

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Thursday, August 20, 2020
8:30 a.m. Educational Session
9:30 a.m. Business Session

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211

EDUCATIONAL SESSION – 8:30 AM

High-Fenced Enclosure Status Report

Russ Walsh, Wildlife Chief of Staff, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Status of High-Fenced Enclosures in Mississippi. Discussion followed on Senate Bill 2722 as passed during the last Legislative Session, which requires all harvested deer in an enclosure to be submitted for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing. The proposed language to bring Wildlife Rule 8.2 in compliance with the new statute was also discussed.

William McKinley, Deer Program Coordinator, and Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, provided input on certain questions the Commission had on the new statute.

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SESSION – 9:30 AM

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

PRESENT via telecommunication: Commissioners Scott Coopwood.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Jennifer Head, Larry Pugh, Col. Steve Adcock, Russ Walsh, Curtis Thornhill, Brian Byrd, and Drew Malone (Special Assistant Attorney General).

OPENING PRAYER

Deputy Executive Director Robert Cook opened the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the minutes of the July 16, 2020 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner moved to approve the agenda for August 20, 2020, Commissioner Mounger seconded the motion and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments were received from the public.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration Division, presented the License Sales Report for the month of July 2020. The total revenue for the end of July is up 17%.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – up 13.34%
 - All Game Hunt/Fish – up 25.70%
 - Small Hunt/Freshwater Fishing – up 12.58%
 - 3 day Freshwater Fishing – up 11.87%
 - Res WMA user permits – up 9.69%
 - Commercial Fishing – up 48.33%
- Non-resident license sales – up 33.55%
 - NR Freshwater Fishing – up 37%
 - NR 3 day Freshwater Fishing – up 20%
 - All Game Hunting Lic – up 62.50%
- Permit category – up 29.4%
- Lifetime License category – down 5.62%

Total WMA App Downloads – 30,220

Currently we have 69,169 customers signed up for auto renewals. During the month of July, 2,833 customers signed up.

The Commission inquired as to getting other items on the website for use of the public.

WILDLIFE

PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code – Part 2, Chapter 8 – Enclosures

- **Rule 8.2 – Regulations for Enclosures Preventing the Free Ingress and Egress of White-tailed Deer**

Walsh informed the Commission that the 2020 Mississippi Legislature passed Senate Bill 2722, requiring mandatory Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing of all harvested deer inside high-fenced enclosures. Language was added to Rule 8.2 to be in compliance with the statutory change.

On July 1, 2020, Senate Bill 2722 went into effect mandating that all deer harvested inside a high-fenced enclosure shall be tested for Chronic Wasting Disease. The first violation of this requirement shall be a Class II violation punishable upon conviction as provided in MISS. CODE ANN. §49-7-143. Subsequent violations of this requirement shall be Class I violations and punishable upon conviction as provided in MISS. CODE ANN. §49-7-141.

ACTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Cossar to approve PROPOSED Rule 8.2. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wagner and the motion carried.

Administrative Quarantine for Enclosures Preventing the Free Ingress and Egress of White-tailed Deer

Walsh presented a handout to the Commission listing 36 enclosures which had not complied with the mandatory submission of CWD samples for the 2019/2020 season. He recommended administrative quarantine action for non-compliance with Rule 8.2. This would result in enclosure biologists working with MDWFP biologists on a plan for compliance. Failure to submit the required number of samples may result in MDWFP collecting the required samples. Failure to provide consent to MDWFP to remove the number of samples OR failure to take the required number of deer samples two consecutive years may result in the enclosure no longer being eligible to hold deer in captivity.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission unanimously approved placing these 36 enclosures under administrative quarantine for non-compliance during the 2019/2020 season until they have submitted the required samples.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Update

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported that 256 citations were issued this past month with trespassing being the number one violation. Law Enforcement assisted with a hunting accident scene in Clarke County, recovered several stolen boats, and the banding of wood ducks. All three shooting facilities were open for business with 966 customers at Turcotte; 402 at McIvor; and 520 at McHenry.

Reinstatement Requests

Two requests were made for license reinstatement. Col. Adcock stated that each violator had taken his Hunter Education class and paid his fines. Each was asked to come forward and state the circumstances of his arrest before the Commission.

- **Alan Allred, Summit, MS.** Allred stated that in November 2018 he and his friends were riding in his truck after dark. They spotted a deer, and a friend shot a deer from the side of the road. He and his friends were in the woods to collect the deer when an officer asked them to come out. He was the only one who turned himself in. He realized that what he did was wrong and will not do it again. This mistake cost him over \$2,000.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve Allred's reinstatement with the provision that if he receives another citation during the next 12 months, his license would be suspended for the full three years for a second offense. Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion and the motion carried.

- **Adam Clay, Pontotoc, MS.** Clay stated that he saw a deer around 9:30 p.m. with his headlights. He shot at the deer and missed. An officer pulled him over. His fines totaled \$2,150.50.

ACTION: Commissioner Cossar made a motion to approve Clay's reinstatement with the provision that if he receives another citation in the next twelve months, his license would be suspended for the full three years for a second offense. Commissioner Mounger seconded the motion and the motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Clarification on Air Guns

Doug Mann, Executive Staff Officer, stated that there has been some misinterpretation by the public on page 18 of the *2020-2021 Outdoor Digest* which reads:

"During any open season on deer with primitive weapons after November 30, a person may use any legal weapon of choice on private lands only,
Air guns may be used on private lands during open gun season."

This statement misled many sportsmen to believe that air guns are approved for hunting deer, in general.

The following statements will be publicized on MDWFP website and social media to clarify the use of air guns:

- Air guns may **NOT** be used on public lands.
- Air guns may only be used during Primitive Weapons Season on **PRIVATE LANDS, AFTER NOVEMBER 30th**.

No action was needed by the Commission, as this was for information only.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020
Location: North MS Hatchery, 457 County Road 36, Enid, MS
Time: 2:00 p.m. Educational Session
3:00 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 a need for an Executive Session to discuss budgetary items.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner made a motion to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session for discussing transaction of business and discussion regarding the prospective purchase, sale or leasing of lands, and discussions regarding employment or job performance of a person in a specific position. Commissioner Cossar 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 for the discussion of transactions in business and discussion regarding the prospective purchase, sale or leasing of lands, and discussions regarding employment or job performance of a person in a specific position.

The meeting was closed, and the room cleared.

Discussion followed.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss transaction of business and discussion regarding the prospective purchase, sale or

leasing of lands, and discussions regarding employment or job performance of a person in a specific position. Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session.

Counsel announced to those very few remaining outside the conference room that the Commission had entered Executive Session to discuss transaction of business and discussion regarding the prospective purchase, sale or leasing of lands, and discussions regarding employment or job performance of a person in a specific position.

Dr. Polles updated the Commission on several land matters ranging from access issues to tracts of land adjacent to existing WMAs that may be on the market. No action was required of the Commission.

Dr. Polles then informed the Commission that certain members of the Executive Staff had received and accepted job offers from outside of the agency. Discussion followed regarding whether or not the positions would be filled, and by whom.

No action was required of the Commission.

ACTION: There being no further items for discussion in Executive Session, Commissioner Wagner made a motion to open the meeting. Commissioner Cossar 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. No votes were taken.

ADJOURNMENT

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



Robert Taylor, CHAIRMAN

9/17/2020

Date



Billy Mounger, VICE CHAIRMAN

Date