

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

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

1 p.m. Educational Session / 2:30 p.m. Business Session

## **EDUCATIONAL SESSION – 1 PM**

**PRESENT:** Commission Chairman Clay Wagner, Commissioners Bill F. Cossar, Robert Taylor, and Billy Mounger.

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Scott Coopwood.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden, Larry Castle, Col. Steve Adcock, Russ Walsh, Jennifer Head, Larry Pugh, and Jason Thompson. Visitors attending were: Senator Philip Moran, Chairman of Senate WFP Committee; Senator Mike Seymour, and Representative John Glen Corley.

Educational Sessions are for informational purposes only. Commission action on any topic may only be taken during a regular business session.

### **1. WILDLIFE - Hog Trapping**

Anthony Ballard, Nuisance Animal Biologist, presented a PowerPoint presentation on in-field testing of the Hogeye Trapping System. The results of the tests were favorable with 249 hogs captured between February through August, 2017, mainly with only one trap. Between March and April 82 fetuses were removed from captured sows as well. Future plans include purchasing more traps statewide and using them in conjunction with specific management strategies. These traps can easily be employed on sparsely covered WMAs and used for trap-shy pigs and newly discovered populations.

### **2. IT/GIS**

Michael Bolden, Director of Administrative Services, presented a PowerPoint presentation on Information Technology (IT) Division of MDWFP. IT supports all divisions of the agency by providing: Network, Programming, Support, Social Media, Communications/Law Enforcement, and Geographic Information System (GIS). Many of the custom operations IT has incorporated within the agency were shared; including website, Facebook, mobile app, electronic citation/prosecution, GPS mapping, security camera/badge access, kiosk operations, etc. The IT Division also operates four drones which are used for documenting events, storm damage, flooding, emergency events, and marketing. Charlie Welch, GIS Coordinator, spoke to many of the applications GIS is providing; including repair/utility management for Parks, timber management, duck concentration by area, and law enforcement real-time mapping. Bolden acknowledged the superior undertaking of the MDWFP IT staff and asked them to stand. A round of applause followed.

With no other items to be presented, the Educational meeting was adjourned.

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1 p.m. Educational Session / 2:30 p.m. Business Session

**MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SESSION – 2:30 PM**

**PRESENT:** Commission Chairman Clay Wagner, Commissioners Bill F. Cossar, Robert Taylor, and Billy Mounger.

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Scott Coopwood.

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

Chairman Wagner, having noted for the minutes that a quorum was present, gaveled the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. Chairman Wagner welcomed Representative Scott Bounds, House Chairman of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (WFP) Committee; Senator Philip Moran, Senate Chairman of WFP Committee; Representatives John Glen Corley and Michael Evans, and Senator Mike Seymour.

**OPENING PRAYER**

Larry Castle, Director of Technical Programs, opened the meeting with prayer.

**MINUTES**

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the minutes of the August 16, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.

**AGENDA**

Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director of the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, requested a change on the agenda to add McIvor Shooting Range Update under Law Enforcement on the Business agenda.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Taylor moved to approve the agenda as amended for September 20, 2017. Commissioner Mounger seconded the motion and the motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were brought forward to the Commission.

### **LICENSE SALES REPORT**

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of August 2017. The total revenue for the end of August was down 11% but when you calculate the alligator license sales in June we are actually up \$25,000.

Highlights of Thompson's end of the month report are listed below:

- Resident licenses – down 3%, total number of licenses sold is up
  - All Game – up 2%
  - Small Game – up 10%
  - 3 day Freshwater Fishing – up 10%
- Non-resident licenses – up \$29,000 (Louisiana residents account for 50% of sales)
  - NR All Game – up 12%
  - NR 7 day Small Game – up 16%
  - NR Annual Freshwater Fishing – up 13%
  - NR 3 day Freshwater Fishing – up 6%
  - NR 1 day Freshwater Fishing – up 20%
- Lifetime License category – quantity sold is down 5%

### **WILDLIFE BUREAU**

#### **FINAL Rule - 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1**

Russ Walsh, Executive Wildlife Director, stated that no public comments had been received on either rule during the 30 day comment period and requested final approval.

- Rule 1.2 – Non-state owned, Non-COE WMA Regulations
- Rule 1.23 – Sunflower WMA Regulations

**ACTION:** By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rules 1.2 and 1.23 as presented.

#### **FINAL Rule - 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 8**

- Rule 8.4 – Regulations for Game & Furbearing Animals in Capacity

With no public comments received during the 30 day comment period, Walsh recommended final approval.

**ACTION:** By motion of Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rule 8.4 as presented.

### **Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan**

William McKinley, Deer Program Coordinator, presented the MDWFP "Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Response Plan" (August, 2017). McKinley has been in contact with Arkansas and Texas authorities on what worked and did not work on their CWD response plans after their states tested positive for CWD. Over 200 deer in seven Arkansas counties have tested positive for CWD and \$1.6 million was spent in the past 16 months to control and eradicate the disease. CWD has been diagnosed in 24 states and 2 Canadian Provinces, with several new locations discovered since 2014. The MDWFP plan was based on the best parts of Arkansas and Texas' CWD response plans.

A Mississippi CWD surveillance program for white-tailed deer was implemented in 2001. Since that time, a total of 12,587 white-tailed deer have been tested for the disease. As of August 2017, CWD has not been confirmed in Mississippi.

McKinley held a public meeting September 19, 2017 to notify hunters in the CWD high risk areas to bring their harvested deer heads in for testing. A letter was mailed out as well.

**ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved the Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan as presented.**

### **Alligator Report**

Ricky Flynt, Wildlife Alligator/Furbearer Coordinator, presented a report and handout on the 2017 Alligator Season which ran for ten days August 25 through September 4, 2017. This was the 13<sup>th</sup> year of public waterway alligator hunting opportunity in Mississippi. Flynt reported that the licensing process was slowed down and he had received only positive comments. There were two random drawings of over 4,150 applicants during the application process in mid-June. MDWFP data showed that 741 alligators were harvested which is only one percent of the adult alligator population. The number of permits sold was 914 with 82.7% (756) of the permit holders actually participating. Hunters networked together and the average hunting party included 3.8 people for a total of 2,872 people participating. A new male alligator length record on public water was certified at 14 feet  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch. The alligator was taken in the Southwest Alligator Hunting Zone by the hunting party of Bryan Burnside of Brandon, MS near Natchez, MS.

## **FISHERIES**

### **FINAL Rule- 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 3, Chapter 3, Rules 3.2, 3.4, and 3.5**

Larry Pugh, Director of Fisheries, received no comments on Rules 3.2, 3.4, and 3.5 and requested Commission approval of all three under one motion with no changes:

- **Rule 3.2 – Regulations regarding the Commercial Harvest of Paddlefish & Paddlefish Eggs**
- **Rule 3.4 – Regulations regarding Paddlefish Management Zones & the Periods Open to the Commercial Harvest of Paddlefish**

- **Rule 3.5 – Procedures for obtaining Paddlefish Permits for the Commercial Harvest of Paddlefish & Paddlefish Eggs & Reporting Requirements for Paddlefish Harvest**

**ACTION:** By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved Final Rules 3.2, 3.4, and 3.5 as presented.

**FINAL Rule- 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 3, Chapter 3, Rule 3.1**

- **Rule 3.1 – Commercial Fishing Regulations**  
Pugh received one comment on Rule 3.1, which was a request to allow for the sale of buffalo ribs in the marketplace. Pugh recommended inserting one sentence to allow for the sale of buffalo ribs.

**ACTION:** By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved Final Rule 3.1 as amended.

**PARKS**

**PROPOSED Rule - 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 6**

Jennifer Head, Director of Parks presented a handout summarizing proposed fee increases at state parks and language additions. These fee increases will be used for capital improvements. Head stated that even with the fee increases our state park fees are lower than other states.

- **Rule 1.1 – State Park Fees**
- **Rule 1.2 – General Rules and Regulations for State Parks**

**ACTION:** By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved PROPOSED Rules 1.1 and 1.2 as presented.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**Citation Report**

Col. Steve Adcock distributed a handout to the Commission which highlighted citations and shooting range attendance at Turcotte and McHenry. Other events during the month included officer participation at the “9-11 Memorial Run” at the State Capitol and officer-led programs for the public.

Capt. Dale Bell updated the Commission on the Special Response Team deployment to Florida to assist in search and rescue efforts following Hurricane Irma. The team also escorted the Governor of Florida and some of his staff down the St. Johns River to assess damage.

Capt. Scottie Jones presented a handout on Mclvor Shooting Range construction updates. Construction is halfway completed. Bids for the second phase went out last week and construction should begin in October.

### License Reinstatement Request

Adcock presented the following two license reinstatement requests. Each violator was asked to come forward and state the circumstances of his arrest before the Commission. Both violators had paid their fines and attended the Hunter Education class as required for restitution.

- *John Smith, Carriere, MS*

Smith informed the Commission that he was with Mr. Jesse Crowe when Mr. Crowe stopped his truck, and shot a deer with the help of his headlights. Mr. Smith's gun was used to kill the deer. He was arrested and paid fines in the amount of \$3,000.

**MOTION: By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, Smith's license was reinstated by unanimous consent with the stipulation that if he has another violation in the next two years, his license will be suspended an additional two years.**

- *Jesse Crowe, Picayune, MS*

Crowe stated he was spotlighting and shot the biggest deer he has ever seen in Panola County. He paid \$3,000 in fines. He has had no previous violations.

**MOTION: By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, Crowe's license was reinstated by unanimous consent with the same two year stipulation if he gets another ticket in the next two years.**

### OTHER BUSINESS

#### Calhoun WMA Lease

Larry Castle informed the Commission that Art Kennard, Lands Coordinator, has been trying to work out the language so that we can lease the land for one more year until the road issue can be resolved. The Board of Supervisors has agreed verbally to help with the road but will not commit to this in written form. Dr. Polles stated that this issue needs to be resolved before the next Commission Meeting and requested the Commission give MDWFP staff authority to come to a resolution on this matter. MDWFP is waiting to hear from the Board of Supervisor attorneys.

**MOTION: By motion of Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission granted MDWFP staff authority to resolve the Calhoun WMA Lease by unanimous consent.**

#### National Fisheries Award Recipient

Larry Castle stated that Larry Pugh, Director of Fisheries, recently received the Award of Excellence from the Fisheries Management Section of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) at their 147<sup>th</sup> meeting in Tampa, Florida. The AFS is an international organization dedicated to strengthening the fisheries profession, advancing fisheries science, and conserving fisheries resources. Larry Pugh is well known for his work on our state lakes, reservoirs, hatcheries, and working with other states on invasive fish



species. Castle asked Larry Pugh to come forward and he presented the Award of Excellence plaque to him. A round of applause followed.

Pugh thanked everyone and stated that this award is a reflection of the wonderful Fisheries staff and what they do. He added, "This is more of a "we" award, than an "I" award." Pugh has worked for MDWFP for almost 21 years.

### **NEXT COMMISSION MEETING**

**DATE:** Wednesday, October 18, 2017  
**LOCATION:** 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211  
**TIME:** 11:00 a.m. Educational Session  
1:30 p.m. Business Session

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Director stated that there was no need for an Executive Session.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Cossar made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Mounger, and the motion carried.

Chairman Wagner gaveled the meeting into adjournment.

  
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Clay Wagner, CHAIRMAN

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Date

  
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Bill F. Cossar, VICE CHAIRMAN

  
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Date