

# MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

8:30 a.m.

J. P. Coleman State Park, Iuka, 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, Chad Dacus, Col. Steve Adcock, and Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

## MINUTES

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the minutes of April 16, 2014 were unanimously approved as presented.

## TODAY'S AGENDA

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, today's agenda was unanimously approved as presented.

## LICENSE SALES REPORT

### License Sales Report

Mr. Larry Castle, Director of Technical Programs, presented the following License Sales Report for the month of April, 2014.

He reported the following cumulative sales (comparing April, 2014 to April, 2013) with overall dollar sales up over \$116,000.

#### Resident License Sales:

- Resident category sales are down 1%
- Sportsman License is down less than 1%

- New Range Permit generating over \$50,000 since July 1, 2013
- 3,600 youth exempt licenses have been purchased by the Foundation for Hunter Ed students

Non-resident License Sales:

- Non-resident category up \$237,000
- All Non-Resident hunting and fishing licenses are up from last year with the exception of the three day All Game License
- Revenue generated from Louisiana residents is up \$143,000
- Other License category is up over \$9,000
- Native Son license is up \$9,000

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

**FINAL 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 Jones and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, FINAL Rule 1.4 was unanimously approved as presented.**

**Citation Report**

Col. Adcock briefed the Commission on citations issued statewide between March 28 and May 8, 2014. This report included 420 citations for license/compliance violations which included 201 citations for no license and 133 citations for boating/fishing violations.

Other duties required of Law Enforcement this past month included Search and Rescue Team (SRT) support following the Winston County tornado, a Yazoo County drowning, and Reservoir houseboat explosion/fire; as well as, preparation and attendance for Fallen Officer John Collum's funeral on May 14, and annual MDWFP Fallen Officer Memorial on May 15. Copies of the citation report were distributed to the Commissioners.

### WILDLIFE

**FINAL WILDLIFE RULES - AMENDED**

Chad Dacus, Wildlife Bureau Director, informed the Commission that the Wildlife Bureau hosted six open-house meetings across the state to assess public opinion regarding WMA regulations, Deer, Turkey, and Small Game Hunting Season rule changes. Eighty-six (86) written comments were received at these meetings, in addition to email comments and letters to the Jackson Office. A summary of the

public responses was prepared and handed out to the Commission. After analyzing public comments and identifying typos in the rules, Dacus recommended the following revisions to the PROPOSED rules:

40 MS Admin. Part 2 Chapter 1 - WMA Rules

- Added a draw turkey hunt during the first two weeks of the season at Leaf River WMA (by public request)
- Added Sandy Creek Youth Turkey Hunt (omitted in error)
- Any WMA with deer bag limit language stating "same as statewide regulations" will be changed to "antlered buck deer limit one (1) buck per day, not to exceed three (3) per license year; and antlerless deer limit is one (1) per day, not to exceed three (3) per license year." This does not apply to all WMAs, only those with "same as statewide regulations" language. For example, Mahannah, Black Prairie, and Hill Creek are not included in this change and have different bag limits specified. Dacus stated that all WMAs will now have specified bag limits. This change addresses comments received by the public that deer harvest limits are too high.
- Changed legal bucks at Bienville, Caney Creek, and Tallahala WMAs from 10-in. inside/13-in. main beam to 12-in. inside spread/15-in. main beam (public comment request).
- Removed February hog hunting from Caston Creek, Sandy Creek (USFS request), and Chickasawhay (no hogs present on this WMA).
- Removed language – "A violation of this Administrative Rule is also a violation of Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations and is a Federal Class B Misdemeanor with a maximum fine of \$5,000."
- Standardized dove hunting language in Northeast Mississippi - "After the youth dove hunt, dove hunting will be allowed from 2 p.m. until sunset during the first season. After the first season, dove hunting is allowed during the statewide season dates, except during special event days."
- Changed Tuscumbia WMA rabbit season to open Oct. 15 (typo had it opening Oct. 1).
- Changed Charles Ray Nix late archery season to open Jan. 10 (typo reflected Jan 1).

40 MS Admin. Part 2 Chapter 2, Rule 2.2 - WTD Season and Bag Limits

- Removed language in Homochitto Dog Rule Section - "A violation of this Administrative Rule is also a violation of Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations and is a Federal Class B Misdemeanor with a maximum fine of \$5,000."

40 MS Admin. Part 2 Chapter 2, Rule 2.3 - Hunting in Fully Enclosed Hunting Blinds - NO CHANGES

40 MS Admin. Part 2 Chapter 3, Rule 3.1 - Wild Turkey Season and Bag Limits - NO CHANGES

40 MS Admin. Part 2 Chapter 4, Rule 4.1 - Small Game seasons and Bag limits - NO CHANGES

40 MS Admin. Part 2 Chapter 6, Rule 6.1 - Trapping and Fur Dealing - NO CHANGES

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the FINAL Wildlife rules above were unanimously approved as amended.**

**ACTION:** Chairman Stanley requested Jason Thompson to inform the Commission in June as to how many women buy hunting licenses and how they can be encouraged to buy. Dacus informed the Commission that at one time special hunting seasons were set aside for women and youth; however, several groups started requesting special hunting seasons and it was decided to limit special seasons for youth only.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Stanley welcomed each group and allowed five (5) minutes to comment:

**Mr. David Smith, President, Mississippi Hunting Dog Association:**

Mr. Smith had several questions concerning the pilot program at Homochitto. He informed the Commission that association members are policing themselves and trying to comply. Appreciation was expressed by Mr. Smith for striking the "\$5,000 fine and misdemeanor" language from the rules. An invitation was extended for the Commission to participate in one of the hunts sponsored by the Mississippi Hunting Dog Association. Several fox hunts in the state have included over 200 dogs and assisted in raising money for children with special needs. One hunt in Grenada included participants from 26 different states and Canada.

Chairman Stanley thanked Mr. Smith. He recommended developing a working relationship with local conservation officers. Chairman Stanley assured Mr. Smith that the Commission has no intention to outlaw hunting with dogs.

Commissioner Wagner advised Mr. Smith that he would like to participate in a hunt and requested Mr. Smith to send a calendar of the hunting events with plenty of advance notice.

Mr. Smith came back with a question on House Bill 864. Chairman Stanley asked him to see the MDWFP staff concerning that question after the meeting.

**Mr. Steve Bishop, President, Northeast Mississippi Hunting Dog Association:**

Mr. Bishop stated that his hunting club and another club adjoin Canal Section and Divide WMAs in North Mississippi and have requested permission to run dogs across a part of those WMAs.

Chairman Stanley stated that this question had come up before for hog hunting with dogs and this property was determined to be too narrow to safely hunt. Chad Dacus confirmed that these areas are very thin along the river system and some of this property belongs to the Corps of Engineers. Chairman Stanley expressed his appreciation for Mr. Bishop coming and advised him to work closely with Chad Dacus and local conservation officers.

**Mr. Shannon Lindley, Big Track Hunting Club:**

Mr. Lindley did not have any questions but simply wanted to inform the Commission that he owns and operates a feed business which sells and bags S & H Dog food in Golden, MS. His business sold \$290,000 worth of dog food so far this year and \$590,000 last year. He wanted the Commission to know that this is a dog hunting area and requested continued support for hunting with dogs.

**Chairman Stanley emphasized again that there is no intention or plan to limit dog hunting, whether it be for bird, squirrel, or deer.**

**Mr. Mike Rabalais, Big Beech Hunting Club, Homochitto National Forest:**

Mr. Rabalais agreed with the rules requiring tracking collars and permits for hunting dogs. However, he requested Commission consideration concerning item 11; his point being that there are strips of private property that do not have public access in the Homochitto. As the law now reads, hunters are restricted from using private (US Forest Service) roads. Mr. Rabalais stated that without access to private roads, hunters are unable to control dogs from running onto private property. Due to this constraint, Mr. Rabalais requested that hunters not be held liable for dogs running onto private property when they have no means of managing them.

**Chairman Stanley requested Mr. Rabalais put his suggestions and comments in writing and give them to Chad Dacus so that these items may be taken into consideration.**

**Mr. Mike Seymour:**

Mr. Seymour is a land owner in North Jackson County surrounded by the Desoto National Forest. He presented a list of questions to the Commission in the form of a handout and requested a response to these questions in writing. Mr. Seymour made comments related to the injustices addressed in his questions.

**Chairman Stanley stated that Mr. Seymour would be receiving a response in writing to his questions. Mr. Seymour requested the statute numbers in answer to the questions.**

**Mr. Brad Underwood:**

Mr. Underwood requested Commission reconsideration to allow transportation of live feral hogs. He explained the difficulty he is having with the new law in his area.

**Chairman Stanley explained that the Commission had researched the hog problem extensively with experts in several states. The problem with hogs is the transportation of live hogs. If transportation had been illegal in the beginning there would be no hogs in Mississippi or Texas. Chairman Stanley**

asked Mr. Underwood to get with Chad Dacus and see if anything could be done to help him eradicate the hogs in his area.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business to discuss.

#### **NEXT TENTATIVE MEETING DATE**

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

Wednesday, July 16 – TBA @ 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, 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 the job performance of a specific employee in a specific position, relocation of a business or industry, and transactions in land. Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session.

Dr. Polles informed the Commission that since the Lessee had abandoned the lease of Mallard Pointe Golf Course at John Kyle State Park, the department had been operating the facility as best it could. The current greens need to be re-sodded with a better grade of grass to replace the experimental grass strain which has proved to be unsatisfactory. In addition, a prospective new Lessee has been found. Dr. Polles asked the Commission to authorize him to negotiate a lease with the prospective operator and move forward with repairing the greens.

**Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Commission voted unanimously to authorize the Executive Director to move forward with negotiations for a new lease and to effect the repair of greens at Mallard Pointe Golf Course.**

Chad Dacus informed the Commission that there were two tracts of land contiguous to Black Prairie WMA that had become available for purchase. Mr. Dacus asked the Commission for authority to proceed with appraisals of the two properties.

**Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Commission voted unanimously to authorize agency staff to have the properties appraised and enter into preliminary discussions to acquire the land.**

Discussion followed on personnel actions and by unanimous consent Libby Hartfield was approved to fill the position of Director of Parks. She has been serving as Interim Director for several months.

There was no other business for discussion in Executive Session.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney 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.

  
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John C Stanley IV, CHAIRMAN  
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Date  
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Bryan Jones, VICE-CHAIRMAN  
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Date