

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

**Wednesday, October 14, 2015**

**2 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; Larry Castle, Michael Bolden, Jennifer Head, Larry Pugh, Chad Dacus, Charles Knight, Colonel Steve Adcock, Jason Thompson, Ed Penny, and counsel, Doug Mann and Drew Malone, Special Assistant Attorneys General.

Chairman Rigdon gaveled the meeting to order.

## **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 September 16, 2015 Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

## **AGENDA**

**ACTION:** Upon motion by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the agenda for October 14, 2015 was unanimously approved as presented.

## **SIX MILE LAKE**

At the August meeting the Commission voted to approve a request from the Secretary of State's Office declaring certain donated lands at Six Mile Lake as a waterfowl refuge. After receiving numerous public comments, the Commission tabled any further consideration of Six Mile Lake at the September Commission meeting. The Commission also noted that staff had requested an Attorney General's Opinion regarding the Commission's authority to impose any restrictions on the public's use of the public waterway running through the proposed refuge.

Chairman Rigdon stated that the Attorney General's Opinion had been received, and consideration of a proposed refuge at Six Mile Lake would now be brought back for Commission consideration.

Commissioner Wagner announced that the Attorney General's Opinion stated that the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks does not have authority to impose the proposed restrictions for the sole purpose of complying with the covenants and conditions set forth in the subject donation deeds; therefore, Commissioner Wagner made the following motion.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Wagner moved to rescind the action of the August Commission meeting, wherein the Commission voted to support the declaration of certain donated lands at Six Mile Lake as a waterfowl/wildlife refuge, based upon the Attorney General's Opinion, and the determination therein that the Commission lacked the authority to impose the restrictions requested upon public waters, and related findings. Commissioner Deviney seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Wagner noted for the record that the Commission and Department will continue to work with the other agencies involved to resolve any outstanding issues involving Six Mile Lake.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Earl Creely, Tupelo, MS. Mr. Creely presented questions concerning Six Mile Lake and projects connected to Six Mile Lake.
- Mark Blake, Six Mile Lake Cabin Owner. Mr. Blake questioned what happens now following the Commission's decision on Six Mile Lake. Legal counsel advised that as the situation exists at present, the Commission does not have authority to comply with the conditions set forth in the donation deeds. Either the set of facts concerning the donated property will have to change (i.e., removal of any contingencies), or the property will revert to the donors.

#### LICENSE SALES REPORT

Jason Thompson, Director of License/Boat Registration, presented the License Sales Report for the month of September 2015. Total revenues were up \$25,000 or a one percent increase.

Highlights of Thompson's report are listed below:

- Resident License Sales are down.
- Non-resident License Sales are up \$19,000. All Game licenses up \$10,000. Seven day licenses are up \$7,000.
- Permits were up \$96,000 or a 58% increase.
- Lifetime Licenses are down 1%

#### FISHERIES

##### Fisheries Update

Larry Pugh, Director of Fisheries Bureau, presented a PowerPoint overview of the Fisheries Bureau. Highlights included:

- Currently manages 20 lakes with 69,000 customers in FY15.
- Fishing Rodeos reach out to over 6,000 youth annually and are the backbone to the Education Program.
- North Miss. Fish Hatchery Visitor and Education Center has sponsored 43 events; 162 tours; and received 45,149 visitors from FY13 to FY15.
- Camp Fish – complements rodeos and teaches kids (15 and under) how to cast, lure selection, fisheries sampling, boating safety, and minnow traps. Plans are to include families in 2016.
- Pond Workshops – hosted 51 workshops and 637 attendees from FY12 to FY15
- Lake Monroe is currently closed and under renovation. Lake renovations have been completed for Lake Jeff Davis and Lake Lamar Bruce.
- New structures at Calling Panther campground, Jeff Davis office, Neshoba bathhouse, and Tippah equipment building.
- Joint Fishery Bureau meetings with other states, including Louisiana, Tennessee, and Alabama since 2012
- New website tools – Interactive Boat Ramp Map, Interactive Bait Shop Map, and Interactive Fishing Regulation Map
- Website Tools Coming Soon – Mississippi Fish Identification and Info; and Public Water Info, including a Depth Map

## WILDLIFE

### Alligator Season Summary

Ricky Flynt, Wildlife Alligator/Furbearer Coordinator, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the 2015 Alligator Season. He stated that all alligator record categories were broken this year and will continue to be broken as more people become experienced. This year's hunt ended with a 70 percent success rate for harvesting an alligator, compared to 66 percent last year. The overall impact of the alligator hunting season was one percent of the male population. The population of alligators remains stable.

### FINAL Rule 1.44 – Great River Road WMA

#### 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 2, Chapter 1, Rule 1.44

Chad Dacus, Director of Wildlife Bureau, stated that no public comments had been received since the last meeting and requested final approval of the changes as outlined last month.

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

### Hope Outdoors – License Exemption Request

Mr. Dacus presented a request for license exemptions for five out-of-state hunters who are disabled. These hunters will be participating in a hunt sponsored by Hope Outdoors for children and adults with

critical illnesses and severe disabilities. The hunt is scheduled for December 4 and 5, 2015 in the Vicksburg area.

**ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Wagner and seconded by Commissioner Cossar, the license exemptions were approved unanimously by the Commission as presented.**

### Waterfowl Conservation Groups

- **Delta Waterfowl – Jim Fisher, Director of Canada Conservation Policy**

Mr. Fisher requested support for Delta Waterfowl's ALUS program, which MDWFP has been supporting for several years. ALUS has expanded from an initial small community model to a much larger second watershed area. Mississippi is currently the only state participating in this project. He thanked the Commission for their continued support.

- **Mississippi State University – Joe Lancaster, Graduate Student**

Mr. Lancaster came on behalf of Dr. J. Brian Davis, MSU Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Department, to thank everyone for their continued support. He updated the Commission on several findings from his fourth year of research on waterfowl in the Mississippi Delta. Over the four year period his team radio marked 265 female mallards and acquired nearly 7,500 daytime locations. This is one of the largest studies of radio marked mallards in the wintering region. They are currently analyzing data from this study. Dr. Davis and Mr. Lancaster will present some of their findings at the North American Duck Symposium in 2016.

- **Ducks Unlimited – Dr. Tom Moorman, Director of Conservation Programs, Southeast**

Dr. Moorman expressed his appreciation for the partnership and support with MDWFP. Ducks Unlimited matches every dollar given by MDWFP. DU currently has more North American funding each year than they have match money which is why this year's request shows an increase. Dr. Moorman works with 13 states trying to secure funds.

As shown in the handout which was distributed to the Commission, about one third of the ducks harvested in Mississippi come from the Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has the highest density of nesting waterfowl.

### Duck Stamp Projects

Ed Penny, Director of Conservation Programs, thanked the Waterfowl Conservation groups for their comments and presented staff recommendations for distribution of duck stamp proceeds for the following waterfowl projects:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Project Description</u>
DU Canada	\$175,000	\$125,000	Continue funding of Eastern Saskatchewan Parklands NAWCA Project; funds will be matched 3:1 with other agency and DU funds
Delta Waterfowl	\$100,000	\$100,000	Continue funding for Delta's ALUS initiatives.

MSU Research	\$40,000	\$ 40,000	Provide funding for the MS Delta radio-marked mallard project
WMA Waterfowl Management	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	Provide funds to WMAs as needed to supplement annual waterfowl habitat management.
WMA Wetland	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	Wetland infrastructure survey and design work for for future NAWCA project proposals on WMAs. Funding will be used as match for NAWCA grants.
Private Lands Wetland Enhancement Projects	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	Funding for private lands wetland habitat enhancement/restoration. Funding will be used as match for upcoming NAWCA grants.
Aerial Waterfowl Surveys	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	Continue monitoring of MS Delta waterfowl abundance and habitat; Delta Wildlife also funding.
Waterfowl Program Travel	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	Provide funds for MDWFP staff to attend regional and national meetings on management, regulations, and policy related to waterfowl and wetlands.
Mississippi Flyway Council Dues	\$ 2,795	\$ 2,795	Annual dues to Mississippi Flyway Council; Waterfowl and Wetlands Stakeholder survey.
MS Flyway Banding	\$ <u>1,981</u>	\$ <u>1,981</u>	Annual contribution to MS Flyway banding efforts
TOTAL	\$481,776	\$431,776	FY 2015 resident stamp sales = 31,224 non-resident stamp sales = 10,951 FY 2015 Total Revenue = \$484,980

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Wagner, funds for 2015-16 Duck Stamp projects were unanimously approved as recommended by staff.**

### PARKS

#### **PROPOSED - 40 Miss. Admin. Code Part 6, Chapter 1, Rule 1.1 - State Park Fees**

Jennifer Head, Director of Parks, presented marina fee increases and a few new items for the J. P. Coleman State Park. A handout was distributed to the Commission with fee changes.

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

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

#### **Officer Pinning**

The recent promotions of two MDWFP Law Enforcement officers were acknowledged by a pinning ceremony. Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of Law Enforcement, requested the following personnel to come forward as they were presented their new rank and pin:

- Byron Middleton from the rank of Sergeant Major to Lieutenant
- Tracy Tullos from the rank of Master Sergeant to Lieutenant

The Commission and attendees ended the pinning ceremony with a round of applause.

### Citation Report

Colonel Adcock presented a handout which highlighted license violations, shooting range attendance, and MCOTA facility improvements.

### 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.

- *Thomas Beck, Grenada, MS*

Mr. Beck stopped his vehicle at night to let his girlfriend shoot a deer. They came back later to get the deer and were arrested for headlighting and shooting on a public road. His rifle was taken and he was fined \$2,200.

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

- *Joseph Moniz, Lumberton, MS*

Mr. Moniz was arrested for hunting on a public road, smoking marihuana, and headlighting. He served 23 days of community service.

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

- *Kevin Hataway, Lamar, MS*

Mr. Hataway crossed over someone else's property and was charged with spotlighting and trespassing. He did not shoot anything but he threw his gun into the woods and it broke into two pieces. He had to pay \$2,300 in fines plus \$500 reinstatement fee and \$200 trespassing fine.

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

- *Matthew Bryan, Vicksburg, MS*

Mr. Bryan turned a spotlight on one mile from his friend's house. He did not shoot anything but had a loaded gun in the back of his vehicle. He had to pay \$2,400 in fines and \$500 reinstatement fee.

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

- *Jerry Adamec, MS*

Mr. Adamec shot a buck in his back yard after dark. He was fined \$2,300.

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

**OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was presented.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Next Commission meeting date was set for Monday, November 9, 2015 at 2 p.m., at 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson.

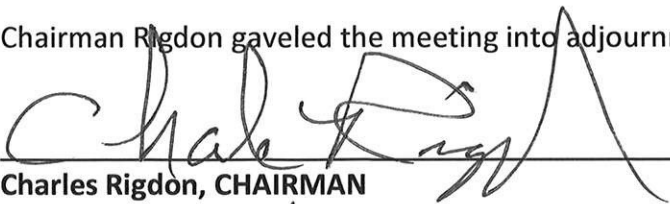
**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Chairman asked if there was a need for an Executive Session. The Executive Director responded that there was not a need this month for an Executive Session.

**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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Date

  
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 Clay Wagner, VICE CHAIRMAN

11/9/15  
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 Date