

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Thursday, November 16, 2023

9 AM Education Session
10 AM Business Session

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS, 39211

EDUCATION SESSION

PRESENT: Commission Chairman Bill F. Cossar, Vice-Chairman Scott Coopwood, Leonard Bentz, William Mounger II, and Gary Rhoads.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Mr. Lynn Posey, Executive Director; Curtis Thornhill, Chief of Staff; Larry Pugh, Deputy Director; Angel Rohnke, Deputy Administrator; Brian Ferguson, Chief of Staff of MS State Parks; Jason Thompson, Director of Administrative Services; Jeremy Bass, Director of Marketing and Communications; Charles Knight, Director of MS Museum of Natural Science; Anthony Ballard, Black Bear Program Leader; Col. Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement; Doug Mann, Executive Staff Officer; and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General. Special Guest: Commissioner Andy Brister, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

State Parks Logo

Mr. Jeremy Bass, Marketing and Communications Director, announced the unveiling of a new logo for Mississippi State Parks. The new logo will serve as a milestone in MDWFP's dedication to our State Parks and the near century-long role Parks have played in preserving and protecting some of our most precious natural resources. He explained that over the last few years, the agency has worked very hard to improve Parks infrastructure and campgrounds, and the new logo was created as a symbol to support these achievements and to serve as a reflection of State Parks' mission to enhance its connection with our guests.

Mr. Bass provided a brief history of MDWFP, which began in 1932 as the "MS Game and Fish Commission," amidst concerns over conservation of pine forests and the habitats they provide.



The MS State Parks system began shortly thereafter in 1934, with 42,000 visitors the first year and close to half a million the subsequent three years. To date, MDWFP's State Parks have welcomed millions of visitors.

The new Parks logo encompasses a turquoise shield featuring a symbolic pinecone amidst horizontal blue and green lines, which represents dedication to preserving and conserving Mississippi's natural and cultural resources. Mr. Bass explained the representation of each of the logo's elements: The Shield as a symbol of protection over the natural, and cultural treasures; the Pinecone as a beacon of Mississippi's rich natural heritage and diverse wildlife; and the Horizontal Lines as a symbol of

the transition between land, water, and sky that defines our scenery. He stated that the Pinecone also serves as a reminder to visitors that even though things may be changing, our State Parks remain "Always in Season."

He outlined State Park's goals and said most of the brand development research went into guest/ambassador interviews to determine the emotional connection they have with our Parks. Mr. Bass said those interviewed indicated that joy, wonder, inspiration, creativity, and a sense of community come to mind. He explained that these experiences, along with Parks' research, history, goals, and purpose, were considered as part of the Parks brand and translated into the new logo.

Mr. Bass announced that the next step is placing the logo into action, which will be done through "logo launch boxes" to be distributed to media outlets, tourism agencies, Mississippi Legislators, and statewide organizations. He said there will also be an awareness campaign in 2024 that will include statewide and national outreach through social media, print publications, and radio.

Black Bear Program Update

Mr. Anthony Ballard, Black Bear Program Leader, provided the Commission with a Black Bear Program update. Mr. Ballard explained each of the program's objectives, including logistics of den checks, baiting and trapping, tagging, and taking samples from captured bears to determine population size and genetic diversity. He also presented information on the use of GPS collars, which aid in monitoring bear travel and help to determine habitat/den site selection, home range, and other information relevant to Black Bear research.

Mr. Ballard participated in six den checks in March of 2023 in cooperation with Mississippi State University and Allen Engineering. Of these den checks, he said six females (sows) were discovered in Bolivar, Warren, and Issaquena Counties, along with six cubs.

He stated that the bears are usually baited with donuts and captured with the use of manual culvert traps deployed at the bait sites. However, he explained that the recent implementation of automated bear traps is more effective in handling of the bears by providing total control of trapping. These traps are less confining, allow for complete air flow, and have a live feed camera. The traps also have a gate that can be activated manually or remotely.

Mr. Ballard announced that in the fall of 2022, eight collared bears were captured over a span of three counties, and in the fall of 2023, the Bear Program had 21 total collared bears over a span of eight counties. Of the 2023 captures, 18 were caught between May-October, with 13 (72%) of them caught via automated trap.

He noted that most Black Bear trappings events in 2023 can be credited to outreach and education on social media, where thousands of individuals have become involved through the "Mississippi Black Bear Photos" Facebook group, launched in April 2023. Originally intended to report Black Bear sightings, the group has yielded more than 7,000 followers and a 600,000+ post reach.

He provided the "Bearwise Basics" for avoiding conflict with Black Bears in the wild, which includes avoiding feeding or approaching them; securing food, garbage, and recycling; removing bird feeders where bears are active; never leaving pet food outdoors; cleaning and storing grills; and alerting neighbors of bear activity.

Mr. Ballard said further promotion of the Black Bear program is underway, with the main goals being research and public education. Also helping to expand the program's reach include "Bear Week" scheduled for spring 2024; promotional items made available to landowners and contributors; "Bearwise" educational materials; more automated traps; and a public survey currently in development with MSU for 2025. He said that further analysis of genetic and collar data for population estimates will also improve the program's reach.

Mr. Ballard was asked whether there were a sufficient number of bears to justify a limited hunting season. He explained that more information should be available in 2024 as to when the bear population could possibly be legally hunted in Mississippi. He said it is important to know how many bears are available before determining how many can be harvested, and efforts are underway to determine those numbers.

Commissioner Bentz introduced Commissioner Andy Brister of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The Commissioners asked Commissioner Brister to come forward and inform the Commission of Louisiana's new Black Bear Season.

Commissioner Brister informed the Commission that Louisiana's Bear Season will be by lottery and limited to 10 hunters. The season will run in northeast Louisiana for 16 days in December 2024. Hunts will be restricted to properly licensed Louisiana residents, and all successful applicants for the hunt will be required to attend an LDWF bear hunter training course.

November 16, 2023

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Thursday, November 16, 2023

**9 AM Education Session
10 AM Business Session**

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS, 39211

MINUTES – BUSINESS SESSION

PRESENT: Commission Chairman Bill F. Cossar, Vice-Chairman Scott Coopwood, Leonard Bentz, William Mounger II, and Gary Rhoads.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Mr. Lynn Posey, Executive Director; Curtis Thornhill, Chief of Staff; Larry Pugh, Deputy Director; Angel Rohnke, Deputy Administrator; Brian Ferguson, Chief of Staff of MS State Parks; Jason Thompson, Director of Administrative Services; Jeremy Bass, Director of Marketing and Communications; Charles Knight, Director of MS Museum of Natural Science; Russ Walsh, Wildlife Bureau Chief of Staff; Col. Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement; Doug Mann, Executive Staff Officer; and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General. Special Guest: Commissioner Andy Brister, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

OPENING PRAYER

Jason Thompson, Director of Administrative Services, opened the meeting with prayer.

Chairman Cossar welcomed guests Senator Mike Seymour, MS Representative Doug McCleod, former MS Representative Ted Foster, MS Outdoor Stewardship Fund Executive Director Ricky Flynt, and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Commissioner Andy Brister.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion made by Vice-Chairman Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Bentz, the Commission meeting minutes of October 12, 2023, were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

Director Posey announced amendments to the agenda, which included two additional guests for the Public Comments portion—Cameron Dinkins and Walt Rambo. He also noted that there would be an Executive Session added to the agenda and one "Other Business" item.

ACTION: Commissioner Bentz moved to approve the agenda for November 16, 2023. Commissioner Mounger seconded the motion and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Cossar recognized Louisiana Commissioner Andy Brister. Commissioner Brister stated that he represents the area from Ruston to Alexandria and Natchez to the Arkansas border. He informed the Commission that his interests include education on the Mississippi River and its surrounding islands, CWD, the LA Bear Program, and the invasive carp issue. He thanked the Commission for having him and added that he looks forward to meeting the Commissioners and working with them in the future.

Chairman Cossar welcomed Mr. Cameron Dinkins and called him to address the Commission. Mr. Dinkins, a Glen Allen native who operates a duck hunting guide service, expressed appreciation for Mississippi's funding of projects to enhance and restore wetlands on his property and other properties through duck stamp sales proceeds. Mr. Dinkins also thanked the Commission for Duck Stamp funding allocated to the wetlands and grasslands of Canada's Pothole Prairie Region, which increases harvest potential. Chairman Cossar thanked him for his comments.

Chairman Cossar welcomed Mr. Walt Rambo, a Sunflower County farmer who addressed the Commission regarding the Commission's October discussion of Duck Stamp funding. Mr. Rambo, an avid waterfowler, said he hopes that his children can have the same hunting experiences as himself. He emphasized the effect that Duck Stamp funding to areas in Canada and the Dakotas has on Mississippi's duck population. He stated that continued monetary support of organizations like Ducks Unlimited and Delta Waterfowl is imperative. Chairman Cossar thanked Mr. Dinkins for his comments.

Also welcomed by Chairman Cossar was David Smith, president of the MS Hunting Dog Association. Mr. Smith presented the Commission with details on the Grenada Fox Hunt charity event, which featured 954 hounds from 26 states during the six-day event. He noted its impact on tourism and income to Mississippi, with one of the events generating \$8 million. He acknowledged that two event's winners and eight top 10 scorers in other events were Mississippians. Mr. Smith recognized members of the Grenada Lake Fox Preserve, including Charles Parker, Terence Harrison, Ted Foster, Hayes Nolan, and Mike Smith, and invited them to address the Commission.

Mr. Smith introduced Chris Graham of Vardaman, MS, president of the All-American Fox Hunt. Mr. Graham informed the Commission that the MHDA hosts not just fox hunts, but also the *Le Bonheur* Hunt which generated a MDHA donation of more than \$650,000 to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital.

Mr. Graham commented that the goal of the hunts is not to kill the foxes or coyotes, but to merely serve as a hound dog sporting competition. He noted that one event grossed an estimated \$1.3 million. He thanked the Commission for their help in the past.

Commissioner Bentz asked Mr. Graham whether GPS collars were used during the hunts. Mr. Graham responded yes—nearly all participants utilize the collars. Commissioner Bentz stated that he has asked MDWFP to conduct a study and enact a collar policy for hunts on state-owned WMA's. He asked that the MDHA take the initiative to deter "bad apples" who violate the rules and regulations of the hunts.

Mr. Graham turned the discussion over to Darren Harris, president of the All-American Field Trial, scheduled for February 3rd -10th and open to the U.S. and Canada. Mr. Harris stated that between 600-800 dogs and 50 judges are expected at the event.

Chairman Cossar asked Mr. Harris how many hunt attendees were expected at the Field Trial. Mr. Harris answered between 300-400 people.

Commissioner Mounger asked what type of lodging hunt attendees usually choose and whether it involves State Parks. Mr. Harris replied that attendees indeed stay in State Parks, as well as hotels and campers. He thanked the Commission and Chairman Cossar expressed his appreciation for his comments.

Charles Parker, President of the MS Fox Hunter's Preserve in Yalobusha and Grenada Counties, approached the Commission and emphasized the usefulness and convenience of GPS collars.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson presented the License Sales Report for the month of October 2023. The total revenue generated for the end of September was \$4,894,000, down \$24,000 from last year.

The number of licenses sold is down 5% from October 2022.
Highlights of his report are as follows:

- Resident license sales – \$2.1 million
- Resident waterfowl stamps – increase of 3%
- Velvet Deer Permits, 2,993 sold; 3,786 sold in 2022
- RES WMA User Permit – up 3%
- Boating & Fishing Guide Permits – 70 RES & 7 NR sold - \$45,675
- Non-resident license sales – up \$35,000
 - NR Small Game Hunting – up 8%
 - NR 7-day Small Game – up 25%
 - NR Deer Permit – up \$150,000
- Permit category – Alligator Licenses – up 3%; 2,316 sold (17 more than last year)
- Lifetime License category – down 4%
- License packages sold – 10,084, compared to 9,483 in 2022
- Autorenewal customers increased to 9,199, up from 7,339

Chairman Cossar asked how many non-resident licenses were sold to Louisiana residents. Mr. Thompson responded that Louisiana licenses brought in \$1.6 million in revenue.

Commissioner Mounger inquired of the status of the new Licensing System. Mr. Thompson stated that weekly meetings were still in place and the target rollout date of January 2025 remains the same.

Hunter's Holiday Campaign

Jeremy Bass came forward to present information on MDWFP's "Hunter's Holiday," a renewal and recruitment License campaign that focuses on two target audiences: License holders who need to renew a hunting or fishing license, and individuals who have never held a hunting or fishing license. Anyone renewing or acquiring a new license from November to the end of January will be entered to win a "Hunter's Holiday Package."

Mr. Bass explained that each target segment will have a chance to win an incentive package created through several sponsor agreements. Renewals will get the chance to win a Winchester 20-gauge, a 75-quart cooler, and a \$100 Van's Sporting Goods gift card. New license holders will get the chance to win a Bergara .22 rifle along with a 75-quart cooler and \$100 gift card from Van's.

Mr. Bass discussed outreach methods that will include social media, social media advertising, point-of-sale promotions, email marketing, and geotargeting specific audience segments, including extending the campaign to Louisiana and Alabama.

He said the campaign will have an additional incentive with the agency's new partner, OnX, which will offer a 30% discount for the holidays.

Vice-Chairman Coopwood asked whether there will be any television or cable promotions included in the campaign. Mr. Bass said not with this program, but there were plans for those types of advertising in the future.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife Update

40 Miss. Admin. Code, Part 2, rule 1.23 Sunflower WMA Rules and Regulations for 2023-24, FINAL.

Russ Walsh, Wildlife Chief of Staff, stated that the approved change to Rule 1.23 – Sunflower WMA from the October 12th Commission Meeting had received no public comments. He recommended that Rule 1.23 be approved as Final by the Commission.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads, the Commission unanimously approved Rule 1.23 as Final.

Mr. Walsh proposed a license exemption request for G6:2 Outdoors, who will host a hunt to include disabled individuals and out-of-state hunters December 1-3, 2023.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Bentz, the License Exemption Request for G6:2 Outdoors was approved by the Commission.

PARKS

Parks Update

Mr. Brian Ferguson, Chief of Staff for MS State Parks, reviewed Parks information distributed to the Commission outlining the amount of money spent thus far on State Park projects, which covered three categories totaling over \$67 million.

Vice-Chairman Coopwood stated that at one time, he thought the numbers exceeded \$100-\$150 million. Director Posey said that amount included infrastructure changes not taken into account by the current estimation.

Mr. Ferguson said deferred maintenance and improvements did in fact total about \$100 million, and a request would be made for more funding in the next Legislative Session. He added that about five State Parks will undergo significant changes by this time next year, and these were listed in the handout along with changes planned for the Museum as well.

Mr. Ferguson stated that at the last meeting, he'd mentioned plans for partnerships with companies that provide amenities not previously held by Parks.

He introduced two guests to the Commission, including Matt Mahaffey, Director of Sales/Training of BeanFruit Coffee Company of Flowood, MS, which was selected by agency employees as the official coffee brand provided at MS State Parks. Mr. Mahaffey invited the public to attend a "Coffee Roastery" hosted by BeanFruit. Mr. Ferguson stated that he and Parks' staff have worked with Mr. Mahaffey to develop the selected flavor, to be featured in State Parks' retail stores and cabins statewide.

Mr. Ferguson also introduced Ameka Coleman, founder and CEO of "Strands of Faith," a Pearl, MS-based all-natural haircare brand discovered by Mr. Ferguson. Ms. Coleman, who holds multiple degrees including Clinical Research, has achieved success through promoting her company through social media.

Mr. Ferguson stated he has worked with Ms. Coleman to produce Parks' official soap, which will also be featured in all State Parks. He added that Parks looks forward to future partnerships with similar businesses around the state.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Update

Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported 378 citations issued for the month of October with the top five as: "No License" (76 citations); Supplemental Feeding (21 citations); Trespassing (19 citations); No WMA Permit (12 Citations); and Headlighting (10 citations).

Colonel Carter noted that Officer Barnes received a complaint in Lamar County of an individual illegally harvesting turkeys. Officer Barnes interviewed the subject, who admitted to killing the turkeys with a .22 rifle. The subject was charged with killing a hen and jake out of season, unlawful possession, illegal shot size, and no hunting license. Colonel Carter commended the officer on his work.

Shooting range customer counts were: McIvor – 974; Turcotte – 1,322; and McHenry – 1,175, each up from September.

Colonel Carter also provided a case update from January 2023, involving 262 crappies seized at Enid Spillway by Officers Tallent and Evans. Colonel Carter read aloud a press release that was issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the case. He added that plans are underway for further investigations on repeat offenders for hunting and fishing violations.

He recognized the arresting officers along with Major Tracey Tullos of the MDWFP Investigations Unit, who informed the Commission on details of the case. The case involved the January 1, 2023, arrest of two men from Lakeland, TN. Colonel Carter stated that in addition, the men used oversized hooks exceeding the number allowed per line. Both men were fined \$1,000 and a restitution to MDWFP for \$4,275. Each defendant was placed on probation for one year, during which each was prohibited to fish anywhere worldwide and banned from all USACE property in the Northern District of MS as a probation condition.

Colonel Carter expressed his thanks to USFW, the assisting officers, and the U.S. Assistant District Attorney who assisted in the prosecution of the case.

Major Tullos stated that the Investigations Unit's purpose is to assist our local and county officers and our state and federal partners and hopes to continue to be an asset to their efforts in the future.

Discussion followed between the Commission and the MDWFP officers involved in the case. Commissioner Cossar thanked the officers for their work.

License Reinstatements

Colonel Carter announced six license reinstatements, as follows:

Mr. Dez Fairley, Mr. Breeland Collins, and Mr. Elijah Brown of Jackson County. The violation took place Dec 23, 2021. The Jackson County Sheriff's Office had the three subjects detained for shots fired after dark.

Mr. Fairley presented the Commission with his version of the incident, which entailed the three boys riding in separate trucks late at night with another subject (not present). Fairley stated he shot a deer while in the truck as Collins shot a second deer from the other truck. The boys were followed by an unknown person and pulled into the backyard with the deer, when the person following them (the landowner), contacted the police. The police contacted an MDWFP officer, who arrived at the scene in the early morning and issued the tickets to Fairley, Collins, and Brown.

Collins presented a similar account of the incident. Each was issued four tickets ranging from \$3200-\$3,800 and lost their licenses for one year, along with their guns. Mr. Brown concurred with the accounts of Mr. Fairley and Mr. Collins and also lost his gun, which did not belong to him.

Colonel Carter recommended that all three boys be reinstated having met the requirements.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the licenses for Mr. Fairley, Mr. Collins, and Mr. Brown were reinstated.

Colonel Carter introduced Kameron Crowley of Walthall County. The violation took place November 27, 2020, in Choctaw County. Officers had received complaints of illegal hunting activity which prompted a stakeout of the area. A vehicle was observed traveling down the road, headlighting from the driver's side. The officer pulled the vehicle over and made the arrest citing Mr. Crowley for headlighting.

Mr. Crowley informed the Commission that he was asked by a friend to hunt hogs and was a passenger in the vehicle that was stopped for the offense. He stated the driver had shot a rabbit but no deer or any other animal while Mr. Crowley was in the vehicle. The driver had two loaded guns in the truck.

Colonel Carter recommended Mr. Crowley be reinstated, as he had paid his fine and met all requirements.

ACTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Bentz to reinstate Mr. Crowley's license. Commissioner Rhoads seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Colonel Carter presented the Commission with the reinstatement recommendation for Mr. Clay Hoover of Guntown, MS. The date of violation was December 8, 2021. The arresting officer had received a call from residents reporting shots fired. Officer Starling met with the caller/landowner who advised the officer that they recognized the vehicle and owner and would like to press charges. Officer Starling received a call from Mr. Hoover after launching his investigation.

Mr. Hoover informed the Commission that he was driving his truck with a friend and had his father's gun while headlighting. Mr. Hoover said he was holding the headlight and drove in several circles, so as not to raise suspicion. He stated that he and his friend shot at a deer

from the window of the vehicle. Mr. Hoover said a nearby homeowner recognized his vehicle and called his father and asked to speak to him, by which Mr. Hoover said he admitted to headlighting and shooting at the deer. Officer Starling called Hoover's father, which prompted Hoover to call Starling and admit to the offense.

Mr. Hoover said the offense cost him about \$3,000 and resulted in losing his father's gun and hunting license for the past two years. He said the gun has not been returned.

Colonel Carter recommended Hoover be reinstated since he had met all requirements.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the hunting license of Mr. Clay Hoover was reinstated.

Colonel Carter also presented the Commission with the reinstatement recommendation for Austin Miller of Marietta, MS. The violation occurred in Itawamba County, resulting from a call from the Itawamba County Sheriff's Office for shots being fired after dark. Officer McFerrin arrived at the location where the incident was reported, also hearing shots. He spotted Mr. Miller's vehicle and made the arrest.

Mr. Miller told the Commission that he was in the truck with his brother and shot a doe from the truck's window. He said half an hour later, they returned to get the deer and saw blue lights following them as they left the scene with the deer in the truck. Mr. Miller said he and his brother received multiple tickets. He added that the incident cost about \$2,300 and he lost his weapon, which has been returned to him.

Colonel Carter recommended Mr. Miller's reinstatement, as he had met all necessary requirements.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Bentz and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads, Mr. Miller's license was reinstated.

Colonel Carter added that he would like to thank those assisting law enforcement officers, stating that these arrests would not have been made if law enforcement did not receive the calls. He encouraged everyone to call 1-800-BE-SMART to report any violations witnessed.

David Smith asked Colonel Carter about a meeting he attended between the National Forest Service and MS Hunting Dog Association regarding Forest Service "safety rules" on Forest Service lands.

Commissioner Bentz asked whether MDWFP would enforce the safety rule enacted by the U.S. Forest Service.

Colonel Carter responded that the agency would assist the Forest Service to the extent possible; however, we do not have any authority to enforce Forest Service rules on Forest Service lands.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Cossar recognized Larry Pugh, Deputy Director, who presented the Commission with a resolution dedicated to Ms. Sharon Polzin, who has served as MDWFP's Commission Secretary for the past 10 years. Ms. Polzin will retire effective November 30, 2023, having also served in the capacities of Administrative Assistant to the Executive Staff, the Deputy Director, and the Director of Technical Programs; as well as serving as Executive Assistant to Dr. Sam Polles for the remainder of his career. Mr. Pugh stated as of November 16, 2023, the Commission has voted unanimously to honor Ms. Polzin for her faithful service to the people and state of Mississippi, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks, and the Commission for MDWFP. Mr. Pugh presented Ms. Polzin with a resolution signed by Chairman Cossar and Director Posey. A standing ovation followed.

Chairman Cossar presented Ms. Polzin with a gift and extended his gratitude for her service.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Director Posey announced the next Commission Meeting date information.

Date: Thursday, December 14, 2023
Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS
Time: 10 a.m. Business Session – No Executive Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Director Posey announced that an Executive Session for the Commission was necessary.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Coopwood to close the meeting to determine the need for an Executive Session to discuss transactions in real property and strategy involving prospective or potential litigation. Commissioner Rhoads seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting. The meeting was closed.

The room having been cleared, Mr. Malone announced to the public outside that the Commission had closed the meeting to determine the need for an Executive Session to discuss transactions in real property and prospective litigation strategy.

Discussion followed.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session to discuss transactions in real property and strategy involving prospective or potential litigation.

November 16, 2023

Mr. Malone made the appropriate announcement to the members of the public outside the Commission room.

Art Kennard updated the Commission on a tract of land that had been considered for purchase several years ago; however, the owners were not yet ready to sell. They are now ready to sell and have contacted us to see if the state is still interested. Mr. Kennard requested Commission approval to obtain the required appraisals of the property.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the Commission approved obtaining appraisals on the subject land.

Next, Mr. Malone and Executive Director Posey brought up an issue that could result in litigation in the future.

Discussion followed.

The Commission took the matter under advisement. No further action was required.

Commissioner Coopwood made a motion to come out of Executive Session and re-open the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Mounger. The Commission voted unanimously to end the Executive Session and the meeting was re-opened.

Mr. Malone made the appropriate announcement, reporting the approval of obtaining appraisals and that there was no action on the potential litigation matter.

ADJOURNMENT

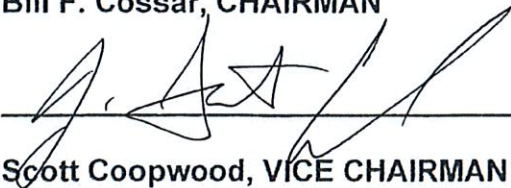
There being no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Rhoads made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Bentz. The Commission voted unanimously in favor and the meeting was adjourned.



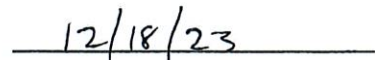
Bill F. Cossar, CHAIRMAN



Date



Scott Coopwood, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date

November 16, 2023

BEFORE THE MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON
WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

In Re: In honor of Sharon Polzin's service to the Commission, upon her retirement.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, On November 3, 2011, Sharon Polzin began her employment as an Administrative Assistant in the Executive Offices of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks;

WHEREAS, During the early years of Mrs. Polzin's service, she provided administrative and clerical support to the agency's Deputy Executive Director, and Director of Technical Programs;

WHEREAS, In addition to providing clerical support to the Executive Staff, Sharon also assumed the responsibilities of providing administrative clerical support to the Commission; which included, but was not limited to, coordinating the Commissioners' travel, obtaining surety bonds for each Commissioner as required by law, transcribing and maintaining all minutes and minute books of the Commission meetings, and all other administrative support for the Commission;

WHEREAS, In addition to providing support for the Commission, following the retirement of her immediate predecessor, Sharon assumed the role of Executive Assistant to the Executive Director, Dr. Sam G. Polles, for the remainder of his career as Executive Director of the agency;

WHEREAS, Having faithfully served the Commission for the past ten years, Sharon has become eligible to retire from state service and has taken the steps to do so, effective November 30, 2023.

THEREFORE, at its regular meeting of November 16, 2023, the Commission voted unanimously to honor Mrs. Sharon Polzin and her service to the people and State of Mississippi, by resolution set forth below.

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks finds that Sharon Polzin has devoted her time and resources to serving the Mississippi Commission on, and Department of, Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, in a supporting administrative role for over ten (10) years. In recognition of her faithful service, the Commission acknowledges, with gratitude and affection, Sharon Polzin's career with the Department, and extends to her our heartfelt congratulations and regards for all she has done for us.

SO RESOLVED, by unanimous vote of the Commission, this 16th day of November, 2023.



Bill E. Cossar, Chairman

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 November 16, 2023.


Lynn Posey, Executive Director