MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Thursday, July 23rd, 2026
10:00 AM Business Session
MDWFP Headquarters
1505 Eastover Drive
Jackson, MS 39211

BUSINESS SESSION MINUTES

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending were Executive Director Lynn Posey, Curtis Thornhill, Scottie Jones, Col. Jerry Carter, Amy Blaylock, Jerry Brown, Jason Thompson, Andre Hollis, Drew Malone (General Counsel), and Mitchell Boulanger (Deputy General Counsel).

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

AGENDA

The Chairman asked Executive Director, Lynn Posey if there were any changes to the proposed agenda. Mr. Posey stated that there are no public comments and there will be a need for Executive Session. He also stated that there will be no reinstatements.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Maloney, the Commission unanimously approved the meeting agenda for July 23rd, 2026.

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

Chairman Mounger called for the swearing in of Commissioner Gary Rhoads, who was reappointed, in vacation, by Governor Tate Reeves. He was sworn in by Tara Yount.

MINUTES

Chairman Mounger 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 Maloney and seconded by Commissioner Rhoads, the Commission meeting minutes for June 24th, 2026, were unanimously approved.

VISIT MISSISSIPPI

Mike Jones, with Visit Mississippi, spoke on the Great Mississippi Nature Trail.

Mr. Jones described the trail concept and how it came to be. He provided additional detail on marketing through advertisements, social media, and their website. He also discussed partnering with the MDWFP to add new sites to the trail, and other projects in the future.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of Administrative Services, presented the License Sales Report for the month of June 2026. The total revenue for the end of June was up 1.21% ($21,641,256.20) compared to June 2025.

Highlights of this report are listed below:

- Resident license sales - $67,263,506.30 (up 1.38%)
- Non-resident license sales - $11,712,773.90 (down 0.73%)
- Other Licenses - $471,806.00 (up 51.08%)
- Lifetime License category – $923,500.00 (up 13.45%)

PARKS

Andre Hollis, Director of Parks, stated that revenue was up from last year, which was 9.7 million to 10.64 million. He also stated that the total number of visitors has greatly increased over the past year, from 718,000 to 903,000.

Highlights of this report are listed below:

- Day-use visitors – 731,000
- Overnight visitors – 172,000

Mr. Hollis discussed the work that is being done at Wall Doxey State Park, Percy Quinn State Park, and Buccaneer State Park.

He also mentioned the projects to be done in FY2027, including renovations at Trace State Park, and Roosevelt State Park.

MUSEUM

Angel Rohnke, Director of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, gave updates on renovations and upcoming events.

She stated that the following are in the process of being completed:

- Gift shop renovation
- Main lobby entrance
- Conference room additions
- Restrooms remodeled

She also discussed the expansion of facility rentals, installation of a treehouse to the outdoor playground area, and the success of the Mining Company Gem Sluice.

CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Chris Clark, Director of Conservation Programs, provided an overview of the Conservation Program. He explained that the program emphasizes education and outreach for hunters, recreational shooters, anglers, and boaters. He also discussed how the program has expanded its reach and effectiveness through the strategic use of grant funding.

Mr. Clark noted that the officers assigned to the Conservation Program perform a wide range of responsibilities, including teaching educational courses, investigating hunting and boating accidents, and training conservation officer cadets.

He further advised that the program's reputation has grown to the extent that several other states have requested assistance from MDWFP by asking that Conservation Program officers travel to their jurisdictions to help train their personnel.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Col. Jerry Carter reported that for May 2026, law enforcement issued a range of citations, with the top five violations being: No Resident License (47), PFD (27), hunting from a public road (21), headlighting (20), no boat registration (19).

He also brought up an arrest that was made by Officer Stephan last week, after a 12-year-old girl heard a gunshot. The individual was charged with 20 counts of headlighting, 19 hunting from a public road, and a felony under the Mississippi Pet Protection Act.

In June 2026, several officers helped rescue over 40 residents from the Biloxi River, which had flooded due to excessive rainfall.

NEXT MEETING DATE

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

Date: August 27, 2026

Location: MDWFP Headquarters

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Mounger asked Executive Director Posey if there were a need for Executive Sesion. Executive Director Posey replied that there was indeed a need for an Executive Session to discuss land transactions.

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 transactions in real property.

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 possible land transactions.

A closed discussion followed.

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Maloney the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session to discuss transactions in land.

Drew Malone, General Counsel, announced to the visitors now in the lobby that the Commission had voted to enter Executive Session to discuss the potential purchase of land and transactions concerning the purchase of land.

The Meeting was closed.

Josh Moree informed Commissioners about a tract of land that was for sale that was adjacent to Copiah County WMA. The Commissioners gave the Department their approval to purchase the land with the value of the two appraisals being $584,375.00.

Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads and seconded by Commissioner Hairston the Commission voted to authorize the Department to purchase a tract of land located in Copiah County and adjacent to the Copiah County WMA, in the amount of $584,375.00.

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

ACTION: Commissioner Rhoads made the motion to go out of Executive Session and open the meeting. Commissioner Maloney second the motion and the Commissioner 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 authorize the Department to purchase a tract of land in Copiah County contiguous to the Copiah County WMA.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Billy Mounger, CHAIRMAN — 8-27-26 **Date**

Todd Hairston, VICE CHAIRMAN — 8-27-26 **Date**