

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

9 AM Educational Session 10 AM Business Session

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

9 AM

EDUCATIONAL SESSION

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Lynn Posey, Deputy Executive Director; Larry Pugh, Jennifer Head, Col. Jerry Carter, Amy Blaylock, Andre Hollis, Doug Mann, and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General. Chairman welcomed guests attending the meeting: Robert Taylor, and Mac Seage, Legislative Budget Office.

LeFleur's Bluff Education & Tourism Complex - Update

Susan Garrard, President/CEO, MS Children's Museum; Emily Hoff, Director of Development, MS Children's Museum; and Angel Rohnke, Assistant Director, MS Museum of Natural Science; each came forward with a PowerPoint presentation revealing present and future improvements being made at the LeFleur's Bluff Education and Tourism Complex. Highlights of their presentation are presented below:

- The LeFleur's Bluff Complex is the shared campus between the MDWFP's MS Museum of Natural Science and the MS Children's Museum. The multi-purpose complex will be used for recreational and educational activities through a playground, outdoor pavilion, and museum walking trail.
- The playground, which is currently under construction, will hopefully open in September, 2021. The 21st century playground will feature 80 play activities, 73 of these features will be inclusive to children with accessibility needs. The playground will feature a unique play structure for ages 6-23 months, the Wedra, which is the first play structure in the world with this design.
- The outdoor pavilion will provide multiple functions for both museums, such as educational and outdoor programming for field trips and a place to showcase presentations, such as the award-winning Mississippi Science Festival, and community events.
- The museum walking trail will provide engaging, family-oriented opportunities to travel between the MDWFP's MS Museum of Natural Science and the MS Children's Museum, so guests can safely and conveniently visit both museums and the playground. The 8-foot-wide walking trail will include a fun, interactive story narrated by

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Lynn Posey, Deputy Executive Director; Larry Pugh, Jennifer Head, Col. Jerry Carter, Russ Walsh, Andre Hollis, Doug Mann, and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General. Chairman Mounger welcomed guests listening to the meeting by internet.

OPENING PRAYER

Robert Taylor, former Chairman of the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, opened the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission meeting minutes of July 15, 2021, were unanimously approved.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission meeting minutes of August 2, 2021, were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

Executive Director Dr. Sam Polles stated that the following change needed to be made to the August 18 agenda:

- Under "OTHER BUSINESS" – Add Waterfowl Survey

ACTION: Commissioner Cossar moved to approve the agenda as amended for August 18, 2021, Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion and the motion carried.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson presented the License Sales Report for the month of July 2021. The total revenue for the end of July is down 6% from last year.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – down 9.77%
 - Res Sportsman – down 18%
 - Res All Game Hunt/Freshwater Fishing – up 8%
 - Apprentice Game Hunt/Freshwater Fishing – up 22%
- Non-resident license sales – up .53%
 - NR Fall Turkey Permit – up 50%
 - 3-day Freshwater Fishing – up 14 %
- Permit category – up 11.56%
- Lifetime License category – down 4.76 %

FINAL – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 1, Chapter 8 – License

- **Rule 8.4 – Non-resident Hunting and Fishing License & Fee Program**

Thompson stated that a majority of the comments received were in favor of the license fee increases to bring us in line with surrounding states.

ACTION: Commissioner Coopwood moved to approve FINAL passage of Rule 8.4 as recommended by staff. Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Russ Walsh, Wildlife Chief of Staff, presented a summary of public comments received during the past 30 days:

Non-Resident Turkey Season Draw Proposal Comments:

- | | |
|----|--------------------------|
| 65 | In support of the Draw |
| 17 | Did Not Support the Draw |

Other Comments

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 8 | To Delay Start of Turkey Season |
| 4 | Reduction in Non-resident Bag Limit |
| 1 | Increased Enforcement |
| 3 | Non-Resident Application Fee |
| 2 | Fall Season Eliminated |

WILDLIFE

FINAL – 40 Miss. Admni. Code Part 2, Chapter 3 – Turkey

- **Rule 3.1 – Wild Turkey Seasons and Bag Limits**

Walsh informed the Commission that an amendment had been made to Rule 3.1 for clarification. See below:

- a. All non-residents 16 years of age and older must be drawn to hunt open public lands from March 15-March 28.
- b. Open public lands include National Forests, National Wildlife Refuges, Corps of Engineers lands, etc., that have statewide seasons without special regulations. Open public lands do not include MDWFP-operated Wildlife Management Areas (WMA).

ACTION: Commissioner Cossar moved to approve FINAL passage of Rule 3.1 as amended. Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion and the motion carried.

FINAL – 40 Miss. Admni. Code Part 2, Chapter 1 – Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)

- Rule 1.15 – Okatibbee WMA Regulations
- Rule 1.17 – Old River Regulations
- Rule 1.18 – Pascagoula River WMA Regulations
- Rule 1.19 – Pearl River WMA Regulations
- Rule 1.2 – Non-State Owned, Non-COE WMA Regulations
- Rule 1.27 – Nanih Waiya WMA Regulations

Walsh stated that the majority of comments received the past 30 days supported the changes made to the WMA rules.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner moved to approve FINAL passage of Rules 1.15, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19, 1.2, and 1.27 as recommended by staff, seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, and the motion carried.

Waterfowl Update - Survey

The Commission decided to move the "Waterfowl Update" from OTHER BUSINESS to WILDLIFE.

Walsh presented the results of a waterfowl survey which was conducted by means of two emails sent to 49,650 individuals who had purchased duck stamps. Responses were received from 4,453 (9% response rate); 82% were residents and 16% Non-Residents. A summary of the results is listed below:

- Hunters agree that weather is the most important factor influencing their duck season
- Hunters place high importance on having a place to hunt when they can go
- Majority of hunters hunt private land, but a high proportion of public hunters use state WMAs
- Conflicts on Malmaison WMA generally not related to safety
- Majority of Malmaison hunters want to keep status quo or have no preference .
 - No apparent mandate for draw hunts

Walsh had no recommendation to make on changes in hunting waterfowl in the scatters based on the results of the survey.

Discussion followed.

No action was taken by the Commission.

PARKS

Parks Update

Andre Hollis, Director of Park Operations, updated the Commission on progress made on several state park projects at Wall Doxey, Percy Quin, Hugh White, and Roosevelt.

Hollis also presented a report comparing Parks revenue in July, 2021 with July, 2020. The total revenue for the month of July, 2021 is up \$388,087 from July last year. Reservations for RV camping and cabin rental increased from 16,488 in 2020 to 19,647 in 2021, increasing revenue by \$173,025. State Park license plate sales for FY22 totaled 327, generating \$9,810. The Park app was used by 3,700 smartphone users from Sept, 2020 to July, 2021.

Discussion followed.

No action was taken by the Commission.

MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

Museum of Natural Science (MMNS) Update

Angel Rohnke, Assistant Director of MMNS, presented an Admissions & Revenue Report for the Museum. Highlights of her presentation included:

- All MMNS sales dropped off sharply in 2020 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic but are now on tract to surpass (above average) 2019 totals by the end of the year (if current trends persist)

- There is a sharp decrease in school group reservations due to the local schools' COVID precautions. MMNS has adapted programming in many ways to continue to be an extension of the classroom.
- Gift shop revenue so far has exceeded pre-pandemic figures.
- Plans to increase admissions and revenue include:
 - Visitor surveys and interpretation of results
 - Implement new museum events & programming
 - Implement new traveling exhibits & experiences for visitors
 - Continued evaluation of gift shop inventory & restocking only popular items
 - Stocking the gift shop with high-quality new inventory to replace old non-popular items

COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

Communication & Outreach Update

Jennifer Head, Director of Communication and Outreach, presented a handout for the Commission. Highlights of her presentation included:

MS SCHOLASTIC SHOOTING SPORTS (MSSP):

- MSSP School/Coaching Database went live on July 13, 2021
- Assisted with teacher workshops for Firearm Safety and presented information on MSSP
- Held MSSP Coaching Certification classes at Turcotte and McIvor
- Met with Columbus Christian Academy

OUTREACH

- Bi-weekly meeting with the Children's Museum & MMNS on activities for the walking trail that will connect the two museums
- Neshoba County Fair and Ag & Outdoor Expo preparations
- Met with Biologist Pierce Young regarding promoting Private Lands Programs through videos
- Prepared promotion for National Shooting Sports Month (August) on social media
- Kick-off meeting for Women's Outreach with MIS, Graphics, Marketing Team
 - Develop logo & webpage
- Social Media statistics were provided for Facebook, Instagram, & Twitter

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Update

Col. Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported 782 citations issued for the month of July with "No License" being number one. Numerous water details were worked during the

month of July. Officers assisted U.S. Marshalls in apprehending a murder suspect in North Mississippi. Officers participated in a refresher class on field sobriety and busy with preparations for dove season. Cadet applications have been received and the rigorous process of selecting candidates has begun. Shooting range customer counts are: McIvor – 479; Turcotte – 721; and McHenry – 348.

License Reinstatement Request

Col. Carter presented the following license reinstatement request. The violator was asked to come forward and state the circumstances of his arrest before the Commission.

- **Greer Nabors, Houston, MS**

Nabors stated that in 2019 he and a friend decided to check trail cameras late that evening at a hunting club. He spotted a doe, shot it, and tracked it but could not find the deer. His father turned him in to the authorities. Nabors was grateful his father turned him in. The Commission commended the father for his actions and Nabors for admitting to his faults.

Col. Carter recommended the Commission restore his license at this time; however, if he receives another citation, he will serve the full three years for a second offense.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, Nabors' license was reinstated by unanimous consent with the stipulation that he will serve the entire three years for a second offense.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Date: Wednesday, September 15, 2021
Location: North MS Hatchery, 457 CR 36, Enid, MS
Time: TBA

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no need for Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

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



Billy Mounger, CHAIRMAN



Date



Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date