

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, June 14, 2017

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

2 p.m. Educational Session / 3 p.m. Business Session

EDUCATIONAL SESSION – 2 PM

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

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

Three items were on the agenda for the Educational Session. PowerPoint presentations were presented for all three items.

1. Law Enforcement.

- Range Update.....Colonel Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement
- Cadet Update.....Captain Chris Reed, Training Coordinator/Public Relations

Colonel Adcock’s presentation featured the current number of visitors to the ranges at Turcotte and McHenry; revenue and expenditures; and an update on the progress of construction of the new McIvor Creek facility.

Captain Reed updated the Commission on the progress of the current class of conservation officer cadets in their training. Captain Reed also gave a brief update of the ongoing development of the facilities at the Mississippi Conservation Officers Training Academy (“MCOTA”).

2. WMA & State Parks Forestry Management Reports.

Scott Baker, WMA Habitat Program Coordinator, presented WMA Forestry Report.

Carl Branson, Forester, presented State Parks Forestry Report.

Mr. Baker and Mr. Branson presented reports detailing amount of timber cut and revenue produced. The Commission was also updated on management practices designed to improve wildlife habitat and the natural character of agency WMAs and Parks.

3. Turkey Survey Results.

Rush Walsh, Director of Wildlife Bureau, presented results of on-line turkey survey. The report detailed the process of preparing the survey and the data produced. Overall, no substantial changes in wild turkey management are anticipated in the near future.

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, June 14, 2017

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS

2 p.m. Educational Session / 3 p.m. Business Session

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SESSION – 3 PM

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

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden, Larry Castle, Colonel Steve Adcock, Larry Bull, Russ Walsh, Jennifer Head, Jason Thompson, and counsel, Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General.

Chairman Deviney, having noted for the minutes that a quorum was present, gaveled the meeting to order at 3 p.m. Chairman Deviney welcomed Scott Bounds, Chairman of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Committee of the House of Representatives.

OPENING PRAYER

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

In an effort to advance a full agenda, the Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Director stated that there was need for an Executive Session to discuss transactions in land, and personnel matters, and possible litigation.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner made a motion to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session to discuss transactions in land, personnel matters involving job performance of individuals in specific positions as well as budget line items which could affect the continued employment of individuals in specific positions, and strategy for potential litigation. Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting.

Counsel announced to those present that the meeting was now closed to determine the need for Executive Session to discuss transactions in land, personnel matters involving job performance of individuals in specific positions as well as budget line items which could affect the continued employment of individuals in specific positions, and strategy for potential litigation. As a convenience to those who had just arrived and taken seats in the conference room, the Commission left the room and entered an anteroom for the closed meeting discussion.

A brief discussion followed.

ACTION: Upon a motion made by Commissioner Wagner, and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session to discuss transactions in land, personnel matters involving job performance of individuals in specific positions as well as budget line items which could affect the continued employment of individuals in specific positions, and strategy for potential litigation.

Counsel returned to the conference room and announced to those inside, that the Commission had entered Executive Session to discuss transactions in land, personnel matters involving job performance of individuals in specific positions as well as budget line items which could affect the continued employment of individuals in specific positions, and strategy for potential litigation.

Executive Director Dr. Sam Polles and Deputy Executive Director Robert Cook updated the Commission on the authorized realignment for the agency's wildlife/fisheries biologist series. They advised that the realignment was set forth and prescribed in the legislative notes of the agency's appropriation bill for fiscal year 2018 and will take effect on and after July 1, 2017.

Discussion followed regarding several specific employees who would be affected by the proposed realignment.

No action was required of the Commission.

Dr. Polles also advised the Commission of potential difficulties with language in the current RFP which may prohibit the Agency from awarding a contract to any independent vendor, firm, or entity for the production of the Mississippi Outdoors television show at this time. This could result in the cancellation of the RFP.

Discussion followed.

No action was required of the Commission.

Finally, Dr. Polles updated the Commission on the status of discussions with parties of interest in the operations of the Calhoun County WMA, including MDWFP, Forest Investment Associates, TimberCorp, and two representatives of the Calhoun County Board of Supervisors. The landowner has contacted the agency about a possible hike in rent. At issue is the question of maintaining the roads within the leased lands. There is a tentative plan in the works which could result in a reduction in the increase in rent and improved access to the WMA by working with the Board of Supervisors to address the roads. The Calhoun County Board of Supervisors will be contacting the Yalobusha County Board of Supervisors concerning this plan for road maintenance. The landowner agreed to give a 45-day extension to MDWFP and no changes would be made in the contract until August 14, 2017.

Discussion followed.

No action was required of the Commission.

ACTION: There being no further items for confidential discussion, Commissioner Wagner moved to end Executive Session and return to the open meeting. Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to end Executive Session.

As the Commission returned to the conference room, Counsel announced that the Commission had discussed the items set forth earlier for executive discussion; however, as no action was required of the Commission, no votes had been taken.

The Chairman returned to the regular Business Session Agenda.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the minutes of the May 17, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner moved to approve the agenda for June 14, 2017. Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Phil Lechner had made an appeal to the Commission at the May 17, 2017 meeting to change deer regulations for Leaf River Wildlife Management Area. Lechner brought Mr. Mark Sramek and Mr. Eric Oehms with him to the June 14, 2017 meeting. Lechner said he had many calls from people concerned with the deer regulations but apologized that he did not have any names or comments in writing. He asked the Commission to postpone his comments until after the MDWFP biologist presented his findings.

Larry Castle, Director of Technical Programs, informed the Commission that the deer regulation changes were strictly a hunter preference and will not have a negative biological impact on the deer. On a positive note, the changes will mean larger bucks next year with the payback of reduced hunting for bucks this year. Castle stated that MDWFP will poll deer hunters at the end of next year's deer season and the results will be taken into consideration by the Commission for any future changes in regulations.

Mr. Lechner did not have any further comments.

No action was taken by the Commission.

PARKS

FINAL Rule- 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 6, Chapter 1 – General Regulations

- **Rule 1.1 – State Park Fees**

Jennifer Head, Director of Parks, stated that no comments had been received concerning the fee adjustments to Mallard Point Golf Course and disclaimers which were added to the regulations.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL State Park Fees Rule 1.1.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGE

FINAL Rule- 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 1, Chapter 1 – Gen. Admin. Rules of the MS Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

- **Rule 1.2 – The Commission**

Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General, stated that there were no changes and no comments concerning changes to Rule 1.2 during the 30-day comment period.

ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commission Taylor, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rule 1.2 as presented.

MDWFP LAWFIT TEAM

Captain Chris Reed presented the six-man Conservation Officer team that claimed the title “Fittest in the Nation” as they took the top spot at the 16th annual National LawFit Challenge held this past weekend in Pearl, MS. Over 135 law enforcement officers from around the country competed in this year’s event which tests officers in six different events: bench press, 1.5 mile run, sit-ups, flexibility, pull-ups, and a suspect pursuit course.

The 2017 MDWFP LawFit team consisted of the following officers:

- Captain Chris Reed
- Lt. Marcus Christon
- SGM Ron McMillan
- Cpl Justin Gates
- Pvt Derrick Scott
- Pvt Tamarrius Good

All six officers placed in the top 16 overall with Scott, Christon, and Gates finishing first, second, and third respectively.

The following records were broken by Team MDWFP:

1. New record for points scored by a four-man team with 1618 points scored. (Scott, Christon, Gates, Reed)
2. Two-man team record - 846 points (Scott, Christon)
3. New Individual record set - 424 points (Scott)
4. Individual record - 422 points (Christon – he broke his own previous individual record of 418 set in 2015)
5. Bench Press record – lifting 226% of his bodyweight (Gates)
6. Gates scored 407 points (5th highest point total ever)

A round of applause followed as the Commissioners and staff congratulated the LawFit team.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Commission Meeting

Next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, July 19, 2017 at the Jackson Office located at 1505 Eastover Drive. The time for the meeting will be set at a later date. (This date was changed after the June Commission meeting to Monday, July 17, 2017 due to conflicts in Commissioners' schedules.)

Election of Commission Officers

Chairman Deviney called for nominations for Commission officers for the coming year.

ACTION: Commissioner Scott Coopwood nominated Commissioner Clay Wagner as the new Commission Chairman, and Commissioner Bill F. Cossar as Vice Chairman. Commissioner Robert Taylor seconded the nominations. There were no other nominations. The Commission voted unanimously to approve Clay Wagner as Chairman and Bill F. Cossar as Vice Chairman, beginning July 1, 2017.

Resolution and Order

Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorney General, read a Resolution and Order commemorating the service of William C. "Billy" Deviney as Commissioner on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks for the past 15 years, spanning the terms of three governors of the State of Mississippi. Chairman Deviney's term will officially expire on June 30, 2017. In recognition of Commissioner Deviney's service, it was the desire of his fellow commissioners that the state wildlife management area located in Sunflower County, Mississippi, currently known as the Indianola Wildlife Management Area, be hereafter known as the **William C. "Billy" Deviney Wildlife Management Area**. A copy of this resolution has been appended to the minutes.

A standing ovation followed as a **William C. "Billy" Deviney Wildlife Management Area** road sign was revealed.

Historical Perspective

Chairman Deviney presented a video presentation highlighting the strides and achievements of MDWFP over the past 15 years and his many thanks working alongside the other Commissioners and staff, with special thanks to agency Executive Director Dr. Sam Polles.

Another round of applause followed thanking Chairman Deviney for the many years of contribution to the Department and to Mississippi's natural resources.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman William C. "Billy" Deviney adjourned his final meeting as a Commissioner on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, with a firm strike of the gavel.

Billy Deviney, CHAIRMAN

Date

Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN

8/16/17

Date

BEFORE THE MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

**Commemorating the Service of
William C. "Billy" Deviney as a Commissioner
on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, and for Related Matters.**

RESOLUTION and ORDER

WHEREAS, On June 30, 2017, William C. "Billy" Deviney will rotate off the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (the "Commission");

WHEREAS, Commissioner Deviney's service has spanned the terms of three governors of this great state, and fifteen years, helping formulate the wildlife and natural resource conservation policies of our state;

WHEREAS, At the appropriate time, the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks will present a more comprehensive account of Commissioner Deviney's achievements to be recorded and preserved in the minutes of this august body;

THEREFORE, The remaining commissioners, having voiced their intent to offer a separate and distinct act of recognition of Commissioner Deviney's service, in addition to more traditional and expected observations, has directed the preparation of this resolution and ordered that which follows:

BE IT RESOLVED:

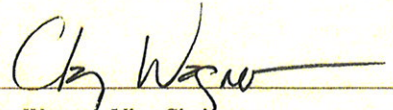
That the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks finds that William C. "Billy" Deviney has devoted countless hours of his personal time, and many of his personal resources, to the promotion and preservation of the wildlife and natural resources of the State of Mississippi; and

BE IT ORDERED:

That, in recognition of Commissioner Deviney's service, it is the desire of his fellow commissioners that the state wildlife management area located in Sunflower County, Mississippi, currently known as the Indianola Wildlife Management Area, be hereafter known as the *"William C. "Billy" Deviney Wildlife Management Area."*

THIS RESOLUTION AND ORDER is hereby adopted by unanimous vote of those in attendance (with the Chairman abstaining), thusly: Vice Chairman/Commissioner Clay Wagner: "Aye"; Commissioner Scott Coopwood: "Aye"; Commissioner Bill Cossar: "Aye"; and Commissioner Robert Taylor: "Aye."

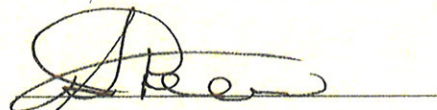
SO RESOLVED AND ORDERED, this the 14th day of June, 2017.



Clay Wagner, Vice Chairman

Mississippi Commission on Wildlife,
Fisheries, and Parks

I, **Sam Polles, Ph.D.**, hereby certify that the Resolution and Order set forth above, is a true and correct Resolution and Order of the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, as authorized by a vote taken and spread upon the minutes of the meeting of the Commission, dated Wednesday, June 14, 2017, as duly noticed and conducted by law.



Sam Polles, Ph.D., Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Wildlife,
Fisheries, and Parks