

# MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Thursday, May 14, 2020  
11 a.m. Business Session

Commission, Staff, and Public Viewed Meeting by Means of Teleconferencing  
due to Covid-19 Pandemic Executive Orders

## NO EDUCATIONAL SESSION

### MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SESSION – 11 AM

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending by webinar were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Jennifer Head, Michael Bolden, Curtis Thornhill, Doug Mann, and Drew Malone (Special Assistant Attorney General). Staff present at MDWFP office were: Col. Steve Adcock, Russ Walsh, Larry Pugh, Ricky Flynt, Jason Thompson, Amy Blaylock, Curtis Thornhill, Chip Ward, and Sharon Polzin.

### OPENING PRAYER

Deputy Executive Director Robert Cook opened the meeting with prayer.

### MINUTES

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the minutes of the April 15, 2020 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

### AGENDA

The Executive Director informed the Commission of the following items which needed to be added to the agenda:

- Added Wildlife Bureau – PROPOSED Rule 2.7 – Cervid Carcass Importation/Exportation
- Wildlife Bureau - Rule 1.5 was presented last month as PROPOSED and tabled pending amended language. It will be presented as PROPOSED again this month with amended language on feral hogs.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Wagner moved to approve the agenda for May 14, 2020 as amended, Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion and the motion carried.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

No written or oral comments were received for the Commission.

### LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration Division, presented the License Sales Report for the month of April 2020. The total revenue for the end of April is down by less than 1% from last year.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – up \$112,000
  - Small Hunt/Freshwater Fishing – up 12%
  - Res 3 day Freshwater – up 42%
  - Res WMA user permits – up 9%
- Non-resident license sales – down 2%
  - NR Freshwater Fishing – up 2%
  - NR 1 day Freshwater Fishing – up 8%
  - NR Spring Turkey Permits – up 17%
- Permit category – down 8%
- Lifetime License category – down 5%

WMA iOS users – 21,086

Android WMA users – 6,703

Total WMA App Downloads – 27,789

As of May 7, 2020 there has been a total of 7,628 license packages sold.

### FISHERIES

Larry Pugh, Fisheries Bureau Director, recommended that the Commission approve the following two Rules 1.4 and 2.2 under one motion as PROPOSED last month. No comments were received on either rule.

#### **A. FINAL 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 3, Chapter 1 – General Fisheries Rules**

- **Rule 1.4 – Statewide Creel Limits**

#### **B. FINAL 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part, Chapter 2 – State Fishing Lakes, and Community Fishing Assistance Program Lakes**

- **Rule 2.2 – Regulations regarding Community Fishing Assistance Program Lakes**

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rules 1.4 and 2.2, as recommended by staff.

**FINAL 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part, Chapter 2 – State Fishing Lakes, and Community Fishing Assistance Program Lakes**

- **Rule 2.1 – Regulations regarding State Fishing Lakes**

Pugh stated that one addition had been made to the language in the FINAL Rule 2.1.:

“Unmanned Aerial Vehicles may not be launched from or landed on any MDWFP managed State Fishing Lake property without the written permission of the Executive Director or his designee.”

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rule 2.1, as amended.

**WILDLIFE**

**FINAL – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1 – WMA Regulations**

- **Rules 1.1 – 1.45 – WMA Regulations**

Walsh recommended final passage for Rules 1.1 – 1.45 with the following deletion in the John Starr WMA which was made at the request of MS State University College of Forest Resources since they no longer require this permit.

John Starr WMA - Hunting Permit Amendment:

- ~~All hunters must obtain a hunting permit from the College of Forest Resources, Forest Operations Office, and (662) 325-2191. Deer tags will be provided for persons wishing to hunt deer on the area.~~

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL WMA Regulations (Rules 1.1 - 1.46), as amended.

**PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code – Law Enforcement Part 4, Chapter 1**

- **Rule 1.5 – Regulations regarding the Taking, Catching, or Killing of any Wild Bird, or Wild Animal on Lands affected by Flood Waters**

Rule 1.5 was tabled at the last meeting in order for staff to amend the language on spring turkey season and feral hog hunting during flooding. Walsh presented the following proposed language to amend Rule 1.5:

- Automatic closure of spring turkey season when lands along the MS River are affected by flooding.
- Allows wild hogs to be hunted or trapped by landowners, leaseholders, or their designated agents between October 1 and May 1 in a closed zone with an Animal Control Permit issued by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks.

**ACTION: Commissioner Cossar made a motion to approve PROPOSED Rule 1.5 as amended. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion and the motion carried.**

### **CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE REPORT**

Research data indicates CWD prevalence increases slowly until the 5% threshold is crossed, after which prevalence accelerates drastically (Colorado Parks and Wildlife 2018). Proactive measure such as reducing deer density and minimizing unnatural deer concentration are vital, proactive measures for CWD management. Thus a broader CWD management zone (per the current zone) is critical to our goal to manage the disease at a local prevalence under 5%.

Mississippi is less than two years removed from the detections in North MS. Given this short timeframe relative to CWD management, the Wildlife and Law Enforcement Bureaus submitted the following recommendation:

- Current CWD Management Zones remain in effect until after the 2020-2021 hunting season and additional samples are collected for the following 22 counties: Benton, Marshall, Issaquena, Pontotoc, Panola, Tallahatchie, Warren, Union, Lafayette, Grenada, Tippah, Tate, DeSoto, Yalobusha, Leflore, Carroll, Lee, Quitman, Alcorn, Prentiss, Sharkey, and Sunflower.

This staff recommendation was made after careful consideration of the following:

- Given the current sample numbers, data are insufficient to indicate additional positive deer are not present in the CWD Management Zone counties.
- One of the worst CWD outbreaks in the country is within 10 miles of Mississippi.
- The densest deer herd in MO with CWD has an estimated 1 deer per 21 acres. In Mississippi's zones, higher deer densities (greater than 1 deer per 15 acres) and unnatural concentrations could increase rate of spread.
- Recent data from Madison and Yazoo counties revealed 9% of adult bucks cover 10 or more miles in their annual home range.

Walsh presented an AMENDED ZONE OPTION map for Commission consideration. A copy of this map has been appended to the minutes. The Amended Zone Option would make the following changes to the existing CWD Management Zone counties:

- Creates CWD Surveillance Zones (Counties currently in the CWD Management Zone which are outside of the 10-mile radius of CWD detections)
  - Carcass transportation regulation applies to these zones
- Creates 4 CWD Management Zones (Counties currently in the CWD Management Zone where CWD was detected and within a 10-mile radius of CWD detections)
  - Supplemental feeding ban applies to these zones.

**ACTION: Commissioner Mounger made a motion to approve the amended Zone Option. Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion and the motion carried.**

#### **FINAL – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 2 – White-tailed Deer**

- **Rule 2.2 – White-tailed Deer Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits**

With the adoption of the CWD Surveillance Zones, Walsh recommended amending Rule 2.2 with the following language change:

“Mandatory CWD sampling is required of all deer harvested on November 21-22 in any county or portion thereof in the North Mississippi and Issaquena CWD Management SURVEILLANCE Zones.”

**ACTION: Commissioner Cossar moved to approve FINAL adoption of Rule 2.2 as amended, seconded by Commissioner Mounger, and the motion carried.**

#### **PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 2 – White-tailed Deer**

- **Rule 2.7 – Prohibition on Cervid Carcass Importation/Exportation, to protect Mississippi from Chronic Wasting Disease**

With the adoption of the CWD Surveillance Zones, Walsh recommended amending Rule 2.7 with the following language change:

“It is unlawful to transport any portion of a cervid carcass outside of an MDWFP-defined CWD Management SURVEILLANCE Zone.”

**ACTION: Commissioner Cossar moved to approve PROPOSED Rule 2.7, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, and the motion carried.**

#### **FINAL - 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 5 – Alligator**

Ricky Flynt, Wildlife Alligator/Furbearer Coordinator, came forward to give a report on a survey conducted on-line by Moon Lake residents to see if their community would be interested in an alligator hunting opportunity. Based on the 61 results of the survey by residents and non-

resident owners, the staff recommendation was to “not” open alligator hunting at Moon Lake at this time. Flynt recommended FINAL adoption of the following rules:

- **Rule 5.2 – Private Lands Alligator**
- **Rule 5.3 – Public Waters Alligator**

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rules 5.2 and 5.3 as adopted in April, which included the removal of Moon Lake as an open lake for alligator hunting.

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

#### **Law Enforcement Update**

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, reminded the Commission that the Fallen Officer Memorial Service would take place at 2 p.m. following the Commission Meeting. The service can be viewed by the public by live feed on the MDWFP website at 2 p.m.

Adcock’s report stated that citations were lower this month since individuals were given a warning and an opportunity to buy a license instead of receiving a ticket. However, 45 individuals chose not to buy a license and were given a ticket the second time around. Part of their duties this month included patrolling public waterways and State Parks to enforce social distancing while also maintaining a visible presence due to the coronavirus pandemic. Law Enforcement has also been called in this past month to work tornado search and rescue, drowning and boat accidents, nuisance alligators, and social media cases.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was brought forward.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020  
Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211  
Time: 2 p.m. Business Session

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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


**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Cossar moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, and the motion carried. Chairman Coopwood gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



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Scott Coopwood, CHAIRMAN

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Date



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Robert Taylor, VICE CHAIRMAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

