

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

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

1 p.m. Educational Session      2 p.m. Business Session

MCOTA @ Holmes Co. State Park, 5369 State Park Road, Durant 39063

## **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; and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

### **Cadet Class 2019**

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented the six cadets currently in training to become MDWFP Law Enforcement Officers. Two of the original eight cadets had dropped out, one with an injury. Cadets Colby Bias, Bailey Jones, Tyler McCann, Richard Meeks, Scott Miller, and Scott Nicholas stood as the Commission and staff gave them a round of applause.

### **2019 Legislative Session Overview**

Some of the highlights from Budget Director Jennifer Head's presentation are listed below:

- MDWFP PINS have been reduced since 2013 from 1,000 to 712.
- Parks still operating on same money as 2013....
- CWD received \$400,000 in general funds.
- Capital Projects: \$4 million in bond bills for dam repair (SB 3065, Section 2).
- Buccaneer State Park received \$1 million (SB 3049, Section 24) from 2018 Transportation & Infrastructure Improvements Fund.
- Tishomingo State Park received \$500,000 (SB 3049, Section 25) from Capital Expense Fund.
- Port Bienville/Buccaneer (Hancock County) received \$1 million (SB 3065, Section 6) for dredging.
- JP Coleman State Park Marina – Loan to upgrade Dock B. LWCF funding.

Education session was then adjourned until 2 p.m.

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**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; Col. Steve Adcock; Larry Pugh; Russ Walsh; Amy Blaylock; and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General. Chairman welcomed Senator Mike Seymour and the 2019 Cadet Class.

**OPENING PRAYER**

Commissioner Mounger opened the meeting with prayer.

**MINUTES**

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the minutes of the March 27, 2019 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

**AGENDA**

**ACTION:** Commissioner Wagner moved to approve the agenda for April 17, 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 March 2019. The total revenue for the end of March is down 3% from last year.

Highlights of his report are listed below:

- Resident license sales – down 4%
  - 3-day Freshwater – up 2%
  - Senior Exempt Lic Sales – up 2%
- Non-resident licenses – down 3%

- NR WMA User Permits – up 3%
- NR Spring Turkey Permit – up 3%
- Permit category – sales down by 182 permits

Turkey Harvest Reporting Update:

- 9,772 turkeys reported harvesting
- 75% reported through phone app
- 16% reported through 1-800-BE-SMART
- 9% reported through website
- Public feedback is overwhelmingly positive.
- No technical issues.

Commissioner Taylor requested that the Turkey Harvest Reporting mobile app automatically update the total harvest count in the county map when used.

Auto renewal for licenses – Over 9,923 (79%) people have signed up for auto renewal.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. Davin Henderson, Research Biologist, Prion Research Center, Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Pathology at Colorado State University, informed the Commission that banning urine-based scents is not going to do anything to prevent the slow down, or stop chronic wasting disease in elk, moose, whitetails, mule deer and other cervids.

CWD prions have been detected in whitetail deer urine, but only under unnatural conditions when concentrated well beyond what occurs naturally. Colorado State University research showed that the occurrence of CWD prions is 1 million times higher in carcass and lymphoid tissue and 100,000 times higher in deboned meat and digestive tissue than it is in deer urine. It is estimated that it would take 33,000 gallons of urine from a terminally infected CWD-deer to equal the infectivity in just 1 gram of brain. Currently, no one has been able to infect a deer with CWD by inoculating them with relatively high doses up to 700 millimeters or about 23 ounces of diseased urine.

Eleven facilities in the Archery Trade Association (ATA) Deer Protection Program provide 95% of commercial urine. These facilities have been in business longer than five years and none have ever had a positive CWD finding. Additional requirements of the ADA Deer Protection Program go beyond USDA standards, including annual review of 20% of herd and every third year a 100% inspection of herd.

Discussion followed.

Attorney asked if the ATA Deer Protection Program is confident enough to indemnify that Mississippi will never get CWD from any products with their seal? Henderson replied negative.

The Commission thanked Dr. Henderson for coming and providing this information.

## FISHERIES

Larry Pugh, Fisheries Bureau Director, presented the following FINAL rule changes. No public comments were received, and Pugh recommended approval for final passage.

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

- Rule 1.4 – Statewide Creel Limits

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

- Rule 2.1 – Regulations regarding State Fishing Lakes
- Rule 2.2 – Regulations regarding Community Fishing Assistance Program Lakes

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

## WILDLIFE

### Wildlife Bureau Awards

Russ Walsh, Executive Wildlife Director, presented the following awards to personnel who had exhibited outstanding performance and work ethic over the past year. Each awardee was presented a plaque and a gift certificate in recognition of their efforts. Commission recognition and applause followed each presentation.

- Doyle Bond – 2018 WMA Manager of the Year
- Adam Butler – 2018 Wildlife Biologist of the Year

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

With no public comments received during the 30-day comment period, Walsh recommended final adoption of Alligator Rules 5.2 and 5.3.

- Rule 5.2 – Private Lands Alligator
- Rule 5.3 – Public Waters Alligator

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission unanimously approved FINAL Rules 5.2 and 5.3, as recommended by staff.

**PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1 – WMA Regulations****• Rules 1.1 – 1.46 – WMA Regulations**

Walsh presented the rule changes made for each WMA as outlined in a handout distributed to the Commission. A summary of these changes is outlined below:

**Basic Regulation Changes:**

- Rule 1.1 – Allow the use of broadheads during small game season.

**Season Structure Changes:**

- Rule 1.11 – Leroy Percy WMA – Allow guardians to participate in Youth Dove Hunt on opening day.
- Rule 1.12 – Mahannah WMA – Remove the Youth Dove Hunt Event due to continued flooding. Will hold event at Muscadine.
- Rule 1.26 – Natchez State Park WMA – Allow hunters to use primitive weapons instead of muzzleloaders only.
- Rule 1.30 – Trim Cane WMA – Providing dove hunting opportunity.
- Rule 1.34 – Muscadine WMA – Implement a Youth Dove Hunt Event to replace the Mahannah hunt.
- Rule 1.43 – Canemount WMA – Combining the primitive weapon and gun hunts into just gun hunts.

**Standardize or Clarify Language:**

- Rule 1.12 – Mahannah WMA – Clarify that no boats can launch until after the Waterfowl Draw has been completed.
- Rule 1.18 – Pascagoula River WMA – Clarification of high water language.
- Rule 1.21 – Shipland WMA - Clarification of high water language.
- Rule 1.24 – Twin Oaks WMA – Clarification that ORV/ATV use is for the retrieval of harvested deer or hog only.
- Rule 1.26 – Natchez SP WMA – Clarifying that no Special Buck Tags are available.
- Rule 1.43 – Canemount WMA – Clarification of Squirrel hunting days, that ATV/ORV use is not allowed for fishing, and that there are no Special Hunt Dates.
- Rule 1.7 – Canal Section – Clarifying the watercraft language.

**New WMA Opportunities:**

- Rules 1.26, 1.45, and 1.46 – Group Draw Hunt Structure
  - North Region – Cossar State Park WMA
  - Central Region – Phil Bryant WMA
  - South Region – Natchez State Park WMA
- Rules 1.19 and 1.28 - Mentor Deer Hunts
  - Black Prairie WMA – October 5, 2019
  - Pearl River WMA – November 9, 2019

Phil Bryant WMA - PROPOSED Hunt Plan (Rule 1.46)

- Details have been appended to the minutes of the proposed hunt plan.

Phil Bryant WMA is a groundbreaking hunting experience for Mississippians, different from any other WMA. The hunting plan allows something for everyone.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Mounger and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission unanimously approved PROPOSED WMA Regulations (Rules 1.1 - 1.46), as recommended by staff.**

**PROPOSED – 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 2 - Deer**

- **Rule 2.2 – Deer Seasons and Bag Limits**

Walsh presented the following changes to Rule 2.2 allowing more deer to be harvested in certain areas to reduce deer density in response to Chronic Wasting Disease protocol. Three public meetings (April 22 in Batesville, April 30 in Jackson, & May 7 in Hattiesburg) are being scheduled to update the public on CWD and discuss the regulation changes for the next deer hunting season.

Public and Private Land

- Increase antlerless bag limit to five (5), except remain two (2) in the Southeast Zone.
- Bonus tag for hunters that submit a CWD-positive deer during hunting season and choose to relinquish the meat.

Private Land Only

- Allow one of three-buck bag limit to be any antlered deer.

WMAs and Open Public Land

- Allow antlerless harvest Dec. 2-15 (primitive weapon) on open public lands and certain WMAs.
- Only youth may harvest sub-criteria antlered deer.

Upper Sardis WMA and Holly Springs National Forest

- Allow antlerless harvest from Oct. 1-Jan. 31.
- Allow one of three-buck limit to be any antlered deer.

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

### 2019-2020 Migratory Game Bird Framework Selections

Walsh called upon Houston Havens, Waterfowl Program Coordinator, to present to the Commission the 2019-20 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Season Recommendations which are listed in the table below.

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY	POSSESSION
Sept. Teal	Sept. 14 - 29	6	18
September Canada Geese	Sept. 1 - 30	5	15
Woodcock	Dec. 18, 2019- Jan. 31, 2020	3	9
Snipe	Nov. 14, 2019- Feb. 28, 2020	8	24
Common & Purple Gallinules	Sept. 1 - 30 AND Nov. 22 - Dec. 31	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Possession Limit
Rails: Clapper and King	Sept. 1 - 30 AND Nov. 22 - Dec. 31	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Possession Limit
Rails: Sora and Virginia	Sept. 1 - 30 AND Nov. 22 - Dec. 31	25 Singly or in aggregate	75 Possession Limit
Mourning and White-winged Doves (North Zone) <b>Beginning at 2pm on Sept. 1</b>	Sept. 1 - Oct. 6 AND Oct. 19 - Nov. 16 AND Dec. 21, 2019- Jan. 14, 2020	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Singly or in aggregate
Mourning and White-winged Doves (South Zone) <b>Beginning at 2pm on Sept. 1</b>	Sept. 1 - 15 AND Oct. 5 - Nov. 6 AND Dec. 21, 2019 - Jan. 31, 2020	15 Singly or in aggregate	45 Singly or in aggregate
Ducks, Mergansers, and Coots	Nov. 29 - Dec. 1 AND Dec. 6, 2019- Jan. 31, 2020	Details Below*	Details Below*
Geese: Canada, White-fronted, Snow, Blue, Ross's, and Brant	Nov. 11-24 AND Nov. 29 - Dec. 1 AND Dec. 6, 2019- Jan. 31, 2020	Canada Geese: 3 Snow, Blue, and Ross's: 20 White-fronted: 3 Brant: 1	Canada Geese: 9 Snow, Blue, and Ross's: No Limit White-fronted: 9 Brant: 3
Youth, Veteran, & Active Military Waterfowl Days	Nov. 16, 2019 AND Feb. 8, 2020	Same as Regular Season	Same as Regular Season

**\*DUCKS, MERGANSERS, and COOTS daily bag limit and possession:** The duck daily bag limit will include a total of 6 ducks, including no more than 4 mallards (no more than 2 of which may be females), 3 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 3 scaup, 1 pintail, 2 canvasbacks, 1 mottled duck, and 2 black ducks. The merganser daily bag limit will be a total of 5 mergansers, only 2 of which may be hooded mergansers. The coot daily bag limit is 15. The possession limit for ducks, mergansers, and coots is three times the daily bag limit.

**ACTION:** Motions were made as follows on the 2019-2020 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Season Recommendations.

Motion by Wagner, seconded by Taylor to approve Dove Season Recommendations.

Motion by Taylor, seconded by Wagner to approve Rails, Gallinules, Geese, Teal Recommendations.

Motion by Wagner, seconded by Mounger to approve Duck Season Recommendations.

Motion by Wagner, seconded by Mounger to approve Geese Season & Youth, Veteran/Active Military Days.

All motions were unanimously approved by the Commission as presented.

## PARKS

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

Michael Bolden, Deputy Administrator, stated that no comments were received and recommended final adoption.

- Rule 1.1 – State Park Rules
- Rule 1.2 – General Rules and Regulations for State Parks

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

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

### Law Enforcement Update

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented a handout to the Commission which highlighted license violations for the month of March with “no license” being the top violation. During the month of March, officers issued 37 citations for baiting turkeys. Eighty percent of the violations involved grain being deposited directly on the ground. Officers gave boating safety talks to kids at the NRCS event in Lauderdale County. Officers canvassed the state making hunters aware of the new game check app for turkeys. Mclvor Shooting Facility Dedication last month hosted 120 guest and staff. Opening day count at Mclvor was 149 customers.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was brought forward.

**MDWFP FALLEN OFFICER DEDICATION  
AND NEXT MEETING DATE**

Date: Wednesday, May 15, 2019  
Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211  
Time: 10 a.m. MDWFP Fallen Officer Dedication  
12:30 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**

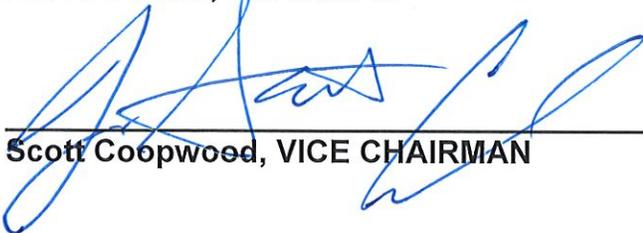
There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Cossar gaveled the meeting into adjournment.



Bill F. Cossar, CHAIRMAN

5/15/19

Date



Scott Coopwood, VICE CHAIRMAN

5/15/19

Date

# PHIL BRYANT WMA PROPOSED HUNT PLAN

## Backwoods Unit

- 4 subunits

Deer, waterfowl, and small game

- Group hunting and camping
- Draw a party of 4 per hunt (16 hunters per hunt)
- Wednesday – Sunday
- Every other week starting October 1 – January 14
- Group bag limit of 4 legal bucks and 8 antlerless deer

## Buck Bayou Unit

Deer draw hunts (same as Mahannah)

- October – archery only
- November/December – Gun
- Jan 1 – 14 – Open archery hunting
- Small game seasons same as Mahannah

Waterfowl Hunts

- 41 units on Mahannah and Buck Bayou
- Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday

## Ten Point

Deer Draw Hunts

- Thursday – Sunday
- Oct/Nov – Archery
- December – Gun
- Youth/Handicapped only -- Dec 26 – Jan 12

Waterfowl and small game – open on days not deer hunting (Mon-Wed)

## Goose Lake

- Boating or walk-in access only

Deer Draw Hunts

- Thursday – Sunday
- October 3– January 12 – Archery

Waterfowl and Small Game – Monday–Wednesday

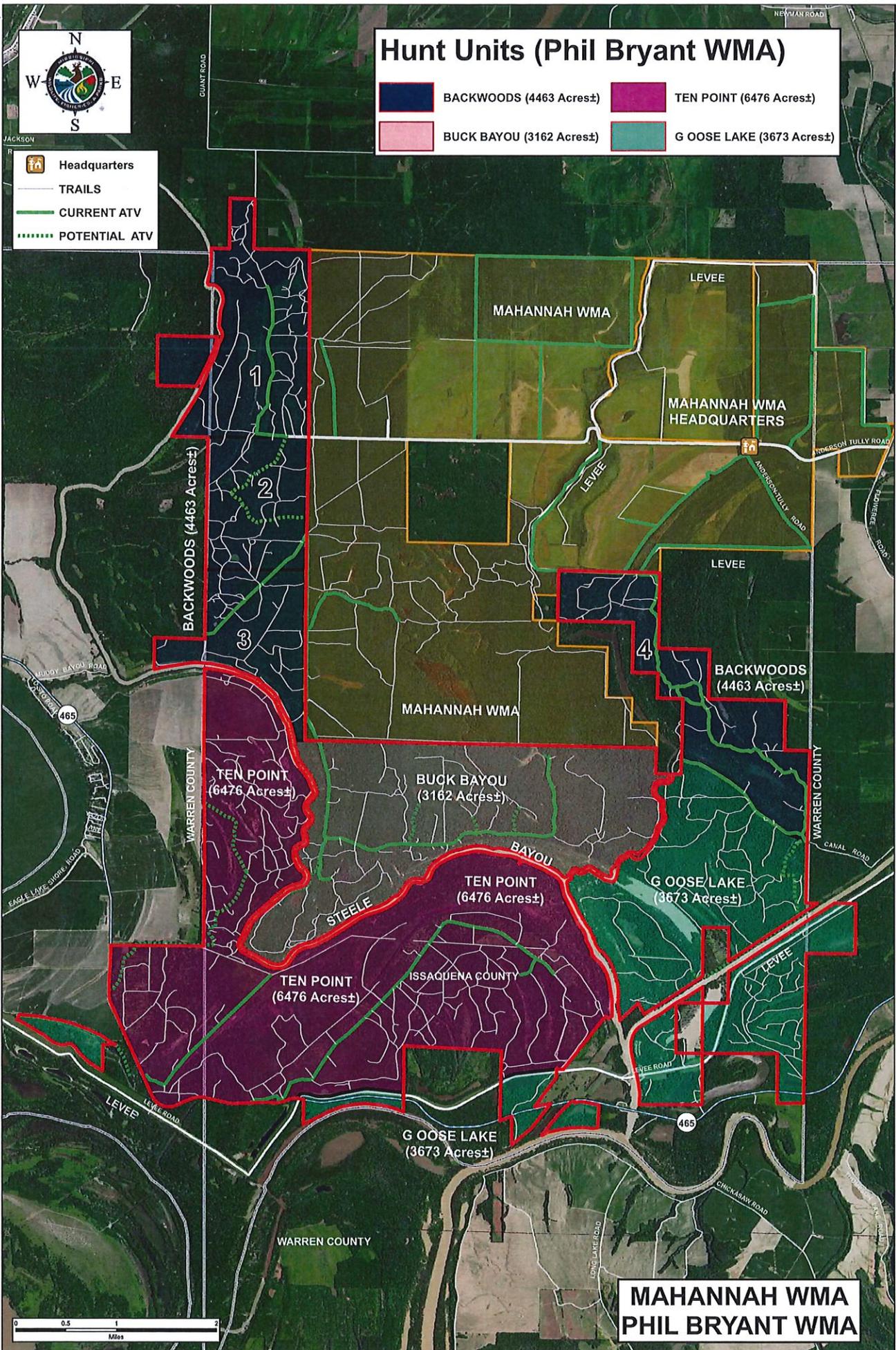
- General Regulations
  - Deer
    - Season Bag Limit – 3 deer, of which only 1 may be a legal buck (Antler Criteria of 16/20)
    - Mandatory CWD sample submission for all antlerless deer
  - Trapping ---- Jan. 1 – February 28 daily
  - Fishing
    - From Oct. 1 – Jan. 14, fishing is allowed on small game/waterfowl hunting days.
  - ATV Use
    - Retrieval only
    - Designated road and trails only
  - Horses
    - Prohibited Oct. 1 – Jan. 14.
    - From Jan. 15 – Sept. 30, designated roads and trails for recreational use only.
  - High Water/Flooding
    - Mahannah and Phil Bryant WMAs will be closed to all activities, except waterfowl hunting, at 82ft on the SB landside gauge.
    - Waterfowl hunting shall open daily on 10 Point and Goose Lake units during the waterfowl season after 82ft on the SB landside gauge.
    - Waterfowl hunting is draw only on Mahannah and Buck Bayou Units during the waterfowl season after 82ft on the SB landside gauge.



# Hunt Units (Phil Bryant WMA)

	BACKWOODS (4463 Acres±)		TEN POINT (6476 Acres±)
	BUCK BAYOU (3162 Acres±)		G OOSE LAKE (3673 Acres±)

-  Headquarters
-  TRAILS
-  CURRENT ATV
-  POTENTIAL ATV



**MAHANNAH WMA  
PHIL BRYANT WMA**