

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Thursday September 17, 2025

10:00 AM Business Session

MDWFP Headquarters

1505 Eastover Drive

Jackson, MS 39211

BUSINESS SESSION MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Gary Rhoads, Vice-Chairman Billy Mounger, and Commissioners Colin Maloney, Todd Hairston, and Drew St. John were in attendance.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Executive Director Lynn Posey, Curtis Thornhill, Scottie Jones, Col. Jerry Carter, Russ Walsh, Amy Blaylock, Jerry Brown, Jason Thompson, Brian Ferguson, 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 Rhoads requested that Jason Thompson, Director of Administrative Services, open the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES

Chairman Rhoads asked the Commission to review the minutes of the August meeting and when done, he called for a motion to approve the minutes.

ACTION: Upon motion to approve by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner St. John, the Commission meeting minutes of August 20th, 2025, were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

The Chairman asked Executive Director, Lynn Posey, if there were any changes to the proposed agenda. Mr. Posey stated that there were no changes and there would not be a need for an Executive Session. There also would be no public comments.

Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Maloney, the Commission unanimously approved of the meeting agenda for September 17th, 2025.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of Administrative Services, presented the License Sales Report for August 2025.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

Resident license sales - \$919,194.90 (up 12.03%)
Non-resident license sales - \$429,473.30 (down 0.58%)
Other license sales - \$73,130.00 (up 52.95%)
Lifetime license sales - \$97,000 (down 12.22%)

WILDLIFE

Russ Walsh discussed the "Mississippi Wild Conservation Snapshot" report. He explained that the Wildlife Bureau created this document to showcase their work across different wildlife species. The report provides a two-page spread for each species, highlighting:

1. The current state of the population
2. A hot topic related to that species
3. Conservation efforts by the Wildlife Bureau

The goal was to create an informative, digestible document that tells the story of their work and shows how hunting license dollars support conservation efforts. Mr. Walsh praised the marketing department and graphic designer for helping create this comprehensive report. Mr. Walsh explained how they plan on making social media posts and uploading the report to our website.

PARKS

Mr. Ferguson reports on visitation and revenue for state parks in August, noting a typical seasonal decline in August due to school starting back.

Highlights of Mr. Ferguson's report are listed below:

Total Visitors- 138,273
Total Occupancy- 31,040
Total Revenue- \$1,550,000

Chairman Rhoads expressed how impressive the reopening of Roosevelt was and how nice the cabins are.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Col. Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement, reported that during the month of August 2025, a total of 428 citations were issued with "No Resident License" being number one (123), "No Fishing License Non-Resident" number two (37), "No WMA Permit" was three (28), "No Boat Registration" was number four (28), "State Lake Violations" was number five (23).

The Law Enforcement Bureau's report covered a range of activities. The K9 unit assisted in weapons recovery and search operations, while officers conducted river patrols and boating checks, issuing 20 citations. Their special dive team helped local sheriff's departments, including recovering a drowning victim.

South Region Officer Awards:

- Levi Walker: MDWFP Officer of the Year
- Steven Trosclair: South Region NWTF Officer of the year
- Keith Bond: South Region Waterfowl Officer of the year

Customer counts for the department's shooting ranges for the month of August were:

McIvor – 878
Turcotte – 838
McHenry – 610

License Reinstatement

Mr. Joseph Eli Chism was caught illegally hunting a deer after legal shooting hours. He was riding down a field road in Monroe County and decided to harvest a deer using a spotlight after sunset. Game wardens received a tip from social media posts, investigated, and obtained a confession from Chisholm. He admitted it was a "dumb decision" and that he missed hunting with his family. During the reinstatement hearing, he acknowledged the serious risks of spotlight hunting, such as potentially injuring someone in the woods. The commission ultimately reinstated his hunting license after he showed remorse and understanding of his violation.

ACTION: Upon motion to approve by Commissioner Maloney and seconded by Commissioner St. John, the Commission unanimously approved the reinstatement of the license of Joseph Eli Chism.

OTHER BUSINESS

Andre Hollis received the prestigious Canada Bear Trap Award at the National Association of Park Directors conference in Davis, West Virginia. This award recognizes exceptional leadership, innovation, and commitment to state park management and preservation. Mr. Hollis is only the second Mississippi State Park Director to receive this

honor, with the first being Auburn Roselle in 1985. During his acceptance speech, Hollis thanked the leadership who believed in him and highlighted the transformation of Mississippi's state parks from being considered for privatization to becoming a source of pride for the state.

Doug Mann was honored with a resolution commending his nearly 30 years of service to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. The resolution praised his professionalism, dedication, and the valuable legal guidance he provided to the department and commission throughout his career. In his brief acceptance speech, Mann reflected on his time with the department, noting he's worked with great teams and commissioners. He highlighted how he's seen staff members like Andre Hollis grow in their careers and described his job as the "greatest job in the world," using humor to describe the varied challenges he's faced, such as dealing with complex legal issues involving dog hunters, private landowners, and national park services.

NEXT MEETING

Date: TBD
Location: TBD
Time: TBD

ADJOURNMENT

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




Gary Rhoads, CHAIRMAN



Billy Mounger, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date



Date