

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

**Thursday June 19th, 2025
10:00 PM Business Session
MDWFP Headquarters
1505 Eastover Drive**

BUSINESS SESSION MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Scott Coopwood and Commissioners Gary Rhoads, Billy Mounger, Colin Maloney, and were in attendance. Todd Hairston joined by phone.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Executive Director Lynn Posey, Col. Jerry Carter, Russ Walsh, Amy Blaylock, Jerry Brown, Jason Thompson, Andre' Hollis, Drew Malone (General Counsel) and Doug Mann.

The Chairman gaveled the meeting into order and welcomed guests, both those watching the live stream video and those attending in person.

OPENING PRAYER

Chairman Coopwood requested that Jason Thompson, Director of Administrative Services, open the meeting with prayer.

AWARD PRESENTATION

Commissioner Mounger was asked to present an Outstanding Mississippi Sportsman award to Mr. Raymond Callahan. Commissioner Mounger recognized Raymond Callahan for his distinguished service in natural resource and wildlife conservation, particularly in wetlands preservation. Early in his career, Mr. Callahan served as a Forest Ranger in Colorado, as a County Forester for the Mississippi Forestry Commission, and as forester/wildlife biologist as the US Naval Air Station in Meridian. He also served as a Field Biologist for Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and through the SCS evolution into the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). After leaving that position, he continued to serve for over thirty years as a biologist in the private sector, working to conserve Mississippi's natural resources.

MINUTES

Chairman Coopwood asked the Commission to review the minutes from the May meeting and when done called for a motion to approve the minutes.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Maloney, the Commission meeting minutes of May 15th, 2025, were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

The Chairman asked Executive Director, Lynn Posey if there were any changes to the proposed agenda. Mr. Posey stated there are no public comments and there is a need for an Executive Session.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Maloney, the Commission unanimously approved the meeting agenda for June 19th, 2025.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of Administrative Services, presented the License Sales Report for the month of May 2025. The total revenue for the end of May was down 3% (\$18,871,431.00) compared to May 2024.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – \$6,406,316.50 (down 4.75%)
- Non-resident license sales – \$11,233,794.90 (down 2.31%)
- Other Licenses – \$101,490.00 (down 1.71%)
- Lifetime License category – \$764,000.00 (down 3.72%)

Mr. Thompson also stated that there will be test messages sent out to remind sportsmen to renew their licenses.

PARKS

40 Miss. Admin. Code, Part 6, Rule 1.1 State Park Fees (Proposed)

Brian Ferguson, Parks Bureau Chief of Staff, presented the proposed changes to Rule 1.1, changing state park fees. These changes will increase the fees for rental and events.

Rule 1.1

- **NIGHTLY FEES:** Changing overnight maximum fees to \$350. This includes cabins, cottages, and townhouses
- **PERSONAL CHECKS:** Remove personal checks as a payment option
- **GULF VIEW and PRIMITIVE SITES:** Remove them from discount exclusions
- **WEDDING FEES:** Change wedding fees from \$0 to \$1,000 (depending on the size of the wedding)

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Maloney, the Commission unanimously approved Rule 1.1 as a PROPOSED rule.

40 Miss Admi. Code, Part 6, Rule 1.2 General Rules and Regulations for State Parks (PROPOSED)

Mr. Ferguson also presented changes to Rule 1.2, making some changes to reservations.

Rule 1.2

CALL CENTER TITLE: Change Itinio to Parks call center. Removing vendor reference

RESERVATION WINDOW: Change from 13 to 12 months for reservation window

MINIMUM NIGHT STAY: Remove minimum night stay requirements for peak season, off season, and add MS State Parks reserves the right to establish minimum night stay requirements as the need arises

CHANGE CHECK IN/CHECK OUT TIME: Change check-in from 2:00 P.M. to 11:00 A.M., and check-out time from 4:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved Rule 1.2 as a PROPOSED rule.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement Update

Col. Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported that during the month of May 2025, a total of 720 citations were issued with "No License" being number one (162), "Trespassing" was number two (80), "PFD Violation" was number three (79), "Unlawful Possession" was number four (36), and "No Boater Ed Certificate" was number five (32).

Customer counts for the department's shooting ranges for the month of May were: McIvor – 244; Turcotte – 731; and McHenry – 632 customers.

OTHER BUSINESS

Resolution – Commemorating Chairman Scott Coopwood

Executive Director, Lynn Posey, shared a resolution in honor of Chairman Coopwood, which was motioned by Vice-Chairman Rhoads. Chairman Coopwood was also honored with a plaque regarding his time as a Commissioner for MDWFP.

Election of Officers

Commissioner Mounger made a motion to nominate Commissioner Gary Rhoads as Chairman of the Commission for 2025-2026, which was seconded by Commissioner Maloney. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Maloney made a motion to nominate Commissioner Billy Mounger as Vice Chairman of the Commission for 2025-2026, which was seconded by Commissioner Rhoads. The motion passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Executive Director Posey announced the proposed date and time for the next meeting as follows:

Date: Thursday, July 24th, 2025
Location: MDWFP Headquarters – 1505 Eastover Drive
Time: 10:00 AM Business Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Coopwood asked Executive Director Posey if there were a need for Executive Session. Executive Director Posey replied that there was indeed a need for an Executive Session to discuss matters involving personnel and budget items. The Chairman called for a motion to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Maloney the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to determine the need for an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters including job performance of individuals in specific positions and budget line items that could affect the continued employment of individuals in specific positions.

The meeting was closed and the room was cleared.

Drew Malone, General Counsel, announced to the visitors now in the lobby that the meeting had been closed to determine the need for an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and budget items.

A closed discussion followed.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Maloney and seconded by Commissioner Mounger the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel matters including job performance of individuals in specific positions and budget line items that could affect the continued employment of individuals in specific positions.

Drew Malone, General Counsel, announced to the visitors now in the lobby that the Commission had voted to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and budget line items

Director Posey informed the Commission of proposed changes on the Executive staff and promotions within the senior leadership of the law enforcement bureau.

At this time Drew Malone, General Counsel, for the Agency asked that the room be cleared by all in attendance except for the Commissioners.

Mr. Malone informed the Commission that Director Posey has not received a raise in two years. Commissioner Coopwood stated that Director Posey's salary needed to be addressed by the Commission and discussion followed.

After discussing the matter and with confirmation from the General Counsel that the suggested pay increase was within the range established by the State Personnel Board's SEC² personnel system, Commissioner Gary Rhoads made the motion to raise the salary of the Executive Director to \$185,000.00. Commissioner Mounger second the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the pay raise.

There being no further matters for discussion in Executive Session, Chairman Coopwood called for a motion to re-open the meeting.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Hairston the Commission voted unanimously to exit Executive session and return to an open meeting.

Mr. Malone announced to those still outside the room that the Commission had voted to raise the salary of the Executive Director within the range allowed under the state personnel system. Having no further business to discuss in Executive Session, the Commission had opened the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Coopwood called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Maloney made the motion to adjourn which was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Coopwood gaveled his last meeting into adjournment.




Gary Rhoads, CHAIRMAN



Billy Mounger, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date



Date