

# MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

2:30 p.m.

MDWFP Main Office, 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS. 39211

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

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

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

Chairman Rigdon gavelled the meeting to order and welcomed House Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Chairman Scott Bounds and Senate Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Chairman Philip Moran.

## OPENING PRAYER

Larry Castle, Director of Technical Programs, opened the meeting with prayer.

## SIX MILE LAKE

Before any further business could be conducted, Commissioner Wagner requested to be recognized for a motion out of order. The Chairman granted his request. Commissioner Wagner stated that at last month's meeting, the Commission voted to support a request from the Secretary of State's Office, to declare certain lands at Six Mile Lake, which had been donated to the state, as a waterfowl refuge. Since that time, Commissioner Wagner noted that he, individually, and Department staff, had received many comments regarding this matter from interested citizens. Of particular interest are concerns about any restrictions being placed on the public's use of the public waterway running through the proposed refuge. To that end, staff has requested an Attorney General's opinion regarding the proposed action. Staff has been informed that the opinion should be rendered prior to the October meeting. Therefore, Commissioner Wagner would like to table any further consideration of the Six Mile Lake matter until the October meeting. The Commissioner went on to note that there could be members of the public present at the meeting who wished to comment on this matter and they should be heard. The Chairman then asked Commissioner Wagner to state his motion and asked for a second.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Wagner made a motion to lay further discussion on the request to declare a refuge on certain lands donated to the State of Mississippi, at Six Mile Lake in Leflore County, on the table, subject to call at the October meeting, until staff receives the Attorney General's Opinion and brings forward a recommendation. Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion and the motion carried.

### MINUTES

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the minutes for the August 19, 2015 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

### AGENDA

**ACTION:** Commissioner Cossar made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of a rule change for the Wildlife Bureau; namely, Proposed and Temporary Rule 1.44 Great River Road WMA. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Deviney and the agenda was unanimously approved as amended.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Brad Young, Executive Director, Mississippi Wildlife Federation. Mr. Young announced that he had mailed a letter to each Commissioner on behalf of the Mississippi Wildlife Federation and 13 other conservation-based organizations opposing the proposed changes to the Wildlife Supplemental Feeding Rule. He presented two arguments for the Commission consideration.
- D.R. Bozeman, Flora, Rancher. Mr. Bozeman voiced his concern and objection over the proposed changes to the Wildlife Supplemental Feeding Rule.
- Dr. Jim Miller, Extension Professor Emeritus, MSU. Dr. Miller read his letter opposing the Commission's proposed Wildlife Supplemental Feeding Rule to the Commission and then presented a hard copy of the letter to each Commissioner.
- Dr. Bronson Strickland, Associate Extension Professor, MSU. Dr. Strickland presented statistics on public polls in Mississippi and national polls concerning hunting. He expressed his opposition to the proposed changes to the Wildlife Supplemental Feeding Rule.
- Mr. Michael Smith. In lieu of speaking, Mr. Smith presented Chairman Rigdon with a petition from over 200 individuals supporting the decision of the Commission to remove the line-of-sight restriction in the Supplemental Feeding Rule.

### WILDLIFE

- **PROPOSED and TEMPORARY Rule 1.44 – Great River Road WMA**  
**40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1, Rule 1.44**  
Chad Dacus, Wildlife Bureau Director, presented the following changes to Rule 1.44 - Great River Road WMA. These changes were recommended after reviewing the regulations and meeting with the public due to safety concerns.

- Archery hunting will be draw permit only from November 1 – 25. The application period will be from September 23 – October 7.
- There will be no youth squirrel season September 24 – 30, and no squirrel season October 1 – 31.
- Squirrel hunting will be allowed from January 1 – February 28 on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only. A limited number of hunters will be allowed on the WMA at one time. See the permit station for available hunting locations on hunt days. Squirrel hunting with dogs is prohibited.
- Scouting will be allowed daily October 1 – 31 and on Thursdays, only during permitted deer hunts. Only those persons drawn to hunt will be allowed on the area during permitted deer hunts.
- There will be no raccoon, opossum, bobcat, or rabbit hunting allowed.

Mr. Dacus added that the public should check the regulations at each WMA before hunting for regulations specific to that WMA.

**ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, Rule 1.44 was approved unanimously by the Commission.**

- **FINAL Rule 40 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 2, Chapter 2, White-tailed Deer:**  
**Rule 2.4 – Supplemental Feeding of Wild Animals Outside of Wildlife Enclosures**  
Chad Dacus presented Rule 2.4 for final passage to go into effect November 1.

**ACTION: Commissioner Cossar made the motion to approve Rule 2.4, to go into effect on November 1, 2015. Commissioner Deviney seconded the motion. Chairman Rigdon asked for a show of hands and the vote was unanimous. The rule carried.**

**Commissioner Coopwood requested recognition to change his vote and to be recorded as voting “No” on Rule 2.4. Mr. Coopwood explained that he thought a different rule was up for consideration. The Chairman directed that the minutes shall reflect that Rule 2.4 was adopted by a vote of 4 to 1.**

#### **LICENSE SALES REPORT**

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of August 2015. He gave highlights from two different reports; namely, the Commission Report and the Current Report. The Commission Report reflects revenue through the end of August and the Current Report reveals sales through the first two weeks in September.

Thompson stated that revenue for August was down \$212,000 but the Current Report which includes the first two weeks of September shows total revenue up \$39,000, mainly due to Dove Season opening in September and a large number of customers waiting to buy licenses until the first week of September.

Highlights of Thompson's report are listed below:

- Resident Sales are down 20%. Current Report reflects Resident Sales are down 3%
- Sportsman's Licenses - up \$268,000 in Current Report
- Non-resident License Sales are down 2% on Current Report
- Alligator Permit privileges up \$118,000 - 3,619 participants in Alligator Hunt (765 more participants this year)
- Lifetime Licenses - down \$15,000

### FISHERIES

#### **FINAL Rule Changes: 40 Miss Admin. Code Part 3:**

**Rule 3.2 Paddlefish Harvest Regulations**

**Rule 3.4 Paddlefish Seasons and Zones**

**Rule 3.5 Paddlefish Application Permits**

Larry Pugh, Fisheries Bureau Director, explained that no negative public comments had been received and no changes had been made since the last meeting.

**ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, Final adoption of Rules 3.2, 3.4, 3.5 were unanimously approved as presented.**

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

#### **Citation Report**

Colonel Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented license violations. At the suggestion of former Commissioner Bryan Jones the Turcotte Shooting range was upgraded from .6 miles to 1.78 miles and customer attendance exploded to 1,462 between 8/23/15 and 9/13/15. McHenry Shooting Range welcomed 770 customers during the same time frame. The Law Enforcement Cook Team cooked 800 pounds of catfish to over 2,000 first responders on the Gulf Coast attending the Hurricane Katrina Plus 10 Event.

#### **Reinstatement Requests**

Colonel Adcock presented the following five reinstatement requests. All violators had taken their Hunter Education classes and paid their fines. Adcock asked that each come forward and state the circumstances of their arrest before the Commission. Following each statement a motion was made by the Commission.

- *Michael Rutherford, Southaven, MS*  
He shot a deer after dark in his yard. Someone reported gun shots and he was arrested.

**MOTION: By motion of Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, Mr. Rutherford's license was reinstated by unanimous consent.**

- *James Jenkins, Fulton, MS*

He saw a deer on the side of the road. He stopped to shoot and a conservation officer drove up. He lost his gun, spotlight, a day of work, and \$2,600 in fines.

**MOTION: Upon motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, the Commission unanimously voted to reinstate Mr. Jenkins' license.**

- *Andrew Williams, Fulton, MS*

Mr. Williams saw a deer in the field. When he came back later to shoot the deer, a conservation officer presented him a ticket for headlighting. He paid \$2,000-3,000 in fines.

**MOTION: Commissioner Deviney made a motion to reinstate Mr. Williams' license, seconded by Commissioner Cossar, and unanimously approved by the Commission.**

- *Billy Archie, Nettleton, MS*

Mr. Archie shot a deer after dark. When he came back later to find the deer, a conservation officer was there and issued a citation for headlighting. He pled guilty before the judge and paid \$2,600 in fines.

**MOTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Wagner, seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission unanimously voted to reinstate Mr. Archie's license.**

- *Sawyer Goode, Waterford, MS*

Mr. Goode shot a buck and was arrested for headlighting. He was fined \$2,000 and worked for the county three months to pay it off.

**MOTION: By motion of Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, Mr. Goode's license was reinstated by the Commission.**

Col. Adcock reminded each violator that a second conviction would result in the termination of their hunting license for three years.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was presented.

#### NEXT MEETING DATE

Next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, October 14, 2015 at 2 p.m., at the Jackson office, 1505 Eastover Drive.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to determine the need for Executive Session. The Commission determined that Executive Session was needed for discussions regarding transactions in real property. Upon motion made by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, the Commission voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session.**

Dr. Polles updated the Commission on several pending land transactions. The acquisition of 120 acres in Stone County will be closed by the next meeting.

Dr. Polles informed the Commission of the results of the appraisals of a 1,214 acre tract of land in Bolivar County. Based upon the appraisals, he requested authority to make an offer.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Coopwood and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission voted unanimously to authorize the Executive Director to offer the average of the two appraisals to purchase the 1,214 acre tract in Bolivar County.**

Dr. Polles informed the Commission of a tract of land adjacent to the Tuscumbia WMA in Alcorn County. The tract is contiguous to the WMA and will increase the size of the WMA as well as providing much needed access to nearby public roads.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the Commission voted unanimously to authorize staff to obtain appraisals of the Alcorn County lands adjacent to the Tuscumbia WMA.**

Dr. Polles also informed the Commission that another tract of land, owned by the former owner of Canemount, may be available for purchase. The tract is about 1,100 acres and in Claiborne County. At this time, the Executive Director is merely seeking guidance and authority to engage the owner about the possibility of selling.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission voted unanimously to authorize the Executive Director to pursue the purchase of a 1,100 acre tract in Claiborne County.**

Dr. Polles concluded his presentation by informing the Commission that the agency had been approached by the US Army Corps of Engineers (Vicksburg District) to take over management of a property near Alligator, MS. These are mitigation project lands and are not one contiguous block. It is a patchwork of smaller tracts with numerous private in-holdings.

Discussion followed.

Since the management responsibilities would not be accompanied with any guaranteed operation and maintenance funding from the Corps, the consensus of the Commission was to continue discussions, but to make no commitment, pending better funding prospects.

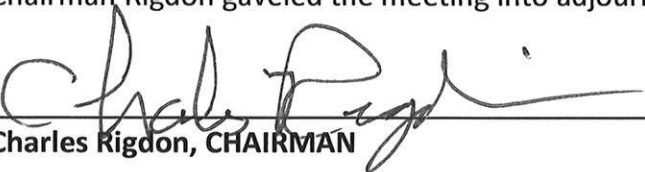
There was no further business for Executive Session.

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


**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting being open, Commissioner Wagner made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cossar seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn.

Chairman Rigdon gaveled the meeting into adjournment.

  
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Charles Rigdon, CHAIRMAN

  
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Date

  
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Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN

  
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Date