

# **MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS**

**Thursday, April 21, 2022**

**No Educational Session      11 AM Business Session  
2148 Riverside Drive, Jackson, MS 39202**

**11:00 AM**

## **BUSINESS SESSION MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Commission Chairman William Mounger, Commissioners Bill F. Cossar, Scott Coopwood, Leonard Bentz, and Gary Rhoads.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Deputy Executive Director Lynn Posey, Larry Pugh, Brian Ferguson, Jennifer Head, Angel Rohnke, Col. Jerry Carter, Russ Walsh, Jerry Brown, Andre Hollis, Charles Knight, Jason Thompson, Doug Mann, and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General. The Chairman welcomed guests watching the live stream video and special guests attending; U.S. Forest Service attendees (Mike McDonaldson, Tony Bolton, and Shannon Kelardy); Texas Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, John Kinsey; Kristen Windham, Governor Tate Reeves' Office; and the Honorable Chuck Younger, Mississippi State Senate.

### **OPENING PRAYER**

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

### **MINUTES**

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission meeting minutes of March 16, 2022, were unanimously approved.

### **AGENDA**

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission unanimously approved the meeting agenda of April 21, 2022.

### **LICENSE SALES REPORT**

Jason Thompson, License/Boat Registration Division Director, presented the License Sales Report for the month of March 2022. The total revenue for the end of March is up around \$230,000 compared to March 2021.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – down 1.75%
- Non-resident license sales – up by 4%
- Other Licenses – down 1.7%
- Lifetime License category – down 6%

License packages are up 1,647 compared to 1,478 sold last March 2021.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

#### ***Davy Murrah – Pascagoula River WMA.***

Mr. Murrah wanted to thank the Commission for taking his comments seriously last September 2021. MDWFP biologists and Executive staff met with him on October 28<sup>th</sup> on the sandbar at Pascagoula River WMA for two hours reflecting on needed changes and maintenance. Murrah recommended reinstating two managers at Pascagoula River WMA, instead of one, due to its size and needs. He inquired why the second manager position was advertised last month; yet no applicants were hired.

Chairman Mounger stated that the Commission will discuss this vacancy during Executive Session when personnel matters are taken into consideration. Mounger thanked Mr. Murrah for coming.

### **WILDLIFE**

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

Ricky Flynt, Wildlife Alligator/Furbearer Coordinator, presented proposed changes and clarifications to Rule 5.2 – Private Lands Alligator and Rule 5.3 – Public Water Alligator; as well as a NEW Proposed Rule 5.4 for Pelahatchie Bay Alligator Season at the March Commission meeting.

Flynt informed the Commission that no negative comments had been received this past month and recommended Final Approval.

**ACTION: Commissioner Rhoads moved to approve FINAL Rules 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 as recommended by staff. Commissioner Bentz seconded the motion and the motion carried.**

#### **PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1 – Wildlife Management Areas**

##### **Rules 1.1 – 1.46 – WMA Regulations**

Russ Walsh, Chief of Staff, 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 REGULATIONS**

### Basic Regulations Rule 1.1:

- Wild Hogs – Delete hog trapping permit language.
- CWD Sampling – All antlerless deer harvested within CWD Zone must be submitted.
- All posted Waterfowl Draw Hunt procedures and rules will be enforced.
- WMA Check-in – All harvested game must be reported using the WMA Check-in Application or the Daily Visitor Use Card.

## **CAMPING**

### Nanah Waiya WMA – Rule 1.27

- Clarify that primitive camping is allowed and no permit is needed.

### Phil Bryant WMA – Rules 1467

- Camping for Goose Lake is only allowed at Ten Point or Mahannah Campground.
- Camping for Backwoods 4 is only allowed at Mahannah Campground.

### Mahannah WMA – Rules 1.12

- Camping area language.

## **DEER REGULATIONS**

### Antlerless Deer Opportunity – Rules 1.2 & 1.17

Increase in days:

- Allow antlerless opportunity on John Starr WMA.
- Allow Muzzleloaders during Jan. 8 – 31 on Copiah County WMA.

### Nanah Waiya WMAs – Rule 1.27

- Allow guns instead of primitive weapon only.

### Black Prairie WMA – Rule 1.28

- Change October to Open Archery opportunity.

### Muscadine and Howard Miller WMAs – Rule 1.34 & 1.38

- Add Youth Deer Draw Hunt.

### Yockanookany WMA – Rule 1.35

- Open Archery Hunting.

### Theodore Mars WMAs – Rule 1.39

- Add Youth Archery Opportunity.

## **DOVE SEASON REGULATIONS**

### Leroy Percy, O'Keefe, Deviney WMAs – Rule 1.11, 1.16, & 1.41

- Dove hunting is allowed from 2 p.m. to sunset on opening day. Remainder of season Statewide Structure.

## HOGS

### Leaf River, Little Biloxi, Wolf River, Red Creek, Mason Creek, & Pascagoula River WMAs – Rule 1.2 & 1.18

- Close Hog Hunting with Dogs on Feb. 28 to standardize with rest of state.

## LANGUAGE CLARIFICATION

### ORVs/ARVs – Rules 1.10 & 1.21

- Lake George & Shipland – Delete ATV Trail wording to clarify there are no trails.

### Phil Bryant WMA – Rule 1.46

- Delete “when environmental conditions and infrastructure are suitable for public access.”
- Goose Lake – ORVs/ATVs/Electric Bicycles are prohibited (No access off levee)
- Buck Bayou – Deer harvested on Buck Bayou must be checked in at Buck Bayou Parking Area.
- Buck Bayou – Visitors must park at Buck Bayou Unit parking area and cannot park at Backwoods unit campsites.

### Yockanookany WMA – Rule 1.35

- Close 10-acre area across Hwy 12 surrounded by houses.

*Commissioner Bentz questioned why ten acres of public land would be closed. The attorney and MDWFP staff replied that these ten acres are surrounded by private homes. Safety and protection are the chief concern.*

### Howard Miller WMA – Rule 1.38

- Clarify scouting days are Sundays and Wednesdays and visitors must park at front entrance.

### Pascagoula River WMA – Rule 1.18

- Land Between the Creeks – Clarify scouting days.
- Land Between the Creeks – ORVs/ATVs are only allowed for retrieval. During Turkey Season, electric carts may be used on roads open to motorized vehicles.

## SMALL GAME REGULATIONS

### Nanah Waiya WMA – Rule 1.27

- Open Rabbit Season Saturday closest to Oct. 15 – Feb. 28.

### Tuscumbia WMA – Rule 1.25

- Open Rabbit Season on Oct. 31 instead of Oct. 15.

### Charles Ray Nix WMA – Rule 1.36

- Open Quail Season.

Riverfront WMA – Rule 1.44

- Small game hunting opportunity.

**TURKEY SEASON REGULATIONS**Old River WMA – Rule 1.17

- Close Turkey Season.

Sunflower WMA – Rule 1.23

- Delete turkey bag limits – season has been closed.

**WATERFOWL**Mahannah WMAs – Rule 1.12

- Woodcock and Snipe Season – add working to clarify hunt days.
- Waterfowl – Be out of assigned unit by 1 p.m.

Charlie Capps and Deviney WMAs – Rule 1.40 & 1.41

- September Teal – Open concurrent with statewide season. Hunt on any open water.
- Deviney WMA – Geese – open during early season.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission approved PROPOSED WMA Regulations (Rules 1.1 - 1.46), as recommended by staff. Commission Bentz was recorded as voting “No.”**

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

Russ Walsh stated that Rule 2.2 was amended to reflect statutory changes made by the 2022 Legislative Session in House Bill 1035 which added a 3-day Velvet Deer Hunting Season.

**Rule 2.2 – White-tailed Deer Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits - Changes**

1. Velvet Season: Consecutive Friday, Saturday, and Sunday between September 10-20 on private lands and specified Wildlife Management Areas.
  - a. Archery: Longbows, recurves, compound bows, and crossbows. There is no minimum or maximum draw weight. There is no minimum length arrow. Fixed or mechanical broadheads may be used.
  - b. Only legal bucks for the respective Deer Management Unit may be harvested.
  - c. The bag limit is one (1) legal buck and count towards the annual antlered deer bag limit.
  - d. Hunters (including license exempt hunters) must report their harvest by 10 PM the day of harvest. Hunters can report via the MDWFP smartphone application or MDWFP web portal.

- e. All hunters, unless exempt or have a lifetime license, must possess a valid Velvet Season Permit.
- f. All harvested bucks must be submitted for CWD sampling to a MDWFP CWD drop-off freezer or to an MDWFP participating taxidermist within 5 days of harvest.

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

**PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 1, Chapter 8 – General Regulations applicable to Sale and Types of Licenses to Hunt, Trap, or Fish**

Walsh proposed increasing the Non-Resident Deer Permit to \$50.00 to be in line with the \$50 Non-Resident Turkey Permit.

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

F. License Types and Prices for Non-Residents

e. Deer Permit – Required for hunting deer during all deer seasons. This license must be purchases in addition to any all game, 7-day all game, or 3-day all game hunting license: \$50

**ACTION:** Commissioner Rhoads moved to approve staff recommendations on PROPOSED Rule 8.4, seconded by Commissioner Cossar, and the motion carried.

**2022-2023 Migratory Game Bird Framework Selections**

Houston Havens, Waterfowl Program Coordinator, presented to the Commission the 2022-23 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Season Recommendations which are listed in the table below.

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY	POSSESSION
Teal (Early Season)	Sept. 10 - 25	6	18
Canada Geese (Early Season)	Sept. 1 - 30	5	15
Woodcock	Dec. 18, 2022 - Jan. 31, 2023	3	9
Snipe	Nov. 14, 2022 - Feb. 28, 2023	8	24
Common & Purple Gallinules	Sept. 1 – Oct 2 AND Nov. 25, 2022 – Jan 1, 2023	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Possession Limit
Rails: Clapper and King	Sept. 1 – Oct 2 AND Nov. 25, 2022 – Jan 1, 2023	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Possession Limit

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY	POSSESSION
Rails: Sora and Virginia	Sept. 1 – Oct 2 AND Nov. 25, 2022 – Jan 1, 2023	25 Singly or in aggregate	75 Possession Limit
Mourning and White-winged Doves (North Zone)	Sept. 3 - Oct 14 AND Nov. 19 – Nov. 27 AND Dec. 24, 2022 - Jan. 31, 2023	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Singly or in aggregate
Mourning and White-winged Doves (South Zone)	Sept. 3 - 18 AND Oct. 8 - Nov. 6 AND Dec. 19, 2022 - Jan. 31, 2023	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Singly or in aggregate
Ducks, Mergansers, and Coots	Nov. 25 – 27 AND Dec. 2 - 4 AND Dec. 9, 2022 - Jan. 31, 2023	Details Below*	Details Below*
Geese: Canada, White-fronted, Snow, Blue, Ross's, and Brant	Nov. 11 - 27 AND Dec. 2 - 4 AND Dec. 9, 2022 - Jan. 31, 2023	Canada Geese: 5 Snow, Blue, and Ross's: 20 White-fronted: 3 Brant: 1	Canada Geese: 9 Snow, Blue, and Ross's: No Limit White-fronted: 9 Brant: 3
Youth, Veteran, & Active Military Waterfowl Days	Feb. 4 - 5, 2023	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. 25 – 27, Dec. 2 – 4, 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.

*Commissioner Bentz asked if we could appeal Washington for later duck hunting dates in Mississippi. Chairman Mounger informed him that the Mississippi Flyway Council worked to get the closing date for duck season extended to January 31, in recent years. Chairman Mounger added that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been resistant to having the season run later due to the ducks having pair bonds formed by that time of the year.*

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission unanimously approved the 2022-23 Migratory Framework Selections as recommended by the staff.

### FISHERIES

Jerry Brown, Director of Fisheries, presented the following PROPOSED rule changes.

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

- **Rule 1.3 – Regulations regarding Sport Fishing**
  - A. Adopted rules and regulations
    - 1a. Clarifies that it is illegal to set trotlines that extend more than halfway across a stream, channel, drain, or other body of water.
    - 3e. Clarifies that no more than two artificial lures can be used in spillways where hook restrictions are in place.
  - C. Crawfish and freshwater shrimp
    - 4a. Adds that puddle nets and life nets are allowed for catching crawfish.
  - F. Adds that written permission is needed to run someone else's fishing gear.

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Bentz, the Commission unanimously approved PROPOSED Fisheries Rule 1.3, as recommended by staff.

#### PROPOSED 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 3, Chapter 2 – State Fishing Lakes, and Community Fishing Assistance Program Lakes

- **Rule 2.1 – Regulations regarding State Fishing Lakes**
  - I. Other rules.
    - 5d. Sets waterfowl hunting days at Lake Bogue Homa to Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays with shooting time ending at noon.  
*Brown informed the Commission that this change was the result of comments received from hunters and staff. The intent was to give the birds some relief by ending at noon and having set hunting days.*

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission approved PROPOSED Fisheries Rule 2.1, as recommended by staff. Commissioner Bentz was recorded as voting "No."



## PARKS

### Parks Update

Andre Hollis, Director of Park Operations, presented the following revenue update on Parks comparing February FY21 to February FY22:

- Reservations (Camping, Cabins, Primitive) – Up \$66,126
- Entrance and Miscellaneous Privilege Fees - Up \$16,722
- Gross Revenue – Up \$1,551,561

Hollis informed the Commission that the Beach Campsite Project had been completed with the demolition of 70 grass and gravel beachside sites and 44 gulf view sites created with concrete pads and full water/sewer hookups. The price increases compare to other campsites in the area. There are no price increases for the other 206 campsites, which are currently \$32/night.

### PROPOSED 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 6, Chapter 1 – General Regulations for the MS State Parks

- **Rule 1.1 State Park Fees**
  1. Buccaneer State Park – Camping Gulf View - \$85 - \$180
  2. Buccaneer State Park – Camping Gulf View Pull Thru – \$95 - \$190

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission unanimously approved PROPOSED Parks Rule 1.1, as recommended by staff.

## MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS

### Marketing/Communications Update

Josh Carver, Marketing/Communications Manager, reported that their team were busy providing support to several events this past month:

- Set up and ran Tentrr at MS State parks Ribbon Cutting at Clarkco State Park.
- Attended “Girls Really into Shooting” (G.R.I.T.S.) event at Turcotte Shooting Facility
- Provided video support for State Parks RFP meetings
- Travel to State Capitol for Dr. Sam Polles’ Recognition by the State Legislature
- Ran full Live Stream support for the March Commission Meeting

### Other Marketing Campaigns

- Email Campaigns – up 18% with 160K opens & 40% increase in revenue amounting to \$14,000 trackable revenue
- Facebook – 93K followers and 329 new followers; 215K people reached
- Instagram – 151K accounts reached, 10,587 followers, 205K impressions, & 1,069 profile visits

Mississippi Outdoors TV Shoots

- Governor's Quail Hunt
- Madison Co. Youth Turkey Hunt
- Tom Kelly Turkey Hunt in Copiah Co.
- Disabled Turkey Hunt guided by Med Palmer
- Amanda Mills Turkey Hunt in Hinds Co.
- Lexington Turkey Hunt
- Bienville Draw Turkey Hunt
- Ladies Shooting Team at Turcotte Range

MS Outdoors Magazine

- Tagging cats: Catching monster catfish and tagging them
- Survey Says: Responses from MS's hunters & trappers
- Spring offers a different kind of squirrel season
- Vows with a view: Consider a Mississippi State Park as a wedding venue

Photography

- Tentr Grand Opening at Clarkco
- Bass fishing at Ross Barnett Reservoir
- Pollinator Day – Miss. Museum of Natural Science
- Dr. Sam Polles Resolution at the Capitol
- G.R.I.T.S. – Turcotte
- March Commission Meeting – Pictures of Awards recipients

*Commissioner Cossar requested the staff present a report on the AIMS Tournament next month.*

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

### Law Enforcement Update

Col. Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported 460 citations issued for the month of March with "No License" being number one and "Trespassing" was number two.

Officer detail included investigating illegal turkey hunting in Jefferson Davis County and encountering the subject sitting in a camouflage ground blind near a feeder filled with cracked corn chops. The subject was cited for Hunting Turkeys with the Aid Bait under State Statute 49-7-101.

Officers also conducted compliance checks on WMAs throughout the State. Thirteen cadets recently graduated from the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy. Cade Brandon Clark graduated Top Cop of Class 267.

Shooting range customer counts are: McIvor – 801; Turcotte – 524; and McHenry – 527.

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Executive Order – Wolf Lake

Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General, informed the Commission that 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, on March 22, 2022, had suspended all recreational boating activity on Wolf Lake, in 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 to protect private property, any boating was restricted to a "Dead Slow; Leave No Wake," standard. Since that Order was issued and prior to the Commission meeting, the water has receded; however, for informational and related purposes, the Commission is requested to ratify the executive action as taken earlier in the month.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission unanimously ratified the 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.**

## NEXT MEETING DATE

Date: Thursday, May 19, 2022  
Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211  
Time: 10:00 AM FALLEN OFFICER MEMORIAL  
1:00 PM COMMISSION MEETING

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. Deputy Executive Director stated that there was a need for an Executive Session.

**ACTION: Commissioner Coopwood made a motion to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session. Commissioner Bentz 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.

The meeting was closed. Discussion was held and it was determined that there was a need to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters involving job performance of specific employees in specific positions and the prospective purchase of land.

**ACTION: Commissioner Bentz made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel matters involving job performance of specific employees in specific positions**

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 into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters involving job performance of specific employees in specific positions and the prospective purchase of land.

Art Kennard updated the Commission on pending land matters. No action from the Commission was required.

The Commission then took up the matter of identifying candidates for the vacant Executive Director position. Applicants were interviewed for the position.

Upon motion by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood the Commission voted to submit three candidates to the Governor for his consideration, as per the requirements of Mississippi Code Annotated §49-4-6(2).

There being no further items for discussion in Executive Session, Commissioner Bentz made a motion to open the meeting. Commissioner Rhoads 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 was now open and that during Executive Session the Commission voted on three names to be submitted to the Governor for his consideration to fill the vacant Executive Director position, as per the requirements of Mississippi Code Annotated §49-4-6(2).

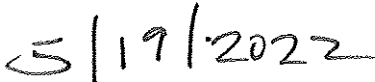
**ADJOURNMENT**

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

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William M. Mounger II, CHAIRMAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Cossar, VICE CHAIRMAN

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

***In Re: Suspension/Closure of Recreational Boating activity during temporary high water emergency.***

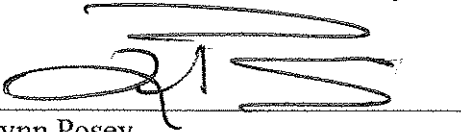
**EXECUTIVE ORDER**

PURSUANT to the authority set forth in MISSISSIPPI CODE ANNOTATED '59-21-111, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, with the approval of the Commission, has ordered the suspension of all recreational boating activity on the lake or lakes listed below, due to emergency flooding and high water resulting from unusually heavy rainfall events. 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, 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 THEREFORE ORDERED, That the lake or lakes listed above shall be closed to recreational boating activity, in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public, until further notice. Any boating shall be conducted according to a "Dead Slow; Leave No Wake," standard. Failure to comply with this order may subject an individual to criminal liability.

SO ORDERED, this the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2022.



Lynn Posey  
Deputy Executive Director