

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

1 p.m. Educational Session 2 p.m. Business Session
North MS Hatchery & Visitor's Center, 457 CR 36, Enid

MINUTES OF THE EDUCATIONAL SESSION – 1 PM

PRESENT: Commission Chairman Bill F. Cossar, Commissioners Scott Coopwood, Robert Taylor, Billy Mounger, and Clay Wagner.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden; Jennifer Head; Curtis Thornhill; Col. Steve Adcock; Larry Pugh; Russ Walsh; Amy Blaylock; Ricky Flynt; William McKinley; and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

Russ Walsh presented a draft hunt plan for Phil Bryant WMA. The WMA would be divided into 4 hunt units, with each having individual hunting regulations. Opportunities would include:

- "Group hunting camp" draw hunts
- Deer draw hunts with archery and gun
- Waterfowl and small game
- Youth and handicapped only draw hunts

The regulations for the WMA will be proposed during the April 2019 Commission meeting in preparation to open for the 2019–2020 hunting season.

Walsh then informed the Commission that staff was in the process of considering changes to the proposed statewide deer bag limits, which would help with the containment of CWD. Briefly, staff was considering raising the bag limit for antlerless deer to four (4) per person, in order to reduce the impact of CWD on the whole deer herd, by reducing herd population. This proposal is still in development but may be brought before the Commission in April as part of regularly-scheduled rule changes. More information would be shared during the CWD Update during the regular business session.

Education session was then adjourned for lunch.

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

1 p.m. Educational Session 2 p.m. Business Session
North MS Hatchery & Visitor's Center, 457 CR 36, Enid**MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SESSION – 2 PM**

PRESENT: Commission Chairman Bill F. Cossar, Commissioners Scott Coopwood, Robert Taylor, Billy Mounger, and Clay Wagner.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Executive Director; Michael Bolden; Jennifer Head; Curtis Thornhill; Charles Knight; Col. Steve Adcock; Larry Pugh; Russ Walsh; Amy Blaylock; Ricky Flynt; William McKinley; and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

OPENING PRAYER

Commissioner Mounger opened the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the minutes of the February 18, 2019 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA

Director Sam Polles, Ph.D., stated that an addition to the agenda under WILDLIFE; namely, Phil Bryant WMA – 2019-2020 Hunting Season Regulations, was needed.

ACTION: Commissioner Wagner moved to approve the agenda as amended for March 27, 2019, Commissioner Coopwood seconded the motion and the motion carried.

LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration Division, presented the License Sales Report for the month of February 2019. The total revenue for the end of February is down 3% from last year.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – down 5%
 - Sportsman's Lic – down 5%
 - 3-day Freshwater – up 6%
 - Youth Exempt Lic Sales – up 2,600 more than last year
- Non-resident licenses – down 2%
 - Freshwater Fishing – up 2%
 - 3-day Freshwater – up 2%
 - 1-day Freshwater – up 2%
- Permit category – down 4% (156 fewer permits)
- Lifetime Licenses – up 20% (139 more licenses)

Turkey Harvest Reporting:

- 4,469 hunters have reported at least one turkey
- 5,100 turkeys reported
- 74% (3,491) reported through mobile app
- 17% (794) reported through call center
- 9% (431) reported online

Suggestions: Distribution to Welcome Centers, subscriptions to doctor offices, business, etc.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments were brought forward by the public.

FISHERIES

Larry Pugh, Fisheries Bureau Director, presented the following PROPOSED rule changes.

PROPOSED 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 3, Chapter 1 – General Fisheries Rules

- **Rule 1.4 – Statewide Creel Limits**

The following length and creel limits were removed in order to simplify regulations:

1. Lake Bolivar near Scott, MS – removed 2 bass/day bag limit (page 4)
2. Lake Columbia – removed 14-18" bass slot limit; recommended statewide bag limit of 10 (page 4)
3. Little Eagle Lake – removed 12" MLL and 5 bass/day (no longer public) (page 4)
4. Percy Quin State Park – removed 50 bream/day; recommended statewide limit (page 5)
5. Wall Doxey State Park – removed walleye creel limit (page 6)

PROPOSED 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part , Chapter 2 – State Fishing Lakes, and Community Fishing Assistance Program Lakes

- **Rule 2.1 – Regulations regarding State Fishing Lakes**
 1. Added “property” to clarify prohibiting of hunting/trapping. (page 6)
 2. Inserted language to allow frog gigging at all state lakes, except Bill Waller, during statewide season and with state lake permit and hunt/fish license. (page 6)
 3. Inserted language to clarify waterfowl hunting days, time, and number in party at Neshoba County Lake. (page 6)

- **Rule 2.2 – Regulations regarding Community Fishing Assistance Program Lakes**
 1. Edits to Brookhaven Fishing Pond language – removed “be” (page 1; 2a)
 2. Added Floewood River Plantation Lake – new CFAP lake outside of Greenwood; closed until fish population is established. (page 6)

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission unanimously approved PROPOSED Rules 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2 as recommended by staff.

WILDLIFE

FINAL – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 8 – Regulations regarding Animals in Captivity and Enclosures

- **Rule 8.6 – Enclosures that Prevent the Free Ingress & Egress of White-tailed Deer– Administrative Quarantine**

Russ Walsh presented a new rule at the last meeting which defined Administrative Quarantine for enclosures in violation of any applicable law, rule, or regulation regarding high-fenced enclosures that prevent the free ingress and egress of white-tailed deer.

Walsh stated that no comments were received.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Mounger the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rule 8.6 as recommended by staff.

PROPOSED - 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 5 – Alligator

Ricky Flynt, Wildlife Alligator/Furbearer Coordinator, presented the following two rule changes:

- **Rule 5.2 – Private Lands Alligator**
 1. Opens 12:00 noon August 30 until 6 a.m. September 23, 2019
 2. Adds Neshoba and Winston Counties to open counties list (36 counties). (Part B)

3. Clarifies previous language that Senior and Disabled Exempt License holders do not have to purchase an additional combination hunt/fish license. (Part L, a. & b.)

- **Rule 5.3 – Public Waters Alligator**

1. Opens 12:00 noon August 30 until 12:00 noon September 9, 2019
2. Cleans up paragraph structure and clarifies previous language that Senior and Disabled Exempt License holders do not have to purchase an additional combination hunt/fish license. (Part F, 1., i. & ii.)
3. Cleans up paragraph structure and clarifies previous language that Senior and Disabled Exempt License holders do not have to purchase an additional combination hunt/fish license. (Part F, 2., i. & ii.)

Alligator Permit Allocation Changes

1. No changes to the seven (7) Zones or their boundaries.
2. Increased permits by 30 to 960 statewide, compared to 930 in 2018.
The following Zones were recommended to receive an increase of 10 permits each due to the observation of hunters tagging out the first weekend in these zones and the waterways being able to withstand additional permits:
West Central Zone
Pearl/Ross Barnett Zone
Southwest Zone

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission unanimously approved PROPOSED changes to Rules 5.2 and 5.3 as recommended by staff.

Chronic Wasting Disease Update

Walsh gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing CWD status in Mississippi and the impact of the disease if left unchecked as revealed in current world studies and historical records.

At the end of deer season Mississippi stayed at 19 CWD positive cases and Tennessee stood at 185. Six counties have tested positive in Mississippi. MDWFP staff met with Tennessee, Arkansas, and Missouri officials this week to discuss strategies. The different approaches to CWD in Illinois and Wisconsin were presented. Illinois' aggressive approach has kept CWD in check. Illinois was persistent in their testing. Wisconsin requirements were aggressive at first then became more lenient as the public complained of the restrictions, and now CWD has gone from 5% to 60% in adult males and 35% in females in its red zone. This vividly illustrates that aggressive, preventive measures are imperative in order to stay ahead of CWD.

Hunting Season and Bag Limits (continued from Education Session)

Walsh echoed his prior discussion (in Education Session) of several options for the Commission to consider for next deer season to keep CWD in check in Mississippi. The first proposal is to reduce deer density through increased harvest, except in the southernmost region. It was

presented that antlerless bag limits may be increased from 3 to 4 in all zones but the Southeast. Commissioners inquired whether it is prudent to further increase the bag limit or allow special harvest opportunities. Staff will present for discussion several options during the April Commission meeting.

The second proposal is to harvest younger males and/or antlerless deer, as they appear to be the most likely carriers who spread CWD to other areas. It was presented that to encourage harvest of yearling males, 1 of the 3 buck bag limit could be any antlered buck on private lands only.

Discussion followed on increasing buck harvest through youth hunts and bag limits, continuation of testing for CWD, and increasing the number of testing sample collection sites.

Mr. Walsh assured the Commission that all options were being considered to form the nexus of proposed rule changes for the next meeting. The proposed rule(s) would then be filed for public comment, well before going final.

No action was taken at this time.

PARKS

PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 6, Chapter 1 – General Regulations for the Mississippi State Parks

Michael Bolden, Deputy Administrator, presented the following changes to the State Park rules and regulations:

- **Rule 1.1 – State Park Rules**
State Park Damage fee - \$50
Changes to fees on Quail Hollow and Mallard Pointe Golf Courses
- **Rule 1.2 – General Rules and Regulations for State Parks**
Refers specially to damage assessment and a charge to guest's credit/debit card for the damage.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved PROPOSED Rules 1.1 and 1.2 as recommended by staff.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

FINAL Rule 6.1 – Rules and Fees for MDWFP Public Shooting Ranges

Col Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented changes to WMA shooting range fees to a flat daily rate of \$15.00 for everyone at the February meeting. There was one comment based on a misunderstanding of the regulations; and, after communicating the correct information to him, he was satisfied.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rule 6.1 as recommended by staff.

Law Enforcement Update

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented a handout to the Commission which highlighted license violations for the month of February. During an enclosure inspection, a Tennessee resident was charged with unlawful possession and hunting out of season. This month officers worked on backwater flooding and fishing details. McIvor Shooting Facility will host a ribbon cutting on March 28, 2019.

OTHER BUSINESS

Executive Orders

Legal Counsel explained that the following Executive Orders had been issued by Executive Director Polles on behalf of the Commission for the suspension/closure of recreational boating activity during temporary high water.

1. Wolf Lake Yazoo County, Mississippi (ordered February 21, 2019)
2. Lake Lamar Bruce State Fishing Lake (ordered February 25, 2019)
3. Elvis Presley State Fishing Lake (ordered February 25, 2019)
4. The Mississippi River and its tributaries and each oxbow lake or other lake or waterway, the level of which is influenced and/or affected by the level of the Mississippi River or by backwater flooding due to the high waters of the Mississippi River (ordered February 25, 2019)

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously ratified the Executive Orders above issued in February due to flooding caused by high waters of the Mississippi River. A copy of each Executive Order has been appended to the minutes.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2019
Location: MCOTA (MS Conservation Officers' Training Academy)
@ Holmes Co. State Park, 5369 State Park Road, Durant 39063
Time: 1:00 p.m. Educational Session
2:00 p.m. Business Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. Executive Director Polles stated that there was no need for an Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

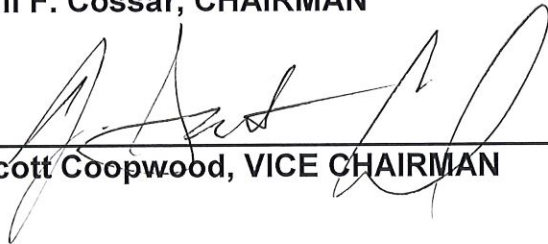
There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Cossar gave the meeting into adjournment.



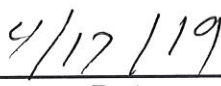
Bill F. Cossar, CHAIRMAN



Date



Scott Coopwood, VICE CHAIRMAN



Date

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

In Re: Suspension/Closure of Recreational Boating activity during temporary high water emergency.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

PURSUANT to the authority set forth in MISSISSIPPI CODE ANNOTATED §59-21-111, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, with the approval of the Commission, has ordered the suspension of all recreational boating activity on the lake or lakes listed below, due to emergency flooding and high water resulting from unusually heavy rainfall events. This suspension of privileges applies *ONLY* to recreational boating and not to any boating activity that must be employed for the safe transportation of persons to and from a home or dwelling or other legitimate purpose. Any boating activity during the suspension period shall be conducted in a reasonable manner, minimizing any wake created, or otherwise conducted to minimize any negative effects on surrounding property. The lake or lakes set forth below shall remain closed to recreational boating only, until further notice:

LAKE: Wolf Lake, Yazoo County, Mississippi

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, That the lake or lakes listed above shall be closed to recreational boating activity, in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public, until further notice. Any boating shall be conducted according to a "Dead Slow; Leave No Wake," standard. Failure to comply with this order may subject an individual to criminal liability.

SO ORDERED, this the 21st day of February, 2019.



Sam Polles, Ph.D.
Executive Director



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

In Re: Suspension/Closure of Recreational Boating activity during temporary high water emergency.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

PURSUANT to the authority set forth in MISSISSIPPI CODE ANNOTATED §59-21-111, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, with the approval of the Commission, has ordered the suspension of all recreational boating activity on the lake or lakes listed below, due to the emergency flooding and high water situation that currently exists. This suspension of privileges applies *ONLY* to recreational boating and not to any boating activity that must be employed for the safe transportation of persons to and from a home or dwelling or other legitimate purpose. Any boating activity during the suspension period shall be conducted in a reasonable manner, minimizing any wake created, or otherwise conducted to minimize any negative effects on surrounding property. The lake or lakes set forth below shall remain closed to recreational boating only, until further notice:

LAKE: Lamar Bruce State Fishing Lake

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, That the lake or lakes listed above shall be closed to recreational boating activity, in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public, until further notice. Any boating shall be conducted according to a "Dead Slow; Leave No Wake," standard. Failure to comply with this order may subject an individual to criminal liability.

SO ORDERED, this the 25th day of February, 2019.



Sam Polles, Ph.D.
Executive Director

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

In Re: Suspension/Closure of Recreational Boating activity during temporary high water emergency.

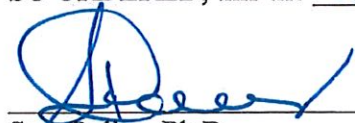
EXECUTIVE ORDER

PURSUANT to the authority set forth in MISSISSIPPI CODE ANNOTATED §59-21-111, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, with the approval of the Commission, has ordered the suspension of all recreational boating activity on the lake or lakes listed below, due to the emergency flooding and high water situation that currently exists. This suspension of privileges applies *ONLY* to recreational boating and not to any boating activity that must be employed for the safe transportation of persons to and from a home or dwelling or other legitimate purpose. Any boating activity during the suspension period shall be conducted in a reasonable manner, minimizing any wake created, or otherwise conducted to minimize any negative effects on surrounding property. The lake or lakes set forth below shall remain closed to recreational boating only, until further notice:

LAKE: Elvis Presley State Fishing Lake

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, That the lake or lakes listed above shall be closed to recreational boating activity, in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public, until further notice. Any boating shall be conducted according to a "Dead Slow; Leave No Wake," standard. Failure to comply with this order may subject an individual to criminal liability.

SO ORDERED, this the 25th day of February, 2019.



Sam Polles, Ph.D.
Executive Director

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

In Re: Suspension/Closure of Recreational Boating activity during temporary high water emergency.

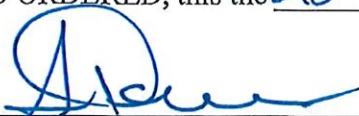
EXECUTIVE ORDER

PURSUANT to the authority set forth in MISSISSIPPI CODE ANNOTATED §59-21-111, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, with the approval of the Commission, the Executive Director has determined that an exigent condition of high water exists and that it is in the best interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the general public that all recreational boating activity on lakes or waterways affected by the water level of the Mississippi River, shall be temporarily suspended. The situation is such that the Corps of Engineers may need to manipulate certain water control structures along the Mississippi River, in order to manage these water levels. This suspension of privileges applies **ONLY** to recreational boating and not to any boating activity that must be employed for the safe transportation of persons to and from a home or dwelling or other legitimate purpose. Any boating activity during the suspension period shall be conducted in a reasonable manner, minimizing any wake created, or otherwise conducted to minimize any negative effects on surrounding property. The lake(s) or waterways set forth below shall remain closed to recreational boating only, until further notice:

The Mississippi River and its tributaries and each oxbow lake or other lake or waterway, the level of which is influenced and/or affected by the level of the Mississippi River or by backwater flooding due to the high waters of the Mississippi River.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, That the lakes and waterways referenced above shall be closed to recreational boating activity, in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public, until further notice. This suspension of recreational boating activity shall remain in full force and effect as long as the Mississippi River remains above flood stage as measured at the nearest gauge maintained by the Corps of Engineers and/or NOAA. Any boating activity shall be conducted according to a "Dead Slow; Leave No Wake," standard. Failure to comply with this order may subject an individual to criminal liability.

SO ORDERED, this the 25th day of February, 2019.



Sam Polles, Ph.D.
Executive Director