

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

Wednesday, September 19, 2012 @ 2:00 p.m.
MDWFP Main Office, 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

PRESENT: Chairman Jerry Munro, Commissioners John C Stanley IV, William “Billy” Deviney, Charles Rigdon, and Bryan Jones.

Among the MDWFP staff attending were: Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director; Mr. Robert Cook, Deputy Director; Ramie Ford; Larry Castle; Noel Hughes; Michael Bolden; Libby Hartfield; Chad Dacus; Ron Garavelli; Col. Steve Adcock; Jim Walker; Donnie Tate; Sharon Polzin; and Doug Mann, Special Assistant Attorney General.

WELCOME

Chairman Munro welcomed Representative Scott Bounds, Chairman of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Committee, and other guests to the meeting. Larry Castle, Director of Technical Services, opened the meeting with prayer.

MINUTES

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Stanley and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the Minutes of the August 15, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

TODAY’S AGENDA

The agenda was amended to reflect no Public Comments.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Rigdon and seconded by Commissioner Stanley, today’s agenda was unanimously approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.



LICENSE SALES REPORT

Mr. Michael Bolden, Director of Administrative Services, presented the License Sales Report for the month of August 2012. As he anticipated last month, the buying and spending patterns of our customers have changed and sales are improving. For example, currently we are showing a decrease in the number of non-resident license sales but show an increase in the dollar amount due to a higher level of license being purchased.

Some highlights of Mr. Bolden's report are noted below.

Resident Sportsman	down 22 licenses or 11%
Apprentice Sportsman License	up 207 licenses or 481.40%
Resident All Game Hunt/Fish License	up 872 licenses or 23.52 %
Alligator licenses	up 24.49%
Overall Resident licenses	up .56%
Overall Non-resident licenses	up 9.95%
Other license total sales	up 38.21%
DMR	down 2.27%
Lifetime Licenses	up 43.94%
Foundation Donations	down 14.04%
Louisiana total sales	up .91%

Commissioner Munro noted that the Waterfowl Stamps are up as well.

Mr. Bolden advised the Commission that Lacey Kuhn is putting together marketing strategies to improve areas where license sales are sluggish. The Foundation is working with Marketing to launch a campaign which will encourage youth participation as well.

Alligator Report

Commissioner Deviney raised some questions on alligator permit sales. Ricky Flynt, Wildlife Alligator/Furbearer Coordinator, stepped up to provide the following insight. Alligator permits have doubled from last year and quadrupled from two years ago. According to our harvest reports, 2,144 different people have purchased alligator licenses this year. We had 810 available permits on public water and 99 private land properties that were permitted as well. When you add the two together it should be significant for this year.

The current harvest report shows we had 512 alligators harvested on public waters, 267 of these were over seven ft. long. Every zone except the Northwest zone reported alligators in the 12-13 foot range. We are showing that 66% of those licensed hunters harvested at least one alligator. We had 4,100 different people to apply for permits with 810 being awarded. Some people applied more than once. For every person who received a permit, we licensed 2.65 people. Mr. Flynt is encouraged that permits will remain the same this next year so that his office can evaluate the situation and make further determinations.

The Commission thanked Ricky Flynt for the outstanding report.



LAW ENFORCEMENT

Commendation Presentation for Burl Holmes

Col. Steve Adcock, Chief of MDWFP Law Enforcement, wanted to acknowledge Burl Holmes as a member of the Special Response Team which was activated on May 10, 2012, at the request of the U.S. Marshal's Service and brought about the rescue of the Bain sisters. Col. Adcock presented Mr. Holmes with a framed commendation letter from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. A round of applause followed in honor of Mr. Holmes and his contribution to the SR team. Other members of the SR team received their commendations at the July 18, 2012 Commission Meeting.

Citation Report

Col. Steve Adcock reported citation statistics issued in the Northern, Central, and Southern regions for the month of August. Most of the citations issued this month were for no licenses which totaled 47 statewide. Overall 180 citations were issued. He noted that during this time Law Enforcement Officers were dealing with Hurricane Isaac as well.

Exemption Request for Primitive Weapons

Col. Steve Adcock brought before the Commission a request from Mr. Jonathan Carter for special exemption for primitive weapons. Mr. Carter was involved in an automobile accident which left him with very little use of his hands. He has demonstrated to law enforcement that he can maneuver the bolt action weapon and fire it safely. Chief Adcock recommended this request be approved.

ACTION: Motion to approve the special exemption for primitive weapons for Mr. Carter was made by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, and unanimously approved.

Golden Triangle Outdoors Request

Col. Adcock stated that Golden Triangle Outdoors, Inc. will be sponsoring an annual deer hunt in Lowndes County November 8 – 11 (Primitive Weapon Season) for challenged hunters much like Mr. Carter above. They would like permission to utilize more modern rifles which will be easier for their hunters to use safely.

ACTION: Motion to approve this request was made by Commissioner Stanley, seconded by Commissioner Deviney, and unanimously approved.



Reinstatement Requests

Col. Steve Adcock, Law Enforcement Bureau Chief, brought before the Commission two requests for reinstatement.

- **Andrew Marshall - Pontotoc, MS**

He was convicted in 2010 and charged with spotlighting and killing a deer on a public road. This was his first violation. Col. Adcock recommended his reinstatement, stating that he met all the requirements, paid his fine, and completed the hunter education course.

ACTION: Motion to reinstate Andrew Marshall's license was made by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, and unanimously approved.

- **Joseph Colby Runnels - Batesville, MS**

Col. Adcock advised the Commission that Mr. Colby Runnels was convicted in November 9, 2010 of spotlighting and killing a deer. He also received a fishing citation in February, 2012 for fishing without a license.

Mr. Runnels declared that he was innocent of both charges. He alleged that he only helped a friend pick up his deer after the fact. He testified that he did not spotlight or kill a deer. Mr. Runnels also alleged that he was not fishing at the time he received a fishing citation. Mr. Runnels' attorney, Paul Hastings, stated that Mr. Runnels had witnesses corroborating his statement. Mr. Runnels also alleged that he was being stalked by a wildlife ranger.

Col. Adcock stated that he had an entirely different story from the law enforcement officer. It was understood by Col. Adcock that Mr. Runnels had received several spotlighting violations. Mr. Runnels argued that the only time he had spotlighted and shot a deer was when he was eight years old and was sitting in his father's lap. Mr. Runnels' father, Ronnie Runnels, was present and testified that he had requested that the wildlife law enforcement officer give him the ticket instead of his son. Attorney Doug Mann asked for the court date of the spotlighting conviction. Mr. Ronnie Runnels replied November 16, 2003.

Chairman Munro asked Col. Adcock for his recommendation. Chief Adcock replied that based on his evidence he could not recommend Mr. Runnels' reinstatement.

Discussion followed as to how to settle this matter. Commissioner Deviney requested to hear from the law enforcement officer. Col. Adcock advised the Commission that this case had already been to court and Colby Runnels had been found guilty. There is an appeal process which Mr. Runnels can go through. Chief Adcock did not recommend bringing witnesses here since this is not a court of law. The Commission agreed. Dr. Polles, Executive Director of MDWFP, suggested Mr. Hastings get statements from Mr. Runnels' witnesses and his client and to submit a letter to his office.

ACTION: Due to the conflict of testimony, Chairman Munro stated that the Commission could not reinstate Mr. Runnels at this time. Mr. Hastings was directed

to get a statement from his client and witnesses, then to submit a letter to Dr. Sam Polles, Executive Director of MDWFP, requesting reconsideration. Chief Adcock will check Mr. Runnels' records for all documentation and give Mr. Colby Runnels a copy of everything. This matter will be left open for reconsideration at a future date should Mr. Runnels so request.

Chairman Munro excused Mr. Runnels, Mr. Hastings, and the Runnels family.

WILDLIFE

Chad Dacus, Assistant Wildlife Bureau Director, presented the following public notices for Commission approval. We received no public comments on these notices.

- **Wildlife Public Notices of FINAL W 3819a Canemount WMA**

No changes from INTENT.

- **Wildlife Public Notice FINAL W-16-3467a Sunflower WMA**

No changes from INTENT.

- **Wildlife Public Notice FINAL W 3820 McHenry WMA**

No changes from the INTENT.

- **Wildlife Public Notice FINAL W2-3070 Trapping and Fur Dealing Regulations**

No changes from the INTENT.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Stanley and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the abovementioned four Wildlife Public Notices were unanimously approved as presented.

MUSEUM

Summary of Museum of Natural Science Activities for FY 2012

Mrs. Libby Hartfield, Director of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, handed out a Mississippi county diagram and two attendance reports reflecting visitation statistics for the Museum this past year. As expected most of the Museum visitors came from Central Mississippi but Mrs. Hartfield pointed out that every county in Mississippi had been involved. During the past year 128,152 people came to the museum, including 835 groups.



Additionally the Museum employs four Outreach people who take a little of the Museum to all 82 counties in Mississippi. During the year, 442 outreach programs were presented with 26,667 participants. Mrs. Hartfield added that two teaching positions were vacant during part of this past year, one in Northeast Mississippi and one in Delta. Both positions are filled this year so she expects the numbers in these two areas to be even stronger next year.

The Museum's 796 Educational Programs reached 43,271 students; these included In-House, Outreach w/in-house staff, and Preschool Programs.

During the year a total of 274,712 people connected with the Museum in one of the above mentioned ways.

Mrs. Hartfield concluded with attendance statistics over the past 12 years. The Dinosaur Exhibit continues to draw the largest crowds over the past few years.

The Commissioners commented on the excellent information provided by Mrs. Hartfield.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business.

TENTATIVE NEXT MEETING DATES

Thursday, October 25, 2012 (Commission Meeting) – 10:00 AM – Location: Mahannah WMA
Tuesday, November 13, 2012 (Working Session) - 3:00 PM - Location: Jackson Office
Wednesday, November 14, 2012 (Commission Meeting) – 8:30 AM – Location: Jackson Office
Wednesday, December 19, 2012 (Commission Meeting) – 1:00 PM – Location: TBA

ACTION: The Commission concluded that future meetings would be scheduled on the Wednesday following the third Tuesday of the month, and then adjusted as needed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ACTION: Dr. Polles advised the Commission that Executive Session was needed regarding transactions in land, relocation of a business or industry, ongoing investigations, and related issues. Upon motion made by Commissioner Deviney and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Commission voted unanimously to close the meeting to determine the need for executive session. The Commission determined that executive session was needed to discuss transactions in land, relocation of a business or industry, ongoing investigations, and related issues. Upon motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Deviney, the Commission voted unanimously to enter executive session.

Ed Penny updated the Commission on operations at Canemount WMA. No action was required of the Commission.



Chief Adcock updated the Commission on matters surrounding the request of Mr. Runnels earlier in the meeting, to have his privileges reinstated. The Commission asked the Chief to obtain more information from the arresting officer before they make a final decision. No action was required of the Commission.

Dr. Polles advised the Commission of ongoing efforts to obtain more land for public hunting and on the development of the facilities at McHenry. No action was required of the Commission.

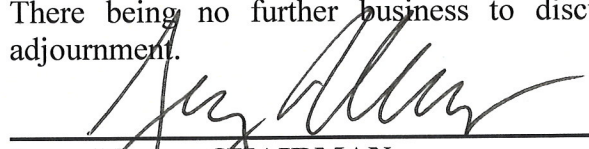
Ramie Ford updated the Commission on operations at Percy Quin State Park to stabilize the dam at Lake Tangipahoa. The Bureau of Buildings and Grounds at DFA has awarded an emergency contract to two contractors to perform emergency operations designed to eliminate the possibility of the dam failing. It is unclear if DFA's projects will be applied to an overall reconstruction of the dam. No action was required of the Commission.

There was no further business for Executive Session.

ACTION: Upon motion made by Commissioner Stanley and seconded by Commissioner Rigdon, the Commission voted unanimously to exit Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

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



Jerry Munro, CHAIRMAN

10-25-12

Date



John C Stanley IV, VICE-CHAIRMAN

10-25-12

Date