

Additional county expected to be added to CWD management zone

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USA TODAY NETWORK

Mississippi had a record number of deer tested for chronic wasting disease in the 2025 sample year and also a record number of new cases of the deer disease and one positive case of two found in Claiborne County will likely bring another county, at least in part, into the Issaquena CWD Management Zone.

"So, one was not far from the nuclear power plant (Grand Gulf Nuclear Station)," said Russ Walsh, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks' Wildlife chief of staff. "One was in the southwest part of the county just east of the (Mississippi) river."

"The one that was in the southwest part of the county was more toward Jefferson. It is six miles from the Jefferson County line."

Chronic wasting disease affects white-tailed deer and other species such as moose, elk and caribou. It's a neurological disease with no known cure or vaccine and it's considered to be always fatal. Unlike some other diseases that affect deer, this one kills slowly. It can take one to two years before a deer dies from it.

The first known case of the disease in Mississippi was discovered in 2018. Since, there have been 446 cases detected

and the number detected each year has risen. In the 2025 sample year, there has been a record 10,685 tissue samples tested and a record 128 cases detected.

"We've been trying to hit that 10,000 mark and this year we went well beyond it," Walsh said.

To slow the spread of the disease, MDWFP is attempting to isolate it as best as can be done. Where the disease is known to be present, CWD management zones have been created with special regulations to reduce transmission of the disease.

Under current regulations, areas within 10 miles of a known positive become a CWD management zone and common landscape features such as roads and rivers are used as boundaries. So, with a case being found six miles from Jefferson County, at least a portion of that county is expected to be included in the Issaquena CWD Management Zone.

Walsh said the boundaries of the CWD management zone in Jefferson County will be determined before the start of the 2025-26 deer hunting seasons.

What is banned in a CWD management zone?

- Salt licks
- Mineral licks

- Supplemental feeding
- Transportation of deer carcasses outside the zone

What parts of a deer can be taken out of a CWD zone?

- Cut/wrapped meat
- Deboned meat
- Hides with no head attached
- Bone-in leg quarters
- Finished taxidermy
- Antlers with no tissue attached
- Cleaned skulls or skull plates with no brain tissue

• Hunters may transport deer heads to permitted taxidermists participating in the CWD collection program. A CWD sample number must be obtained from a participating taxidermist prior to transporting a deer head outside of the CWD management zone.

Issaquena CWD Management Zone

The Issaquena CWD Management Zone currently includes:

- Claiborne County
- Issaquena County, east of the Mississippi River and south of MS 14
- Warren County

Harrison CWD Management Zone

Portions of Hancock and Harrison

counties are included and defined as:

- All portions of Harrison County west of US 49
- All portions of Hancock County east of MS 53, MS 603 and MS 43
- All portions of Hancock County east of Nicholson Avenue

North CWD Management Zone

The North CWD Management Zone includes all portions of the following counties:

- Alcorn County
- Benton County
- Desoto County
- Lafayette County
- Marshall County
- Panola County
- Prentiss County
- Tate County
- Tippah County
- Tishomingo County
- Union County

Portions of Coahoma, Quitman, and Tunica counties are also included and are defined as:

- Areas south of MS 4
- Areas east of Old Highway 61 to the intersection of US 49
- Areas east of US 49 to the intersection of US 278
- Areas north of US 278
- Areas west of MS 3

Man sentenced for sexual battery of woman at Madison restaurant

Pam Dankins
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USA TODAY NETWORK

An undocumented man was sentenced on Monday, April 28, for raping a "completely unconscious" woman at a Mississippi restaurant in early 2025, officials announced Monday.

The Madison and Rankin Counties' District Attorney Office identified the man as Jose "Rigo" Rigoberto Mejia-Cubias, 37, of El Salvador.

The District Attorney's Office said Mejia-Cubias pleaded guilty to one count of sexual battery. Rankin County Circuit Court Judge Dewey Arthur sentenced Mejia-Cubias to 25 years in pris-

on without the possibility of early release or parole. The sentence comes three months after the crime was committed.

According to Madison Police Department Lt. Micah Taylor, authorities received a call at approximately 1:20 a.m. Jan. 30, regarding a female who had been sexually assaulted at Fernando's Restaurant on Colony Crossing Way in Madison.

The District Attorney's Office provided more details stating the victim had called police. According to the office, the caller said she went to the restaurant the night before and sat at the bar. The office said the woman indicated her assailant was the bartender.

"She did not remember everything that happened but woke up on the floor of the bar area around midnight, left the premises and called police," the District Attorney's Office said.

The District Attorney's Office said the owners of Fernando's assisted law enforcement by providing the restaurant's surveillance footage. The footage reportedly showed the victim sitting in the bar area after closing, speaking with the bartender. Prosecutors said the victim then passed out, and the bartender moved her from a barstool to the floor.

"He proceeded to have sexual intercourse with the victim while she was completely unconscious and appeared lifeless for over an hour and a half," the

District Attorney's Office said.

A jury indicted Mejia-Cubias, four days later on Feb. 3 for sexual battery of a physically helpless person. Mejia-Cubias is also facing pending charges for illegal entry into the United States. He was previously deported in 2010.

"Our office wants to commend the Madison Police Department for their immediate response to this situation and securing the surveillance video which captured this victim's entire ordeal," Madison-Rankin District Attorney Bubba Bramlett wrote in a statement. "I hope this swift justice brings closure to the victim and serves as a warning to anyone thinking of committing a similarly heinous offense."



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LEGAL NOTICE

SOUTHEAST COMPRESSION UTILITY AND RELIABILITY EXPANSION PROJECT

HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF INTERSTATE NATURAL GAS PIPELINE FACILITIES

On April 16th, 2025, Gulf South Pipeline Company, LLC (Gulf South), filed an application for its Southeast Compression Utility and Reliability Expansion Project ("SECURE Project" or "Project") with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) under Section 7(c) of the Natural Gas Act in Docket No. CP25-219.

As part of the SECURE Project, Gulf South is requesting approval to make improvements at four locations to help maintain reliable natural gas service in the Southeastern United States. The proposed work includes adding new compressor units and equipment at Gulf South's existing Tallulah Compressor Station in Madison Parish, LA, and Jasper Compressor Station in Jasper County, MS; upgrading Gulf South's Forrest Compressor Station in Forrest County, MS by adding a new compressor unit, modifying an existing unit, and installing ancillary equipment; and building a new compressor station in Hinds County, MS, which will include one compressor unit and ancillary equipment.

The Project is more fully described in Gulf South's application to the FERC. A copy of the application is available at the Lois A. Flagg Library (105 Williamson Ave Edwards, MS 39066) and can be accessed on the FERC's eLibrary at <https://elibrary.ferc.gov/elibrary/search>. Search in the eLibrary by entering the docket number in the Reference Number field to access the Project documents. Gulf South has also mailed Project notices to landowners who are considered directly affected by the Project, per the FERC's regulations, and to relevant governing entities.

Gulf South's Project website (SECURE.gulfsouthpl.com) addresses general information about the Project, including Frequently Asked Questions, the regulatory process, environmental protection, safety, how to contact Gulf South, and how to access the FERC's website to review and obtain copies of public filings.

For information on becoming involved in the FERC review of this Project or to obtain the FERC pamphlet, "An Interstate Natural Gas Facility on My Land? What Do I Need to Know?," go to the FERC's website at www.ferc.gov or call the FERC Office of External Affairs at (202) 502-8004, or toll free at (866) 208-3372.

For additional information about the Project, you may contact Gulf South via its Project hotline or Project email address.

Hotline: (877-972-8533)

Email: community.voices@bwpipelines.com

