

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

None - Educational Session

2 PM - Business Session

Buccaneer State Park, Waveland, MS

MINUTES

BUSINESS SESSION – 2 PM

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

NOT PRESENT: Commissioners Billy Mounger and Scott Coopwood.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Jennifer Head, Larry Pugh, Col. Steve Adcock, Russ Walsh, Jason Thompson, André Hollis, Stu Rayburn, Chip Ward, and Drew Malone (Special Assistant Attorney General).

Chairman Taylor invited guests watching online to come to Buccaneer State Park and enjoy the beautiful beach, camping, and activities in Waveland, MS. MDWFP Foundation CEO, Don Brazil, was present and welcomed.

OPENING PRAYER

Russ Walsh, Wildlife Chief of Staff, opened the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the minutes of the September 17, 2020 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

ACTION: Commissioner Cossar moved to approve the agenda for October 13, 2020, Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nathan Tarver, Jackson – As requested by Mr. Tarver, his written comment concerning LeFleur's Bluff State Park was read to the Commission by Jennifer Head, Budget Director. Mr. Tarver's comment suggested adding a grass-trail loop through the current LeFleur's Bluff Golf Course. This trail would complement current trails at the Natural Science Museum, encourage outdoor exercise for the public, and serve as a regionally recognized cross-country course for high school and college events. His research indicated that revenue generated by hosting cross-country meets and community recreational races would generate the needed revenue to sustain the trail.

Ms. Head advised the Commission that repurposing the golf course has been discussed over the past two years. Plans are currently underway to establish biking, walking, and exercise trails.

Executive Director Dr. Sam Polles asked Ms. Head to inform the Commission of recent meetings concerning LeFleur's Bluff State Park. Head explained that the Children's Museum, Natural Science Museum, and partners at Blue Cross Blue Shield have had numerous meetings to finalize plans for a state-of-art playground at LeFleur's Bluff State Park. The old playground has already been demolished and the new playground construction will begin as soon as all plans have been finalized.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration Division, reported that the total revenue for the month of September was up 21%.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident License Sales – up 12.72%
 - All Game/Freshwater Fishing – up 10%
 - Sportsmen – up 9%
 - Small game – up 11%
 - WMA permits – up 27%
- Non-resident License Sales – up 34%
 - NR Small Game Hunting – up 18%
 - NR All Game Hunting – up 43%
 - NR Freshwater Fishing – up 26%
 - NR WMA User Permit – up 42%
- Permit category – up 15%
- Lifetime License category – up 29%

A total of 5,780 customers signed up for Auto Renewal during the month of September and 12,546 signed up during the past three months.

all the way to the entrance with a canteen. Currently, Buccaneer has a wave pool and a water slide with a 4 ft. 10 in. height restriction. Phase II called Buccaneer Bay will have a pool with a pirate-themed play area in the middle of the pool. Families with small children will be drawn back to Buccaneer with a pool area just for them. This pool will be open in Spring 2022. Pictures of Phase II were presented to the Commission.

WILDLIFE

FINAL – 40 Miss. Admin. Code – Part 2, Chapter 9 – Regulations for the Opening and Closing of Hunting Seasons

- **Rule 9.1 – Opening and Closing Days for Hunting Seasons**

Last month the Commission approved the PROPOSED Rule 9.1 reflecting the statutory hunting season changes to extend open hunting seasons for deer, bobwhite quail, wild turkey, small game and fur-bearing animals (including any additional open season on raccoon) so that when these seasons end on a Friday, they may be extended until 30 minutes after sunset on the following Sunday.

With no comments received, Russ Walsh recommended final approval.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commission Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rule 9.1 as presented.

2020-2021 Duck Stamp Projects

MDWFP STAFF 2020-2021 DUCK STAMP FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

On behalf of Waterfowl Program Coordinator Houston Havens, Russ Walsh presented the 2020-2021 Duck Stamp Funding requests and 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. Conservation reports from Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, and Mississippi State University were distributed to the Commission

<u>Project</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Project Description</u>
DU & DU Canada	\$125,000	\$125,000	Continue funding of Eastern Saskatchewan Breeding Habitat Project.
Delta Waterfowl	\$125,000	\$125,000	Continue funding for N. Dakota Working Wetlands initiatives and funding for Adopt a Pothole Program in Manitoba.
MSU Research	\$ 31,765	\$ 31,765	Continue post-doctoral work on MDWFP aerial waterfowl survey data and continuation of study on wood duck nest box production and female wood duck recruitment.
<u>Project</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Project Description</u>

WMA Wetland Management & Enhancement Projects	\$116,975	\$116,975	Funds for WMAs (as needed) for waterfowl habitat management and infrastructure projects. WMA enhancement funds can be used as match on future wetland projects.
Private Land Wetland Habitat Assistance	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	Funding a wetland habitat assistance program by providing water control structures to private landowners; similar to past years under the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Programs.
Aerial Waterfowl Surveys	\$ 22,000	\$ 22,000	Continue monitoring of MS Delta waterfowl abundances and distributions: Delta Wildlife also potentially providing funding.
Waterfowl Program Travel	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	Funding for MDWFP staff to attend regional and national meetings related to waterfowl and wetlands (as needed).
Waterfowl Trapping and Banding Supplies	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	Items related to trapping and banding of waterfowl (as needed).
Mississippi Flyway Council Dues & Cooperative Projects	\$ 17,254	\$ 17,254	Annual dues to MS Flyway Council, annual contributions to MS Flyway banding, & other cooperative waterfowl projects.
MS Flyway Mtg	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	Funding to host the Summer 2021 MS Flyway Council Meeting. Cancelled last year due to COVID.
Delta Wind Birds	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	Match funding for nest boxes on Delta Wind Birds' recent NAWCA project wetland acquisition near Sky Lake WMA.
Youth Waterfowl	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	Supplement YPI funding for continuing the Youth Waterfowl Hunting and Education Camp in partnership with Ducks Unlimited.
TOTAL	\$503,994	\$503,994	

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, funds for the 2020-2021 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.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Update

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported that 636 citations were issued this past month with no license being the number one violation. Law Enforcement issued 102 citations for hunting over bait. Officers assisted with Youth dove hunting events and were constantly removing and relocating nuisance alligators. All three shooting facilities were open for business with 953 customers at Turcotte; 503 at McIvor; and 370 at McHenry.

License Reinstatement

One request was made for license reinstatement. Col. Adcock stated that the violator had taken his Hunter Education class and paid his fines. The violator was asked to come forward and state the circumstances of his arrest before the Commission.

- ***Johnny Halderman, Kosciusko, MS.*** Halderman stated that on January 31, 2018 he made a bad decision which involved getting in his truck with a loaded gun and spotlight with plans to shoot a deer. No shots were fired but he did have intent. This mistake cost him over \$2,400 in fines. He suffers every time his grandson asks him why he does not go hunting anymore. He promised to never do this again.

ACTION: Commissioner Cossar made a motion to approve Halderman'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 Wagner seconded the motion and the motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Date: Thursday, November 19, 2020
Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211
Time: 8:30 a.m. Educational Session
9:30 a.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 investigative proceedings by a public body regarding allegations of misconduct or violation of law.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner made a motion to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session for discussing investigative proceedings by a public body regarding allegations of misconduct or violation of law. 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 investigative proceedings by a public body regarding allegations of misconduct or violation of law.

The meeting was closed, and the room cleared.

Discussion followed.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss an ongoing investigative proceeding regarding allegations of misconduct and/or a violation of law. 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 an ongoing investigative proceeding regarding allegations of misconduct and/or a violation of law.

Colonel Steve Adcock updated the Commission on an investigation being conducted jointly with Special Agents of the US Fish & Wildlife Service. No action was required of the Commission.

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 Wagner moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Cossar, and the motion carried. Chairman Taylor gavelled the meeting into adjournment.



Robert Taylor, CHAIRMAN

11/19/2020

Date



Billy Mounger, VICE CHAIRMAN

11/19/20

Date