

# MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Tuesday, January 4, 2022

2 p.m.

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

## MINUTES OF SPECIAL TELECONFERENCE MEETING

**PRESENT VIA TELEPHONE:** Chairman Billy Mounger, Commissioners Scott Coopwood, Leonard Bentz, and Bill F. Cossar; as well as, Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General.

**COMMISSION & STAFF attending:** Commissioner Gary Rhoads; Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Lynn Posey; Larry Pugh; Jennifer Head; Brian Ferguson; Russ Walsh; Adam Butler; Col. Jerry Carter; André Hollis; Angel Rohnke; and Doug Mann.

**Noted for the Record:** Attached to these minutes are copies of the Special Teleconference Meeting Notices, which were posted three hours prior to the meeting on the doors of the MDWFP office building located at 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS, and on the MDWFP website and the Mississippi Open Meetings website, as per the provisions of the Mississippi Open Meetings Act.

Having determined that a quorum was present, the Chairman opened the meeting.

### WILDLIFE

#### Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update

Russ Walsh, Wildlife Chief of Staff, informed the Commission that a white-tailed buck collected in Warren County tested positive for CWD. The sample was "suspect positive" through initial testing and will be sent to the national Veterinary Services Laboratory. This is the first CWD-positive test result from Warren County.

A total of 28 new CWD-positive results came from 2,798 samples collected to date for the current sampling year. A total of 111 CWD-positive deer have been verified in Mississippi since testing first began in 2017.

This was for information only and no action was required by the Commission.

#### Delta Waterfowl Request – Muscadine Farms WMA

Walsh presented a request made by Delta Waterfowl to access Muscadine Farms WMA on January 16-17, 2022 to host the University Hunting Program with Mississippi State University. Delta Waterfowl designed the University Hunting Program in 2017 to help combat the fact that up to 70% of current

university wildlife management students have never hunted before with many never having been given the opportunity. This is a dramatic change from 25 years ago, when most collegiate students were experienced in fishing and hunting. Delta sees this as a massive problem for the future of hunting and management of wetlands and waterfowl. Students need to understand the critical role that hunting plays in conserving ducks and geese. Through this course students will not only gain exposure to the critical role hunters play in conservation, but they will get to see first-hand how conservation dollars are used to create and maintain areas such as Muscadine Farms.

**ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads, the Commission unanimously approved Delta Waterfowl's request to use Muscadine Farms WMA for a two-day hunting program, January 16-17, 2022.**

### Wild Turkey Summit

Adam Butler, Moderator, presented a tentative agenda for Mississippi's First Wild Turkey Summit to be held Thursday, February 24, 2022 at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Jackson, MS. There will be an open discussion of issues with input from all participants, including an appointed panel up front. Primary themes to guide discussion:

- How do we continue Mississippi's legacy as a leader in addressing national concerns over wild turkeys?
- How do we create more resources and advocacy to address the challenges facing wild turkeys in Mississippi and the southeast?
- What specific additional regulatory infrastructure is needed to protect wild turkeys in Mississippi?

Invitations will be sent out in the next week or two.

This was for information only and no action was required by the Commission.

### 2022 Non-Resident Hunting Turkey on Open Public Land Rule Changes

Adam Butler, Turkey Program Coordinator, refreshed the Commission on turkey hunting rule changes made at the July 2021 Commission meeting. These changes only applied to nonresidents hunting on open public land. Nonresident turkey hunter licenses have doubled in Mississippi since 2019, due to opening date changes in neighboring states. Going into 2022 only two states, Mississippi and lower Florida, still engage in an early turkey season (March 15-28).

To relieve the stress on the turkey population, Mississippi law now requires nonresidents to have a "Public Land License Endorsement" prior to accessing open public lands during the first two weeks of Mississippi's regular spring season (March 15-28). This endorsement is only available to winners of a new turkey draw system. The combined total number of nonresidents on public lands (new endorsement

winners plus traditional draw winners) will not exceed 1,100 individuals. Prospective hunters can apply for the drawing anytime between January 15 – February 15.

Nonresident hunters are exempt from this endorsement if they hunt only on private land or if they are drawn to hunt at a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) through the traditional WMA draw system. The winning permit notification for the WMA drawing will serve in lieu of the endorsement.

The cost of the Nonresident Spring Turkey Permit was raised from \$20 to \$50 for all nonresidents, regardless of when and where they hunt.

This was for information only and no action was required by the Commission.

### **PERSONNEL**

Brian Ferguson, Director of Administrative Services, presented the following personnel changes for 2022. This was for information only. No action was taken by the Commission.

#### **Hazardous Duty Pay & Special Duty Pay for Law Enforcement Officers**

Hazardous Duty Pay was approved by State Personnel Board for 156 Law Enforcement Officers in the amount of \$1,500. Special Duty Pay for Special Response Team (SRT) and Honor Guard was approved by the State Personnel Board for 63 officers in the amount of \$300 per month.

#### **MDWFP Employee Reclassification (3%)**

All MDWFP employees received a three percent (3%) increase in pay beginning January 1, 2022, with funds provided to the agency in the FY22 appropriation.

#### **Project SEC2 Update – State Personnel Board System**

Project SEC<sup>2</sup> is a state employee classification and compensation initiative led by the Mississippi State Personnel Board. The goal of Project SEC<sup>2</sup> is to create a classification and compensation system that is fair and equitable and allows for recruitment, retention, and motivation of a qualified workforce. This is the first update to the state employee classification and compensation system in 40 years. The new classification and compensation system went into effect January 1, 2022.

## **STATE PARKS**

Brian Ferguson presented the following updates on State Parks. These items were for information only and no action was taken by the Commission.

### **RFP on Management of State Parks**

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for management of several State Parks has been completed and approved by state oversight agencies. The RFP requests proposals to takeover operations and maintenance of Hugh White, George P. Cossar, John Kyle, and Wall Doxey State Parks, as well as the golf courses at John Kyle and Hugh White. The RFP will be advertised for bids on Wednesday, January 5 and proposals from prospective vendors will be opened on Tuesday, February 1, 2022.

### **Renovation & Repair of Cabins at Roosevelt State Park**

- **Engineer Plans on Cabins 8 & 12**  
Renovation construction documents have been received from Waycaster & Associates Architectural Firm. A request for bids will advertise on Tuesday, January 11 and expected bid opening will be held on Friday January 28, 2022. Renovation to be completed this Summer 2022.
- **In-house Repairs on Cabin 13A & 13B (Duplex)**  
Repairs will be completed by Summer 2022.

## **FEBRUARY COMMISSION MEETING**

A location for the February Commission Meeting has not been finalized and will be announced at a later date.

## **2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

### **MDWFP Talking Points on State Parks**

Lynn Posey, Deputy Executive Director, presented the following talking points for the 2022 Legislative body:

1. Parks are better situated under the purview of MDWFP.
2. MDWFP needs the continuation of \$5.75M in off-road fuel tax for the support of Law Enforcement efforts.

3. MDWFP needs the Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA) Tourism Division to utilize their designated funds to specifically market the Parks System.

Other information shared:

- MDWFP is currently creating a business plan for the State Parks System and each individual state park.
- MDWFP is in the process of bidding out a new Parks Reservation System and a new License Reservation System.
- The Request for Proposal (RFP) for operations and maintenance of Hugh White, George P. Cossar, John Kyle, Wall Doxey, and golf courses will be available for bids beginning January 5, 2022. We will receive proposals from prospective vendors on February 1, 2022.

**Parks Renovation 3-Phase Capital Improvement Plan (FY22 - FY24)** - is underway; the approximate total is \$27M.

- Currently funded – \$3.5M (FY22) appropriation + \$1.2M agency funds + \$4.7M Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) federal matching funds.
- Future state funding needs for Capital Improvement Plan (FY23 & FY24) - \$4.5M per year.
- MDWFP has committed \$400,000 for the Roosevelt State Park cabin renovation for two cabins via Waycaster Architectural Firm efforts, with a completion date expected in summer 2022.

### **BUDGET/APPROPRIATION REQUEST**

Jennifer Head, Budget Director, presented a handout of the MDWFP FY23 General Fund Budget Summary which was submitted to the Legislative Budget Office.

**General Funds:**

• Reinstate General Funds for salaries to fill vacancies:	
Salaries for State Parks (93 PINs)	\$ 2,413,019
Salaries for Museum of Natural Science (11 PINs)	584,957
• Natural Science Museum – LeFleur's Playground additional expenses	275,000
• Marketing Advertising, & Promotion	<u>200,000</u>
<b>TOTAL REQUEST for GENERAL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$ 3,472,976</b>

**Other State Support (Capital Expense Fund):**

• State Parks Capital Improvement Plan – Phase II (LWCF Grant Match) (JP Coleman, Lake Lowndes, LeFleur’s, Tishomingo, Wall Doxey)	\$ 4,500,000
• Remove State Parks Capital Improvement Plan – Phase I rec’d in FY22	( 3,500,000)
• Wildlife Bureau – Continued support for Chronic Wasting Disease	400,000
• Natural Science Museum – admissions/security area remodel	2,900,000
• Administration building entrance and parking lot resurfacing	<u>1,000,000</u>
<b>TOTAL REQUEST for OTHER STATE FUNDS</b>	<b>\$ 5,300,000</b>
 <b>TOTAL GENERAL FUNDS + STATE SUPPORT FUNDS</b>	 <b><u>\$ 8,772,976</u></b>

**ADJOURNMENT**

**ACTION:** There being no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Cossar made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Coopwood seconded the motion and the Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Chairman Mounger gaveled the meeting into adjournment.

  
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 Billy Mounger, CHAIRMAN

  
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 Date

  
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 Bill F. Cossar, VICE CHAIRMAN

  
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 Date

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## Special Meeting

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## MS Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

PURSUANT TO MISSISSIPPI CODE ANNOTATED '25-41-5 and '25-41-13, the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks hereby issues this notice to the public of a special (telephonic) meeting to be held on **Tuesday, January 4, 2022**, in Jackson, Mississippi, at **2:00 P.M.** At this special meeting, the Commission will receive information and reports from the Wildlife Bureau regarding: CWD update, a special request for Muscadine Farms WMA, information on an upcoming Wild Turkey summit, and an update on the nonresident Draw System for the upcoming wild turkey season. Administrative Services will update the Commission on: hazardous duty and special duty pay for Law Enforcement, reclassification of all employees, and an update on the SEC<sup>2</sup> State Personnel Board classification system. The Parks Bureau will update the Commission on current repair and renovation projects at Roosevelt State Parks and the recent Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the agency for third party management of several state parks. Staff reports will also include information regarding the upcoming 2022 Legislative Session, and the current budget process to include requests for appropriations and needs for future fiscal years. The site of the February Commission Meeting will also be discussed.

This meeting is for the stated purposes only, and no other items will be discussed nor are any other votes or actions anticipated or required. No other items will be considered by the Commission.

The meeting will be held in the Commission Meeting Room of the Department's offices at 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211. The meeting is open to the public and the Commissioners will be attending telephonically from remote locations.

This the 4<sup>th</sup> day of **January, 2022**.



Sam Polles, Executive Director  
Mississippi Department of Wildlife,  
Fisheries and Parks

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## Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Teleconference Meeting

Tuesday, January 4, 2022

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211

County: Hinds

For more information please contact Sharon Polzin at 6014322009 or by email at [sharon.polzin@wfp.ms.gov](mailto:sharon.polzin@wfp.ms.gov)

A Special Telephonic Meeting of the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks will be held on Tuesday, January 4, 2022 to review and approve items under six topics:

- (1) Wildlife - CWD Update; Delta Waterfowl request; Wildlife Turkey Summit; 2022 Non-resident Public Land Turkey Changes.
- (2) Personnel - Hazardous Pay Duty & Special Duty Pay for LE Officers; All Employees Reclassification (3%); RSEC2 Update - State Personnel Board System.
- (3) State Parks - RFP on Management of State Parks; Renovation & Repair of Cabins at Roosevelt State Park.
- (4) February Commission Meeting Location
- (5) 2022 Legislative Session - MDWFP Talking Points on Parks
- (6) MDWFP Budget/Appropriation Request

This meeting is for the stated purposes only, and no other items will be discussed nor is any other vote or action anticipated or required. No other items will be considered by the Commission. The meeting is open to the public and the Commissioners will be attending telephonically from remote locations. There will be a live audio stream of the meeting and a link will be provided on the MDWFP website around 1:45 p.m.

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# NOTICE DETAILS

## NOTICE DETAILS

State Agency: Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks

Public Body: Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks

Title: Special Telecommunication Commission Meeting

Subject: January 4 2022 Special Meeting of the Commission on WFP

Date and Time: 1/4/2022 2:00:00 PM

### Description:

A special telephonic meeting of the Commission will be held to discuss or approve items on agenda only. No other items will be discussed nor is any other vote or action anticipated or required.

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## MEETING LOCATION

1505 Eastover Drive  
Jackson MS 39211

[Map this!](#)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Sharon Polzin  
6014322009  
[sharon.polzin@wfp.ms.gov](mailto:sharon.polzin@wfp.ms.gov)

## DOWNLOAD ATTACHMENTS

## SUBSCRIPTION OPTIONS

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