

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Thursday, May 19, 2022

**No Educational Session 12:30 PM Business Session
1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39202**

BUSINESS SESSION MINUTES

PRESENT: Vice Chairman Bill F. Cossar (presiding), and Commissioners Scott Coopwood, Leonard Bentz, and Gary Rhoads. Attending by means of telecommunication: Chairman William M. Mounger II.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Deputy Executive Director Lynn Posey, Larry Pugh, Brian Ferguson, Angel Rohnke, Col. Jerry Carter, Russ Walsh, Amy Blaylock, Jerry Brown, Andre Hollis, Charles Knight, Jason Thompson, and Doug Mann.. The Chairman welcomed guests watching the live stream video and special guests attending: Representative Bill Kinkaid, House WFP Committee Chairman; Coach Bob Tyler; Max Seage, Chris McDonald, Ed Penny, and Ben Thompson.

OPENING PRAYER

Commissioner Scott Coopwood opened the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission meeting minutes of April 21, 2022, were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Bentz, the Commission unanimously approved the meeting agenda of May 19, 2022.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, License/Boat Registration Division Director, presented the License Sales Report for the month of April 2022. The total revenue for the end of April was up 1.7% compared to April 2021.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – down 1.27%
- Non-resident license sales – up by 4.48%
- Other Licenses – down 3.05%
- Lifetime License category – down 6.79%

Auto renewal customers continue to increase each month and license packages sold continue to increase in sales.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one came forward at the meeting for public comment.

WILDLIFE

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

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

Rule 2.2 was presented to the Commission at the last meeting. This rule reflected statutory changes made by the 2022 Legislative Session in House Bill 1035 which added a 3-day Velvet Deer Hunting Season. Walsh stated that no public comments were received over the last 30 days and recommended approval.

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

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

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

Rule 8.4 increased the Non-Resident Deer Permit to \$50.00 to be in line with the \$50 Non-Resident Turkey Permit. Walsh stated that no public comments were received over the last 30 days and recommended approval.

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

FINAL – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1 – Wildlife Management Areas**Rules 1.1 – 1.46 – WMA Regulations**

Walsh reported that no public comments were received over the last 30 days and recommended approval.

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

PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 7 – Nuisance Animals**Rule 7.1 – General Regulation for the Taking of Nuisance Animals**

Walsh presented proposed changes to the coyote, fox, and wild hog regulations. Discussion followed.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission approved PROPOSED Rule 7.1, as recommended by staff.

FISHERIES**FINAL 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 3, Chapter 1 – General Fisheries Rules****Rule 1.3 – Regulations regarding Sport Fishing**

Jerry Brown, Director of Fisheries, stated that no public comments were received over the past 30 days and recommended approval.

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

FINAL 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**

Brown stated that no public comments were received over the past 30 days and recommended approval.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads, the Commission approved FINAL Fisheries Rule 2.1, as recommended by staff. Commissioner Bentz was recorded as voting “No.”

FISHERIES BUREAU AWARDS

Fisheries Bureau awards were presented by Brown to the following employees who have shown exemplary abilities, passion, and work ethic this past year.

- **Samantha Bergeron – Fisheries Biologist of the Year**
- **Dustin Brumfield – Lake Manager of the Year (Unable to attend the meeting)**

Each recipient received a framed certificate and gift card to Bass Pro. Applause followed the presentations.

PARKS

Parks Update

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

- Monthly Revenue Comparison – Up \$19,124 - Comparing April 2022 to April 2021
- Gross Revenue – Up \$1,580,685 – Comparing July 1–April 30, 2022 to 2021

Hollis informed the Commission that the Buccaneer projects should be completed by May 30th.

PROPOSED 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 6, Rule 1.1 – State Park Fees

Rule 1.1 State Park Fees

Andre Hollis presented the proposed fees for the new Gulf View campsites recently completed at Buccaneer State Park. The new sites are larger to accommodate newer RVs and have a view of the Gulf. Hollis asked for Commission approval.

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

MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing/Communications Update

Josh Carver, Marketing/Communications Manager, reported highlights on the following events and participation by the Marketing/Communications' team:

- Sponsored & attended the 2022 Spring Tourism Conference in Natchez
- Press coverage for the LeFleur's Bluff Master Plan
- Press coverage for the WSFR Conference on the MS Gulf Coast
- Planned "Women at the Range" event for MDWFP female staff

Other Marketing Campaigns

- Email Campaigns – up 18% with 110K opens & increase in revenue amounting to \$4,000 trackable revenue
- April Newsletter
- Facebook – 99K followers and 6.4K new followers; 7.2M people reached (for Record Blue Catfish post); 1.5M engaged
- Instagram – 140K accounts reached, 10,800 followers, 195K impressions, & 1,286 profile visits (George P Cossar Park, Lunch with a View, and Buccaneer State Park Highlights)

Mississippi Outdoors TV Shoots

- Clay Co. Turkey Hunt
- Madison Co. Bass Fishing
- MMNS Summer Camps
- Grenada Lake Wade Fishing for Crappie
- State Parks Virtual Tours: Percy Quinn, Tishomingo, JP Coleman, John Kyle
- MSO TV Sponsors' videos
- Van's Sporting Goods & Deviney Tractor

MS Outdoors Magazine

- Fish on the cover of the MS Outdoors magazine for the first time ever, by staff photographer, Blythe Summers
- Featured articles for the magazine:
 - Kayaking is a great option for anglers on creeks and rivers
 - Despite the hard exterior, female alligators often show a softer touch for their young
 - Biology and History of MS's most misunderstood fish, the Alligator Gar

Photography

- Black bear @ Mahannah WMA
- Record Catfish
- Hog Trapping
- Turkey Hunt
- MSSP Tournament

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Update

Col. Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported 706 citations issued for the month of April with "No License" being number one and "Unlawful Possession" was number two.

For the month of April officers focused details on major waterways and reservoirs. Numerous citations were written for no license, slot limit violations, and exceeding the limit.

Shooting range customer counts are: Mclvor – 291; Turcotte – 614; and McHenry – 394.

PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 4, Chapter 2 – Rules and Regulations regarding Boat and Water Safety

Rule 2.6 – "No Wake" Zones for Waters of the Jourdan River in Hancock County, Mississippi

Doug Mann, Executive Staff Officer, presented changes to Rule 2.6 to the Commission. A map with the GPS coordinates of where the No Wake Zones begin and end were distributed. This map is included in Rule 2.6.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads, the Commission approved PROPOSED Rule 2.6, as recommended by staff.

OTHER BUSINESS

No items under Other Business were presented.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Date: Wednesday, June 22, 2022

Location: Mclvor Shooting Facility, 4216 Davis Chapel Road, Sardis 38666

Time: 11:00 AM

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Vice 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 Bentz made a motion to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session. Commissioner Coopwood seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting.

Doug Mann announced to those present that the meeting was now closed to determine the need for Executive Session to discuss real property transactions.

The meeting was closed. Discussion was held and it was determined that there was a need to enter into Executive Session to discuss the prospective purchase of land.

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

Mr. Mann announced to those present outside the meeting room that the Commission had entered into Executive Session to discuss the prospective purchase of land.

Art Kennard and Doug Mann then presented information and draft resolutions for the purchase of three (3) tracts of land – two in Pearl River County, contiguous to the Old River WMA and one in Marion County, contiguous to the Marion County WMA. Mr. Mann explained that the resolutions were part of the paperwork needed to disburse funds from the Wildlife Heritage Fund. A brief discussion followed.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Bentz, the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the resolutions to disburse funds from the Wildlife Heritage Fund; however, Commissioner Rhoads abstained from the vote on the purchase of a tract from the Rankin/Hinds Flood Control District because he is an *ex officio* member of that entity by virtue of his position as Mayor of Flowood.

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. Mann announced to those individuals located outside the Commission room that the meeting was now open and that during Executive Session the Commission voted to adopt resolutions to expend funds from the Wildlife Heritage Fund to purchase three (3) tracts of land in Pearl River and Marion Counties.

ADJOURNMENT

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

William M. Mounger II

William M. Mounger II, CHAIRMAN

6/22/22

Date

Bill Cossar

Bill Cossar, VICE CHAIRMAN

6/22/2022

Date