

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

11 a.m. Educational Session / 1:30 p.m. Business Session

EDUCATIONAL SESSION – 11 AM

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden, Larry Castle, Curtis Thornhill, Col. Steve Adcock, Russ Walsh, Jennifer Head, Larry Pugh, Charles Knight, and Jason Thompson. Visitor attendee: Representative Scott Bounds, Chairman of House WFP Committee.

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

LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. Hunter Education

Lt. Megan Fedrick, Director of Hunter Education, presented a PowerPoint presentation detailing hunter/instructor education classes, outreach education, special events, and training opportunities offered throughout the State of Mississippi.

Upcoming in FY18, the Hunter Education Program is developing an Advanced Hunter Education Class and hopes to purchase an inflatable BB Range for each of the four regions which would be used for outreach events.

2. Boater Education

Capt. Calvin Fulton, Training Director of Boating Law Administration and Boating Education, presented a PowerPoint presentation on boating administration, boater education, special programs, training, and funding.

Fulton announced that MDWFP has applied for two 27 ft. SAFE boats through a Port Security Grant. One boat would be assigned to Pickwick Lake (Ohio River Sector) and one to the Vicksburg area (Lower MS River Sector). These boats would be used to patrol these areas and act as First Responders for the U.S. Coast Guard.

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

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11 a.m. Educational Session / 1:30 p.m. Business Session

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SESSION – 1:30 PM

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden, Larry Castle, Curtis Thornhill, Col. Steve Adcock, Larry Pugh, Russ Walsh, Jennifer Head, Charles Knight, 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 1:30 p.m. Chairman Wagner welcomed Representative Scott Bounds, House Chairman of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (WFP) Committee; and Senator Mike Seymour.

OPENING PRAYER

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

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the minutes of the regular meeting held on September 20, 2017 and special teleconference meeting held on October 5, 2017 were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

ACTION: Commissioner Coopwood moved to approve the agenda for October 18, 2017. Commissioner Cossar 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 September 2017. The total revenue for the end of September was down 7% but when alligator sales from June are factored in, the total revenue is only down 2%. Customer buying patterns have shifted from buying sportsman licenses to purchasing all game or small game licenses.

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

- Resident licenses – down 3%
 - Small Game Freshwater Fishing licenses – up 6%
 - 3 day Freshwater Fishing – up 5%
- Non-resident licenses – total licenses sold are up 2%
 - NR 3 day Freshwater Fishing – up 6%
 - NR 1 day Freshwater Fishing – up 17%
 - WMA permits – up 9%
- Permit category – down \$161,000 which does not include alligator sales of \$200,000
- Lifetime license sales is similar to last year.
- Marketing strategy to boost revenue includes sending out notices to resident customers and pushing back the time frame to buy a license from 60 days to 90 days.

WILDLIFE BUREAU

HOPE OUTDOORS

Russ Walsh, Executive Wildlife Director, presented license exemption requests for non-resident hunters and fishermen at the following events sponsored by Hope Outdoors for children and adults with critical illnesses and severe disabilities:

- Gulf Coast Chapter (Fishing event) - October 20-21, 2017
- Vicksburg Chapter (Deer hunt) - December 1-3, 2017
- Florence Chapter (Deer hunt) - December 8-9, 2017
- Forest Chapter (Deer hunt) - December 15-16, 2017
- Calhoun/Webster Chapter (Deer hunt) - December 15-16, 2017
- Director's Hunt/Natchez area (Deer hunt) – January 4-7, 2018
- Granada Lake (Duck hunt) – January 13-14, 2018
- Wiggins Chapter (Deer hunt) - January 26-27, 2018

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission unanimously approved the Hope Outdoors' license exemption requests as presented.

2017-18 DUCK STAMP PROJECT

The following Waterfowl Conservation Groups had representatives present. Each came forward and voiced their requests for Duck Stamp Funding for 2017-18.

- **Delta Waterfowl – Jeff Howell, Vice President of Development – Individual and Major Gifts, Delta Waterfowl Foundation**

Jeff Howell thanked the Commission for prior year support and requested \$100,000 on behalf of Delta Waterfowl to be used for the following projects:

1. North Dakota Working Wetlands Project with goal of incorporation into 2018 Farm Bill (\$75,000)
2. Mississippi Delta private lands winter water initiative (\$25,000)

- **Ducks Unlimited – Ed Penny, Director of Public Policy, Southern Region**

Ed Penny requested MDWFP to partner again with Ducks Unlimited by providing for the following projects and thanked the Commission for their support:

1. Saskatchewan Parklands Habitat Conservation in Canada (\$100,000)
2. Sunflower WMA green-tree reservoir wetland enhancements in Mississippi (\$25,000)

- **Mississippi State University – Dr. Jessica Klassen, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Aquaculture**

Dr. Jessica Klassen thanked everyone for their continued support of the MSU Waterfowl Program. MSU requested \$64,581 in Duck Stamp funds to continue for the second year an evaluation project of the MDWFP Waterfowl Program's overall waterfowl conservation efforts through analysis of long-term information including:

1. aerial waterfowl survey data
2. climate and water coverage data
3. land ownership: public and private
4. Mississippi land management changes
5. waterfowl habitat use and distributions
6. waterfowl harvest and hunter satisfaction

MDWFP STAFF 2017-18 DUCK STAMP FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Larry Castle thanked the Waterfowl Conservation groups for their comments and presented the following staff recommendations for distribution of duck stamp proceeds for the full amount requested with a stipulation that we will designate by line item how the funds are to be spent.

<u>Project</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Project Description</u>
DU Canada	\$125,000	\$125,000	Continue funding of Eastern Saskatchewan Parklands NAWCA Project; funds will be matched 3:1 with other agency and DU funds (\$100,000); and funding for survey, design, and planning work for Sunflower WMA green-tree reservoir wetland habitat enhancements (\$25,000).
Delta Waterfowl	\$100,000	\$100,000	Continue funding for N. Dakota Working Wetlands initiatives with goal of incorporation into 2018 Farm Bill (\$75,000); plus a Mississippi private lands winter water initiative for the Delta region (\$25,000).
MSU Research	\$ 64,581	\$ 64,581	Year 2 of project to evaluate the MDWFP Waterfowl Program's overall waterfowl conservation efforts through analysis of aerial survey and other long-term data.
WMA Wetland Management & Enhancement Projects	\$130,000	\$130,000	Provide funds to WMAs as needed to supplement annual waterfowl habitat management. Continue mulching dense woody areas on Shipland WMA & replace infrastructure & enhance habitat on state-owned portion of Sky Lake WMA. Initiate habitat & water delivery work on Sunflower WMA green-tree reservoirs.
Private Lands Wetland Enhancement Projects	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	Funding for private lands winter water project in strategic areas of the Mississippi Delta (i.e., adjacent to or near Wildlife Mgmt. Areas). Funds spent would be used as match for future wetland work.
Aerial Waterfowl Surveys	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	Continue monitoring of MS Delta waterfowl abundance and habitat; Delta Wildlife also funding.
Waterfowl Program Travel	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	Provide funds for MDWFP staff to attend regional and national meetings related to waterfowl and wetlands.
Mississippi Flyway Council Dues & Cooperative Projects	<u>\$ 15,448</u>	<u>\$ 15,448</u>	Annual dues to MS Flyway Council, annual contributions to MS Flyway banding, & other cooperative waterfowl projects.
TOTAL	\$509,029	\$509,029	FY 2017 resident stamp sales = \$ 26,837 non-resident stamp sales = \$ 9,464 FY 2017 Total Revenue = \$ 448,186

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, funds for 2017-18 Duck Stamp projects were unanimously approved as recommended by staff contingent upon further discussion with the recipients about, and the recipients' acceptance of, any restrictions on how the funds are to be spent.

PARKS

FINAL Rule - 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 6

Jennifer Head, Director of Parks, stated that no comments had been received and recommended final adoption of the following rules:

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

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL 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, which were down due to Hurricane Nate. Other events during the month included officer participation at the “Outdoor Rama” at Turcotte, missing person detail in South Mississippi, school events, and in-service training. Phase II of the McIver Shooting Range construction will begin the first of November.

License Reinstatement Request

Col. Adcock presented the following license reinstatement request. The violator was asked to come forward and state the circumstances of his arrest before the Commission.

- *Christopher Bohl, Meridian, MS*
Bohl stated that he had made a terrible mistake and learned a valuable lesson. On December 15th at 11 p.m. he left home to go to the store when he spotted a doe with his headlights. He stopped and shot the deer. His gun was still in his truck from earlier in the day. He has never done anything like this before. He assumed a neighbor heard the shot and called it in. An officer arrived at his home at 3 a.m. He had to pay \$2,000 to \$3,000 in fines.

Col. Adcock recommended the Commission restore his license at this time; however, if he receives another citation, he will serve the full three years for a second offense.

MOTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, Bohl’s license was reinstated by unanimous consent with the stipulation that he will serve the entire three years for a second citation.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was brought before the Commission.

NEXT COMMISSION MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, November 14 & Wednesday, November 15, 2017
LOCATION: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211
TIME: 2:00 p.m. Nov. 14 - Educational Session
8:30 a.m. Nov. 15 - Business Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Director stated that there was need for Executive Session to discuss transactions in land, ongoing investigations of a law enforcement agency, potential litigation and litigation strategy, and personnel matters involving job performance of individuals in specific positions.

ACTION: Commissioner Cossar made a motion to close the meeting to determine the need for executive session to discuss transactions in land, ongoing investigations of a law enforcement agency, potential litigation and litigation strategy, and personnel matters involving job performance of individuals in specific positions. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting.

Counsel announced to those present that the meeting was now closed to determine the need for executive session to discuss transactions in land, ongoing investigations of a law enforcement agency, potential litigation and litigation strategy, and personnel matters involving job performance of individuals in specific positions. The room was cleared.

A brief discussion followed.

ACTION: Upon a motion made by Commissioner Taylor, and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to enter executive session to discuss transactions in land, ongoing investigations of a law enforcement agency, potential litigation and litigation strategy, and personnel matters involving job performance of individuals in specific positions.

Counsel announced to those outside the meeting room that the Commission had entered executive session to discuss transactions in land, ongoing investigations of a law enforcement agency, potential litigation and litigation strategy, and personnel matters involving job performance of individuals in specific positions.

Dr. Polles updated the Commission on several pending potential purchases of land for public hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. These were the same matters discussed during the special meeting of October 5, 2017. No action was required of the Commission at this time.

Dr. Polles and Deputy Director Robert Cook updated the Commission on several pending personnel actions to fill vacancies and address attrition. No action was required of the Commission.

Larry Castle updated the Commission on the various enclosure enforcement actions which have resulted in Lacey Act prosecutions in Federal Court. Included in the discussion was information regarding a recent case made on a violation of the cervid carcass importation rule against a hunter who self-reported. In this case, the hunter had taken a mule deer in Wyoming. He was subsequently informed that the deer had tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease ("CWD"). He then reported to the MDWFP that his deer had tested positive. Conservation officers were dispatched to investigate and discovered that the remains that the individual had brought back from Wyoming had not been properly prepared as required under 40 Miss. Admin. Code, Part 2, Rule 2.7. The individual was cited and the remains were seized for incineration.

Mr. Castle followed this presentation with a discussion about CWD prevention and the need to be proactive. Considering the case where an enclosure fence was partially destroyed by a storm, and other cases involving the importation of white-tailed deer from CWD-positive sources, into the state, the time has come for the agency to be more focused on the prevention of the introduction of CWD. Castle informed the Commission that staff had already been in discussions with surrounding states – especially those where CWD has been found – to develop protocols aimed at preventing the introduction and limiting the spread of the disease.

Discussion followed.

The Commissioners encouraged staff to bring forward an evaluation of existing rules and regulations, and any proposed changes to same, to address CWD prevention.

No action was required of the Commission.


There being no further items for discussion in Executive Session, Commissioner Cossar made a motion to open the meeting. Commissioner Mounger seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to open the meeting.

Counsel announced to any members of the public outside the meeting that the Commission had exited Executive Session and opened the meeting. Counsel also announced that no official actions had been taken on the items discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Chairman Wagner gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



Clay Wagner, CHAIRMAN



Date



Bill F. Cossar, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date