MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Thursday, August 27, 2026
10:00 AM Business Session
MDWFP Headquarters
1505 Eastover Drive
Jackson, MS 39211

BUSINESS SESSION MINUTES

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Executive Director Lynn Posey, Curtis Thornhill, Michelle Carter, Jerry Brown, Jeremy Bass, Amy Blaylock, Scottie Jones, Colonel Jerry Carter, Brian Ferguson, Jason Thompson, Russ Walsh, Angel Rohnke, Andre Hollis, Chris Clark, Drew Malone (General Counsel), and Mitchell Boulanger (Deputy General Counsel).

The Chairman gaveled the meeting into order and welcomed all guests, both in person and on the live stream.

OPENING PRAYER

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

MINUTES

Chairman Mounger asked the Commission to review the July meeting minutes and then call for a motion to approve them.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Vice-Chairman Hairston, the Commission meeting minutes for July 23, 2026, were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

The Chairman asked Executive Director Posey whether there were any changes to the agenda. Executive Director Posey noted that there would be public comments and that the Commission would need to hold a brief Executive Session on personnel matters.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Vice-Chairman Hairston, the Commission unanimously approved the meeting agenda for August 27, 2026

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ed Penny, Director of Public Policy for Ducks Unlimited, thanked the Commission, Executive Director Posey, and the Department for their support of waterfowl projects and recent sporting clays events. He noted that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal to allow permanent drainage of prairie potholes is on hold but may return and cited ongoing annual threats to key habitat. Mr. Penny said Ducks Unlimited and waterfowl hunters appreciated the Commission's early involvement. The Commissioners thanked him for his comments.

Brent Pendleton of Hope Outdoors described the organization's nine chapters across the state and its efforts to expand, including plans for a new Gulf Coast chapter. He noted that the group provides adaptive fishing and hunting opportunities for individuals with special needs, including equipment such as battery-operated reels. He said the Marion County chapter will hold its first fishing event on Saturday and emphasized the organization's goal of ensuring that no disability prevents participation. Mr. Pendleton also thanked the Commission for its support, and the Commissioners thanked him for his comments.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of Administrative Services, presented the July 2026 License Sales Report and noted that total revenue decreased by 4.53% from the previous year.

Highlights of this report are listed below:

- Resident license sales - $231,355.70 (down 15.36%)
- Non-Resident license sales - $143,318.40 (down 5.78%)
- Other licenses - $3,140.00 (down 25.43%)
- Lifetime license category – $59,500.00 (up 25.26%)

He also reported that 8,750 customers have enrolled in auto-renewal since its February launch and said marketing efforts will continue.

PARKS

Andre Hollis, State Parks Director, reported July 2026 visitation and revenue totals:

- Total visitors: 92,000
- Total Occupancy: 17,000
- Total Revenue: $1.31 Million

He noted strong attendance and revenue from America 250 events and provided updates on ongoing construction and improvements across multiple state parks.

Great Mississippi Nature Trail – LeFleur's Bluff State Park

Jeremy Bass, Marketing Director, briefed the Commission on the Great Mississippi Nature Trail and highlighted LeFleur's Bluff State Park, a 300-acre urban park featuring the Natural Science Museum, a playground, and a 2.3-mile trail through woodlands, wetlands, Mayes Lake, and the Pearl River. He noted that the trail network now includes 20 sites and that the Department is developing expansion criteria with support from the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) and Tourism while increasing marketing and sponsorship efforts. Angel Rohnke, Natural Science Museum Director, reported that construction has begun on a new pedestrian bridge in the park, with completion expected next year, and outlined additional planned improvements including a nine-hole executive golf course, pickleball facilities, and other recreation projects funded by state and private sources.

WILDLIFE

40 Miss. Admin. Code, Rule 2.4 Supplemental Feeding of Wild Animals Outside of Wildlife Enclosures (Proposed)

Amy Blaylock, Wildlife Director, presented a proposed amendment to Rule 2.4 on supplemental feeding of wild animals outside enclosures. The amendment aligns the rule with state statute by adding "game birds" throughout and removing the word "stationary" before "spin-cast feeders" to allow evenly distributed broadcast feeding. Mrs. Blaylock emphasized that feed must be evenly scattered and not placed in piles. The Commission reviewed the proposed wording and considered a motion to approve the changes.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Vice-Chairman Hairston, the Commission unanimously approved the update to Rule 2.4, as proposed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Col. Jerry Carter reported that officers issued a total of 458 citations in July 2026 with "Personal Floatation Device" (PFD) being number one (69), "No Boat Registration" being number two (67), "No Resident License" being number three (60), "No Running Lights" being number four (33), and "Reckless Operation" being number five (32). He also noted that officers issued 18 citations for "Boating Under the Influence."

On January 11, 2025, Officer Tallent cited Walker Waldo in Yalobusha County for multiple violations, including headlighting, hunting after hours, hunting from a public roadway, trespassing, and using unlawful shot size. Officer Tallent found Mr. Waldo on a roadway with a loaded rifle and a spotlight, and Mr. Waldo admitted to shooting a deer without the landowner's permission. Officer Tallent seized the rifle and spotlight and issued the citations. The Commissioners reviewed the incident involving Mr. Waldo, provided guidance, and Col. Carter confirmed that Mr. Waldo met all reinstatement requirements.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Vice-Chairman Hairston, the Commission unanimously approved the reinstatement of Walker Waldo's hunting license.

Following the reinstatement, Executive Director Posey reported improved compliance, noting fewer violations for failing to purchase a resident license. He encouraged residents to buy licenses, emphasizing that license revenue supports outdoor programs and helps secure federal funding. He expressed hope that the positive trend continues.

Col. Carter honored Captain Marcus Christon, a 2026 LawFit Hall of Fame inductee, for his positive influence on the officers.

Officer Starling then recognized the Department's LawFit Team for earning multiple awards at the DeSoto County competition, as follows:

- **4-Man Team** – 1st Place: Starling, Scott, Marascalco, Tallent
- **Bench Press** – 1st Place: Marascalco; 2nd Place: Scott
- **1.5 Mile Run** – 2nd Place: Tallent; 3rd Place: Scott
- **Female 1.5 Mile Run** – 4th Place: Serat
- **Sit & Reach** – 1st Place: Long
- **Sit Ups** – 2nd Place: Scott; 5th: Marascalco
- **Female Sit Ups** – 3rd Place: Fulton
- **Pull Ups** – 1st Place: Scott; 4th Place: Starling
- **Female Pull Ups** – 3rd Place: Fulton
- **Obstacle Course** – 1st Place: Scott; 3rd Place: Tallent; 4th Place: Marascalco
- **2-Female Team** – 3rd Place: Serat & Fulton
- **2-Man Team** – 1st Place: Scott & Marascalco; 4th Place: Starling & Tallent
- **Mixed Pair** – 1st Place: Serat & Scott; 2nd Place: Fulton & Marascalco
- **Overall Individuals** – 1st Place: Scott; 2nd Place: Marascalco; 3rd Place: Fulton

NEXT MEETING DATE

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

Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Location: MDWFP Headquarters

Time: 9:00 AM Education Session
10:00 AM Business Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Mounger 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 a personnel matter.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Hairston the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to determine the need for an Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

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 a personnel matter.

A closed discussion followed.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner St. John the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

Drew Malone, General Counsel, announced to the visitors now in the lobby that the Commission had voted to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

The Meeting was closed.

Drew Malone, General Counsel, asked the Executive staff to leave the room, including Director Posey. After the room was cleared Mr. Malone informed the Commission that Governor Reeves had authorized a 3% salary increase for Executive Director Posey. As has been done in the past, the Human Resources Staff surveyed the surrounding states for the salaries of their respective Executive Directors. It was determined that the proposed 3% increase would be at the lower end of our surrounding states. Counsel also noted that Section 25-3-39 of the Mississippi Code, which authorizes the Governor to set the salaries of certain appointed officials, does not include the Executive Director of the MDWFP in the list of those appointed officials.

Mr. Malone pointed out that historically the Commission has made recommendations to the State Personnel Board regarding the Executive Director's salary. Mr. Malone pointed out that under the SPB's classification and compensation system, the maximum salary for the Executive Director of the MDWFP is $199,811.80. After much discussion as to the outstanding job that Director Posey has done for the Agency and the understanding of the need to stay competitive with the surrounding states for the Executive Director's salary, a motion was made to request that the SPB increase Director Posey's salary by approximately 7%, to $197,950, to be effective on October 1, 2026.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Hairston and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads the Commission voted unanimously to request the Mississippi State Personnel Board to increase the salary of Executive Director Lynn Posey to the amount of $197,950, which is within the maximum salary recommendations of the SPB, to be effective October 1, 2026. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the measure.

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

ACTION: Commissioner St. John made the motion to go out of Executive Session and open the meeting. Commissioner Rhoads second the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to go out of Executive Session and open the meeting.

Mr. Malone announced to those still outside the room that the Commission had voted to increase the salary of the Executive Director.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Mounger called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hairston made the motion to adjourn the August 27, 2026, Commission Meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner St. John. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Mounger gaveled the meeting into adjournment.

W. M. Mounger — 9/23/26

Billy Mounger, CHAIRMAN — **Date**

— 9/23/26

Todd Hairston, VICE-CHAIRMAN — **Date**