Secretary of State presents Tidelands check to CMR

More than $5.45 million returned to Gulf Coast

Mississippi Secretary of State Eric Clark presented the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources (CMR) with a check for $5.45 million to be used for Fiscal Year 2003 projects at a ceremony held Nov. 1, 2002 in Biloxi.

The Tidelands Trust Fund Program consists of funds derived from the lease rentals of tidelands and submerged lands. Revenues are collected by the Office of Secretary of State, appropriated by the state legislature and administered by the DMR. All tidelands projects are reviewed and evaluated annually by the CMR, as mandated by Section 29-15-9 of the Mississippi Code.

The DMR will distribute the money to tidelands fund recipients for projects in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties. More than $40 million in tidelands lease revenue has been turned over to the DMR for coastal projects over the past five years.

Fiscal Year 2003 projects include:

**Biloxi Port Commission:** Schooner Pier Project; Lighthouse Fishing Dock and Bulkhead—Phase VI and Deer Island Restoration and Harbor Improvements

**City of Gulfport:** Courthouse Road Boat Launch Area—Phase II; Gulfport Lake Improvements and Cowen Road Boat Launch

**City of Pass Christian:** Harbor Improvements

**City of Long Beach:** Harbor Improvements

**Hancock County Board of Supervisors:** Bayou Caddy Marina, McCleod Park and Clermont Harbor Pier

**City of Bay St. Louis:** Ulman Avenue Pier

**City of Ocean Springs:** Fort Bayou Fishing Pier

**Jackson County Board of Supervisors:** Porteaux Bayou

**City of Moss Point:** Pelican Landing

**City of Pascagoula:** Phase I Pier and Launch Improvements

**City of Waveland:** Phase III Pier Expansion and Related Improvements

**D’Iberville Port Commission:** Fountain Beach Public Access and Habitat Learning Center

See TIDELANDS, page 2
Director’s Notes

Dr. William Walker

I am honored that Governor Musgrove and the Commissioners on Marine Resources have entrusted me with the responsibility of guiding the Department of Marine Resources in meeting the goals and objectives of its mission into the future. As an individual who has worked in the field of marine science education and research for most of my professional career, the challenge of marine resources management and stewardship is one that I welcome.

In the short time I have spent as the agency’s head, it has become apparent that I am blessed with a staff of dedicated and talented professionals who will make my job all the easier. From the officers of the Marine Patrol to the wetlands ecologists and fisheries biologists of the Coastal Ecology and Marine Fisheries Offices and to the many other administrative and support services staff who help in getting the job done, the DMR is an organization in which you can entrust the future of your valuable coastal and marine resources.

The continued wise stewardship of those resources to the benefit of every citizen of the State of Mississippi is a pledge I can make on behalf of each and every member of our staff.

William W. Walker, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Boat and Water Safety Course Schedule (Jan.-March 2003)

- Jan. 25, Bolton Building Auditorium, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Jan. 27-28, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2326 Telephone Road, Pascagoula, 6-9 p.m.
- Jan. 29-30, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 300 Hwy. 90, Bay St. Louis, 6-9 p.m.
- Feb. 1, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2992 W. Beach Blvd., Gulfport, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Feb. 3-4, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 300 Hwy. 90, Bay St. Louis, 6-9 p.m.
- Feb. 5-6, Bolton Building Auditorium, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, 6-9 p.m.
- Feb. 8, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2326 Telephone Road, Pascagoula, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Feb. 15, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 300 Hwy. 90, Bay St. Louis, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Feb. 22, Bolton Building Auditorium, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Feb. 24-25, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2326 Telephone Road, Pascagoula, 6-9 p.m.
- Feb. 24-25, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2992 W. Beach Blvd., Gulfport, 6-9 p.m.
- March 1, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 300 Hwy. 90, Bay St. Louis, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- March 8, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2326 Telephone Road, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- March 11-12, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 300 Hwy. 90, 6-9 p.m.
- March 15, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2326 Telephone Road, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- March 17-18, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2992 W. Beach Blvd., Gulfport, 6-9 p.m.
- March 19-20, Bolton Building Auditorium, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- March 24-25, Mississippi Power Co. Auditorium, 2326 Telephone Road, Pascagoula, 6-9 p.m.
- March 29, Bolton Building Auditorium, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Call the DMR Boat and Water Safety Bureau at (228) 435-1332 for more details. All classes are free.

TIDELANDS, continued from page 1

City of Gautier: City Park Expansion
Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum: Biloxi Schooner Project
Beauvoir: Access to Oyster Bayou
Mississippi Sound Maritime Historical Foundation: Mississippi Sound Maritime Museum
Mississippi Coast Audubon Society: Conservation of Least Terns, Harrison County Beaches
Gov. Ronnie Musgrove announced the following appointments to the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources on Dec. 9, 2002:
• Mikel C. Gusa of Gulfport, representing charter boat operators, has been appointed for the term ending June 30, 2006.
• Vernon Asper, Ph.D., of Diamondhead, representing non-profit environmental organizations, has been appointed for the term ending June 30, 2006.

The commission is composed of five members representing the following areas: commercial seafood processor, non-profit environmental organization, charter boat operator, recreational fisherman and commercial fisherman.
Students celebrate GIS Day at DMR

More than 150 people learned the importance of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) on GIS Day at the DMR, held Nov. 20 in Biloxi. Students from D’Iberville and Pica-yune High schools attended the event, hosted by the DMR’s Comprehensive Resource Management Plan (CRMP).

Held each year on the Wednesday of National Geographic Society’s Geography Awareness Week, GIS Day is a global event that celebrates geographic information systems, a computer-based tool for mapping and analyzing objects and events.

GIS combines the power of a database with the visualization capabilities offered by maps. GIS takes information from a database about a place or feature, such as streets, buildings, water bodies, soils and terrain, and turns it into visual data layers. Seeing these layers enables planners and analysts to make informed decisions about their communities.

“GIS Day gave students the opportunity to learn more about this land-use tool and how it can be used for smart growth and community development,” said DMR CRMP director Tina Shumate. “GIS was also introduced as a possible career option for these students to pursue.”

CRMP is a special management program housed within DMR and focused on using GIS for developing a comprehensive strategy to guide economic growth and development impacts on the environment.

Sound Advice

Lt. Frank Wescovich

As I reflect back on the past year, I am reminded of the senseless tragedies that have occurred in our coastal boating community and can think of no better advice than that which I offered in last year’s column on winter boat operations.

Winter is upon us and has brought the usual cold and damp weather to the Coast, and with this cold weather comes a whole new realm of problems. Being out and about on the water this time of year can be significantly more dangerous than other times. If you don’t prepare, you could find yourself in some serious difficulty. Please, for your own safety and the safety of others, try to work the following tips into your winter boating plans. They should make your winter outings much safer and more enjoyable.

1. First and foremost, wear your lifejacket.

Drowning remains the number one cause of death in boating accidents.

2. Dress for the anticipated weather.

Hypothermia will creep up on you before you realize what is happening.

3. Have your boat properly equipped.

Prudent boat operation in cold weather requires much more equipment than warm weather operation.

4. Keep abreast of the weather.

Winter weather doesn’t usually change as fast as it does in the summer, but the changes are usually not for the better.

5. Know your boat and its capabilities and limitations.

A boat that was marginally suited for ventures to the offshore islands in the summer is definitely not a wise choice for the same trip in the winter.

6. Be sure to have some form of reliable communications onboard.

VHF radiotelephone or cellular phone would be a good choice.

7. File a float plan.

Tell a reliable friend, neighbor, or relative where you are going and when you plan to return. Don’t deviate from your filed plan.

See SOUND ADVICE, page 6

Marine Patrol rescues two from sinking vessel

The DMR Marine Patrol responded to a distress call from two men on a vessel sinking about three miles south of Pass Christian on Dec. 5.

DMR Marine Patrol Officer Tommy Jennings was patrolling oyster reefs when an emergency broadcast for assistance came across VHF channel 16 that a boat was sinking about 200 to 300 yards north of Pass Marianne Light. Officer Jennings arrived at the scene within two minutes.

The vessel was a 40-foot homemade steel hull boat. David McGill and William M. Beech, Jr. both of Kiln, were wearing lifejackets when Officer Jennings retrieved them and brought them ashore to the Pass Christian Harbor Oyster Check Station. Both men were wet and cold, but otherwise unharmed. The cause of the sinking is under investigation.

Visit the DMR online

www.dmr.state.ms.us
Coastal Cleanup nets 25 tons of marine debris

About 3,474 volunteers picked up more than 50,000 pounds—3,126 bags—of trash along 107 miles of coastal waterways in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties during the 14th annual Mississippi Coastal Cleanup, held Sept. 21, 2002 in conjunction with the International Coastal Cleanup. The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is the state coordinator for the event.

Due to the approach of Tropical Storm Isidore into the Gulf of Mexico, the barrier islands portion of the cleanup including Cat, Ship, Horn and Petit Bois islands was canceled. Sixty determined volunteers still ventured out and cleaned up Cat, Horn, Petit Bois and East and West Ship islands. Despite the rainy weather, this year’s coastal cleanup saw an increase of 600 volunteers over last year’s event.

The mission of the international cleanup is to remove debris from shorelines, bays, rivers, waterways and beaches; collect valuable information on the amount and types of debris collected; educate people on the issue of marine debris; and use the data collected to affect positive change. Volunteers recorded collected debris on data cards, and the DMR sent the information to the Ocean Conservancy, organizer of the International Coastal Cleanup, for tabulation.

The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup is sponsored by the Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force, which consists of representatives from 25 diverse Coast businesses and organizations in the public and private sectors.

For more info, visit the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Web site at masgc.org/cleanup.

Volunteers from Keesler Air Force Base remove debris along Biloxi’s Back Bay.

Highlights
Hats off to Outback Steakhouse in Gulfport for serving free lunch to 1,280 volunteers in a two-hour period!

In Bay St. Louis, the Office of Congressman Gene Taylor and Da Beach House had a cookout for volunteers. And, Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve held a wiener roast at Shepard State Park in Gautier for volunteers.

Sponsors

BFI
Cellular South
Chevron Pascagoula Refinery
Collins & Associates of Biloxi
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Gulf Islands Conservancy
Gulf Islands National Seashore
Hancock County Chamber of Commerce
Hancock Insurance
Harrison County Beautification
Harrison County Sand Beach Department
Jackson County Solid Waste
Keesler Air Force Base
Lynn Meadows Discovery Center
Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Mississippi State University Coastal Research & Extension Center
Mississippi State University Extension Service, Hancock County
Naval Construction Battalion Center
Naval Station Pascagoula
Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce
Office of Congressman Gene Taylor
Office of the Mississippi Secretary of State
Outback Steakhouse
Sea Coast Echo

Co-sponsors

2002 Cleanup Stats
Volunteers 3,474
Pounds of debris 50,090
Miles cleaned 107
Bags collected 3,126
Designated sites 54
Bird entanglements 12

Peculiar items found
injured seagull artificial limb
broken windshield treadmill
do not litter sign computer
dress on a hanger light fixture
Halloween pumpkin car bumper
bean bag chair kitchen sink

About 45 volunteers picked up 77 bags of trash on Deer Island, the state’s newest Coastal Preserve.

A group of volunteers on Petit Bois Island show off their 2002 Mississippi Coastal Cleanup T-shirts, featuring the artwork of Ocean Springs artist, Walter Anderson. Each cleanup volunteer received a T-shirt compliments of Chevron Pascagoula Refinery.
Seafood processors have been busy this holiday season trying to fill orders for seafood. The Mississippi oyster season officially opened during the month of October, and the harvesting is in full gear as weather permits.

We have just completed the last quarter of routine and follow-up inspections for the year 2002. Staff members also conducted semi-annual water sampling in December. All the water sources of the seafood dealer’s facilities were checked. The seafood officers collected water samples from each water source and delivered them to Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs for water quality analysis.

APCs deployed to enhance artificial reefs

The DMR and the Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks deployed more than 60 Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) onto artificial fishing reefs on November 19. The APCs were sunk at Fish Havens 1 and 2, both areas about 10 miles south of Horn Island.

“Those APCs have been used on the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico and have proven to be great habitat for reef fish species,” said DMR marine fisheries biologist, Kerwin Cuevas. “We’re very thankful to Gulf Stream Marine, Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks and the National Guard for working very hard to make this possible.”

The Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks acquired 123 APCs through a donation from the State of Mississippi. Several of the decommissioned armored vehicles were used by the National Guard to transport troops during Desert Storm. For more information, contact the DMR at (228) 374-5000 or visit the Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks Web site at www.mgfb.com.

We have also been involved with many technical assistance projects, such as assisting newly renovated facilities and new retail stores, visiting old and new facilities, conducting sanitation and advising on the building requirements for a processors, using Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point guidelines.

We are currently analyzing data from a product profile survey conducted in October and a sensory survey of the post-harvest treated oysters conducted in December. We conducted one survey here at the DMR in December, and other surveys were coordinated with the Chef School of the West Harrison County Vocational School of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Long Beach and with the Coastal Aquaculture Unit of the Mississippi State University Extension Service and Seafood Laboratory in Gulfport.
DMR Executive Director William Walker recognized three State Marine Patrol officers with awards for Outstanding Community Service at the October 24 meeting of the CMR.

The three officers: Walter J. Chataginer Sr., Kyle Wilkerson and Jack Ewing Jr. put themselves at considerable risk to secure a shrimp vessel that had been blown into power line towers near the old D’Iberville bridge on Biloxi’s Back Bay during Tropical Storm Isidore, averting a disastrous situation that may have resulted in a power blackout throughout Biloxi.

**Stover, Verges complete APCO training**

Marine Patrol Emergency Telecommunicators Denise Stover and Jessy Verges received training certification in the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International (APCO), Nov. 18-22 at the Police and Fire Academy in Hattiesburg.

Topics of training included call classification, roles and responsibilities of emergency telecommunicators, legal aspects of public safety communications, radio communications and telephone techniques, 9-1-1 terms, stress management and interpersonal communications.

**Vyles recognized for 10 years of service**

Marine Patrolman Charlie Vyles was recently acknowledged for 10 years of service to the State of Mississippi.

The Longevity Service Award program is administered by the Mississippi State Personnel Board, which issues eligible employees engraved certificates signed by the Governor and agency head.

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**Happy Anniversary!**

These anniversaries mark employees’ years of service with the Department of Marine Resources and the state of Mississippi.

- (1/1/90) Dale Diaz
- (1/1/90) Clay Boulet
- (1/1/95) Gerald Chatham
- (1/1/95) Phyllis Davis
- (1/1/95) Doug Drieling
- (1/1/95) Rita Duvernay
- (1/1/95) Kerry Endris
- (1/1/95) Olin Gunter
- (1/1/95) Rocky Southern
- (1/1/95) Rhonda Price
- (1/1/00) Melanie Lane
- (1/1/00) R.T. May
- (1/1/00) Jeffery Payne
- (1/1/00) Andy Ryals
- (1/1/00) Bill Stover
- (1/10/00) Diane Roth
- (1/15/98) Jan Boyd
- (1/18/85) Donnie Armes
- (1/18/02) Denise Stover

We thank them for their dedicated service to the management of our marine resources.

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**Visit the DMR online at**

www.dmr.state.ms.us
DMR Calendar

January 21
Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources meeting, Bolton Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, 9 a.m.

February 18
Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources meeting, Bolton Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, 9 a.m.

February 20
Comprehensive Resource Management Plan meeting, Bolton Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, 10 a.m.

March 18
Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources meeting, Bolton Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, 9 a.m.

April 15
Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources meeting, Bolton Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, 9 a.m.

April 17
Comprehensive Resource Management Plan meeting, Bolton Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, 10 a.m.

May 12-14
Coastal Development Strategies Conference, Casino Magic, Bay St. Louis. Call (228) 374-5000 for details.

May 20
Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources meeting, Bolton Building, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, 9 a.m.

Doc’s Fishing Tips
Fred Deegen, Ph.D., Deputy Director

While bait-cast reels provide much greater sensitivity to strikes, spinning reels are less troublesome on windy days when backlash might be problematic on the conventional stuff.