

MS Library Commission awards over \$7 million in grants to public libraries

At the conclusion of fiscal year 2018, the Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) provided over \$7 million in financial assistance to Mississippi's 53 public library systems through state and federal funding.

These funds were administered as grants and statewide services. Of the total amount provided, the

State of Mississippi was the source of \$6,737,643, with the balance of the funding provided by the federal government under the "Grants to States" program administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Funding from the State of Mississippi provided employee benefits throughout the state for library staff

members; these funds also enabled each of the 53 public library systems to maintain highly qualified library professionals. The MAGNOLIA information database collection is an example of statewide services provided to public libraries through state funding made available to every citizen of Mississippi.

With federal funding,

Mississippi's public libraries can apply to MLC for grants used for a variety of purposes, such as purchasing new public access computers, administering innovative community programming, and acquiring new books for their libraries.

Holmes County libraries are served through the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System which receives \$247,134 in state aid and \$4,860 in federal aid, according to the Mississippi Library Commission.

Following the tabulation of monies reported for FY18, MLC Executive Director Hulen Bivins noted that, "The Mississippi Library Commission has worked with the state's public libraries to both strengthen and enhance library services for the benefit of the state's citizenry.

This work has provided homework aid, business development assistance, and a furtherance of knowledge regarding issues in the fields of finance, law, and medicine." Bivins added, "The achievements accomplished are a direct result of the cooperation and tremendous work of the 53 public library systems in using the funding made available by MLC in an efficient, cost-conscious manner."

In addition to providing funding to the state's libraries, MLC offers a wide variety of services to public libraries, including year-long continuing education opportunities, technology services and support, computer network support, and interlibrary loan of materials.

The Mississippi Library Commission supports innovative programs and initiatives to strengthen and enhance library services

State auditor releases compliance audit of the state auditor's office

Press Release

State Auditor Shad White announced today the completion of a compliance audit of his own office. Mississippi law and auditing experts from the Auditor's compliance audit division reviewed whether employees of the Office of the State Auditor were complying with all the laws that apply to their handling of public money.

"The professionals in our compliance audit division had never done a compliance audit of our own office, and it had been decades since a full audit had been done of the office," said White. "We conducted this audit to hold ourselves to the same standard we hold everyone else in state government to. I pledged when I came into office that we would audit ourselves and publish the report, warts and all, for the voters to see."

The audit showed several minor findings. Specifically, auditors determined bank account reconciliations should be performed earlier and some forms related to the operation of state-owned vehicles should be submitted.

Additionally, the audit found that better records for procurement card use and

contracted services should be kept.

"This audit of the auditor's office shows that, while the office has been strong for some time, there are always ways to improve in state government," said White.

"My team is ready to move forward with a plan to fix the issues that this audit raised," said White. "This office will be even more effective after we implement the needed changes." In response to the findings, the Auditor's office will remedy any issues identified in the audit and bolster internal controls.

"I want to thank my compliance audit team for their excellent work here. It's not easy asking part of your team to confront and examine the practices of the remainder of your staff. I told them to treat this as they would treat any other compliance audit, and they did just that."

This compliance audit comes after a peer review of the Office of the State Auditor in August.

Peer reviewers from across the country came to Mississippi, conducted that review, and issued no findings related to how the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor conducts its audits.

Supplemental Feeding Linked to Disease, Could Cost Mississippi's Hunting Industry Millions

This fall, the state Wildlife Commission cast what could be a lethal blow for wildlife and deer hunters in Mississippi. Until October 2018, hunters had to be at least 100 yards from a supplemental feeding station before a deer could be harvested. Effective October 11th, the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks removed any distance requirements, meaning a hunter can legally hunt and harvest deer within 100 yards of a feeder. This is not consistent with Mississippi's hunting legacy of fair chase and could cost our state millions of dollars.

With the discovery of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in Pontotoc and Issaquena Counties, and the frequency that CWD is now being discovered in Mississippi, the Mississippi Wildlife Federation is strongly urging the Wildlife Commission to impose a statewide ban on supplemental feeding of white-tailed deer and other wildlife.

The Wildlife Commission's decision to allow hunting over supplemental feed, or more appropriately put "shooting-over-bait," for white-tailed deer is not in the best interest of the health of Mississippi's deer herd, the ethical sport of deer hunting, and the Mississippi citizens who all share in ownership of Mississippi's wildlife.

The risks of disease transmission directly from bait is well-documented. Research indicates that CWD is transmitted through bodily fluids, but most prominently saliva. It is ironic that once CWD was detected in areas of our state, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks banned supplemental feeding and attractants within the counties bordering the 25-mile containment zones, while within this same year the Wildlife Commission also approved hunting directly over supplemental feed in areas of the state that have not discovered CWD yet.

Economic impacts of hunting in Mississippi are estimated to exceed \$2.7 billion annually, and how we respond now will strongly affect the well-being of the

herd and simultaneously the outdoor industry for Mississippi. Deer processors are reporting that business is already on the decline this year throughout the state. Hunters are concerned, and we will lose participation in the sport if we do not immediately implement best management practices to control CWD and other diseases.

Implementing regulations that allow the use of supplemental feed to attract and congregate game animals immediately after the discovery of CWD in Mississippi is contradictory to the efforts of our state's wildlife professionals to control disease and manage wildlife. Mississippi sportsmen and wildlife enthusiasts must take a firm stance against supplemental feeding and hunting game over bait.

For decades, the Mississippi Wildlife Federation, along with numerous other conservation organizations, have been on record opposing efforts to allow hunting over bait, and the Federation has worked for decades to prevent this unsportsmanlike style of hunting in Mississippi.

The Mississippi Wild-

life Federation's mission is to "conserve Mississippi's natural resources and protect our wildlife legacy." Baiting is contrary to the spirit of fair chase; and given that we now know that CWD is in our state, this practice jeopardizes the very foundation of our hunting tradition in Mississippi. The survival of our hunting industry depends upon how the Wildlife Commission chooses to act now. We implore the Commission to share the Federation's commitment to responsible deer herd management for our state, today and for future generations of Mississippians.

The Mississippi Wildlife Federation (MWF) is the largest network of conservationists in the state. MWF is a federation of individuals, businesses, and member organizations. MWF and its members are committed to natural resource conservation, to environmental quality, and to supporting hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation that brings people together with Mississippi's natural heritage. To join, support or get more information go to: www.mswildlife.org or call (601) 605-1790

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for all Mississippians. The agency is funded by the Mississippi Legislature, with additional funding provided through the Institute of Museum and Library Services under provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), offering leadership in library services, advocacy, and training for library professionals and paraprofessionals.

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