

# **MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS**

Monday, February 13, 2017

9:30 a.m.

Quail Ridge Conference Center, 7811 Hwy 397, Louisville, MS

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Commission Chairman William "Billy" Deviney, Commissioners Bill F. Cossar, Clay Wagner, Scott Coopwood, and Robert Taylor

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

Chairman Deviney, having noted for the minutes that a quorum was present, gaveled the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Appreciation was extended to the Taylor family for allowing the Commission to meet at the Quail Ridge Conference Center. House WFP Committee Chairman Scott Bounds and former Senate WFP Committee Chairman Giles Ward were also thanked for helping to make the arrangements for the Commission meeting.

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director, opened the meeting with prayer.

## **MINUTES**

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the minutes of the January 18, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.

## **AGENDA**

Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director, stated that the agenda was in need of the following revisions:

- Under PARKS – Remove "Quail Hollow Golf Update" (this was included in the Educational Session)
- Under PARKS – Add "2017 Mississippi Legislature - Regular Session Update"
- Under LAW ENFORCEMENT – Add "Recognition of Officer Donald Fairley"

**ACTION:** Commissioner Wagner moved to approve the agenda for February 13, 2017, as amended by the Executive Director. Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda as amended.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no members of the general public who wished to address the Commission.

### **LICENSE SALES REPORT**

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of January 2017. The total revenue for the end of January is up over \$1,000,000 (7% increase).

Highlights of Thompson's end of the year, annual report are listed below:

- Resident License Sales – up \$1,000,000 (21% increase)
- Sportsman license sales – up \$800,000 (25% increase)
- All Game Hunting and Fishing Licenses - up \$250,000 (47% increase)
- Small Game Freshwater Fishing licenses – 21% increase
- Non-resident licenses –down less than 1%
- NR Small Game Hunting - up 13%
- NR 7 Day Small Game – up 27%
- NR Freshwater Fishing – up 13%
- NR 3 day Freshwater Fishing – up 15%
- NR 1 day Freshwater Fishing – up 8%
- Permit category – down \$28,000
- Lifetime License category – up \$43,000 (12% increase)

### **PARKS**

#### **FINAL Rule 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 6**

##### **Rule 1.1 – State Park Fees**

Jennifer Head, Director of Parks, recommended final passage for Rule 1.1 as presented last month. No comments have been received.

**ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission unanimously approved Parks Rule 1.1.**

#### **2017 Mississippi Legislature - Regular Session Update**

A handout was distributed to the Commission detailing the active bills in the Mississippi House and Senate Chambers which would influence operations at MDWFP. Jennifer Head and Larry Castle made comments on select bills and answered questions.

The Commission thanked the staff for this information. No action was taken by the Commission.

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

#### Update

Colonel Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented a handout which highlighted citations, shooting range attendance, Hattiesburg/Petal Community assistance following January 21<sup>st</sup> tornado, 2017 Hunter Education Coordinators Meeting at McHenry, and McIvor Shooting Range construction update.

A handout was also distributed to the Commission detailing hunting related incident investigations in FY17.

Colonel Adcock also updated the Commission on Law Enforcement activities within the Homochitto National Forest. The Chief noted that although there are still some isolated incidents of trespassing on private property by hunters running dogs, the majority of hunters are following the rules. He also reported that the National Forest Service was still considering promulgating its own rules for the Homochitto. No action was required of the Commission.

#### Recognition of Officer Donald Fairley

On January 28, 2017 the area manager of Pascagoula River WMA called Officer Donald Fairley for assistance with an 84 year-old man who had attempted to cross a low water crossing in his truck. The man had climbed on the roof of his cab as the water reached the handles on the doors. Officer Fairley rescued the man and pulled his truck to safety.

Col. Adcock presented Officer Fairley with a commendation for his valor. A round of applause followed. Officer Fairley was also brought forward at the Dixie National Rodeo this past week and recognized for his valor.

**ACTION: The Commission commented that they would like to see articles on MDWFP officers in the Mississippi Outdoor magazine in the future.**

### OTHER BUSINESS

#### Wounded Warrior Turkey Hunt

Ed Penny, Director of Conservation Programs, presented a license fee exemption request for 9 non-resident participants in the third annual Wings and Warrior Weekend Turkey Hunt at Slay Wilderness Club in Martinsville, MS. The hunt will occur March 23-26, 2017. This special event has been supported by MDWFP for the last two years for deer and turkey hunts.

**ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission unanimously approved the Wings and Warrior Weekend Hunt exemption request.**

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at the Infinity Science Center, One Discovery Circle, Pearlinton, MS. The Educational Session will begin at 2 p.m. and the Business Session at 3 p.m.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Director stated that there was need for a brief Executive Session to discuss several personnel matters.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session to discuss personnel matters involving job performance of specific individuals in specific positions, and budget line items that could affect the continued employment of individuals in specific positions.**

Counsel announced that the meeting was closed to determine the need for an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters involving job performance of specific individuals in specific positions and budget line items that could affect the continued employment of individuals in specific positions.

**Following a brief discussion, Commissioner Wagner made a motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel matters involving job performance of specific individuals in specific positions and budget line items that could affect the continued employment of individuals in specific positions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Taylor, and the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session.**

Counsel announced to those remaining outside the meeting room that the Commission had entered Executive Session for the purposes and discussions stated above.

Executive Director Sam Polles and Deputy Executive Director Robert Cook updated the Commission on a pending retirements and resignations of several key personnel across the agency, involving specific employees. The vacancies that will be created may necessitate some reorganization, but executive staff has a tentative plan to recruit and fill many of the pending vacancies from within the agency.

Discussion followed. No action was required of the Commission.

There was no further business for Executive Session.

**Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to exit Executive Session and open the meeting.**


Counsel announced that no action was required or taken by the Commission on the items discussed during Executive Session, to members of the public still in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Deviney gave the meeting into adjournment.

  
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Billy Deviney, CHAIRMAN

3-22-17  
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Date

  
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Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN

3/22/17  
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Date