

# MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

10:00 AM Educational Session      11:00 AM Business Session  
Cotton House (Donelson Room), 215 Cotton Row, Cleveland, MS

## EDUCATIONAL SESSION

### PRESENT:

Chairman Bill F. Cossar  
Commissioner Scott Coopwood  
Commissioner William Mounger II  
Commissioner Gary Rhoads  
Commissioner Leonard Bentz – Attended by Telecommunication

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Executive Director Lynn Posey, Curtis Thornhill, Larry Pugh, Brian Ferguson, Jason Thompson, Col. Jerry Carter, Russ Walsh, Amy Blaylock, Jennifer Shows, Doug Mann, and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General.

## CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Dr. Jennifer Ballard, State Wildlife Veterinarian and Assistant Chief of the Research Division for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, presented a PowerPoint presentation to inform the Commission on their agency's efforts to track and manage chronic wasting disease, which is fatal to deer and elk.

Ballard shared her insights as to how CWD spreads through saliva, urine, feces, and contaminated plants and soil. Arkansas Game and Fish research initiatives are currently working to understand different strains of the disease and its long-term impact on animal populations. The disease has been spreading throughout 30 states and 40 Canadian Provinces due to the environment remaining infectious 10-20 years. Plus, once infected, the deer has a long incubation period (16 months) before any signs of infection. There is no treatment, no immunity; however, there seems to be some genetic resistance, but more research is needed to find ways to slow its spread.

CWD-causing prions is a whole new class of infectious agents. Prions do not follow the rules of viruses and other diseases. With so many unknowns about this disease, the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) published "Best Management Practices for CWD" in 2018 which was unanimously adopted by State and Provincial conservation agencies in the US and Canada. This book gave recommendations on risk mitigation. Dr. Ballard reviewed Section 1.7 – Preventing Unnatural Concentrations of Cervids, and Section 3.11 – Managing CWD Prevalence.

The Commission thanked Dr. Ballard for coming.

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Cotton House (Donelson Room), 215 Cotton Row, Cleveland, MS****BUSINESS SESSION****PRESENT:**

Chairman Bill F. Cossar  
Commissioner Scott Coopwood  
Commissioner William Mounger II  
Commissioner Gary Rhoads  
Commissioner Leonard Bentz – Attended by Telecommunication

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Executive Director Lynn Posey, Curtis Thornhill, Larry Pugh, Brian Ferguson, Jason Thompson, Col. Jerry Carter, Russ Walsh, Amy Blaylock, Jennifer Shows, Doug Mann, and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General.

The Chairman welcomed guests watching the live stream video and special guests, Mayor Billy Nowell of Cleveland, and Shannon Kelardy, US Forest Service, for attending the meeting.

**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 Rhoads, the Commission meeting minutes of December 15, 2022, were unanimously approved.

**CONSERVATION AWARD**

Commissioner Scott Coopwood asked Mr. Hank Burdine to come forward. Mr. Burdine is a longtime conservationist and hunter. He has spent his life in the Mississippi Delta and along the Mississippi River. As a gifted storyteller and author, he has lent his talents to publicizing the people and land in the Delta through magazine articles and books. Applause followed as Coopwood presented the Conservation Award to Mr. Burdine.

Commissioner Mounger also came forward to share a story about how he and Burdine paid tribute to mutual friend, Chris Hughes, by dedicating a duck hole in his memory in Idaho.

### AGENDA

The Chairman asked if any changes to the agenda were needed. Executive Director Posey stated that two Resolutions needed to be brought before the Commission during "Other Business" and the "Next Commission Meeting" date needed to be changed to Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 9 a.m. Educational Session and 10 a.m. Business Session. The meeting will be held at the Jackson Headquarters, 1505 Eastover Drive.

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads, the Commission unanimously approved the meeting agenda of January 25, 2023, as amended.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- *Ed Penny, Claiborne Co. landowner* – Mr. Penny came forward to ask the Commission for a second time to reverse its November 17, 2022 decision which revised the state's Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Plan and allowed supplemental feeding in Claiborne County. He informed the Commission that since the December Commission Meeting five more suspected cases of chronic wasting disease in deer have been discovered in Tensas Parish, Louisiana bringing the number to seven CWD positive cases in the past year. One of the deer was harvested approximately 1.5 miles from Claiborne County, Mississippi.

### LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, License/Boat Registration Division Director, presented the License Sales Report for the month of December 2022. Thompson reported that total revenue this past month is up 5%. Resident license sales are staying close to last year, generating 5.2 million dollars.

Highlights of his report are listed below which compare December 2022 with December 2021:

- Res WMA permits up 2%
- Res Sr Exempt up 4%
- NR license up 10%
- NR 7-day small game up 16%
- NR Small Game Hunting up 9%
- NR WMA Permits up 6%
- Deer Permits up \$784,000
- Lifetime License up 2%
- Permit category up 6%

License packages sold – 23,537 compared to 21,250 last year

## WILDLIFE

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

Ricky Flynt, Alligator/Furbearer Coordinator, gave an update on the 2022 Alligator Program season. The Commissioners received a hard copy of the 2022 Alligator Program booklet.

Highlights from his presentation below compared totals in 2022 to 2021:

7,050 Applications Received	Up 947
830 Total Alligator Harvests on Public Water	Up 54
871 Permit Holders	Up 20
980 Harvest Permits Issued & 728 Were Used	Up 59
1,669 Alligators Captured and Released	Up 88
Average Hunting Party was 4.4 People	

New record length (10 ft. 2 in) for female alligator harvested. This alligator was tagged in 2009 as "Yellow 410" and was recorded this same length at that time.

## PARKS

Brian Ferguson, Parks Chief of Staff, handed out a 5-year Comprehensive Plan of Major Capital Improvements for the MS State Parks. He asked the Commission to review this information and contact him later if they had any questions.

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

Ferguson informed the Commission that no comments had been received concerning the fee increases in Rule 1.1 and 1.2 and recommended approval.

- **Rule 1.1 – State Park Fees**

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL passage of Rule 1.1.

- **Rule 1.2 – General Rules & Regulations for State Parks**

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL passage of Rule 1.2.

Ferguson informed the Commission of three Stakeholder Meetings held with business owners, landowners, and Legislators concerning state parks in their respective areas. The meetings were

well attended and brought together ideas and continuity. The meetings were held in Hattiesburg, Roosevelt State Park, and Clark County.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### **Law Enforcement Update**

Col. Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported for the month of December there were a total of 1,296 citations issued with "No License" being first on the list, "Hunting from a Public Road" second, "No Hunter Orange" third, "Supplemental Feeding" fourth, and "Trespassing" fifth. During December officers issued a total of 55 citations for supplemental feeding.

The shooting range customer counts for December were:  
McIvor – 590; Turcotte – 1,136; and McHenry – 849.

### **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.

- **Dalton Sibley, Newton, MS**

On January 26, 2021, Sibley stated that a deer ran out in front of his truck and he deliberately turned his wheel to hit and kill the deer. He took a video of this incident and posted it on social media. His fine totaled \$2,200. The Commission questioned Mr. Sibley on such cruelty to an animal. He was apologetic and stated that he would never do this again.

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

- **Tyson Champagne, Homa, LA**

Champagne stated that he was on his way to a store to get ice for a friend to pack his deer when he spotted a deer off the roadway. He turned his vehicle around three times while shining a spotlight on the deer. An officer pulled him over. He had an unloaded gun in the backseat. Since he was a non-resident, he hired an attorney, so his fines and fees were significantly more, around \$5,000.

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

- **Michael Hale, Courtland, MS**

Hale was driving a vehicle with his wife and cousin as passengers. They spotted a deer, so he stopped the car while his cousin shot and missed the deer. He apologized and

stated that he knew not to stop and will never do it again. He has gone two years without hunting. This violation cost him around \$5,000; \$2,500 for himself and \$2,500 for his wife.

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

### **Recognition of Ricky Flynt**

Col. Carter asked Ricky Flynt to come forward and be recognized for 29 years and 7 months of service to the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. During that time Flynt worked in various roles with Law Enforcement and Wildlife. The last 19 years he served as the Alligator Program Coordinator. Flynt accepted a position beginning February 1, 2023 as the Project Manager Supervisor for the newly formed Board of Trustees for the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund. Applause followed as Flynt accepted the framed MDWFP Certificate of Appreciation. The Commission noted their appreciation for his service.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Prentiss County Chancery Court Case**

Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General, came forward at the Chairman's request to inform the Commission of a recent injunction ordered by District 1 Chancery Judge Stephen Bailey in Prentiss County. The injunction was ordered after a lawsuit (*Dickerson et. al v. Allen et. al*) was filed against a group of deer hunters whose dogs repeatedly trespassed on a landowner's property and parked on the landowner's right of way. The judge wrote a 46-page opinion explaining that the dog hunters still had "nuisance" liability even if they were only picking up dogs. The judge signed an order requiring the defendants to keep their dogs off the plaintiffs' property or be held in contempt and face fines and jail time.

### **Resolution – North Mississippi Fish Hatchery and Visitor Center**

A Resolution for Commission approval was presented by the Executive Director which would make a request to the Mississippi State Legislature to designate the North Mississippi Fish Hatchery and Visitor Education Center as the "Bob Tyler State Fish Hatchery and Visitor Education Center."

**ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads, the Resolution requesting the Legislature, whether by concurrent resolution or general bill, to designate the North Mississippi State Fish Hatchery and Visitor Education Center, located in Enid, Mississippi, as the "Bob Tyler State Fish Hatchery and Visitor Education Center, was unanimously approved by the Commission.**

A copy of the signed resolution has been appended to the minutes.

**Resolution – Buccaneer State Park and Mississippi Power Company**

Doug Mann, Executive Staff Officer, explained that MDWFP, in accordance with MISS. CODE ANN. §55-3-33, *et. seq.*, has been consulting with electric public utility companies about transferring electrical infrastructure in certain state parks to the public utility in which the MDWFP electric facilities are located. The pilot program for this transfer is ready which will involve Mississippi Power Company taking over all electric transmission and infrastructure within Buccaneer State Park in Hancock County. MDWFP currently owns and operates the electrical infrastructure and facilities located at Buccaneer. Mississippi Power requested a Resolution from the Commission authorizing this transfer.

**ACTION:** By motion of Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Resolution authorizing the transfer of all electric transmission and infrastructure from Buccaneer State Park to Mississippi Power Company was unanimously approved.

A copy of the signed resolution has been appended to the minutes.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2023

Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211

Time: 9:00 AM Educational Session; 10:00 AM Business Session

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No Executive Session was necessary.

ADJOURNMENT

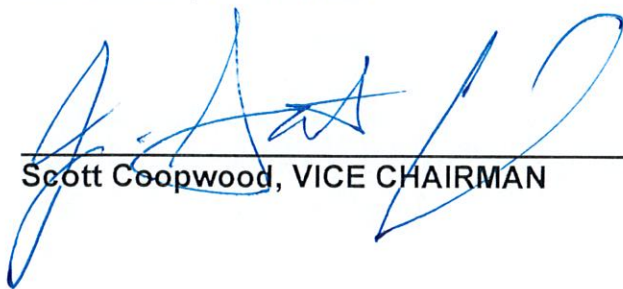
There being no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Rhoads moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, and the motion carried. Chairman Cossar gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



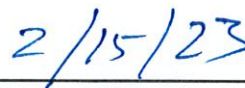
Bill Cossar, CHAIRMAN



Date



Scott Coopwood, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date



**BEFORE THE MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON  
WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS**

**In Re:       A request to the Mississippi State Legislature to designate the North Mississippi Fish Hatchery and Visitor Education Center the “Bob Tyler State Fish Hatchery and Visitor Education Center,” and for related purposes.**

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, Bob Tyler of Water Valley, Mississippi, during his lifetime has served the State of Mississippi as a football coach at the high school and college levels, has served as the Director of State Parks and has unofficially promoted the State of Mississippi;

**WHEREAS**, Bob has served as an assistant coach under the tutelage of such college football greats as Paul “Bear” Bryant while coaching at the University of Alabama, and Johnny Vaught while coaching at the University of Mississippi;

**WHEREAS**, Due to his experience as an assistant to these legends, Coach Tyler became head coach for Mississippi State University leading the Bulldogs through several seasons of excellence in the nation’s toughest football conference, the SEC;

**WHEREAS**, Following his successful coaching career, Bob was selected to be the Director of State Parks. During his tenure as Director of State Parks, Bob oversaw significant renovation and remodeling efforts at the state parks pursuant to a major funding effort by the Legislature;

**WHEREAS**, Since his retirement from official public service, Bob has unofficially continued to promote economic and community development in his hometown of Water Valley, Yalobusha County and the State of Mississippi;

**WHEREAS**, In recognition of a lifetime of service to the people of the State of Mississippi, and by request from his colleagues at the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, this Legislature shall honor and commemorate Coach Tyler by naming the North Mississippi Fish Hatchery, located in Enid, Yalobusha County, Mississippi, after Bob Tyler.

**THEREFORE**, at its regular meeting of January 25, 2023, the Commission voted unanimously to request that the Legislature honor Bob Tyler, by designating the North Mississippi Fish Hatchery and Visitor Education Center as the Bob Tyler Fish Hatchery and Visitor Education Center, as set forth below, before the end of the 2023 Regular Legislative Session.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks finds that Bob Tyler, has faithfully served the people of the State of Mississippi as a successful high school and collegiate football coach and as the Director of State Parks, and continues to serve as an unofficial ambassador for economic and community development for Water Valley, Yalobusha County, and the State of Mississippi. In recognition of Coach Tyler's service, the Commission requests that the Legislature, whether by concurrent resolution or general bill, designate the state fish hatchery and visitor education center, located in Enid, Mississippi, as the "Bob Tyler State Fish Hatchery and Visitor Education Center."

**SO RESOLVED**, by unanimous vote of the Commission, this the 25<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2023.



Bill F. Cossar, Chairman  
Mississippi Commission on Wildlife,  
Fisheries, and Parks

**CERTIFICATION**

I, **Lynn Posey**, hereby certify that the Resolution set forth above, is a true and correct Resolution of the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, as authorized by a vote taken and spread upon the minutes of the meeting of the Commission, dated January 25, 2023, as duly noticed and conducted by law.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Posey', written over a horizontal line.

Lynn Posey, Deputy Executive Director  
Mississippi Department of Wildlife,  
Fisheries, and Parks

BEFORE THE MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON  
WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

**In Re:**            **Authorizing the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries, and Parks, to exercise the power to contract with Electric Public Utilities pursuant to MISS. CODE ANN. §55-3-33(4) to convey the Buccaneer State Park electricity transmission facilities and infrastructure to Mississippi Power Company.**

**RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, in accordance with MISS. CODE ANN. § 55-3-33, *et. seq.*, the MDWFP is authorized, among other things, to transfer electrical infrastructure to the public utility holding a certificate of public convenience and necessity authorizing said public utility to provide electric service to the area in which the MDWFP electric facilities are located;

WHEREAS, the MDWFP currently owns and operates the electrical infrastructure and facilities located at Buccaneer State Park in Hancock County, Mississippi (the “State Park”);

WHEREAS, the MDWFP is authorized by MISS. CODE ANN. §55-3-33 to contract with electric public utilities with a certificate of public convenience and necessity to serve the area where a state park is located for the transfer of ownership of the electrical infrastructure in the state park to that electric public utility; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi Power Company (“MPC”) currently holds the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to exclusively serve the State Park;

WHEREAS, the operation of certain electric facilities by MDWFP is no longer in the best interest of the State Park and transfer the electrical infrastructure to MPC is authorized by MISS. CODE ANN. §55-3-33;

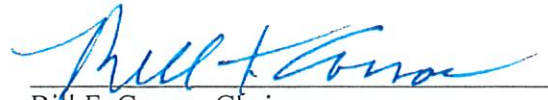
**WHEREAS**, due to the size, location and proximity of the electric facilities located at Buccaneer State Park, the MDWFP has determined that the electrical infrastructure can be conveyed to MPC for continued public use for the advancement, promotion and development of the State Park and the electric public utility may perform any upgrades to the electrical infrastructure of the State Park that are necessary for the electrical infrastructure to be in compliance with the electric public utility standards;

**WHEREAS**, the transfer of the electric facilities located at Buccaneer State Park can be effectuated upon execution of a Bill of Sale in favor of MPC conveying the personal property and an Easement in favor of MPC granting the requisite real property rights that are reasonably necessary for the provision of electric service;

**THEREFORE**, at its regular meeting of January 25, 2023, the Commission voted unanimously to authorize the Executive Director to execute any documents necessary to accomplish the transfer of the electrical transmission facilities located at Buccaneer State Park, to MPC as contemplated in MISS. CODE ANN. §55-3-33.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks finds that the transfer of such electrical transmission facilities and infrastructure currently located at Buccaneer State Park to the Mississippi Power Company is prudent, in the best interest of the people of the State of Mississippi, and the Executive Director is hereby authorized to execute any and all documents necessary to effectuate the timely transfer of such facilities.

SO RESOLVED, by unanimous vote of the Commission, this the 25<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2023.



Bill F. Cossar, Chairman  
Mississippi Commission on Wildlife,  
Fisheries, and Parks

**CERTIFICATION**

I, **Lynn Posey**, hereby certify that the Resolution set forth above, is a true and correct Resolution of the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, as authorized by a vote taken and spread upon the minutes of the meeting of the Commission, dated January 25, 2023, as duly noticed and conducted by law.



Lynn Posey, Deputy Executive Director  
Mississippi Department of Wildlife,  
Fisheries, and Parks