

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

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

2:30 p.m.

Delta State University, Hugh Ellis Walker Alumni Foundation House  
Cleveland, MS

## **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, Deputy Executive Director; Larry Castle, Michael Bolden, Jennifer Head, Larry Pugh, Colonel Steve Adcock, Jason Thompson, Ed Penny, and counsel, Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

Chairman Rigdon gaveled the meeting to order.

Dr. Charles McAdams, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs, welcomed MDWFP to Delta State University.

## **OPENING PRAYER**

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

## **MINUTES**

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, the minutes for the November 9, 2015 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

## **AGENDA**

The Executive Director requested to add Col. Steve Adcock to the agenda.

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the agenda for December 16, 2015 was unanimously approved as amended.

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, introduced three officers to the Commission who were in attendance, Private Cole Edwards and Corp. Justin Gates from the North Region and Lt. Chris Reed from the Jackson Office.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments were presented.

### LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of November 2015. Total revenues are down over 2% and total licenses and permits sold are down over 3%.

Highlights of Thompson's report are listed below:

- Resident License Sales are down 4%. Shooting range permits sold totaled \$45,000 this year. Hunter Ed licenses for youth totaled 1,149 licenses sold compared to 560 last year.
- Non-resident License Sales are down 2%.
- Permits sold were up over \$104,000 or 59%.
- Lifetime Licenses are down \$5,000.

### PARKS

#### FINAL - 40 Miss. Admin. Code, Part 6, Rule 1.1 - State Park Fees

Jennifer Head, Director of Parks, presented for final approval Rule 1.1. The rule changes the fees for boat slip rentals at J. P. Coleman State Park and Percy Quin State Park. No comments have been received.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, Rule 1.1 was unanimously approved as presented.**

### FISHERIES

#### FINAL - 40 Miss. Admin. Code, Part 3, Rule 1.4 – Statewide Creel Limits

Larry Pugh, Director of Fisheries Bureau, presented for Final approval, Rule 1.4. No comments have been received.

**ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, Rule 1.4 was approved unanimously by the Commission.**

### WILDLIFE

#### Rule 1.1 – Basic Regulations for All Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)

#### Rule 1.13 – Malmaison Wildlife Management Boundary Agreement

Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General, explained that there had been a boundary dispute at Malmaison WMA. Settlement of that dispute required additional language in Rule 1.1 to include:

*No shooting across WMA boundary lines. Unless they have been tampered-with, all WMA boundary lines are marked. Lands adjacent to any WMA may be private lands. Crossing onto*

*adjacent private lands may subject the hunter to criminal liability for trespass. Stands, blinds, or other hunting positions should be placed so that the hunter does not shoot across any boundary line and onto adjacent private property. Hunters shall obey all markers and related signs on the WMA. A violation of this provision may also subject the hunter to charges for a violation of WMA hunting regulations and possible loss of hunting privileges on a WMA as provided in Paragraph E.*

Additional language was added to Rule 1.13 which is specific to Malmaison boundaries and trespassing regulations.

**ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, Rule 1.1 and Rule 1.13 were approved unanimously by the Commission.**

#### **LICENSE EXEMPTION REQUESTS**

Larry Castle, Director of Technical Programs, presented three license exemption requests for Commission consideration. It was decided that a motion would be made following Mr. Castle's presentation on all three requests.

- **Wounded Warrior Hunt** – Canemount Wildlife Management Area, December 11 – 13, 2015. Exemption was requested for one non-resident hunter with a disability.
- **Hope Outdoors, North Mississippi Chapter** – Disabled Hunt on December 18 – 19, 2015 at Dorroh Lake near Calhoun City, MS. Exemption was requested for one non-resident hunter who meets this criteria.
- **Warrior Bonfire Program** – Wounded Warrior Hunt on January 8 – 10, 2015 at Valley Park, MS. Six or seven wounded warriors will be participating in the hunt and exemption was requested on their behalf. Hunter L. Fordice, co-founder of the Wounded Warrior Program, thanked the Commission for waiving the license fees last year during the hunt. He shared a story with the Commission on one of the Wounded Warrior participants last year.

**ACTION: By motion of Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, exemption requests were approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.**

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

##### **Citation Report**

Colonel Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, presented a handout which highlighted license violations, shooting range attendance, and Stuff the Truck Toy Drive for Blair Batson Children's Hospital. Lt. Chris Reed was commended on the outstanding job in coordinating all aspects of the Toy Drive.

### Reinstatement Requests

Colonel Adcock presented the following four 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.

- *Landon McCaa, Buckatunna, MS*

McCaa was arrested four years ago for headlighting and hunting on a public road. He stated that there was a gun in the car but no bullets. His friends turned a light on by his house but no gun was fired. His friends pled guilty, so he changed his plea to guilty. He was fined \$2,500.

Col. Adcock stated that ammunition was found at the scene and that McCaa continued to purchase a license the first three years due to computer software glitch. This software has been corrected and the third year the software caught him trying to purchase a license and he was given another year without hunting privileges before he could come before the Commission to get reinstated.

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

- *Matthew Hollinghead, Kiln, MS*

Hollinghead was arrested December 27, 2014 for headlighting. He testified that there were several guns in the vehicle but none were fired. The two guns in the backseat were loaded; the one in the front seat was not. He was fined \$2,100.

Col. Adcock stated that the arresting officer had heard a gunshot and the gun on the front seat had a spent round on the floorboard and the barrel smelled of smoke. Hollinghead responded that he had shot the gun about 35 minutes earlier at a coyote. Col. Adcock stated that Hollinghead had written a letter to MDWFP stating that all the guns were in the back seat and today he testified that one gun was on the front seat. The purpose of coming before the Commission is to admit that a mistake has been made and to take responsibility and be remorseful. Based on the findings and Hollinghead's conflicting testimony, Col. Adcock did not recommend reinstatement at this time.

**MOTION: Upon motion of Commissioner Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, the Commission unanimously voted to disapprove reinstatement of Hollinghead's license.**

Col. Adcock stated that after another year's wait Hollinghead would have the opportunity to come before the Commission again for reinstatement. The Director recommended that Hollinghead write a new letter this month.

- *Troy Riviere, Meraux, MS*

Riviere was invited on a hunting trip. He and a friend were in his truck and while making a sharp turn the headlights of his truck spotted a deer. His friend fired at the deer which turned out to be a mechanical deer. Riviere did not have a gun in the vehicle. This was a costly

experience. He stated that he has been hunting for 22 years without a violation. He regrets that his mistake has kept his son from being able to hunt.

**MOTION: Commissioner Deviney made a motion to reinstate Riviere's license, seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, and unanimously approved by the Commission.**

- *Brooks Alexander, Oxford, MS*

Col. Adcock stated that this is a social media case which led to a headlighting conviction but involved much more. Alexander created an Instagram account called Turkey Assassins where people could post hunting pictures.

Alexander stated that an officer came to his office to ask him some questions about spring turkey season and about a deer that was shot. When charged with headlighting, he already had two turkey charges on his record. Alexander went to federal court and the turkey charges were dropped since he pled guilty to headlighting and cooperated in the investigation.

**MOTION: Motion was made by Commission Cossar and seconded by Commissioner Deviney to table this request subject to call.**

Commissioner Deviney recommended that Alexander write letters to whomever he could and convince everyone that he has learned his lesson and will abide by the law.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Coopwood recognized members of his hunting club, who were guests at the meeting-- Dave Farber, Randy Townsend, Mike Thompson, and George Evans.

Commissioner Deviney recognized Hunter Fordice and what an incredible job he is doing for our veterans.

#### NEXT MEETING DATE

Next Commission meeting date was set for Wednesday, January 20, 2016 at 2 p.m. at 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Director stated that there was need for Executive Session.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, 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 Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, the Commission voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session.

Dr. Polles, with the assistance of Larry Castle, updated the Commission on the results of appraisals that had been obtained for a tract of land in Alcorn County. There was a wide variation in the per acre appraised amounts due to the comparable sales reviewed by the appraisers, resulting in an average price that seemed unusually high for outdoor recreational property. Discussion followed. The consensus of the Commission was to end any further efforts to purchase this property.

Dr. Polles updated the Commission on agency efforts to ready the Canemount house and related buildings for sale as authorized this past legislative session. Dr. Polles circulated printed copies of a prospectus that had been prepared in-house to be used in promoting the sale.

No action was required of the Commission.

There was no further business for Executive Session.

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, 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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1/20/16  
Date

  
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Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN

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1/20/16  
Date