

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

**Tuesday, March 20, 2012 @ 1:30 p.m.**

**Briar Patch Lodge, Carpenter, MS.**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Deviney; Commissioners Jones, Munro, and Rigdon.

Staff attending were Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Robert Cook, Deputy Director; Michael Bolden; Larry Castle; Ricky Flynt, Statewide Alligator and Furbearer Coordinator; and Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

### **WELCOME**

Chairman Deviney welcomed special guest Clark Gordin, Executive Director of the Foundation for Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

It was noted for the record that Commissioner Jerry Munro had called to report that he had been detained and his arrival time would be after 1:30 p.m. However, there being a quorum present, the Chairman moved to go forward with the meeting as scheduled.

Robert Cook then opened the meeting with a prayer.

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the February 20, 2012 Commission meeting, were presented for approval.

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Minutes from the February 20, 2012 Commission meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

### **TODAY'S AGENDA**

The proposed agenda for the day's meeting was presented for approval.

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the March 20, 2012 Agenda was approved as presented.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There were no comments from the public related to any agenda items before the Commission.

### **LICENSE SALES REPORT**

Mr. Michael Bolden presented the License Sales Report. Mr. Bolden stated that the February sales information was almost identical to the January data, indicating that trends have normalized. Similar to last month's report under resident license sales, Sportsman License sales are up again, approximately 1% or over \$39,000.00 but All Games and Resident Fishing license

sales are not. Inasmuch as these trends seem to mirror each other, it is obvious that residents are choosing to upgrade to the Sportsman's License as opposed to purchasing several lesser licenses. As reported, Freshwater Fishing resident license sales are down, and Law Enforcement reports that they are writing a lot of citations for fishing without a license. Nonresident license sales as a whole are slightly down by about \$100,000.00, with sales to Louisiana residents down approximately 1%.

Alligator license sales continue to go up and remain very popular and are up 65% from the prior year. Other license sales are holding a steady 18% increase. With DMR, the Salt Water annual license sales are actually down a bit, but the 3 Day "Trip" license sales are up 60%. Lifetime license sales are up by 20%. Overall all license sales are up by about \$100,000, and tending steadily with the previous year's sales.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Larry Castle, Director of Technical Programs, presented Public Notice of Intent LE6-3779 (Nuisance Animals) with amendments, for approval. Mr. Castle explained that the previous version of this regulation was discovered to have had numerous errors and omitted language, after it was filed. In order to correct the problems, staff decided to simply submit a new rule for adoption.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Jones, Public Notice LE6-3779 (Nuisance Animals) was unanimously approved as presented.**

## **FISHERIES**

Larry Castle presented Public Notice of Intent F7-2999 (Commercial Fishing) for adoption as an intent-to-adopt filing. Mr. Castle explained that, after receiving much public comment on the previous version of this rule, four changes were being made: 1) hoop net size has been increased to 45 inches; 2) tagging requirements for commercial fishing equipment have been simplified and made more reliable; 3) the quota for gar tags has been removed; and minnow and crawfish traps are now banned/prohibited from certain commercial fishing areas such as around spillways.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, Public Notice F7-2999 (Commercial Fishing) was unanimously approved as presented.**

## **WILDLIFE**

Larry Castle presented Public Notice of Intent W1-3814 (Facilities Rental) for adoption as an intent-to-adopt filing. Mr. Castle explained that there are several wildlife management areas with certain facilities that are often rented for use by various organizations such as the dog kennels at Black Prairie WMA and similar facilities. Traditionally the prices and procedures for

renting these facilities have been included in each WMA's separate regulations. In the interest of uniformity and efficiency, all facilities for rent at WMA's are now consolidated into one rule.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Jones, Public Notice W1-3814 (Facilities Rental) was unanimously approved as presented.**

Ricky Flynt, Statewide Alligator and Furbearer Coordinator, presented Public Notice of Intent W7-3758 (Public Waters Alligator Hunting Seasons) for adoption by the Commission. Mr. Flynt reported that the success of alligator hunting in the State of Mississippi has exceeded the expectations of all who have been involved in the program. The only complaint has been that the season doesn't last long enough and that there are too few opportunities for hunting. Mr. Flynt said that the proposed rule will change that.

PN W7-3758, as proposed, opens up alligator hunting in all but the extreme Northeastern part of the state. The total number of permits has been increased and hunting will be open in all public waters, as defined by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, and includes thirteen (13) specified public lakes. The application process has been changed to an all online process to simplify and expedite the process. The season has been expanded to a ten (10) day season that includes two (2) weekends.

Mr. Flynt also presented Public Notice of Intent W4-3799 (Private Lands Alligator Hunting Seasons) for adoption by the Commission. This companion rule to PN W7-3758, expands the alligator hunting season on private lands, with many of the same changes as in PN W7-3758.

Brief discussion followed with Commissioner Jones asking why the season occurs in September. Mr. Flynt responded that by September, alligators have laid eggs that have hatched and the young can survive on their own. Hunting will not negatively impact the population at that time. Mr. Rigdon asked why the Northeastern portion of the state was not included. Mr. Flynt responded that the alligator populations in that area simply were not large enough to bear any hunting pressure at this time. The Commission congratulated Mr. Flynt on the success of the program.

**ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, Public Notices (of Intent) W7-3758 and W4-3799 (Public Waters and Private Lands Alligator Hunting Seasons) were unanimously approved as presented.**

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Jones asked staff present to discuss some possible solutions for Delta farmers facing severe problems with wild hog depredation of crops they were currently planting. Much discussion followed concerning current limitations on the running of dogs during Spring turkey season and Commission authority to deviate from those limits. General discussion on more effective means of hog control/eradication followed. The Commission asked the staff to look into all effective means of hog control that can be employed to assist these farmers.

## NEXT MEETING

Chairman Deviney noted that Tuesdays were not working out as a "set" meeting day and suggested that the Commission look at other days. Discussion followed and the next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 18, 2012, at the MDWF&P offices in Jackson, MS.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION:


**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to determine the need for an Executive Session. The meeting was closed. Discussion followed that there was a need for an Executive Session to discuss a transaction for the purchase of land. Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Commission voted unanimously to enter Executive Session.

Dr. Polles presented information to the Commission regarding a large tract of land in Claiborne County which had become available for purchase. Appraisals were complete; however, the timber cruise was not finalized. Dr. Polles stated a range of prices per acre that he anticipated as a fair market value for the property. Discussion followed.

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the Commission voted unanimously to ask staff to provide some additional information on the property and Commission authority, and to authorize Dr. Polles to negotiate with the seller to purchase the Claiborne County land within the price range as established by the appraisals and timber value used to determine fair market value.

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Deviney gaveled the meeting into adjournment.

  
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William "Billy" Deviney, CHAIRMAN

4/18/12  
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Date

  
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Jerry Munro, VICE-CHAIRMAN

4/18/12  
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Date