals	Fisheries Biologist of the Year
Britt Harris	State Lake Manager of the Year

Chairman Stanley thanked each recipient as they accepted their award.

Lure U to the Lake Event – Lake Prentiss Walker – May 10, 2014

Mr. Pugh stated that the Lure U to the Lake event would actually be taking place at Lake Prentiss Walker instead of Lake Claude Bennett as shown on the agenda. Mr. Pugh requested Commission exemption of fishing fees on May 10, 2014 at Lake Prentiss Walker.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the fee exemption request was unanimously approved.

PARKS

Parks Update

Libby Hartfield, Director of State Parks, distributed to the Commission FY13 and FY14 Parks Profit/Loss March YTD Reports. She introduced Paul Collins, Director of Park Operations, to elaborate on these reports. Roof repairs, wastewater and electrical system upgrades, and Percy Quin levee restoration were a few of the major expenses outlined. The shutdown of Percy Quin's lake accounted for \$400,000 less in revenue this past year. General and Special Fund breakdowns were also detailed. Hartfield explained, "No park system in the nation raises enough money to support itself by its own actions. General Funds or designated funds are necessary to keep a park system functioning."

Change in Rule 1.1 Park Fees – Collins explained that Parks had been misapplying tax rules and taxes were being deducted from park fee revenue. Currently taxes are being added to the fees and collecting both from the customer. This correction will benefit Parks' revenue. No action was necessary from the Commission.

Davis L. Fair III Memorial Pavilion, Legion State Park

Chairman Giles Ward, Senate Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Committee, presented a resolution for Commission approval to restore and preserve a stone and timber picnic pavilion located at Legion State Park. This restoration project will be funded by such grants and donations of private funds obtained by The Friends of Legion State Park and will not require the expenditure of any funds by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. Ward explained that the Department will need to apply for partial funding through the Mississippi Landmark Grant Program, and, if approved, to accept matching share contributions from The Friends of Legion State Park.

By request of The Friends of Legion State Park, the restored picnic pavilion will be permanently and perpetually designated as "The Davis L. Fair, II Memorial Pavilion." The late Mr. Fair was a Winston County native who loved Legion State Park and who was instrumental during his life in promoting and preserving Mississippi's natural resources. His family has agreed to fund a significant portion of this project as a permanent legacy to the memory of one of the state's most dedicated conservationists.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Legion State Park resolution was unanimously approved. A copy of this resolution may be found in the Addendum of the April 16, 2014 minutes.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

PROPOSED Rule (40 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 4 Chap. 1):

- *Rule 1.4 - Hunting from a Motorized Vehicle*

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, stated that changes to Rule 1.4 were made to include boats or other watercraft operating on public waters.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Proposed Rule 1.4 was unanimously approved as presented.

Citation Report

Col. Adcock briefed the Commission on citations issued this past month. Highlights of his report included 88 citations for no license, 11 citations for baiting/supplemental feeding, and 21 for trespassing. Copies of the citation report were distributed to the Commissioners.

Reinstatement Requests

Col. Adcock introduced Michael May and Christopher Lott, adding that both men had completed all requirements for reinstatement of their licenses. Chairman Stanley requested each to come forward and explain to the Commission why their license had been taken away.

- *Michael May – Kosciusko, MS*

Mr. May explained that on December 29, 2011 he took his daughter's gun, stopped his truck, and shot one time at a deer. Much to his surprise, a ranger was positioned on his father's land with a dummy deer and arrested him.

- *Christopher Lott - Purvis, MS*

Mr. Lott was arrested for headlighting. He had no comment on his arrest except that he had a drug addiction problem for ten years, checked himself into rehab, and has been clean for the past 16 months.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the reinstatement requests above were unanimously approved.

MDWFP Fallen Officers' Memorial Service

Col. Adcock invited the Commissioners and public to attend the MDWFP Fallen Officers' Memorial Service to be held on Thursday, May 15, 2014 at 9 a.m. at 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS. MDWFP will honor and remember its conservation officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. The Honorable Giles Ward and Honorable Scott Bounds will deliver the keynote address.

WILDLIFE

Genetic & Phenotypic Impacts of Releasing Pen-Raised Deer into Wild Deer Populations in Mississippi

Dr. Stephen Demarais presented a model developed at Mississippi State University which would quantify some specific impacts and the associated costs to genetically manipulate antler size of pen-raised deer and release them into wild deer populations.

In summary, Dr. Demarais stated that deer can be genetically enhanced in pens but must replace at least 25% of the population to be effective. This is more feasible within fenced property, which is costly, and unlikely to be adaptive for white-tailed deer. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was noted as a threat and is associated with breeding pens. Even though CWD is not highly infectious, it has a 100% mortality rate and is difficult to eradicate. More information on this model can be found on MSU's website at www.MSUDeerLab.com.

PROPOSED WILDLIFE RULE CHANGES

Chad Dacus, Wildlife Bureau Director, presented the following Proposed Rules. Each Commissioner was given a summary outlining the changes made to each Rule for the 2014-15 WMA, White-tailed Deer, Wild Turkey, and Small Game Hunting Seasons. Commissioner Wagner informed the public that each of these rule changes had been discussed in detail during a Work Session of the Commission on April 15, 2014. A copy of this summary entitled "MDWFP 2014-2015 Proposed Rule Changes" has been attached to the April 16, 2014 minutes.

Dacus informed the Commission that the Wildlife Bureau will be hosting six open-house meetings across the state to gain public input about WMA regulations, Deer, Turkey, and Small Game Hunting Seasons. Any comments received will be addressed at the May Commission meeting.

PROPOSED Rule (40 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 2 Chap. 1):

- *Rules 1.1 – 1.43 – All WMAs*

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the PROPOSED Rule 1.1 above was unanimously approved as presented.

PROPOSED Rules (40 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 2 Chap. 2) White-tailed Deer:

- *Rule 2.2 – White-tailed Deer Seasons and Bag Limits*
- *Rule 2.3 – Hunting in Fully-Enclosed Hunting Blinds*

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the PROPOSED Rules 2.2 - 2.3 above were unanimously approved as presented.

PROPOSED Rule (40 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 2 Chap. 3) Wild Turkey

- *Rule 3.1 – Wild Turkey Seasons and Bag Limits*

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the PROPOSED Rule 3.1 above was unanimously approved as presented.

PROPOSED Rule (40 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 2 Chap. 4)

- *Rule 4.1 – Small Game Seasons and Bag Limits*

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the PROPOSED Rule 4.1 above was unanimously approved as presented.

PROPOSED Rule (40 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 2 Chap. 6)

- *Rule 6.1 – Trapping and Fur Dealing*

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the PROPOSED Rule 6.1 above was unanimously approved as presented.

FINAL Rules (40 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 2 Chap. 5):

- *Rule 5.1 - General Regulations Regarding Alligators*
- *Rule 5.2 - Alligator Hunting Seasons for Private Lands*
- *Rule 5.3 - Alligator Hunting Season for Public Waters*

Dacus stated that no comments or changes had been made.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the FINAL rules above were unanimously approved as presented.

Dove Season Opening Dates

Chad Dacus presented the Proposed 2014-2015 Dove Season calendars for the North and South Zones. Dove season is limited to 90 days and a 15 bird bag limit. According to the federal framework, dove season cannot open prior to September 1 and must close no later than January 15. This information was distributed to the Commission in a handout. The proposed seasons are listed below:

North Zone

September 1 – 21, 2014

October 4 – November 9, 2014

December 15, 2014 – January 15, 2015

South Zone

September 13 – 21, 2014

October 4 – November 9, 2014

December 3, 2014 – January 15, 2015

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Dove Season opening dates above were unanimously approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENTS**Mr. Larry Sassar**

Due to the lengthy agenda, Chairman Stanley allowed Mr. Larry Sassar five minutes for his comment. Mr. Sassar informed the Commission that he owned 700 acres next to Homochitto National Forest three years ago. He wanted the Commission to know that hunting dogs had never bothered him or his cattle. Even though he does not hunt with dogs, he did not see a problem with others hunting in the area with dogs. Later in the meeting Mr. Sassar asked if he could have an additional minute. Chairman Stanley allowed him to comment. He brought up a concern about a ticket a third party had received. Chairman Stanley asked Col. Adcock and Chad Dacus to get with Mr. Sassar and answer any questions he may have. Mr. Sassar agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS**Golf Update**

Randy Watkins, golf consultant, updated the Commission on improvements to the following golf courses around the state.

- Quail Hollow – Mr. Watkins thanked the Commission for replacing the greens on Quail Hollow. He stated that it takes two growing seasons to recover. Quail Hollow now has a 200 rounds per month increase over last year.
- Lefleur's Bluff – This golf course has been restored and the results are incredible. Close to 16,000 rounds have been played on it so far this year.
- Mallard Point – This golf course has several issues and stiff competition from two other golf courses in the area. The managing group of this golf course decided to back out. Watkins is negotiating with another group to take charge of the property. Watkins stated that upgrades are needed on both the equipment and greens. He informed the Commission that a capital investment would be needed in order to find an interested management group.

No action was taken by the Commission.

NEXT TENTATIVE MEETING DATE

Wednesday, May 21 – 8:30 a.m. @ J.P. Coleman State Park, Iuka

Tuesday, June 17 – 2:30 p.m. @ 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, 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 ongoing criminal investigations and the relocation of a business or industry. Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Commission voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session.

William McKinley and Eric Clark updated the Commission on the Federal Lacey Act cases pending in south Mississippi. Those cases are being prosecuted by the US Attorney and involve the unlawful importation of deer into the state. McKinley and Clark then informed the Commission of several other enforcement cases underway regarding violations of the enclosure regulations and plans to move forward to access the enclosures, collect data/biological samples, then proceed with criminal charges or otherwise bring the facilities into compliance. A list of eight (8) pending enforcement actions and recommendations was presented to the Commission for review and consideration.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the Commission voted to authorize staff to move forward with the disposition of the enclosure enforcement actions as presented. The vote was four (4) votes in favor of the proposed dispositions, with one (1) Commissioner (Mr. Deviney) abstaining.

The previous discussion included remarks regarding the need to update the regulations on high-fenced enclosures that prevent the free ingress and egress of wild animals. Ultimately, staff informed the Commission that recommendations for regulatory changes were being prepared for presentation at a later date.

No action was required of the Commission.

There was no other business for discussion in Executive Session.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the Commission voted unanimously to end Executive Session and open the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Stanley gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



John C Stanley IV, CHAIRMAN

Date

Bryan Jones, VICE-CHAIRMAN

Date

Resolution

Whereas, Legion State Park, located at Louisville, Winston County, Mississippi is unique in our State Park System in that most of the buildings and structures located within that park were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s and most are registered on the National Register of Historic Places and have been designated and listed by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History as Mississippi Landmarks, as has the entire park, and

Whereas, the preservation of these priceless structures that have been entrusted to the care of the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks through our state park system, and

Whereas, the Commission's efforts in this regard have been greatly aided by the interest, cooperation, and investment of a volunteer group of concerned citizens known as Friends of Legion State Park which is recognized and certified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and

Whereas, The Friends of Legion State Park have asked this Commission for permission to restore and preserve one of the original CCC structures, a stone and timber picnic pavilion, located within the park which has deteriorated and, in its present condition, is unusable, and

Whereas, The Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks finds this proposed restoration and preservation worthy of our support and is prepared to apply for certain preservation grant funds from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History for that purpose, and

Whereas, the complete restoration project will be funded by such grants and donations of private funds obtained by the Friends of Legion Park and will not require the expenditure of any funds by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, and

Whereas, the late Davis L. Fair, II, a Winston County native who loved Legion State Park and who was instrumental during his life in promoting and preserving our natural resources and whose family has agreed to fund a significant portion of this project as a permanent legacy to the memory of one of our state's most dedicated conservationists,

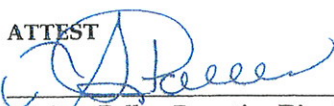
Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks that it approves of the restoration project set forth in this Resolution and

Be it further resolved the Commission directs and authorizes the Department to apply for partial funding for this project through the Mississippi Landmark Grant Program and, if approved, to accept matching share contributions from Friends of Legion State Park, and

Be it further resolved the Commission approves the request of The Friends of Legion State Park that the restored "picnic pavilion" be permanently and perpetually designated as "The Davis L. Fair, II Memorial Pavilion." Further, the Commission grants its permission to The Friends of Legion State Park to erect an appropriate and permanent plaque at the pavilion attesting to this designation and to also erect no more than one directional sign within the park to facilitate patrons visiting the pavilion. A copy of this Resolution shall be spread upon the Minutes of the MS Commission of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks.

ADOPTED this the 16th day of April, 2014, by the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks at their Regular Session meeting in Jackson, Mississippi.

ATTEST


Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director
MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks


John C Stanley IV, Chairman
Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks