

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Tuesday, December 17, 2013 @ Noon

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING

PRESENT: Chairman John C Stanley IV, Vice Chairman Bryan Jones, Commissioners William "Billy" Deviney and Charles Rigdon.

ABSENT: Commissioner Clay Wagner

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Mr. Robert Cook, Deputy Director; Larry Castle; Libby Hartfield, Michael Bolden; Chad Dacus, Col. Steve Adcock; and Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

Having received word that Chairman Stanley and Dr. Polles were delayed, Vice Chairman Jones inquired as to whether the meeting could begin without them. Legal counsel noted that a quorum of three Commission members were present, being Vice Chairman Bryan Jones, Commissioners William Deviney and Charles Rigdon. Vice Chairman Jones noted that the meeting should commence to handle the usual and ordinary business matters in anticipation of Chairman Stanley and Dr. Polles' arrival.

Vice Chairman Jones called the meeting to order and welcomed MDWFP Senate Committee Chairman Giles Ward and House Committee Chairman Scott Bounds.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the minutes of November 20, 2013 were unanimously approved as presented.

TODAY'S AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon to add The Warrior Bonfire Project to "Other Business" on the agenda. The motion carried and the agenda was approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

License Report

Mr. Jason Thompson, License/Boat Registration Division Director, presented the License Sales Report for the month of November, 2013.

He reported the following cumulative sales (comparing November, 2013 to November, 2012):

- Overall license sales up by \$13,000
- Total # of licenses sold up by 398
- Resident License sales slightly down by 2%
- Fishing license / Small Game Hunting license - up \$188,000
- Nonresident licenses up by \$129,000
- Other License up \$14,000 (Paddlefish and Alligator)

A chart was distributed comparing sales from July through January over the past three years. Mr. Thompson pointed out that FY 2014 sales not only caught up but surpassed last fiscal year's sales for the same time period.

As requested by the Commission last month, two handouts were distributed depicting which areas of Mississippi and Louisiana have renewed Resident and Non-resident sportsman licenses.

Listed below are the methods hunting and fishing licenses are sold as presented on a pie chart:

- 66% POS agents (Walmart, sporting good stores, MDWFP locations, etc.)
- 30% Internet
- 4% Phone

Mr. Thompson advised the Commission last month that the MDWFP Foundation had been working with the Licensing Department by purchasing "exempt" licenses for youth 16 and under after completion of their Hunter Education classes. Around 2,400 youth exempt licenses have been processed compared to only 57 last year. Mr. Thompson expects to issue 5,000 to 6,000 licenses by the end of the year.

Vice Chairman Jones recognized Chairman John C. Stanley IV's arrival and turned the gavel over to him for the remainder of the meeting.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Citation Report

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, stated that 1,100 citations were issued last month with 156 license violations, 31 headlighting, 89 supplemental feeding, 42 unlawful possession and 59 WMA related. Hunting accidents are down compared to previous years.

Reinstatement Requests

Col. Adcock brought before the Commission two requests for reinstatement. Each violator appeared before the Commission and stated the reason for his conviction. Col. Adcock recommended reinstatement for both men.

- **Mitchell Rushing, Meridian, MS**

Mr. Rushing stated that he was driving a truck with two other men on New Year's Eve. They spotlighted and killed a deer. A neighbor called in their tag number. Mr. Rushing stated that he had learned his lesson and losing his license was the worst part of this incident.

- **Brenton Reynolds, Coffeeville, MS**

Mr. Reynolds saw a deer running across the road and shot it. This experience cost him \$2,600.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, the requests to reinstate hunting privileges to Mr. Rushing and Mr. Reynolds were unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS**Warrior Bonfire Project**

Mr. Hunter L. Fordice presented a request to waive hunting and fishing license fees for non-resident participants of the Warrior Bonfire Project. The participant requirements are limited to veterans who are Purple Heart recipients. The Warrior Bonfire Project hosts deer hunts and fishing tournaments. Each group is limited to six veterans to allow for bonding and healing from war experiences. A flag retirement ceremony is included around a bonfire. The next deer hunt is scheduled for Jan. 10-13, 2014 at Valley Park. Mr. Fordice stated that they had license issues last year and would appreciate Commission consideration for waiver of the fees.

Legal counsel informed the Commission that statutes on non-residents require individuals 16 and over to have a license, there is no exemption for disabled individuals; however, the commission has the power, "to exercise all incidental powers necessary to develop a non-resident license program," to include waiving fees for these individuals because of their service and disability. Each person would be required to acquire a license but the fees could be waived.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, the request to waive non-resident license fees for hunting and fishing licenses for individuals who are disabled veterans and participants in the Warrior Bonfire Project was unanimously approved.

Proposed Rule Change - 40 Miss. Admin Code, Part 4, Rule 5.3 Running of Dogs during Spring Turkey

Mr. Chad Dacus, Wildlife Bureau Director, presented a handout with one recommended change to Rule 5.3 shown below. This change would clarify Commission authority over the running of dogs during Spring Turkey Season, and assist people with problems of hog crop depredation on their property. The proposed change reads:

C To assist with the control of hogs for agriculture depredation only, an Animal Control Permit may be issued, during spring turkey season to any property owner or lessee for the use of dogs for lethal removal of hogs.

a. To apply for an Animal Control Permit, contact the appropriate MDWFP Regional Office:

North Region (Tupelo): 662.840.5172

Central Region (Canton): 601.859.3421

South Region (Magnolia): 601.783.2911

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, the Proposed change to Rule 5.3 was unanimously approved.

TENTATIVE MEETING DATES

- **January Meeting** – Wednesday, January 15, 2014 – 2:30 p.m. at Greenwood Chamber of Commerce
- **February Meeting** - Monday, February 3, 2014 – 9:00 a.m. at Quail Ridge Lodge, Louisville

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Jones, 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 which may affect the continued employment of individuals in specific positions, ongoing criminal investigations, and the job performance of individuals in specific positions. Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Commission voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session.

Chad Dacus updated the Commission on the projected effect of cuts to the US Army, Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District funding, and the MDWFP's ability to manage Corps properties due to these cuts. Discussion followed, but no action was required of the Commission.

Chief Adcock and Chad Dacus updated the Commission on investigations in south Mississippi and related matters. No action was required of the Commission.

Dr. Polles updated the Commission on several disciplinary matters regarding employees in specific positions. No action was required of the Commission.

There was no other business for discussion in Executive Session.

Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, 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

1-15-14

Date



Bryan Jones, VICE-CHAIRMAN

1/15/14

Date