anybody want to modify it?

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: Mr. Chairman, being that we are having an executive session today, I would like to move public comments to D1 and let the people speak before we go into executive session.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do I have a second?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

At this time, we have the Executive Director's report.

JAMIE MILLER: Mr. Chairman, no report for this month.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Now, we move to public comments.

Mr. Keith Turner, would you come to the microphone and state your name for the record?

KEITH TURNER: Good morning. My name is Keith Turner. I'm an attorney for the Rankin-Hinds Flood Control District.

My purpose today is merely just to restate what I think we've tried to send a message to the Commission in the past, that we are currently completing our flood control study and, although you hear a lot of different stories and a lot of misinformation, we ask that y'all wait until you see the draft Environmental Impact Statement before making final decisions about what we are doing in Jackson.

Our goal is to provide flood protection for Jackson, but we are also very sensitive in considering the impact of any project that we choose, as it relates to y'all's mission down here on the Mississippi Coast and the Fisheries.

All we ask is that y'all wait until that document comes out. It should be sometime in the summertime for draft comments, and, then, we will be able to further address any questions and issues. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.

Do we have anybody else who wants to speak on this subject?

(NO response.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: If not, I'm going to move on.

FROM THE FLOOR: (Indicating.)
COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Okay, sir. I’m sorry. I knew we had some move people, but I didn’t have the particulars here.

ANDREW WHITEHURST: My name is Andrew Whitehurst. I’m the Water Policy Director for Gulf Restoration Network, an advocacy group.

I have some packets that I want to distribute to the front table, if that’s okay (indicating documents).

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Give them to Jennifer and she will bring them to us.

(Documents handed to Jennifer Leirer by Andrew Whitehurst.)

ANDREW WHITEHURST: The Gulf Restoration Network and two other organizations, Audubon Jackson Chapter and The Mississippi Wildlife Federation, supported the nomination of the Pearl River as one of the nation’s most endangered rivers. It made the list, and we announced it on Tuesday two weeks ago, April 7th, and this is the front page of the Clarion Ledger with “Pearl River Endangered” in the top above the fold (indicating document).

There have been two governmental agencies that have felt strongly enough about opposing a dam on the Pearl River that they have passed resolutions in opposition to it. This Commission is one of those. The St. Tammany Parish Council is the other in Louisiana.

I wanted to commend your resolution and wanted to ask you to stand by it.

In your packet, I have given you St. Tammany’s resolution, if you open it up on the right, and their engineering comments supporting why that parish is concerned about another dam on the Pearl, the cumulative impacts. I have included the State of Louisiana’s Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Scoping comments. I have included the State of Louisiana’s Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority’s comments. All are in opposition to putting another dam on this river that already has a large dam on it.

The last letter in your packet is from the Mississippi River Delta Restoration Coalition which is a group, including National Audubon, The Coalition to Restore the Coast of Louisiana, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, The national Wildlife Federation, and the Nature Conservancy. All those were signatories to that letter.

On the left side of your packet, you’ve got an issue summary that looks like this and you’ve got a picture of the dam project (indicating document).

I think your agency opposing this dam is good. It’s a great example of an agency discharging its mission to protect the Coastal Zone. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, sir.

Any questions?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Frank Parker.

FRANK PARKER: Good morning. My name is Frank Parker and I’m a commercial shrimp fisherman from Biloxi, Mississippi.

As you know, a couple of years ago myself and several other fishermen came in front of this Commission and asked for a trip ticket program. This Commission gave us a trip ticket program, but, after several years in effect, it is still stuck in its infancy stage and needs some major improvements.

I became aware of these improvements that they need because, last month, I came up here to this office to see how many pounds of shrimp were landed in the State of Mississippi by my vessel, or myself, and I was shocked to find out that I unloaded zero pounds of shrimp in this state, when, in fact, I unloaded over seventy thousand pounds of shrimp.

As y’all know, our shrimp industry has been in a major downward spiral over the last couple of decades; manmade and natural disasters, rising cost of fuel.

The one thing that we can control is the quality and reputation of our shrimp. There have been thousands of dollars spent on campaigns promoting local wild caught seafood. The latest was “Every Shrimp has a Tail”. Well, in fact, the state can’t even tell us where this tail begins because this office can’t tell us who, where, when and how these shrimp were even harvested.

With that in mind, I feel it is very important for our shrimp industry and for our consumers that this Commission does something about revamping our trip ticket program, and I feel that by accomplishing this, this would be a little step in ensuring a brighter future of our local shrimp industry. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, sir.

I feel compelled to make a statement here. I don’t know what the problem was, in your case, but the state does come to my place and get all the records every month on every boat that lands shrimp in the State of Mississippi and all of our records.

I don’t know where the breakdown is, but I’m sure Director Miller will look into it.

Now, we have Marine Patrol, Chief Davis.

RUSTY PITTMAN: Good morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Director Miller, Ms. Chestnut. Marine Patrol, first, would like to welcome Commissioner Harmon on board. We look forward to working...
to protect the Coastal Zone. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, sir.

Any questions?

(No response.)

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NOW, WE HAVE MARINE PATROL, CHIEF DAVIS.

RUSTY PITTMAN: Good morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, director Miller, Ms. Chestnut.

Marine Patrol, first, would like to welcome Commissioner Harmon on board. We look forward to working...
with you. Congratulations.

COMMISSIONER HARMON: Thank you.

RUSTY PITTMAN: For our report this month, there is one thing I would like to talk about and that is our oyster violations. As you can see, we had two in prohibited area, we had two illegal oysters, and, then, we had the unrefrigerated oysters.

The oysters that were in a prohibited area and the illegal oysters, those cases came from around the boardwalk where people were picking them up onshore and off of the seawall which is a prohibited area, and they had three to five gallon buckets of these oysters.

We also made some cases this month, too, on the same thing. So we are having several people out picking up oysters and they are not knowing that these oysters -- of course, the season is closed, but they are in a bad area, and they need to leave them alone.

The unrefrigerated citation we made was on a truck that was coming from Louisiana in route through Mississippi on Highway 90. The driver was driving carelessly. He was weaving. Our officers pulled him over. He had a hundred sacks of oysters in his truck and no refrigeration unit running at all, and he even made the statement that he had made twenty-five trips like this without refrigeration.

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I took temperatures of the meat samples. The oysters went anywhere from seventy-eight to eighty degrees. At that time, we went ahead and seized all the sacks and returned them back to the water off the Bay Bridge in a closed area.

Any questions?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Rusty, do you think maybe we should put some signs up to let the people know that that is a restricted area and that no oystering is allowed?

RUSTY PITTMAN: As a matter of fact, we are working on that, Commissioner. The Chief and I have been talking about putting some signs up in different areas, boat ramps and piers, and we are talking to a person in Hancock County that did this several years ago for us. After Katrina, he put up six signs in Hancock County. We are already working on that.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: It's mostly just the general public that is doing this?

RUSTY PITTMAN: Right. There will be different regulations on the signs, boating and also talking about saltwater fishing license.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Do these people have a license?

RUSTY PITTMAN: The ones with the oysters?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Yes.

RUSTY PITTMAN: Of course, in a prohibited area, you don't have to have license, but what they are doing is taking these oysters off the seawall, and we don't know what the state of the oysters are, if they could make the people sick, or whatever.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: So these weren't the regular oyster fishermen?

RUSTY PITTMAN: Right. It never would have been open in that area anyway.

If there are no more questions, Chief Davis would like to come up and talk about the training that we have had. Thank you.

KEITH DAVIS: Good morning Commissioners.

I do want to point out that the sign that Chief Pittman is talking about, we do plan to work with our Public Information Officer on that sign.

We have talked, in previous meetings, about training that needs to occur in the Marine Patrol Division, and we created a report for you, but I know it is kind of confusing to read.

If you have any questions about that report, I will be happy to answer them.

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Marine Patrol is very committed to making sure that our officers are up to date on training from Officer Safety to how to deal with the public.

As you can see on this report, all of our officers have received some type of training, as far as how to do the job all the way to customer service.

As you see on the report, we did a training seminar called "Give them the Pickle". That training is committed to customer service and how to treat the public.

The other thing I want to point out is we are finalizing our emergency preparedness plan.

As you know, Lieutenant Patrick Levine is in charge of emergency operations. He is the team leader for the Department of Marine Resources, and we are working with other departments to make sure that they have the NIMS training that is required for DRM to receive federal funding. I think we are close to completing that process, as well.

Any questions, regarding training?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: On the first page, is that different levels of training?

KEITH DAVIS: Yes, sir. If you look at the report, the column to the right side is the different categories of training that we completed, and underneath there is the number of hours each officer had in that
Commission on Marine Resources

that. The Commission would have to take up a motion and change the trip ticket requirements to become mandatory for the dealers and processors.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Joe, let me ask you a question.

JOE JEWELL: Sure.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Isn't it mandatory that the fishermen present a trip ticket?

JOE JEWELL: For those that are selling their own catch. If they are selling directly to a dealer processor, the dealer processor is required to report that.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: But, if they are selling their own catch, they don't have to?

JOE JEWELL: If they are selling it off the dock, they are required to do that for the reporting program, yes.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We've been presenting the Department with each boat broken down and their catch, what they get for it, and the whole nine yards.

JOE JEWELL: Some dealers do, but you are not required to do that. Some dealers meet the minimum requirement, by providing it in bulk.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do you see a problem with that?

JOE JEWELL: The first thing I would like to address is Mr. Parker's comment about the trip ticket program.

As the Commission knows, when we implemented the mandatory requirements for trip ticket reporting that became effective in February of 2012, one of the portions of the requirements was the dealers were not part of the mandatory requirement. So the dealers are in a voluntary system for reporting and, when they report, they do it in bulk. They don't do it by individual fishermen.

Mr. Parker reports to one of those dealers that reports to us in bulk. So there is no way for us to determine.

Say, for instance, the dealer says I landed ten thousand pounds in August. Well, Mr. Parker may be part of that landing, but there is no way for us to know that, unless the dealer voluntarily tells us, or itemizes a list of landings.

That's the quandary that we're in, when we are unable to report to individual fishermen that are selling to dealers that are part of the voluntary program.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Joe, what would it take to change that to get it to where we actually have a full-blown system that works?

JOE JEWELL: The Commission would have to act on
All of these are posted on our website for the public to have access to.

I also want to note that Marine Fisheries has been engaged in some training for our staff. We have Certified Coast Guard boat captains. We have eleven of those, now, on staff, new recipients. We had three existing ones. So we have fourteen Certified Coast Guard boat captains.

We also have intensified our sampling on our public oyster reefs and on our artificial reefs and, to that end, we are in the process of certifying eleven scuba dive personnel on our staff that will bring up our current five member scuba dive staff to seventeen. I want to make the Commission aware of that.

With that being said, I will go into the main portion of the Marine Fisheries agenda items.

First up, is Final Notice of Intent for Title 22, Part 7, Charterboat/Headboat Two-Day Possession Limit. The Commission passed the Notice of Intent, on February the 24th, 2015, and, on the same day, we did the filing notice with the Secretary of State on the Administrative Procedures Bulletin.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources gave public notice via our web page, on March the 2nd, via the Administrative Procedures Act, we gave legal notice to the public in the Sun Herald publication, on March the 2nd, 2015.

The public comment period was from February the 26th through April the 24th, 2015.

That's a misprint. It should be February the 26th, 2015, through April the 20th, 2015. The public comment period was a little bit longer than usual because the Commission delayed a week in its action because of Mardi Gras in February, but we received no comments.

I'm going to read into the public record a summary of the changes to the title and part.

Section 101. Two-Day Bag Limit Endorsement.

A licensed for-hire vessel may obtain a two-day bag limit endorsement from the Department for a fee of one hundred dollars per year. The endorsement allows the vessel to possess a two-day bag limit whole, or field-limited, of spotted seatrout, red drum, and southern flounder, under all of the following conditions:

101.01. The endorsement only applies while fishing in Mississippi territorial waters.

101.02. The trip must extend beyond twenty-four hours before returning to the mainland.

101.03. The harvest must comply with Mississippi's current size limits, regardless of the place of harvest.
COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a motion on this?

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: I would like to make a motion to accept it as written.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I will second the motion.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

Joe.

JOE JEWELL: Next on the agenda is item 22.

As the Commission will recall, at its March Commission meeting, the Commission directed the staff to come forward with a Notice of Intent to address prohibition of basket dredges and changing the maximum oyster dredge weight.

We have before you this morning a Notice of Intent. It address just one section of Title 22, Part 1, Chapter 7, Dredge Specifications. I will read the proposed changes into the public record.

Section 100. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to take, or attempt to take, any oysters from the waters under the territorial jurisdiction of the State of Mississippi by the use of a dredge having a weight in excess of -- it currently reads one hundred and forty pounds. We would delete that section and add one hundred and fifteen pounds, and the tooth bar cannot have more than sixteen teeth and the teeth on the tooth bar cannot exceed five inches, unless otherwise permitted by the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources, or as hereby authorized by the MDMR, its Executive Director, Director of Marine Fisheries, Bureau Director, Program Coordinator, or other MDMR designee.

101. No person, firm, or corporation may use more than two such dredges.

Next is the new section that we would be adding to Title 22, Part 1.

Section 102. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to take, or attempt to take, any oysters from the waters under the territorial jurisdiction of the State of Mississippi by the use of a basket dredge. A basket dredge is a type of oyster dredge also known as a "self-dumping dredge" that utilizes a rigid framed basket, instead of a flexible bag made out of rope, or chain, to retain the harvested oysters.

For this to go forward as a Notice of Intent, the Commission would have to make a motion.

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: I have a question for you, or Kelly.

Is there something coming out of the Oyster Council that would address this?

JOE JEWELL: I do believe the Oyster Council has addressed this issue, but I think Dr. Lucas can answer that.

KELLY LUCAS: Different groups, such as the Aquaculture and Emerging Technologies, have wanted to look at different technologies for dredging. Some of them have suggested looking at experiments that look at the weight, the pounds of the oyster dredge and its effects on the reef and different technology for removing oysters.

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: This won't affect anybody in the State of Mississippi until probably next October.

My question is would it be advantageous for us to hold up on this and wait and see what the Oyster Council puts in front of us?

KELLY LUCAS: That is y'all's decision, as Commissioners.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Let me interject something here with legal.

If someone came before us and had a special dredge, or something, they wanted to try, can't we issue them an experimental permit for a certain period of time to try the dredge improvements?

JOE JEWELL: If they meet the requirements of a scientific permit, the Department, I can issue them a special scientific permit.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Okay.

Do we have a motion on this, to take it out for Notice of Intent?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll make the motion that we take this out for Notice of Intent.

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: I'll second it.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

JOE JEWELL: Thank you, Commissioners. Our final agenda item is the New State Saltwater Fishing Records. We have two for your consideration. Ms. Emily Satterfield will be doing that presentation.
EMILY SATTERFIELD: Thank you, Joe.
Good morning Commissioners, Director Miller, and
Ms. Chestnut.
As Joe stated, we have two new state saltwater
fishing records to be considered this morning. Both of
these were conventional tackle.

The first one is a Tilefish, Lopholatilus
chemaelenticeps. The new record is eighteen pounds four
point one seven ounces. It was caught by angler, Samuel
Sandez.
Here is the fish, and Mr. Sandez with his fish
(indicating photographs).

The second consideration this morning is a
Lionfish, Pterois volitans. The new record is one pound
eleven point two ounces, and it was caught by angler,
Jason Jones.
Here is the beautiful fish, and Mr. Jones with
his catch (indicating photographs).

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Emily, where was the
Tilefish caught?
Was it in Mississippi water?

EMILY SATTERFIELD: No, sir. It was landed in
Mississippi.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a motion to
approve these records?

Commissioner Drummond: I make a motion we
approve these new saltwater fishing records for the State
of Mississippi.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second the motion.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: The motion has been made
and seconded.

All those in favor say aye.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: The Lionfish being an
invasive species, I'm kind of glad to see it. I guess we
need some folks targeting those fish.

JOE JEWELL: Commissioner Drummond, the answer
to your question is the Tilefish was caught about fifty
miles almost due south of here near the Ram Powell.
The Lionfish, there are pros and cons to it, but
certainly one of the pros is that, by acknowledging it,
fishermen may target the species and reduce its
population.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes. We need to put a
bounty on them.

JOE JEWELL: We have an invasive species program
in place to try and reduce their numbers.
Are there any questions?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: The Lionfish was caught
with fishing tackle, right?

JOE JEWELL: Conventional tackle, correct.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I assume that was in
state waters?

JOE JEWELL: No. That was not caught in state
waters. It was landed in state waters.

Any other questions?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you very much, Joe.

JOE JEWELL: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Next we have Coastal
Resource Management, Mr. Jan Boyd.

JAN BOYD: Good morning Mr. Chairman,
Commissioners, Director Miller, and Ms. Chestnut.

I would also like to say welcome aboard to
Commissioner Harmon.

Coastal has one action item for your
consideration this morning, and Chris Pickering will be
presenting that.

CHRIS PICKERING: Good morning. We have a
request for an after-the-fact general permit by Michele
McLindon, DNR Number 120316. It is located on an unnamed
canal adjacent to Mallini Bayou at 105 Baywood Drive in

Pass Christian, Harrison County, Mississippi. It is in
the General Use District, and the agent is Coastal Marine
Construction, Incorporated.

The site was permitted for a boathouse thirty-
feet-by-fourteen-feet and a bulkhead fifty feet long.
Currently existing there is an uncovered boat
lift twelve-by-twelve, and a pier thirty-feet-by-four-
feet.

What the new applicant is proposing is two more
piers; one thirty-feet-by-four-feet and a pier twenty-one-
feet-by-four-feet.

Here's an aerial. As you can see, here is
Highway 90 going over the Bay of St. Louis and I-10, and
the yellow thumbstick is the current location.
Here's a zoomed-in aerial. This is the
structure. This pier is actually over land. So all they
have is the thirty-by-four-foot pier and the twelve-by-
twelve boat lift.

As you can see, we took some measurements across
the width of the waterway from different areas, and this
landowner here has actually given authorization for the
new structures and existing structure (indicating aerial).
Here's a picture of what is existing.
Here's the previous permit. There was an
existing dock there already that was thirty-feet-by-four-
feet, and they proposed a boathouse thirty-foot-by-
fourteen feet, and that was permitted, along with the
fifty foot bulkhead (indicating drawing).
This is what is proposed, now, with the existing
structures, the thirty-by-four-foot pier, and they are
proposing another thirty-by-four-foot pier, the twelve-by-
twelve boat lift, and the twenty-one-by-four-foot pier
(indicating drawing).
On April 27th, 2012, DMR issued a General Permit
to the previous landowner for a bulkhead and boathouse to
be constructed parallel to the shoreline.
On February 3rd, 2015, DMR received an
application in the new owner's name for the agent,
proposing two piers.
On March 3rd, 2015, a site visit was conducted by
DMR staff. It was revealed that the existing structures
were constructed out of compliance with the previous
permit.
On March 26th, 2015, the agent was notified that
the existing structures were out of compliance with the
previous landowner's permit and that an after-the-fact
permit application would be required.
The staff of the Department of Marine Resources
has conducted a thorough evaluation of the situation.
Because the constructed structures meet the General Permit

Guidelines, staff recommends that the Commission approve
the applicant's request, with no fine issued to the
current property owner because she did not own the
property when the violation occurred.
A suspended fine is recommended to be issued to
the contractor, in accordance with Mississippi Code 49-27-
51.
The violation was discovered on March 3rd, 2015.
The violation duration is forty-six days. The maximum
potential fine is twenty-three thousand dollars. Our
recommended fine is a fine issued to the contractor, in
the amount of five hundred dollars, which shall be
suspended contingent on no new violations within two years
of the Commission's ruling.
These are our decision factors. The applicant
recently purchased the property. The structures were
constructed while the previous landowner owned the
property. The applicant has been very cooperative
throughout the after-the-fact permitting process. The
contractor has no previous violations. The contractor is
always cooperative and notifies the DMR of any problems,
or concerns. The contractor decreased the square footage
from five hundred and forty square feet which was
permitted in 2012 to what is currently existing, one
hundred and twenty square feet.

Any questions?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a motion on
this?

COMMISSIONER ROSARGE: I make a motion that we
accept the staff's recommendations and also the
recommended fine of five hundred dollars, with no new
violations for two years.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: Second.

CHRIS PICKERING: You understand the five
hundred dollar fine will be suspended?

COMMISSIONER ROSARGE: Yes. I'm sorry.
The five hundred dollar fine will be suspended.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion has been made and
we have a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

CHRIS PICKERING: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Chris.

Next, Mr. Bill, Finance.

BILL FEIDT: Good morning everyone.

I will take us through the agency financial
results, as of the end of March.
At the end of March, we had State revenue of
five point three million dollars. We still have some
challenges with MAGIC.
The total Agency revenue is twenty-one point
eight million dollars.
State net income is negative two point three
million dollars. That is due to the revenue shortfall due
to MAGIC, as well as we have been spending cash on hand
for special funds such as artificial reef, GOMESA, seafood
marketing, etcetera. I expect we will carry a negative
balance through the end of the year, but we have
sufficient cash on hand to manage that.
Total Agency net income is one point seven
million dollars.

Any questions?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Are we solvent?

BILL FEIDT: We are doing very well. Total cash
on hand for the Agency is about forty-two million dollars.
So we are in pretty good shape, right now.
From a budget standpoint, after nine months, we
are in good shape. From the operating side, we have
forty-three percent of the budget remaining. On the
Tidelands Trust Fund, we have forty-five percent of the

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sponge crabs.

I also wanted to point out that we have increased our footprint with social media. Our newest employee, Amber Jones, has done a great job with that. We are on Facebook and Twitter and Instagram and Youtube. So we are getting a lot of notice out in the community for the things that we are doing in the Agency. Amber is doing a great job with that.

Most recently, we participated in Celebrate the Gulf which was April 11th in Pass Christian, in conjunction with Art in the Pass. Pretty much the whole agency participated. We had employees from Fisheries, Seafood Technology, Coastal Resources Management, Public Affairs, and Marine Patrol.

Jennifer Buchanan, Education Coordinator at the Grand Bay NERR, did an excellent job of coordinating the event and making adjustments because of the anticipated rain, and it was a great day for everybody.

Marine Patrol held two boat-and-water-safety classes in March and certified fourteen students. So far this year, Marine Patrol has conducted thirteen classes and certified a hundred and twenty-four students. Officers also participated in several special events in March; Thunderbirds Air Show, Battle on the Bayou, boat-and-water-safety presentations, and career days at local schools.

We did have a boat at the Crawfish Festival on Saturday, and that is very popular with the children. They like to get on that. Marine Patrol did a great job. Jeff Payne was there. We are going to be there this Saturday, also.

We are also preparing for several events. One of these is our State of the Coast conference which will be held May 12th and 13th, at the Golden Nugget in Biloxi. The Office of Restoration and Resiliency is planning the conference, with help from other departments. It will feature presentations by several DMR employees. We will have the whole Agency represented there. We will have State and Federal officials. We will have a presentation by the Oyster Council, an update on that. We are looking forward to that and we hope you can join us.

Any questions?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Melissa.

MELISSA SCALLAN: Thank you, Melissa.

COMMISSIONER HARMON: Thank you, Melissa.

MELISSA SCALLAN: Since the last OM meeting, the Agency has been mentioned forty-one times in local, state, and national media. Items of particular interest included red snapper and the new rules regarding red snapper, and the arrest of an Alabama man for illegally harvesting sponge crabs.
Lieutenant Levine was chosen, through Rupert Lacy with Harrison County, as the representative for the whole State of Mississippi to be the incident commander and take over the first ten days in Winston County. He and Officer Sapet immediately went up the day that he was chosen to go and set up the incident command, and lieutenant Levine ran that for ten days, allowing the county and the city to start recovery efforts. We submitted his name from the state agencies, and we are proud to say that he was chosen out of all the state agencies to receive that award.

I would like to introduce Lieutenant Patrick Levine.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Patrick, would you like to say something?

PATRICK LEVINE: No, sir.

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: I would like to say I had the luxury of being alongside. A group of guys from Bay St. Louis went up and fed all the emergency people for the first seven days, and y'all did a great job. Thank you.

PATRICK LEVINE: Thank you, sir.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We will go into closed session, now.

(whereupon, a short recess was taken.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We are back on the record, and Ms. Chestnut has an announcement.

SANDY CHESTNUT: At 9:50, a motion was made by Commissioner Zimmerman to go into closed session to discuss the need for executive session to discuss pending litigation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drummond.

Commissioners present in this were Richard Gollott, Shelby Drummond, Steve Bosarge, Ernie Zimmerman, Ron Harmon, and legal counsel Sandy Chestnut and Sean Morrison. Also present was Jamie Miller.

At 9:56, a motion was made by Commissioner Bosarge to go into executive session to discuss pending litigation, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Zimmerman.

Legal counsel started to discuss one matter of pending litigation and Commissioner Zimmerman recused himself based on a potential conflict of interest. Once that matter was concluded, Commissioner Zimmerman came back in the room, and another second matter was discussed.

There were no motions made during the executive session, and, at 10:15, a motion was made by Commissioner Drummond to end the executive session. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Zimmerman. That ends the report.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have any other

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