

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

8:30 a.m. Educational Session 9:30 a.m. Business Session

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211

8:30 AM

EDUCATIONAL SESSION

Russ Walsh, Wildlife Chief of Staff, presented staff recommended changes to the 2021-22 Wildlife Management Area regulations. These recommendations are shown in the Business Session of the Commission Meeting minutes. No action was taken by the Commission during the Educational Session.

9:00 AM

BUSINESS SESSION MINUTES

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Lynn Posey, Chief of Staff; Larry Pugh, Jennifer Head, Brian Ferguson, Col. Steve Adcock, Russ Walsh, Ricky Flynt, Houston Havens, Amy Blaylock, Jerry Brown, and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT COOPWOOD – Second Term of Office

Prior to the Commission Meeting, Commissioner Scott Coopwood was sworn into office by Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, after being reappointed to the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks by Governor Tate Reeves. Commissioner Coopwood will continue to represent the Mississippi Delta on the Commission during his second term of office.

Due to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Legislative Session adjourned before many Executive Branch appointments could be confirmed by the Senate. In March of this year, the Senate confirmed Scott Coopwood to serve out a second term as the Commissioner on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2025.

Chairman Taylor congratulated Commissioner Scott Coopwood. A round of applause followed.

OPENING PRAYER

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

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the minutes of the March 18, 2021 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

The Executive Director informed the Commission of the following items which needed to be added to the April 14, 2021 agenda:

- Wildlife Bureau – Add Proposed Rule 8.2 – Regulations for Enclosures
- Other Business – New Legislation

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner moved to approve the agenda for April 14, 2021 as amended, Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion and the motion carried.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration Division, presented the License Sales Report for the month of March 2021. The total revenue for the end of March is up 12% from last year.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – up 8%
 - Res Sportsman – up 8%
 - Res All Game – up 2%
 - Res Waterfowl Stamp – up 23%
 - Res WMA user permits – up 18%
- Non-resident license sales – up 13%
 - NR Freshwater Fishing – up 24%
 - NR 3-day Freshwater Fishing – up 31%
 - NR All Game Hunting – up 13%
 - NR Spring Turkey Permits – up 22%
 - NR Waterfowl Stamp – up 21%
- Permit category – up 16%
- Lifetime License category – up 34%

Auto renewal customers in March 2021 – 20,000 more this year
License Packages Sold – 21,634 (7/1/2020 to 3/31/21)
Sportsman Package – Most Popular

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Commission received numerous complaints from private landowners concerning deer hunting with dogs during the past two weeks. No other comments were received for the Commission.

FISHERIES

Jerry Brown, Assistant Director for Fisheries, presented the following PROPOSED rule changes. The Commission decided to delay voting on each one separately and to make one motion at the end of Brown's presentation.

PROPOSED 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 3, Chapter 1 – General Fisheries Rules

- **Rule 1.4 – Statewide Creel Limits**
 1. Lake Mary Crawford will open in May 2021, after being closed for renovations.
 - Largemouth bass: 16-22" slot limit, one over 22"; 10 fish daily creel limit
 - Bluegill & Redear Sunfish: 25 fish daily creel limit
 - Crappie: 15 fish daily creel limit.
 2. Choctaw Lake (US Forest Service lake that recently opened.)
 - Adopted regulations of US Forest Service below.
 - Largemouth bass: 16-20" slot limit, one over 20"; 10 fish daily creel limit
 - Bluegill & Redear: 25 fish daily creel limit
 - Crappie: 12: Minimum Length Limit; 10 fish daily creel limit
 - Catfish: 5 fish daily creel limit
 - Walleye: No harvest allowed.

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

- **Rule 2.1 – Regulations regarding State Fishing Lakes**
 1. Increased camping rates:
 - Daily RV camping from \$22 to \$25 at Calling Panther Lake, Neshoba County Lake, and Kemper County
 - 30-day RV camping from \$460 to \$500
 - Primitive camping from \$15 to \$17
 2. Removed Lake Mary Crawford is closed
 3. Added Holmes County SP is closed
 4. Added Elvis Presley Lake will be closed for renovation and lifted creel limits

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

1. Florewood River Plantation Lake:

- Daily Creel limits: Largemouth bass-2 fish daily creel limit; Bream-10 fish daily creel limit; Catfish-5 fish daily creel limit
- Will open June 26, 2021 and will be open to fishing on Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- The lake will be closed to fishing at the discretion of the Leflore Co. Board of Supervisors for special events.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission unanimously approved PROPOSED Fisheries Rules 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2, as recommended by staff.

WILDLIFE

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

Ricky Flynt, Wildlife Alligator/Furbearer Coordinator, came forward and recommended final approval for Rule 5.3. There have been no comments or changes since the last meeting.

Rule 5.2 – Private Waters Alligator was not presented to the Commission because it was not opened up for any changes.

- **Rule 5.3 – Public Waters Alligator**

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rule 5.3.

2021-2022 Migratory Game Bird Framework Selections

Houston Havens, Waterfowl Program Coordinator, presented to the Commission the 2021-22 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Season Recommendations which are listed in the table below. Havens informed the Commission of public comments received to provide some dove hunting opportunity in the North Zone during Thanksgiving holidays. He also received public comments to open Duck Season on Thanksgiving Day and to allow maximum opportunity with scaup bag limits.

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY	POSSESSION
Teal (Early Season)	Sept. 11 - 26	6	18
Canada Geese (Early Season)	Sept. 1 - 30	5	15

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY	POSSESSION
Woodcock	Dec. 18, 2021 - Jan. 31, 2022	3	9
Snipe	Nov. 14, 2021 - Feb. 28, 2022	8	24
Common & Purple Gallinules	Sept. 1 – Oct 3 AND Nov. 26, 2021 – Jan 1, 2022	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Possession Limit
Rails: Clapper and King	Sept. 1 – Oct 3 AND Nov. 26, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Possession Limit
Rails: Sora and Virginia	Sept. 1 – Oct 3 AND Nov. 26, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022	25 Singly or in aggregate	75 Possession Limit
Mourning and White-winged Doves (North Zone) Opening Day – Sept 4 @ Noon	Sept. 4 - Oct 17 AND Oct. 30 – Nov. 28 AND Dec. 25, 2021 - Jan. 9, 2022	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Singly or in aggregate
Mourning and White-winged Doves (South Zone) Opening Day – Sept 4 @ Noon	Sept. 4 - 19 AND Oct. 9 - Nov. 7 AND Dec. 19, 2021 - Jan. 31, 2022	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Singly or in aggregate
Ducks, Mergansers, and Coots	Nov. 26 – 28 AND Dec. 3 - 5 AND Dec. 9, 2021 - Jan. 31, 2022	Details Below*	Details Below*
Geese: Canada, White-fronted, Snow, Blue, Ross's, and Brant	Nov. 12 - 28 AND Dec. 3 - 5 AND Dec. 9, 2021 - Jan. 31, 2022	Canada Geese: 5 Snow, Blue, and Ross's: 20 White-fronted: 3 Brant: 1	Canada Geese: 15 Snow, Blue, and Ross's: No Limit White-fronted: 9 Brant: 3
Youth, Veteran, & Active Military Waterfowl Days	Feb. 5 - 6, 2022	Same as Regular Season	Same as Regular Season

***DUCKS, MERGANSERS, and COOTS daily bag limit and possession:** The duck daily bag limit will include a total of 6 ducks, including no more than 4 mallards (no more than 2 of which may be females), 3 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 1 pintail, 2 canvasbacks, 1 mottled duck, and 2 black ducks. The daily bag limit for scaup is 1 scaup per day Nov. 26 – 28, Dec. 3 – 5, and Dec. 9 – 17; and is 2 scaup per day Dec. 18 – Jan. 31. The merganser daily bag

limit will be a total of 5 mergansers, only 2 of which may be hooded mergansers. The coot daily bag limit is 15. The possession limit for ducks, mergansers, and coots is three times the daily bag limit.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission unanimously approved the 2021-22 Migratory Framework Selections as recommended by the staff.

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

Rules 1.1 – 1.46 – WMA Regulations

Walsh presented the following rule changes for each WMA as outlined in a handout distributed to the Commission. A summary of these changes is outlined below:

Basic Regulation Changes:

- Rule 1.1 and Special Instructions – ORVs, ATVs, and Electric Bikes – regulations will be based on WMA ownership and access.

Boating and High Water

Canal Section WMA – Rule 1.7

- Unattended watercraft – required to have name/registered and to be removed.

Old River WMA – Rules 1.17

- Unattended watercraft – required to have name/registered and to be removed.

Camping

Old River WMA – Rules 1.17

- Camping equipment removed for a min of 72 hours – eliminate homesteading.

Deer Regulations

Antlerless Deer Opportunity – Rules 1.2, 1.13, 1.14, 1.17

Increase in days:

- Allow antlerless opportunity during Dec. 16-23 (Bienville, Calhoun, Caney Creek, Chickasaw, John Starr, and Tallahala)
- Allow antlerless opportunity Jan. 4 – 31 on Marion County WMA

Decrease in days:

- Legal bucks only during primitive weapon (Red Creek WMA)
- Legal bucks only Dec. 16 – 23 (Old River WMA)

Mahannah and Twin Oaks WMAs – Rule 1.12 and 1.24

- Remove South Delta Zone wording.

Malmaison WMA – Rule 1.13

- Standardize season dates with statewide seasons.

Tuscumbia WMA – Rule 1.32

- October primitive weapon deer draw hunt.
- Require CWD sampling.

Dove Season RegulationsDivide Section WMA – Rule 1.9

- Dove hunting is allowed from 2 p.m. to sunset.

Malmaison WMA – Rule 1.13

- Delete Dove Season wording from table.

Hell Creek WMA – Rule 1.29

- Dove hunting not allowed during deer gun hunts.

Language ClarificationJohn Starr WMA – Rule 1.2

- John Starr Permit (MSU request).

Stoneville, Leroy Percy, and Lake George WMAs – Rule 1.1, 1.11, and 1.22

- Turkey season closed – clarify that the season is closed.

Ward Bayou WMA – Rule 1.25

- Still hunting area.
- No buckshot allowed.
- Kirkwood road closure.

Phil Bryant WMA – Rule 1.46

- Clarification that scouting is allowed daily from Jan. 15 – Sept. 30 on Backwoods Unit.

Pascagoula WMA (Land Between the Creeks)Land Between the Creeks Unit – Rule 1.18

- New regulations.

WaterfowlPhil Bryant WMA – Rule 1.46

- Youth/Veteran Season open on Backwoods Unit.

WMA TransitionCalhoun County, Graham Lake, and Sardis Waterfowl WMAs – Rule 1.11, 1.20, and 1.33

- Recommendation to not renew Calhoun County lease.
- Relinquish management duties to COE for Sardis Waterfowl and Graham Lake.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission unanimously approved PROPOSED WMA Regulations (Rules 1.1 - 1.46), as recommended by staff.

PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 2 - Deer

Rule 2.2 – Deer Seasons and Bag Limits

Proposed Rule Changes (presented by Russ Walsh):

- Remove South Delta Deer Zone – reduced bag limits are no longer recommended. Increase to statewide bag limits.
- Rename “Deer Zones” to “Deer Management Units” – renaming “zones” to “Deer management units” will minimize confusion with the CWD zones.
- Create the “North Central Deer Management Unit” (Desoto, Tate, Marshall, Benton, Tippah, & Alcorn Counties) – Increase buck bag limit from 3 to 4. Remove antler criteria. Increase antlerless bag limit from 5 to 10.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner moved to approve staff recommendations on PROPOSED Rule 2.2, seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, and the motion carried.

CWD Management Plan

Walsh informed the Commission that the 2017 CWD Response Plan, created prior to the first CWD positive deer in Mississippi, has now moved to the CWD Management Plan. A handout was given to the Commission on the “Mississippi Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan Summary – April 2021”. Walsh also handed out to the Commission Mississippi maps displaying the current Deer Management Zones, Proposed Deer Management Units, CWD Management Zones, and 2021 CWD 10-mile Positive Buffers/Proposed CWD Zones.

The different zones outlined in the summary included:

1. Management Zone (CWD-MZ)
 - a. Following a confirmed CWD positive within a new county, all counties within 10 miles of the positive, including the county containing the positive, will be placed in a CWD Management Zone for a minimum of three (3) years.
 - b. Delineated using county boundaries.
 - c. Implement specific regulations:
 - i. Ban supplemental feeding of wildlife.
 - ii. Only bone-in leg quarters, deboned meat, antlers, cleaned skull or skull plates, finished taxidermy, cleaned teeth, hides and tanned products may leave the CWD MZs.
2. Containment Zone (CWD-CZ)
 - a. Encompasses a 3-mile radius around the location of a confirmed CWD detection.
 - b. Facilitate focused management strategies to prevent CWD from becoming established or spreading farther on the landscape.

- c. Includes issuance of DMAP CWD tags to participating properties within three (3) miles of positives.
- 3. Established Zone (EZ)
 - a. Smaller areas within CWD-MZs that are characterized by CWD detections occurring contiguously and consistently across a large area from year to year.
- 4. Prevalence Monitoring Areas (PMA)
 - a. Permanently identified units within EZs for long-term prevalence monitoring.

A CWD Management Zone Delineation Tool will be used to determine qualitative risk for each county using risk modifiers based on the ecology of CWD and historic risk factors. The tool produces a score that determines the county to be included (≥ 55 points) or excluded (< 55 points) from a CWD MZ. Counties within a CWD MZ are reassessed annually after three (3) years inclusion in the zone.

ACTION: Commissioner Mounger moved to approve the new CWD Management Plan as recommended by staff, seconded by Commissioner Wagner and the motion carried. Commission Cossar was recorded as voting "No".

PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 8 – Regulations regarding Animals in Captivity and Enclosures

Rule 8.2 – Regulations for Enclosures

Proposed Rule Changes (presented by Russ Walsh) :

- a. Language stricken in 5 c (i):
~~Additionally, up to ten (10) adult deer harvested in an enclosure annually must be tested for CWD. If no samples are submitted from harvested deer, MDWFP will coordinate the sampling of required deer with the enclosure owner.~~
- b. Language added to 5 c (ii):
"Each high-fenced enclosure shall submit viable samples for CWD testing, annually, in a number equal to one (1) deer per each two hundred (200) acres of fenced land, whether the deer's mortality was due to natural causes, as set forth above, or harvested by means of hunting. Enclosures with acreages not evenly divisible by 200 will round up to nearest 200 acres (e.g., 315 acres would be 400). For the purpose of this rule to be a "viable sample," the sample must include two (2) retropharyngeal lymph nodes from each deer.

ACTION: Commissioner Cossar moved to approve staff recommendations on PROPOSED Rule 8.2, seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, and the motion carried.

2021 Legislative Session

MDWFP staff and Commission discussed how recently amended statute on high-fenced enclosures might impact CWD zone delineation, as per the CWD Management Plan, if an enclosure detects a CWD-positive animal. The statute currently states that should an enclosure

test positive for CWD, no lands within 5 miles of the enclosure can be included in a CWD Management Zone until CWD is detected in free range. Mississippi does not have an enclosure with CWD positive deer at this time, so there is no immediate need for change or conflict. However, the Commission contends the appropriate application of the statute should be clarified.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Update

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported that 468 citations were issued for the month of March with "No License" being the number one violation, "Unlawful Possession" was second, "Trespassing" & "Supplement Feeding/Hunting turkey with the aid of bait" tied for third, and "No Boat Registration" was fourth.

Turkey Season opened and officers dutifully checked 982 resident hunters and 270 non-resident hunters during March 20-21, 2021. A total of 101 hunting violations were reported.

Officers continued their duties by wrestling nuisance alligators, helping stranded boaters, and assisting with career day at Copiah-Lincoln. Customer counts at our shooting ranges are: 376 at Turcotte; 263 at McIvor; and 307 at McHenry.

MDWFP Fallen Officer Memorial

Lt. Col. Jerry Carter, Assistant Chief of Law Enforcement, gave an update on the MDWFP Fallen Officer Memorial to be held Wednesday, May 12, 2021 @ 10 a.m. at the Jackson Headquarters, located at 1505 Eastover Drive. There will be a live audio/video stream of the Memorial Service and a link will be provided on the MDWFP website 10 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. A small audience will be present and everyone will be kept at a safe distance in line with COVID regulations.

License Reinstatement

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.

- *Ricky Roebuck, Pope, MS.*
Mr. Roebuck approached the podium but did not have any comments and went back to his seat.

Col. Adcock informed the Commission that this was Mr. Roebuck's second offense and that a lady witnessed him shooting a deer from the road. Mr. Roebuck left the scene and returned with his 11 year-old grandson to assist him in removing the deer. Col. Adcock recommended revocation of his license for three years.

MOTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission unanimously voted to not reinstate Roebuck's license.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021
Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211
Time: 1 p.m. Educational Session
2 p.m. Business Session

OTHER BUSINESS

Executive Order Ratification – Temporary Suspension of all Recreational Boating Activity; Wolf Lake, Yazoo County, Mississippi

Pursuant to the authority set forth in MISSISSIPPI CODE ANNOTATED §59-21-111 *et. seq.*, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, with the approval of the Commission, approved by Executive Order on March 24, 2021, the suspension of all recreational boating activity on the Wolf Lake, Yazoo County, Mississippi, due to the emergency flooding situation that existed along the Mississippi River. In order to protect and ensure the health, safety and welfare of the general public, and protection of private property, any boating shall be conducted according to a "Dead Slow; Leave No Wake," standard, until further notice.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission unanimously ratified Executive Order for temporary suspension of all recreational boating activity at Wolf Lake, Yazoo City. A copy of the Executive Order has been appended to the minutes.

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 pending litigation and discussion regarding the prospective purchase of land.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner made a motion to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session for discussion of pending litigation and discussion regarding the prospective purchase of land. Commissioner Coopwood seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting.

Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General, announced to those present that the meeting was now closed to determine the need for Executive Session to discuss pending litigation and the prospective purchase of land.

The meeting was closed, and the room cleared. Discussion was held to determine the need for executive session to discuss pending litigation and the prospective purchase of land.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss to pending litigation and the prospective purchase of land. Commissioner Coopwood seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session.

Mr. Malone announced to those present outside the meeting room that the Commission had entered Executive Session to discuss pending litigation and the prospective purchase of land.

During Executive Session Drew Malone discussed pending litigation and possible settlement negotiations. Discussion followed and the Commission indicated that they supported counsel's strategy.

Dr. Polles updated the Commission on certain tracts of land which have been identified as being for sale, the purchase of which would benefit existing WMAs in the areas where the properties are located. Discussion followed. No action was required of the Commission at this time.

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

Mr. Malone announced to those individuals located outside the Commission Room that the meeting had re-opened.

ADJOURNMENT

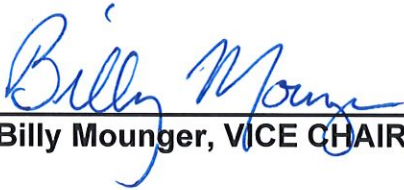
There being no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Wagner moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, and the motion carried. Chairman Taylor gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



Robert Taylor, CHAIRMAN



Date



Billy Mounger, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date



**MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS**

**Sam Polles, Ph.D.
Executive Director**

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

***In Re:* Temporary Suspension of all Recreational Boating Activity; Wolf Lake, Yazoo
County, Mississippi**

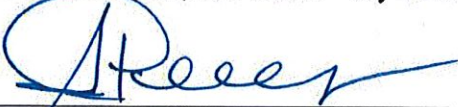
EXECUTIVE ORDER

PURSUANT to the authority set forth in MISSISSIPPI CODE ANNOTATED §59-21-111 *et. seq.*, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, with the approval of the Commission, hereby orders the suspension of all recreational boating activity on the lake or lakes listed below, due to the emergency flooding situation that currently exists along the Mississippi River. Information from the Corps of Engineers shows that an exigent condition of high water exists. This suspension of privileges applies **ONLY** to recreational boating and not to any boating activity that must be employed for the safe transportation of persons to and from a home or dwelling or other legitimate purpose. Any boating activity during the suspension period shall be conducted in a reasonable manner, minimizing any wake created (also known as "dead slow"), or otherwise conducted to minimize any negative effects on surrounding property. The lake or lakes set forth below shall remain closed to recreational boating only, until further notice:

LAKE: Wolf Lake, Yazoo County, Mississippi

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, That this order shall extend to boating activities for all tributaries and related bodies of water along the Mississippi River, currently experiencing rising backwaters, as a result of the rising Mississippi River. In order to protect and ensure the health, safety and welfare of the general public, and protection of private property, any boating shall be conducted according to a "Dead Slow; Leave No Wake," standard, until further notice. Failure to comply with this order may subject an individual to criminal liability.

SO ORDERED, this the 24th day of March, 2021.



Sam Polles, Ph.D.
Executive Director