

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

2:30 p.m.

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

PRESENT: Chairman Bryan Jones, Commissioners Charles Rigdon, Clay Wagner, and Bill F. Cossar

ABSENT: Commissioner William "Billy" Deviney

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

Chairman Jones gaveled the meeting to order and welcomed House WFP Committee Chairman Scott Bounds.

OPENING PRAYER

Mr. Larry Castle, Director of Technical Programs, opened the regular session with a prayer.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the minutes of September 17, 2014 were unanimously approved as presented.

TODAY'S AGENDA

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

LICENSE SALES REPORT

License Sales Report

Mr. Jason Thompson, License/Boat Registration Division Director, presented the License Sales Report for the month of September, 2014. He informed the Commission that total revenue for September was down 1.9 percent from last year and total license permits fell behind 1.6 percent.

His report included the following cumulative sales (comparing September, 2014 to September, 2013):

- Resident category – Small Game & Fresh Water Fishing up 1%; Shooting range permits up 63%
- Non-resident category was down 3%; one highlight, User Permits up 24%
- Other Licenses – sales were up 6% with participation up 4% for alligator permits
- Lifetime category – sales up 3%

Mr. Thompson advised the Commission that this dip in September sales seems to follow the same trend as last year. Marketing will be sending out an email blast next week to encourage license sales.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several waterfowl conservation groups were present and their comments were postponed to follow the MDWFP Duck Stamp Project recommendations.

WILDLIFE

FINAL Rule 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2

Rule 7.1 - General Regulation for the Taking of Nuisance Animals

Mr. Larry Castle, Director of Technical Programs, stated that comments had been received on this rule concerning restricting the transportation of hogs to daylight hours. Comments were not received concerning any other part of this rule.

ACTION: Commissioner Rigdon made a motion to adopt FINAL Rule 7.1 with *“between the hours of sunset and sunrise”* language removed in Section G.2. Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Duck Stamp Projects

Mr. Castle elaborated on several handouts concerning State Waterfowl Stamp sales. It was pointed out that sales have steadily increased since 1998 and expenditures have been kept within the appropriate boundaries. Mr. Castle then presented staff recommendations for distribution of duck stamp proceeds for the following waterfowl projects:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Project Description</u>
DU Canada	\$100,000	\$100,000	Continue funding of Eastern Saskatchewan Parklands NAWCA Project; funds will be matched 4:1 with other agency and DU funds
Delta Waterfowl	\$100,000	\$100,000	Continue funding for Delta’s ALUS initiative in Alberta

MSU Research	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	Provide funding for the MS Delta radio-marked mallard project
WMA Waterfowl Management	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	Provide funds to WMAs for supplemental waterfowl plantings and pumping for hunting season.
WMA Wetland Enhancement Project	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	Projects will enhance waterfowl habitat on O'Keefe and Shiplace WMAs. Funding will be used as match for future NAWCA grant proposals.
Private Lands Wetland Enhancement Projects	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	Funding for private lands wetland habitat enhancement/restoration. Funding will be used as match for upcoming NAWCA grants.
Aerial Waterfowl Surveys	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	Continue waterfowl monitoring of MS Delta waterfowl abundance; Delta Wildlife also funding.
Waterfowl Program Travel	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	Provide funds for MDWFP staff to attend LMJVJ, GCJV, and MFC meetings
Mississippi Flyway Council Dues	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,700	Annual dues to Mississippi Flyway Council
MS Flyway Banding	<u>\$ 1,981</u>	<u>\$ 1,981</u>	Annual contribution to MS Flyway banding efforts
TOTAL	\$411,681	\$411,681	

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Waterfowl Conservation Programs

- Ducks Unlimited – Craig LeSchack, Director of Conservation Programs, Southeast**
 Mr. LeSchack expressed his appreciation for the partnership and support with MDWFP. His organization matches every dollar given by MDWFP. A handout was distributed to the Commission displaying how funds were used last year for the conservation of the Saskatchewan waterfowl habitat.
- Delta Waterfowl – Dan Hughes, Member of Board of Directors**
 Mr. Hughes requested support for Delta Waterfowl's ALUS program, which MDWFP has been supporting for several years. These funds would be used in the Saskatchewan program. Mr. Hughes explained that their program received an invitation to submit a budget request on the federal level which was a significant breakthrough. He thanked the Commission for their continued support.
- Mississippi State University Professor – Dr. Rick Kaminski, James C. Kennedy Endowed Chair in Waterfowl & Wetlands Conservation**
 Dr. Kaminski expressed his gratefulness for MDWFP support of the Delta Waterfowl program. He brought with him Mississippi State University intern, Joe Lancaster, who will be finishing his third and final year of research and study of the waterfowl in the Delta. Dr. Kaminski updated the Commission on several findings from Mr. Lancaster's research.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, funds for 2014-15 Duck Stamp projects were unanimously approved as recommended.

PARKS

Parks Update

Libby Hartfield, Director, Education & Recreational Services, summarized FY15 projects for the Bureau of Building and Grounds using bond money. Design for these projects should be completed by spring with many of them well under construction by summer.

- *Critical Infrastructure Improvements at MDWFP Administration Office in Jackson.*

This project centers around emergency electrical and HVAC upgrades deemed necessary in the event of an extended power loss. These upgrades will establish an appropriate level of reliability for the support of the IT data center and Law Enforcement 24/7 dispatch functions. Our agency's response time and communication are crucial, especially following any natural disaster in the state.

- *Construction of Two (2) Bridges and Utility Infrastructure at Percy Quin State Park.*

MEMA did not consent to replace these two bridges after Hurricane Isaac. The existing limestone roadway will be paved, and water/sewer utilities will be reconnected to the group camp side of the park.

- *Waste Water Improvements at Five (5) State Parks – Percy Quin, Roosevelt, Tishomingo, J.P. Coleman, and Hugh White.*

The range of renovations is broad, but is necessary to meet MDEQ compliance issues and/or bring the systems up to required operational and maintenance standards. In several cases complete replacement of the existing treatment facilities are planned.

This report was for information only. No action was taken by the Commission.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

FINAL Rule 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 4, Chapter 1 - General Regulations on Hunting

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, informed the Commission that no comments had been received regarding this rule change.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, FINAL Rule 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 4, Chapter 1 was unanimously approved as presented.

Citation Report

Col. Steve Adcock briefed the Commission on 294 citations issued statewide between September 11 and October 13. The new McHenry Shooting Range received 672 customers this past month; while the Turcotte Range saw 1,037. Activities during the month included SRT Training, Jacob Reeves benefit (raised over \$37,000) and Turcotte bathroom construction. MDWFP Law Enforcement Training Academy begins in November with 23 cadets currently enrolled in the program.

Reinstatement Request

Col. Adcock brought before the Commission one request for reinstatement. Chairman Jones asked Mr. McCullough to come forward and state why his license had been revoked.

- Charles McCullough, Water Valley, MS
Mr. McCullough was arrested for spotlighting deer. He was fined \$2,600 plus \$250 for reinstatement fees.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to reinstate Mr. McCullough's license.

OTHER BUSINESS**Mississippi Right to Hunt and Fish Amendment, House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 30**

MWFP House Committee Chairman Scott Bounds stated that he co-chairs the Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus which promotes hunting and fishing across the state. Chairman Bounds requested support by the Commission for the Mississippi Right to Hunt and Fish Amendment, HCR 30, which is on the November 4, 2014 Mississippi ballot as a legislatively-referred constitutional amendment. The measure, upon voter approval, would establish a constitutional right to hunt, fish, and harvest game species throughout Mississippi, including by the use of traditional methods, subject only to such regulations and restrictions that promote wildlife conservation and management as the Legislature may prescribe by general law. A press conference will be held at the Capitol on October 29 regarding this amendment to the Constitution.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commission Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to spread upon the minutes, its support for the adoption of the Right to Hunt and Fish Amendment, HCR 30.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no need for an Executive Session.

NEXT MEETING DATES

Wednesday, November 19, 2014 @ 2 p.m., Holmes County State Park, Durant

Wednesday, December 17, 2014 @ 2:30 p.m., 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson

ADJOURNMENT

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



Bryan Jones, CHAIRMAN



Date

Charles Rigdon, VICE CHAIRMAN

Date