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TENNESSEE FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
MINUTES – APRIL 15, 2016
Region 2 – Ray Bell Building
Nashville

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The Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Committee/ Commission Meeting was held in Nashville at the Ray Bell – Region 2 Building. At approximately 9:00 a.m. on Friday, April 15, 2016 Chairman Harold Cannon called the commission meeting to order.

Chairman Cannon asked Commissioner Jeff McMillin to give the invocation, followed by the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

The Roll Call was taken on Friday, April 15 and the following commissioners were present:

Jim Bledsoe
Harold Cannon
Jeff Cook
Bill Cox
Kurt Holbert
Connie King
Jim Ripley
Bill Swan
Trey Teague
David Watson
Jamie Woodson
Chad Baker
Jeff McMillin

Roll call verified a quorum was present.

A3806
Approval of Minutes

Chairman Cannon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 24, 2016 commission meeting held at the Region 2 – Ray Bell Building in Nashville. Commissioner Jamie Woodson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and this motion was seconded by Commissioner David Watson. A vote was taken – all ayes – minutes passed.

Chairman Cannon welcomed the following special guests: Boyd Barker – TN Department of Agriculture, Ron Crabtree – Quail Forever and Mike Butler – Tennessee Wildlife Federation and Dave Buehler – UT Knoxville.

A visitors' sign-up sheet was passed on Friday, April 15, 2016 and the following were present:

Ron Crabtree – Quail Forever – Murfreesboro
Mike Butler – TWF – Nashville
Boyd Barker – TN Dept. of Ag. – Nashville
David Buehler – UT Knoxville
John Bragg III- Conservation Enthusiast – Murfreesboro 37129
Harold Robertson –TOHA- Greeneville

A3807
Proclamation 16-30

Chairman Cannon called on Commissioner Trey Teague, Chair of the Wildlife Management Committee. Commissioner Teague asked Joe Benedict, Assistant Chief of Wildlife and Forestry Division, to come forward to present Proclamation 16-30 – Dove, Woodcock, Snipe, Crow and September Waterfowl Hunting Seasons and Proclamation 16-31 – Duck, Goose and Crane Hunting Seasons to the Commission for approval. A power point was presented to Commission to review proclamations. A motion was made by Commissioner Jim Ripley and seconded by Commissioner Bill Cox to approve Proclamation 16-30. A vote was taken – all ayes. Proclamation 16-30 Dove, Woodcock, Snipe, Crow and September Waterfowl Hunting Seasons were adopted.

A3808
Proclamation 16-31

Joe Benedict presented Proclamation 16-31 - Duck, Goose and Crane Hunting Seasons to the Commission for approval. A power point presentation was given showing the Agency recommendation and the Commission's recommendation. Voting on Proclamation 16-31 – Duck, Goose and Crane Hunting Seasons as amended by Committee to reflect changes in the Sandhill crane season as follows. The season will now open on December 3, 2016 and will close at sunset on January 12, 2017. Season will reopen at sunrise January 16, 2017 and close at sunset January 29, 2017. The number of packets which is currently at 400 will remain the same and the number of permits in each of those packets at 3 permits per packet will remain the same. Vote was

taken in Committee – all ayes. All in favor of Proclamation 16-31 – Duck, Goose and Crane Hunting Seasons as amended and presented by the Committee. A vote was taken in Commission – all ayes. Proclamation 16-31 – Duck, Goose and Crane Hunting Seasons as amended by Committee to reflect changes in the Sandhill crane season was passed.

A3809
Proc. 16-23 thru 16-28
Region III Land Procs

Assistant Joe Benedict presented TWRA Lands Proclamations for Region 3. They are as follows: Procs. 16-23 Anderson Pond PHA, Proc. 16-24 Battle Creek PHA, Proc. 16-25 Blackburn Fork WMA, Proc. 16-26 Hampton Crossroads PHA, Proc. 16-27 Long Branch PHA, Proc. 16-28 Whites Creek PHA. A motion was made by Commissioner Jim Bledsoe and seconded by Commissioner Bill Cox to approve Proclamations 16-23 thru 16-28. Vote was taken in Committee – all ayes. Commissioner Teague made a motion and seconded by Commissioner David Watson. Vote was taken in Commission – all ayes. Proclamations 16-23 thru 16-28 as advertised and presented passed.

D2692
Wild Turkey Research
Proposal

Commissioner Trey Teague, Chair of the Wildlife Management Committee asked Mark Gudlin, Chief of Wildlife/Forestry Division, to come forward to present the TN Southeastern Cooperative Wild Turkey Research Proposal. Chief Gudlin provided an overview of a potential 6 year research project with the University of Tennessee Knoxville. If this budget expansion is approved, the total cost for TWRA's portion of this project would be \$170,000 per year which will be all federal funds; no license dollars would be used. UT Knoxville would provide the non-federal match. Further discussion and budget expansion will be presented at the May commission meeting for approval.

D2693
Overview 2016-17

Mark Gudlin, Chief of Wildlife/Forestry Division gave a brief overview of the 2016-17 Hunting &

Hunting & Trapping Seasons

Trapping Season process. Chief Gudlin named the program coordinators that will be presenting the recommendations. Final vote will be given at the May commission meeting.

Chuck Yoest, Assistant Chief of Wildlife and Forestry presented a brief summary for the 2016-17 deer seasons. Recommendations included modifying antlerless deer regulations, allowing additional antlerless harvest during gun season – all counties and allow antlerless harvest early in gun season, eliminating the Claiborne county special red deer hunt and establishing two new deer harvest units. The commission requested that the agency draft a new definition for antlerless deer.

Dan Gibbs, Region IV Bear Coordinator, stated that there are no changes for 2016 statewide bear season and the bear dog training season. There is one recommendation from the agency, which would change bear regulations to allow small game hunting in the bear reserves during bear still hunts.

John Mike, Region IV Wildlife Program Manager, brought forth the agency's recommendations for elk. Six elk permits will be issued for the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area. Proposing to add four new private land only elk tags, including one designated for youth for three new private land elk hunting zones in Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne, Morgan and Scott counties.

Joy Sweaney, Wild Turkey and Wildlife Management Area Coordinator, presented the recommendations for the fall turkey bag limit from six to three in 16 Middle Tennessee counties and from three to one in two of the Middle Tennessee counties.

Roger Applegate, Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife/Forestry Division, gave one recommendation for the Statewide Furbearer Hunting & Trapping Seasons & Bag Limits which would allow small game hunters with dogs to utilize bear reserves during bear limits that do not allow

dogs. Commissioner Trey Teague asked for Roger Applegate to take a look at increasing the opportunity for raccoon hunting season to open earlier , but not early enough that it would impact populations and present it at the May commission meeting.

Joy Sweaney, Wild Turkey and Wildlife Management Area Coordinator, recommended changes for Wildlife Management Areas, Public Hunting Areas, and Refuges Hunting Seasons, and Misc. Regulations. The first recommendation is changing the title of the proclamation to WMAs, PHAs, Waterfowl Refuges. Recommendations for Region I: Beason Creek WMA, Beech River WMA, Chambers Creek WMA, Col. Forrest V. Durand WMA, Grays Creek WMA, Perry Switch WMA and Spring Creek WMA - open with statewide seasons, except closed to fall turkey hunting; Thorny Cypress WMA – do training September 1 – October 31; Cowan Swamp PHA, Shady Park PHA – same as statewide seasons. Recommendations for Region II: Laurel Hill WMA – add a 2 week goose season (fields only); Cumberland Plateau – Anderson Pond PHA, Battle Creek PHA, Whites Creek PHA – same as statewide seasons; Hampton Crossroads PHA, Long Branch PHA – Same as statewide seasons, deer archery only; Blackburn Fork WMA – same as statewide seasons, dog training September 1 – March 15. Recommendations for Region III: Cumberland Plateau – Catoosa WMA – remove quota from Young Sportsman deer gun hunt, South Cherokee WMA – remove prohibition of tracking devices for squirrel dogs – Enterprise South Nature Park WMA – remove deer hunt for 2016-17, Bridgestone Firestone Centennial Wilderness – allow hiking during big game hunts without firearms. Recommendations for Region IV: Henderson Swamp PHA, Big Springs Access PHA – same as statewide seasons with exceptions for small game hunting, Mullins Island PHA – same as statewide seasons, North Cherokee WMA – set bag limits for antlerless take, Foothills WMA – set bag limits for antlerless take. Commissioner Harold

Cannon asked agency staff to bring to the May commission meeting, a comprehensive answer on these new proclaimed properties designated as PHAs, and WMAs. Commissioner Cannon also asked what the expectations are on these properties. The commission would like to see this information prior to the commission meeting in May.

Joy Sweaney presented recommendations for the Hunting Season and Bag Limits on Select National Wildlife Refuges and Other Federal Areas: Hatchie NWR – close the area west of I-40 during some deer hunts and spring squirrel season, Chickasaw and Lower Hatchie NWR – close hunting seasons in relevant areas when the Mississippi River reaches 28 ft., Reelfoot and Lake Isom NWR – add a deer young sportsman quota hunt.

Joy Sweaney presented one recommendation for the Holston Army Ammunition Plant (HAAP) which would change designation from Wildlife Refuge to Waterfowl Refuge.

Col. Darren Rider, Chief Law Enforcement/Boating Division previewed the recommendations for Manner and Means of Hunting, Taking and Trapping. Changes in Section II Prohibited Acts - any electronic light amplifying night vision scope, thermal imaging device, or other similar devices while in possession of a firearm or archery tackle between sunset and sunrise. Changes in Section VI Big Game Check - after check in, documentation of the TWRA confirmation number from an approved TWRA check in station, TWRA website or TWRA mobile application shall be available for inspection by TWRA personnel until time of final processing and evidence of the animal's sex, species, and antlered status (if applicable) must remain with the animal while afield. Additionally, turkeys must remain intact until checked in. The final change in Section VII Miscellaneous – during a deer archery only season, a fall turkey hunter may not be in possession of both archery equipment and shotguns and/or rifles.

D2694
Legislative Update

The commission recognized Commissioner Kurt Holbert, Chair of the Government Relations Committee. Commissioner Holbert asked Chris Richardson, Legislative Liaison and Special Assistant to the Director to give a legislative update. Chris Richardson stated the legislation will probably be shutting down before the end of April. Mr. Richardson had no report at this time, but there were some items that he would like to tell the commission about in more depth. He felt that it would be best to reserve it for the May commission meeting. Commissioner Bledsoe, on the record, stated that all the legislatures that he's spoken to and other affiliates at the legislature, brag on Chris all the time and think he's doing a heck of a job.

A3810
Budget Expansion

The commission recognizes Commissioner David Watson, Chair of the Budget Committee. Commissioner David Watson called on John Gregory, Manager of Region 4 to present a budget expansion. Mr. Gregory presented a budget expansion in the amount of \$30,000 for the Bear Human Conflict Management Project. This is all federal dollars. Commissioner Bill Swan made a motion to approve this budget expansion and was seconded by Commissioner Jeff McMillin. A vote was taken – all ayes. The ayes have it. Budget expansion in the amount of \$30,000 for the Bear Human Conflict Management Project was approved.

A3811
Budget Expansion

The commission recognizes Commissioner David Watson, Chair of the Budget Committee. Commissioner David Watson called on Assistant Director Barry Sumners. Assistant Director Sumners presented a budget expansion in the amount of \$20,000 to go to Southeastern Fish and Wildlife Association that will support a program called the Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow. All federal dollars. Commissioner Bill Swan made a motion to approve this budget expansion and was seconded by Commissioner Bill Cox. A vote was taken – all ayes. The ayes have it. Budget expansion in the amount of \$20,000 for the

Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow Program was approved.

Commissioner Cannon thanked the commissioners, the public and staff for their patience due to the long meeting. This is the first time they've had the waterfowl season setting and the preview of wildlife on the same day. We have learned today that we need a 2 day meeting.

Chairman Cannon asked Director Ed Carter if he had any comments. Director Carter stated that he attended the Ribbon Cutting of the Opening of the Beretta Corporation event which has moved to Tennessee. Gov. Haslam, Senator Corker, Congressman Black, and several other state, local and national government representatives attended. He expects that they will be a big wildlife supporter of Tennessee. Director Carter stated that he wished to note publically, for the last time, how much he appreciated Barbara Hayes for everything she's done in helping him personally and also for the commission in putting meetings together and the things she's done for the staff. We'll sorely miss her. Commissioner Cannon stated that Barbara was phenomenal, and Danette, we look forward to working with you.

Commissioner Kurt Holbert invited the commissioners to the Paris, Tennessee Fish Fry. This event starts April 23 and goes through April 30.

Commissioner Bill Cox called a Retention & Recruitment meeting to begin at 9 a.m. on Thursday, May 12. (Meeting has since been cancelled until June.)

Commissioner David Watson asked that the budget committee stay over for an informal meeting.

John Gregory stated that Bart Carter was out of surgery and doing well.

The next meeting will be a two day meeting in Tullahoma at the Arnold Engineering Development Center (AEDC) Gossick Leadership Center. The Committee meeting will begin at 1 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2016 and the Commission meeting will begin at 9 a.m. on Friday, May 13, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

_____, Secretary
Ed Carter, Executive Director
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

Harold Cannon, Chairman
Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission