

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

**Thursday, November 17, 2022**

**No Educational Session      9:00 AM Business Session  
1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211**

## **BUSINESS SESSION MINUTES**

### **PRESENT:**

Chairman Bill F. Cossar  
Commissioner Scott Coopwood  
Commissioner William Mounger II  
Commissioner Gary Rhoads  
Commissioner Leonard Bentz

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Executive Director Lynn Posey, Curtis Thornhill, Larry Pugh, Col. Jerry Carter, Russ Walsh, Amy Blaylock, Jason Thompson, Brian Ferguson, Andre Hollis, Jerry Brown, Angel Rohnke, Charles Knight, Josh Carver, Doug Mann, and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General. The Chairman welcomed guests watching the live stream video and special guests attending the meeting. Former Commissioner Billy Deviney was recognized.

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Jason Thompson, License/Boat Registration Division Director, opened the meeting with prayer.

### **MINUTES**

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission meeting minutes of October 19, 2022, were unanimously approved.

### **AGENDA**

The Chairman asked if any changes to the agenda needed to be made. Executive Director Posey stated that there was a need to add an Executive Session.

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Bentz, the Commission unanimously approved the meeting agenda of November 17, 2022, as amended.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

#### Two Comments concerning the Supplemental Feeding Ban in Claiborne County:

- *Charlie Davis, McComb* – Mr. Davis owns around 700 acres near the Mississippi River and the Grand Gulf Nuclear Plant. He started feeding the deer in his area around two and a half years ago and noticed a big difference in their health. In an effort to build the deer herd Mr. Davis included in their feed a de-wormer and special nutrients. He asked the Commission to reconsider the Supplemental Feeding ban in his area since the deer infected with CWD was across the Mississippi River.
- *Eddie Buckner* – Mr. Buckner purchased Delta Outfitters in Vicksburg in 2007 and purchased the feed store next door around the time CWD was found in a deer across the Mississippi River. He did not come to argue the science on CWD but to tell the Commission what the supplemental feeding ban has done to his business. His feed store has had a major downturn in sales, which not only affects his family but his 18 employees and their families. He came to the Commission today to defend this industry, his business, and Mr. Charlie Davis.

Chairman Cossar thanked Mr. Davis and Buckner for coming before the Commission.

### LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, License/Boat Registration Division Director, presented the License Sales Report for the month of October 2022. Thompson reported that total revenue this past month is up 3%.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license – up .3%
- Res 3-day Freshwater Fishing – up 4%
- Res WMA User Permit – up 2%
- Non-resident license sales – up 6%
- NR 7 day Small Game Hunting – up 17%
- NR Small Game Hunting – up 10%
- Other Licenses – up 5%
- Lifetime Sportsman 0-12 – up 3%

### WILDLIFE

#### License Exemption Request – Hope Outdoors

Russ Walsh, Wildlife Chief of Staff, presented a license exemption request from Hope Outdoors. They plan are to host several hunts for disabled hunters this year in December, January, and

February. They have asked the Commission for exemption for the out-of-state hunters participating in the hunts.

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved the license exemption request for disabled out-of-state participants in the Hope Outdoor hunts.

#### **PROPOSED 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 5: Regulations regarding Alligators**

Ricky Flynt, Alligator/Furbearer Coordinator, informed the Commission that on March 16, 2022, the Commission approved a proposed Administrative Rule to open an alligator hunting season in May 2023 on Pelahatchie Bay on the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Since being approved, several items in the rule need to be addressed further. The following changes were recommended:

- **Rule 5.4 – Alligator Hunting Season for Pelahatchie Bay (Rankin County)**
  - Part B. 7. a. Clarifies applications must include two applicants.
  - Part B. 7. c. Clarifies hunting guests are allowed to hunt with a permit holder.
  - Part E. 5. o. Strike information that is no longer applicable  
AND  
Add language to restrict noise pollution by airboats due to residential areas in the immediate hunting area.

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission approved changes to Rule 5.4 Commissioner Bentz was recorded as voting “no”.

#### **MDWFP Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan**

Commissioner Bentz requested permission to present a motion before the Commission. Chairman Cossar gave him the floor.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Bentz proposed to amend the CWD Management Plan regarding how counties would be treated in terms of supplemental feeding bans on lands which lie along the Mississippi River. Bentz proposed to use the Coast Guard demarcation line which determines the middle of the Mississippi River channel to divide the west side of the river (Louisiana/Arkansas) and east side (Mississippi) of the river in situations where a deer with CWD which is found on the west side of the channel would not trigger a feeding ban on the Mississippi counties located on the east side of the river. Commissioner Rhoads seconded the motion.

Commissioner Mounger requested to speak before a vote was taken. Chairman Cossar gave him the floor. Mounger stated that he has land in Claiborne County and there is no easy solution to CWD. He invited everyone to come to the Educational Session on this topic in December. There are places now on the Mississippi River where deer can cross when the river is low, as

he noted Buck No. 140 (a deer which was outfitted with a GPS tracking collar for a study of deer movement) crossed the river four times between Mississippi and Louisiana during a two-year period. Most importantly Mounger stated that he would not want to look back 20 years from now and see Claiborne County decimated. CWD would not only hurt feed sales, but all hunting items sold. The problem with CWD is that it does not reveal itself at the time of infection and an infected deer could walk around for 18 months to two years infecting other deer before it is discovered, which is what happened at the Tennessee border and quickly spread to North Mississippi.

Commissioner Bentz wanted the record to show that he does not personally know either one of the gentlemen who came forward during Public Comments concerning the feeding ban in Claiborne County.

**ACTION: A vote was taken on Commissioner Bentz's motion and the motion prevailed with a vote of 3-1. Commissioner Mounger was recorded as voting "no".**

## PARKS

### Demand-Based Pricing

Brian Ferguson, Parks Chief of Staff, provided a handout on Demand-Based Pricing for the Commission to read during the next month in preparation for the December meeting.

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

- Rule 1.1 – State Park Fees
- Rule 1.2 – General Rules & Regulations for State Parks

Ferguson requested postponement of changes to Rules 1.1 and 1.2 until the December meeting.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Bentz, the Commission unanimously approved to table Rules 1.1 and 1.2 until the December Commission meeting.**

### Parks Revenue Report

Andre´ Hollis, Director of State Parks, presented the October revenue report for Parks.

Reservation sales - down \$42,844  
Privilege revenue - up \$25,292  
Gross revenue (Oct. 2022 compared to Oct. 2021) - down \$17,552

Hollis stated that the revenue report will be improving soon due to the completion of some campsite construction projects. Tishomingo will be having a ribbon cutting November 18, 2022

and opening 50 ft. campsite pads with 50-amp and 30-amp connections. Buccaneer will have 44 campsites opening up on the beach Monday, November 21, just in time for the Thanksgiving holidays.

### LEFLEUR'S COMPLEX

#### LeFleur's Complex Update

Angel Rohnke, Director of the LeFleur's Complex, presented updates happening at LeFleur's Complex. A new mobile cart, Spotter's Snack Shack, was launched during the annual "Park after Dark" event generating \$900 in 3 hours. The permanent park concession stand renovation was completed in November and has generated net revenue of \$4,206.36 since opening. The playground continues to draw patrons of approximately 1,300 visitors a week.

Photographs and a PowerPoint presentation of present and future projects were presented.

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

#### Law Enforcement Update

Col. Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported for the month of October, there were a total of 226 citations issued with "No License" being number one, "Supplemental Feeding" was number two, "No WMA user permit" was third, "Headlighting" number four, and "Trespassing" number five.

Other Updates:

- MSSP qualifier events were held at Mclvor and McHenry Shooting Ranges. Over 1,000 students participated.
- Law Enforcement will begin accepting applications Monday, November 21, 2022 for 15 cadet positions. This is a 30-day process. The first cadet class is scheduled to begin in March 2023.

The shooting range customer counts for October were:  
Mclvor – 1,248; Turcotte – 858; and McHenry – 491.

#### License Reinstatements

Col. Carter presented three license reinstatement requests. The violators were asked to come forward and state the circumstance of their arrest before the Commission.

- **Joie West, Big Creek, MS**  
West stated that he and some friends had seen a big deer earlier that day and decided to go headlighting in December 2020. When they spotted the deer, he fired a shot, but missed. His friend held the light for him to shoot. His fines totaled \$2,300 and his gun and flashlight were confiscated. West apologized to the Commission.

**ACTION:** By motion of Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, Joie West's license was reinstated by unanimous consent with the stipulation that he will serve the entire three years for a second offense.

- **Jarret Brown, Lucedale, MS**

Brown stated that he and two friends were at his house one evening and were bored, so they decided to go hunting. Four or five deer had been killed in this area the week before. Brown was arrested on November 18, 2019. He and his friends tried to lie about having a gun. They tried to hide the gun, but the officer searched the truck and found it. They were each fined \$2,200 and his dad's gun was confiscated.

**ACTION:** By motion of Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads, Jarret Brown's license was reinstated by unanimous consent with the stipulation that he will serve the entire three years for a second offense.

- **Tyler Cook, Tupelo, MS**

Cook stated that he was at a cookout at his aunt's house January 2021. He and a cousin took the truck in hopes of spotting some deer on the backroads. They spotted a deer, shot it, loaded it in the back of the truck, and returned to his aunt's house. Another cousin's ex-wife called law enforcement and turned them in. Cook was fined \$2,500 and his grandfather's gun was confiscated.

**ACTION:** By motion of Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, Cook's license was reinstated by unanimous consent with the stipulation that he will serve the entire three years for a second offense.

### OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was presented.

### NEXT MEETING DATE

Date: Thursday, December 15, 2022

Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

Time: 9:00 AM Educational Session; 10:00 AM BUSINESS SESSION

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Director advised the Chairman that an Executive Session was necessary to discuss matters involving personnel.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Bentz made a motion to close the meeting to determine the need to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Coopwood seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting.

The attorney announced to those present that the meeting was now closed to make the determination whether there was a need to go into Executive Session.

Discussion was held and it was determined that there was a need to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

**ACTION: Commissioner Bentz made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Commissioner Coopwood seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session.**

The attorney announced to those present that the Commission had entered into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

During Executive Session the Commission discussed with Executive staff the new organizational chart and employment promotions made in the Parks Division.

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

The attorney announced to the public that the meeting was now open and that during Executive Session the Commission took no action and no votes were taken.

ADJOURNMENT

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

  
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Bill Cossar, CHAIRMAN

  
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Date

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Scott Coopwood, VICE CHAIRMAN

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Date