

# **MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS**

Wednesday, October 12, 2016

1:30 p.m.

Holmes County State Park/Miss Conservation Officers' Training Academy  
5369 State Park Road, Durant, MS

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Commission Chairman William "Billy" Deviney, Commissioners Clay Wagner, Bill F. Cossar, Robert Taylor, and Scott Coopwood

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden, Larry Castle, Jennifer Head, Colonel Steve Adcock, Chad Dacus, Larry Pugh, Jason Thompson, and counsel, Doug Mann and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorneys General.

Chairman Deviney gaveled the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director, opened the meeting with prayer.

## **MINUTES**

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the minutes of the September 21, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved.

## **AGENDA**

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the agenda for October 12, 2016 was unanimously approved.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no members of the public present who wished to make comments.

## **LICENSE SALES REPORT**

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of September 2016. Total sales are up \$433,000.00, which is a 14% increase.

Highlights of Thompson's report are listed below:

- Resident License Sales – up \$300,000, a 19% increase
- Sportsman license sales – up 25%
- Senior Exempt license sales are up 20% (204 more licenses sold)
- Nonresident licenses – up \$136,000.00, quantity of licenses sold up 2%
- Big game licenses sold are up. (including all game annual, youth all game, 7-day youth all game and 3-day all game/arch private weapon)
- Other Licenses - Total Permit Sales – number of permits sold is down 6%
- Lifetime License category – up 14%

### WILDLIFE

#### **FINAL Rule 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 8**

#### **Rule 8.4 – Regulations for Game & Fur-Bearing Animals in Captivity**

Dacus informed the Commission that several comments concerning Rule 8.4 had been received and asked that the Commission table the pending rule until staff had time to do further research and collect additional information.

**ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, FINAL Rule 8.4 laid upon the tabled until further call at the next meeting, by unanimous vote of the Commission.**

#### **Waterfowl Conservation Groups**

Ed Penny, Director of Conservation Programs, introduced the following Waterfowl Conservation Groups and speakers. Penny relinquished the floor to these three groups and returned with staff recommendations following the last presentation.

- **Delta Waterfowl – Joel Brice, Vice President of Waterfowl & Hunter Recruitment**

Chairman Deviney recognized Joel Brice and the following Delta Waterfowl constituents who were present: Billy Mounger and Dan Hughes, Delta Board of Directors, and TJ Mallette, Development Director.

Dan Hughes informed the Commission that Delta will no longer be requesting money for ALUS, since it is now independent and has launched its own board and support system.

Brice gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the following proposals:

1. Adopt a Pothole – perpetual wetland easements (\$25,000)
2. North Dakota Working Wetlands pilot initiative (\$75,000)
3. Importance of North Dakota and US Prairies to Mississippi harvests

- Ducks Unlimited – Dr. Tom Moorman, Director of Conservation Programs, Southern Region**  
 Dr. Moorman expressed his appreciation to MDWFP as a major partner in ensuring that waterfowl return to breed in Canada and find quality nesting and brood rearing habitat. Ducks Unlimited requested MDWFP to partner again this year by providing \$125,000 for FY 2017 breeding ground work in Saskatchewan, Canada. MDWFP funds will be matched with \$125,000 from DU and \$250,000 from the North American Wetland Conservation Fund Act (NAWCA). Proposed work will include conservation easements, land purchase, grassland restoration and wetland restoration with other complementary programs ensuring a balanced approach to landscape recovery.
- Mississippi State University – Dr. Brian Davis, Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Aquaculture**  
 Dr. Davis thanked everyone for their continued support of the MSU Waterfowl Program. Over the past four years MDWFP helped support one of MSU's finest students, Joel Lancaster, who has just finished his Master's Degree. Lancaster's studies incorporated two years in the South Delta and two years in the North Delta. This work comprised over 225 radio marked female mallards using some state-of-the-art statistical modeling techniques to determine habitat use and habitat selection.

MSUs proposal is to revisit 14 years of aerial survey data and look at timing and distribution of mallards and other ducks.

#### **Duck Stamp Project Staff Recommendation**

Penny thanked the Waterfowl Conservation groups for their comments and presented the following staff recommendations for distribution of duck stamp proceeds:

<b><u>Project</u></b>	<b><u>Requested</u></b>	<b><u>Recommended</u></b>	<b><u>Project Description</u></b>
DU Canada	\$125,000	\$125,000	Continue funding of Eastern Saskatchewan Parklands NAWCA Project; funds will be matched 3:1 with other agency and DU funds
Delta Waterfowl	\$100,000	\$100,000	Continue funding for Delta's Adopt a Pothole & N. Dakota Working Wetlands initiatives.
MSU Research	\$ 64,581	\$ 64,581	Project to evaluate the MDWFP Waterfowl Program's overall waterfowl conservation efforts through analysis of aerial survey and other long-term data.
WMA Waterfowl Management	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	Provide funds to WMAs as needed to supplement annual waterfowl habitat management.
WMA Wetland Enhancement Projects	\$ 59,500	\$ 59,500	Replace two diesel well motors on Howard Miller WMA and match federal grant funds for two large water control structures on Tuscumbia WMA
Private Lands Wetland Enhancement Projects	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	Funding for private lands wetland habitat enhancement/restoration. Funding will be used as match for upcoming NAWCA grants.

Aerial Waterfowl Surveys	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	Continue monitoring of MS Delta waterfowl abundance and habitat; Delta Wildlife also funding.
<b><u>Project</u></b>	<b><u>Requested</u></b>	<b><u>Recommended</u></b>	<b><u>Project Description</u></b> (Continued)
Waterfowl Program Travel	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	Provide funds for MDWFP staff to attend regional and national meetings on management, regulations, and policy related to waterfowl and wetlands.
Mississippi Flyway Council Dues	\$ 2,795	\$ 2,795	Annual dues to Mississippi Flyway Council; Waterfowl and Wetlands Stakeholder survey.
MS Flyway Banding	<u>\$ 7,731</u>	<u>\$ 7,731</u>	Annual contribution to MS Flyway banding efforts
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$473,607</b>	<b>\$473,607</b>	FY 2016 resident stamp sales = \$ 28,763 non-resident stamp sales = \$ 10,039 FY 2016 Total Revenue = \$ 438,215

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, funds for 2016-17 Duck Stamp projects were unanimously approved as recommended by staff.**

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

##### **Update**

Colonel Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, highlighted citations, shooting range attendance, incidents, and accidents.

No action was required of the Commission.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was presented.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, November 16, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. at the North Mississippi Fish Hatchery and Visitor Education Center, located at Enid, MS.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Director stated that there was need for a brief Executive Session to discuss the possible relocation of a business or industry and budget line items which could affect the continued employment of persons in specific positions.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session to**

**discuss the possible relocation of a business or industry, and budget line items which could affect the continued employment of persons in specific positions.**

Counsel announced that the meeting was closed to determine the need for an Executive Session to discuss the possible relocation of a business or industry and budget line items which could affect the continued employment of persons in specific positions. The room was cleared.

**The Commission determined that Executive Session was needed for the discussions regarding the possible relocation of a business or industry. Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar, seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session for discussions regarding the possible relocation of a business or industry, and budget line items which could affect the continued employment of persons in specific positions.**

Dr. Polles and Jennifer Head, Director of State Parks, presented an overview of golf operations at the three state-owned golf courses. Two courses (Quail Hollow and Lefleur's Bluff) are operated by the agency, and Mallard Pointe is operated under a lease to a private entity. Information regarding revenue and expenses as well as current and projected costs, current and projected staffing needs, and current and projected capital improvements, was shared with the Commission. As a result of recent budget cuts and reductions in the agency's general fund appropriations for parks, the ability of the agency to continue to offer golf at the parks where it is located, is being strained to the limits. Contingency plans for course closure and employee furloughs were included in the information presented.

Discussion followed. Staff recommended a meeting with Legislative leaders to discuss long term funding of golf and parks in general. The Commission indicated its support and encouraged staff to move forward.

No formal action was required of the Commission.

There was no further business for Executive Session.

**Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to exit Executive Session and open the meeting.**

Counsel announced the actions taken by the Commission during Executive Session to any members of the public remaining on the premises.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Deviney gave the meeting into adjournment.

  
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Billy Deviney, CHAIRMAN

  
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Date

  
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Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN

  
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Date