

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Tuesday, June 17, 2014

2:30 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, Michael Bolden, Libby Hartfield, Chad Dacus, Col. Steve Adcock, Jason Thompson, Jim Walker, and Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

Chairman John Stanley welcomed House WFP Committee Chairman Scott Bounds, as well as several Commissioners' wives in attendance: Lenoir Stanley, Sara Jones, and Jeannie Rigdon.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the minutes of May 21, 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. Jason Thompson, License/Boat Registration Division Director, presented the License Sales Report for the month of May, 2014.

He reported the following cumulative sales (comparing May, 2014 to May, 2013) with overall dollar sales up over \$125,000.

Resident License Sales:

- Resident category sales are down 1%
- Sportsman License is down less than 1%
- Over 1,400 Shooting Range Permits sold generating over \$55,000 since July 1, 2013
- Senior Exempt licenses up
- Youth Exempt licenses up (over 4,500 licenses sold)

Non-resident License Sales:

- Non-resident category up \$245,000
- All Game Hunting license up \$124,000
- 7 Day All Game up \$53,000 (5% increase)

Other License category up \$9,000

Lifetime Native Son license sales up \$9,000

Mr. Thompson presented a handout to the Commission depicting license sales by gender, as requested by Chairman Stanley at the May meeting. His report revealed that 18% of licenses are sold to women, which is around the national average. Trends indicate that this market is growing. Discussion followed and a suggestion was made to include special events during the year which would attract women to participate in wildlife sporting events.

PARKS

PROPOSED Rule (40 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, Chapter 1 Compilation)

Ms. Libby Hartfield, Director of Parks, explained the rules and regulation changes pertaining to vehicle and equestrian use at Trace State Park; as well as, the regulation and fee schedule changes for the Business Retreat Centers at J.P. Coleman and Lefleur's Bluff State Parks. In addition, there were several technical amendments and deletions that were needed since the rules were converted to the Administrative Code format.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the PROPOSED Park Rule as presented.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Special Recognition

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented Certificates and Awards for Valor to two MDWFP Conservation Officers, Corp. Travis McDonald and Corp. Marc McCleskey, for the rescue of a young boy from the bottom of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway channel. The boy was

unresponsive as they pulled him on the river bank. The determination of both men by alternating administration of chest compressions revived the boy's breathing. EMS arrived at the scene and the officers assisted with transportation to the hospital.

Col. Adcock commended Officers McCleskey and McDonald for their quick response and diligence in saving this young boy's life. The Commission and staff gave a standing ovation.

Citation Report

Col. Adcock briefed the Commission on citations issued statewide between May 9 and June 9, 2014. This report included 674 license/compliance citations issued statewide, which included 179 citations for no license. Boating/Fishing citations issued statewide were 226, with 84 citations for No Boat Registration. Copies of the citation report were distributed to the Commissioners.

McHenry Shooting Range had its grand opening this past month. Despite inclement weather the past two weekends, 197 people visited and utilized the facility.

Other law enforcement duties this past month included safety instruction presentations, SRT training, and control of nuisance alligators.

Commissioner Jones commented that public restrooms are needed at Turcotte Shooting Range. Col. Adcock stated that there are plans in the next fiscal year budget for restrooms to be added at Turcotte. A suggestion was also made to change the presentation on the sporting clay machines on a monthly basis.

AVL Application Demo

Charlie Welch, GIS Coordinator, presented the attributes of MDWFP's new radio system through a PowerPoint and live tracking presentation. The backbone of this operation is the use of GPS and AVL systems. Two GPS trackers are issued to each officer; one for the truck and one portable device which can be taken by foot, by boat, or ATV. A total of 380 radio devices were launched in April. Information from the GPS is loaded into Operation Dashboard. Officer movement can be tracked twenty-four hours a day and officer travel route can be displayed to show the GPS historic time markers along the path. This technology will greatly improve response time for emergencies and officer safety.

WILDLIFE

Timber Management Plan

Scott Baker, WMA Habitat Coordinator, presented a Timber Management Plan for FY15. This plan was a joint effort between Scott Baker representing WMAs and Carl Branson on behalf of Parks and Lakes. The PowerPoint presentation included timber assessment for 16 state parks, 13 lakes, and 15 WMAs,

encompassing 105,520 acres. He recommended harvesting 1,624 acres in FY15 through eight sales. The contractors will have 18 months to remove the timber. Mr. Baker was happy to report that timber prices have gone up and more bids are coming forward this year.

PROPOSED RULE - 40 MS Admin. Code, Part 2, Rule 7.1 – Nuisance Animals

Chad Dacus, Wildlife Bureau Director, presented proposed changes to Rule 7.1. The rule needs to be updated to include the process for obtaining a transportation permit for a live feral hog. Discussion followed concerning the restriction on hunting wild hogs over grain/bait. The Commission decided to table further consideration of the Rule until later in the meeting. No action was taken at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments were brought forward by the public.

OTHER BUSINESS

Wildlife PROPOSED Rule

The Commission called back the proposed Wildlife rule discussed earlier in the meeting. Mr. Dacus asked permission to withdraw the Proposed Rule so that staff could revise the language related to the use of grain to hunt hogs. No action was taken by the Commission.

License Exemption: Col. Steve Adcock

Colonel Adcock presented a request for an exemption from the revocation of privileges required subsequent to a conviction for unlawful possession of an alligator. Mr. Robert Beard was convicted on June 13, 2014. As part of his penalty, he is to forfeit all hunting, trapping, and fishing privileges for a period of three (3) years. Mr. Beard supports himself and his immediate family by commercial fishing. If Mr. Beard has to forfeit his (commercial) fishing privilege, he will not be able to support himself. Colonel Adcock requested that the Commission exempt Mr. Beard from having to forfeit his privilege to engage in commercial fishing as his source of livelihood.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the Commission voted unanimously to exempt Mr. Beard from forfeiting his commercial fishing privilege subsequent to his unlawful alligator conviction in order to engage in commercial fishing as his livelihood.

Election of Officers

The Commission took up the matter of electing officers for the upcoming State Fiscal Year 2015. Commissioner Deviney nominated Commissioner Bryan Jones to serve as Chairman of the Commission and Commissioner Charles Rigdon as Vice Chairman. The nominations were seconded by Commissioner Wagner. There being no further nominations, the Chairman called for a vote.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission voted unanimously to elect Bryan Jones as Chairman, and Charles Rigdon as Vice Chairman to serve July 2014 through June 2015.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Monday, July 14 @ 2:30 p.m., 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, 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 budget line items that may affect the continued employment of specific individuals in specific positions, job performance of specific individuals in specific positions, ongoing criminal investigations or prosecutions, and the relocation of a business or industry. Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the Commission voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session.

Dr. Polles presented the FY 2016 Budget Request for Commission review and approval. Brief discussion followed regarding areas where increased funding had been requested and areas where funding was requested to remain at FY 2015 levels.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the FY 2016 Budget Request as presented by staff.

Dr. Polles updated the Commission on the health of John Satterwhite. No action was required of the Commission.

William McKinley and Eric Clark updated the Commission on several enclosure enforcement matters. These matters included the anticipated resolution of a joint MDWFP/Federal prosecution of a Lacey Act case regarding deer importation, and ongoing efforts to ensure compliance with enclosure regulations by registered enclosures. No action was required of the Commission.

Dr. Polles also informed the Commission that a request had been received from persons in Winston County inquiring as to whether or not the parks could offer lodging to individuals volunteering to help with storm recovery at Legion State Park at reduced rates. At present, the request was not any more specific, but it was anticipated that housing would not be needed until after August. Without a more specific request, the Commission directed staff to get more information and it would be addressed at the appropriate time.

The Chairman then addressed staff – specifically Wildlife Enclosures staff – with some concerns that he had gleaned from discussions with his fellow Commissioners over the past few months. Specifically, he asked staff to review the fee structure for the enclosure management program and de-commissioning procedures for enclosure owners wishing to remove the fences and cease to hold deer. Staff responded that the regulations were under review and that they would come back with more information, having now been informed of these areas of concern.

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.

John C Stanley IV, CHAIRMAN

Date

Bryan Jones, VICE CHAIRMAN

Date