

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, December 15, 2020
9:00 a.m.
Zoom webinar

Commission Members:

Ronnie Daniels, Chairman
Natalie Guess, Vice Chairman
Steve Bosarge
Richard Gollott

Also Present:

Joe Spraggins, Executive Director DMR
Sandy Chesnut, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I would like to call the
2 Tuesday, December 15th, Commission meeting to order.

3 I would like to ask Chief Wilkerson to lead us
4 in The Pledge of Allegiance.

5 (The Pledge of Allegiance recited.)

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: We will have a moment of
7 silence to kind of gather our thoughts and say our
8 prayers.

9 (Moment of silence observed.)

10 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Approval of the minutes.
11 Can I get a motion to approve the November 17th,
12 2020, minutes?

13 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I make a motion.

14 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second it.

15 All those in favor.

16 Commissioner Guess?

17 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Bosarge?

19 (No response.)

20 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Is Commissioner Bosarge
21 on?

22 BRADY SMITH: It looks like he has dropped off.

23 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Gollott?

24 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Daniels,

1 aye.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Approval of the agenda.
3 Can I get a motion to approve the agenda?

4 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, I'll make
5 that motion.

6 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Second.

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Gollott
8 makes the motion. Commissioner Guess seconds.

9 All those in favor.

10 Commissioner Guess?

11 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

12 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Gollott?

13 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Aye.

14 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Daniels,
15 aye.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS: Did we lose Commissioner
17 Bosarge, sir?

18 BRADY SMITH: Yes. It appears he has
19 disconnected it.

20 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I believe he is
21 disconnected.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS: It could be anything.

23 All right. He will probably come back up.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Joe, I'm going to turn it
25 over to you.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS: First off, I hope everybody is
2 having a wonderful December and they have a wonderful
3 Holiday season.

4 There have been a lot of tragedies and, in our
5 moment of silence, I meant to tell you, but it was done
6 before I could. I would like for us to remember, if we
7 could, a young man that worked hard with us before.

8 What was it, Paul, he was working on?

9 PAUL MICKLE: He was working on the landings
10 program on a private basis so that you could get your
11 fishing license and all the information for each state
12 that you fish in.

13 It could be anywhere on the Gulf of Mexico, a
14 one-stop shop app where you could get your license, the
15 regulations of each state and document photographs and
16 landings, and the landings program, although voluntary,
17 was still so valuable as a data stream we were in consult
18 with him trying to work through the process of allowing
19 those data streams to be very informative for managers
20 such as ourselves.

21 He was a very cunning young man. He had really
22 a vision of what he wanted and what he knew was valuable
23 for what he loved, the recreational and charter fishing.
24 It was a pleasure to know and work with him.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: He had a tragic death a couple

1 of weeks ago in a motorcycle accident. If you can
2 remember his family. He was a young man thirty years old
3 and he had a lot going for him, an avid fisherman, and, if
4 we could, remember that. Neil was a great person.

5 Employment contracts, if you can pull that up.
6 Next slide.

7 As you see, we have Ellen Coffin was hired as a
8 contract for the DMR Marine Fisheries Scientist IV in the
9 Shellfish Bureau. She also worked in another area there
10 in the same area.

11 James Davis was promoted to Coastal Preserves
12 Bureau Director. After Jan and Jeff left, we moved people
13 and obviously we moved Jennifer to Jan's job and Jared
14 into Jeff's job, and, then, that opened some slots up and
15 we moved up inside with James Davis. A great promotion
16 there.

17 Michele Williams left Finance and moved to CZM
18 to be the Grant's Administrator.

19 Katherine Glover was promoted to the DMR Marine
20 Fisheries Scientist IV in Shellfish.

21 Michael Strickland is our new Captain on Marine
22 Patrol. When Patrick Levine became our new Deputy Chief,
23 he moved into the Captain slot. If you get a chance to
24 thank those for their work and everything, he has done a
25 great job.

1 The good thing about it is we are in a situation
2 here that so far in the last five months we have promoted
3 only within, and that is pretty good. We really enjoy
4 being able to do that and it means being able to move
5 people up in the agency. It has worked out pretty good.

6 JOE SPRAGGINS: Are there any contracts, or any
7 procurements?

8 No. I don't think so.

9 Any questions on that, Commissioners?

10 (No response.)

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: If not, I will move on.

12 As far as our Agency update, obviously, we are
13 working with the Governor's office on several things.

14 We are trying to get our Tidelands, and we did
15 get a Tidelands check the other day for seven point three,
16 or seven point four, million dollars.

17 I first want to apologize to each one of you
18 because it was done by the Secretary of State and whenever
19 they made the announcement, they did not invite our
20 Commission, and that is my fault. I made the mistake. I
21 should have looked at the list better and I didn't pay
22 enough attention to what was going on. So I want to
23 apologize to each one of you for not getting that to you
24 before it was announced, and I promise we will do better
25 in the future.

1 It is good to have that check. That gets us to
2 where we can continue to operate.

3 We are having some issues that we are working on
4 with that, just for your information, because it was only
5 seven point four million.

6 They basically cut us back on our managed
7 projects because we only got a million dollars to do
8 anything with managed projects, and that will barely pay
9 the salaries. What we are trying to do is I talked with
10 several of the legislators and they are going to help me
11 the first of January and give me more spending authority.

12 We have the money. We just don't have the
13 spending authority because that is all they gave us. I am
14 trying to get them to understand that, and I think that
15 they are and they are working with me.

16 It's 2020. You can't say anything, but it's
17 2020 and everything has been so jumbled around. I'm not
18 throwing any hatchets, or anything. They were just trying
19 to get some kind of budget passed for us and I think
20 that's what happened with that.

21 We will get it straightened out and hopefully we
22 will get to start back in January as soon as they go into
23 session, and they can give us some more spending authority
24 so that we can open up some of those projects and get them
25 started back.

1 Any questions on that from anyone?

2 (No response.)

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: We are obviously shut down for
4 Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and, then, we will be
5 shut down for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

6 When I say that, there will still be some
7 essential ones as Marine Patrol working. So we will keep
8 the waters safe.

9 As far as the Agency, we will have two three-day
10 weeks. Most people will be able to spend some time with
11 their family and enjoy this time of the year.

12 Before I get too far with that, I would like to
13 wish each and every one of y'all a Merry Christmas and a
14 Happy New Year, and hopefully it is a very safe one for
15 you and your family.

16 We do have a couple of other reports that we
17 want to go over.

18 As far as the CARES Act, we have basically
19 finished the time as far as people applying for the CARES
20 Act. We had a hundred and sixty-four commercial, thirty-
21 four charter and thirteen dealers that applied.

22 Out of the commercial, eighteen were found
23 ineligible. Out of the charter, seven were found
24 ineligible. Out of the dealers, five were found
25 ineligible.

1 We had right at two hundred and fifty people,
2 two hundred forty-two to be exact to apply for this. We
3 are waiting to hear back from one of the charter
4 applications.

5 One of the issues that we have is that if you
6 have a license -- and this happens with both commercial
7 fishermen and with charter folks. If you live in the
8 State of Mississippi and you have a license in Louisiana
9 and that is what you do your business as -- say, you are a
10 charter boat fisherman in Louisiana and you go to
11 Louisiana and charter everyday and that is what you do --
12 well, you don't need a Mississippi charter license because
13 you are not chartering out of Mississippi.

14 If you go to Alabama and you are working as a
15 fisherman over there and you have an Alabama commercial
16 license, but you don't have a Mississippi commercial
17 license -- maybe you have an international license -- the
18 problem is ours says that you have to have a Mississippi
19 commercial, or a Mississippi charter license. Because of
20 that, we have got it caught up in some situations.

21 I am trying to get NOAA to work with us and Gulf
22 States is working with us. I talked with Dave Donaldson
23 some more about it yesterday. Somebody needs to pay these
24 people.

25 States like Louisiana are saying, well, we can't

1 pay you because you don't live there and you don't have a
2 residence there, and we are saying that we can't pay you
3 because you don't have a Mississippi license. We need to
4 find something.

5 If you hear anything from our fishermen out
6 there either charter boat, or commercial fishermen, that
7 have that issue, tell them that we are not giving up on
8 them. We are still working it. We are still trying to do
9 it, and what I'm going to do with that is I am going to do
10 the exact same thing that I did before. If I can't find
11 an answer to it in a short period, I am going to hold that
12 amount of money that they would have normally gotten and I
13 am going to hold that back, and, then, turn around and try
14 to qualify them at a later date so they can get that money
15 and not hold the other people's money up.

16 If that doesn't happen, then, we will turn
17 around and give the money back to each one of the others,
18 a portion of it.

19 I just cannot see trying to turn my back on one
20 of these fishermen and they do it. Just because they live
21 in Mississippi -- and there are a lot of people that cross
22 the line to work -- they shouldn't be punished for that.

23 If y'all have any way of helping me on that, if
24 you know of some angle that I can look at it differently,
25 I would appreciate it, if y'all have anything that will

1 open up an answer for me.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you for looking
3 into that, Joe. It seems like some of these guys just
4 really got kind of caught in a catch-22 there and they
5 feel like they are just kind of getting left behind. We
6 really appreciate you looking into that and trying to help
7 them.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS: Well, we are not going to give
9 up on it because somehow someday they should be allowed to
10 get paid, and I am still working it out.

11 It is basically Alabama and Louisiana I'm
12 working with, but we are trying to get NOAA to say that
13 under circumstances like that, the state they live in can
14 pay them, or whatever. It doesn't matter. We are working
15 that out.

16 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Okay.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: Also, it looks like that we
18 should be able to -- Traci has worked hard on that CARES
19 Act and we are down to the point of being able to get some
20 funding out. I don't want to mention the numbers here
21 because I need to wait and get it finalized, but, if any
22 of you would like to have it, we will be more than glad to
23 send it to you, what we are looking at as far as numbers.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I would like to see that,
25 if you don't mind sending it.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS: Okay.

2 Traci, are you on?

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Mr. Joe, I would like
4 that, also, if you could.

5 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I think it would be good
6 to send it to all of the Commissioners, if you don't mind.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: All right. We will just send it
8 to all of the Commissioners. We will get that to you.

9 I ask, if you would, please hold it close to you
10 until we get it to final announcement because the numbers
11 may change a little bit one way, or the other.

12 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

13 SANDY CHESNUT: Traci is on the line.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS: Traci, we just wanted to make
15 sure. I will get with you and we will get this out to the
16 Commissioners.

17 SANDY CHESNUT: I have somebody that is raising
18 his hand, Ashford Rosenberg. He wants to speak.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS: Brady, we have someone that is
20 asking to make a comment.

21 Is it on this one item?

22 BRADY SMITH: I can't tell, sir. He is just
23 raising his hand. It will be a good idea to remind
24 everyone to submit their public comments through the
25 website.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS: The gentleman that is on, what
2 is his name?

3 BRADY SMITH: Ashford Rosenberg.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS: Mr. Rosenberg, you have
5 permission to talk at this time, if it is all right with
6 you Commissioner Daniels, if it is on this subject.

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Yes. Let's let him let
8 us know which subject he wants to talk about.

9 ASHFORD ROSENBERG: Good morning Commissioners.
10 This is Ashford Rosenberg.

11 My sincerest apologies. My thumb hit the raised
12 hand on my phone. So it was an error. My sincerest
13 apologies, but thank you for allowing me to speak, even
14 though it was an error. Sorry.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you. We just wanted to
16 make sure.

17 Anybody that has public comment, please go
18 online.

19 Brady, can you explain to them again how they
20 can do this?

21 BRADY SMITH: Yes, sir.

22 They will need to go to our website
23 dmr.ms.gov/CMR and there should be a link for them to
24 submit public comments.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: Commissioners, any other

1 questions on the CARES Act?

2 (No response.)

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: If not, the 2019 Bonnet Carre, I
4 just got this this morning. We do have some comments and
5 stuff. We went out for the comment period for people to
6 be able to give their comments. I think we wound up with
7 ten, or so, comments, and, then, Ms. Thau Vu sent some. I
8 think that is the last one.

9 We are looking at that. We are taking those.
10 It is really no significant change. There are comments
11 that we are looking at.

12 What we are looking at now is to go ahead.
13 Since that is over with to the point of the comment period
14 and if somebody has a comment later and they need to send
15 it to us, they are more than welcome to send it. We will
16 look at it at anytime and see if there is something that
17 needs to be changed, or something drastic.

18 Rick Burris, are you on by any chance?

19 RICK BURRIS: Yes, sir.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: Rick, could you give just a
21 quick synopsis of that for us?

22 RICK BURRIS: Of the program itself?

23 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes.

24 RICK BURRIS: Yes, sir.

25 We have several programs that will be funded by

1 this money. I am working trying to get financial
2 assistance to the commercial fishermen and seafood dealers
3 and charter fishing businesses. We will pay direct to
4 those individuals that held a license during that time.

5 It is very similar to how we did the 2011 payment
6 with the amount of funds going to each fisherman based on
7 their historical participation in the fishery through
8 landings.

9 We did have a grant program for new and emerging
10 seafood processing technologies which will go to basically
11 the seafood processing industry to help them upgrade their
12 facilities and help them pay for any new processes that
13 they want to integrate into our seafood industry.

14 We've got a commercial safety program where we
15 are going to reimburse the fishermen for any upgrades to
16 their safety equipment on their vessels.

17 We will obviously restore our commercial oyster
18 reefs; get some cultch plants on all of those.

19 We are going to try to work really hard and
20 investigate point source pollution for our shellfish
21 growing waters to try to get some of these areas that have
22 been closed for so many years to try to find where that
23 pollution is coming from so we can mitigate that and get
24 those areas back open so we can grow some more shellfish
25 in different areas.

1 We are going to do some expansion of the
2 Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program.

3 We have some money set aside to do a study to
4 try to figure out how we can mitigate the spillway
5 opening, to try to look at some of the salinity regimes
6 and other things that are caused by the spillway opening.
7 This is a collaboration with several universities.

8 We want to beef up our seafood marketing
9 program.

10 We are going to integrate it online, a
11 commercial fishing license purchasing system so fishermen
12 don't have to continue to come up here to buy their
13 license. They can do it online like they do in other
14 states.

15 We have a Young Commercial Fishers Training and
16 Education Program to try to get some of these young kids
17 that may not know much about the commercial fishing
18 industry to enlighten them and show them that that is a
19 career path and try to get some younger guys into the
20 fisheries.

21 We are going to expand and enhance the off-
22 bottom aquaculture program to try to scale up the farm
23 operations where we can increase productivity, try to
24 reduce the cost, try to get more people into the program.

25 We will develop a new shellfish harvester's

1 training video. Currently anybody that wants to harvest
2 shellfish has to take a training class based on the
3 criteria set forth by the ISSC.

4 we hold that class as needed, but to have that
5 class virtual, especially with the times we are in now, so
6 they can take that class without having to wait on us to
7 be able to hold the training, we are going to do an online
8 video to allow them to do that.

9 That is a brief synopsis of all the projects
10 that we have proposed as of now.

11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Can you hear me, Rick?

12 RICK BURRIS: Yes, sir.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: This is Steve Bosarge.
14 It sounds like y'all have a heck of a schedule
15 there.

16 I was curious, as far as the management fee.
17 Is it still capped at that ten point three
18 percent to manage this?

19 RICK BURRIS: As far as the indirect cost?

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: For the DMR and how they
21 manage the grant.

22 RICK BURRIS: Yes, sir. It is ten point two
23 four percent, or something like that.

24 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That's what I thought. I
25 was just making sure.

1 RICK BURRIS: That will be for the life of the
2 grant. Over the five years, it will be ten point two four
3 percent.

4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'm sorry.
5 Say that again, Rick?

6 RICK BURRIS: It is a five-year grant, and that
7 ten percent indirect rate will apply throughout the life
8 of the grant for the five years. It won't increase.

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, sir. Thank you.

10 JOE SPRAGGINS: Commissioner Bosarge, that will
11 be as the grant is paid out that we will get paid our
12 portion of it. Some of it won't be for five years. We
13 are trying to do the fishermen as soon as possible because
14 we want to get them and the processors and others their
15 money and the charter boats and all, everybody that we can
16 their money as quick as possible.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That's good, Mr. Joe.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS: Any other questions for Rick?

19 (No response.)

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: Anything else on the Bonnet
21 Carre?

22 Once again, we are trying to get this as quick
23 as possible. Hopefully we will get it to NOAA this week,
24 and, then, be able to get back from that point and be able
25 to get the information back as soon as possible.

1 Obviously, the holidays are going to slow some things
2 down, but we are going to try to get it as quick as
3 possible.

4 As far as the CARES Act, as soon as I can get it
5 finalized, we are going to try to go ahead and start
6 issuing checks to get people paid.

7 Next up is the actions update from prior
8 meetings, Sandy.

9 SANDY CHESNUT: From the November meeting, the
10 Commission recommended the approval of MDEQ's request for
11 a permit extension for previously permitted project
12 consisting of forty-six acres of marsh creation and five
13 point nine miles of breakwater in Heron Bay, and the
14 Director approved that request.

15 We have one pending item, the Simmons Bayou No
16 Wake Zone from September and that is on the agenda this
17 morning, coming up.

18 That is it.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS: Any questions on that,
20 Commissioners?

21 (No response.)

22 JOE SPRAGGINS: If not, I've got one other
23 thing. I've got a sad note coming up. I am going to let
24 him talk for himself, Paul Mickle. I am going to let him
25 explain to the Commission what he is fixing to do.

1 PAUL MICKLE: I appreciate it. I am going to
2 explain my actions.

3 I have accepted a position at the Northern Gulf
4 Institute over at Stennis Space Center. It's through the
5 Mississippi State University. It is going to allow me to
6 continue the work that I am doing here on a larger level.

7 I'm just going to say thank you to everyone. It
8 is really sad. I am going to try to control my emotions
9 while I speak very, very briefly.

10 When I first came to DMR, I left Southern
11 Mississippi. I didn't know anything. You can ask Matt
12 directly. I didn't know anything at all about management,
13 or how to be successful at DMR and with everyone here
14 helping me, it was really a wonderful process. I am going
15 to miss it very much.

16 I love the policy process of allowing science to
17 be available for the policy makers. I have just fallen in
18 love with it.

19 I think you can understand my passion for it,
20 whenever we have had one-on-one's together. I am going to
21 miss all of you, the Commissioners, very much. It was
22 probably one of the favorite things that I did with this
23 job.

24 I am not really leaving, in a sense of taking on
25 one of the larger things I have been working on which is

1 trying to figure out how to get the Mississippi Sound
2 working the way it used to. We all have a passion for the
3 Mississippi Sound. I share it with you, and I see myself
4 moving on to this position to continue that with more
5 resources of scientific capabilities at the university
6 with a partner in NOAA with the Northern Gulf Institute.

7 we all know how amazing the Mississippi Sound is
8 and my goal is to formally -- I will just say it now --
9 provide a roadmap to get the water quality to what it used
10 to be.

11 I have spoken of this before and it is still
12 very high on my list and one of my major goals, and Joe
13 knows that. I am just moving down the road a little bit,
14 and that is pretty much all I am going to say.

15 All I can voice is thank you to everyone in this
16 agency, to Jamie to Joe and to all the staff and the
17 Commissioners. It is just a humbling thing to be able to
18 contribute to the level which I did, and thank you very
19 much.

20 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Paul, it has been an
21 absolute pleasure working with you.

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Same here, Paul.

23 I know you've got several projects you were
24 working on.

25 Are you still going to kind of stay in touch

1 with us on those things?

2 PAUL MICKLE: Absolutely. Joe has made it very
3 clear that I am going to work hand-in-hand with DMR, and I
4 am really just moving down the road.

5 My job duties in the new position at the NGI are
6 extremely similar to what I do here. It is just on a
7 regional level of bringing in Louisiana, Mississippi,
8 Alabama and Florida academic partners with NOAA. I am
9 assuming more resources, a lot of scientists underneath
10 me, to move forward and provide what I provide to you now
11 in a better sense.

12 Hopefully, it will be a smooth transition and I
13 will be able to help and provide more information to y'all
14 with more certainty. That is the feeling I want to share
15 with y'all.

16 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good. I know you have
17 done a lot of work on that Pearl River and looking at how
18 to better change that flow to better protect our oysters.

19 Congratulations. We will miss you. I'm sure it
20 is a step up the ladder. So congratulations.

21 PAUL MICKLE: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Congratulations, Paul.

23 PAUL MICKLE: Thanks, Natalie.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS: well, I will just tell you up
25 front. I hate to see him leave. We had a long discussion

1 about this, before he accepted the job. I have always
2 looked at anything anywhere I have ever worked in my life
3 as people bettering themselves and getting an opportunity
4 to move up in life and do what they went to school for and
5 trying to make themselves get to those points.

6 He didn't get a PhD to sit still. He got a PhD
7 to go out and do some research and other things that make
8 the work that we need to be done on this Gulf Coast.

9 Paul is going to be an outstanding asset to the
10 DMR at Mississippi State University.

11 Dr. Moorhead -- I think he is the one that hired
12 you.

13 Is that correct?

14 PAUL MICKLE: Yes, sir.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: -- and the other people at
16 Mississippi State, I have explained to them how much Paul
17 means to us, and I have explained to them how much work he
18 has done in the past and that his research that he has
19 been working with us to do, that we want to continue to
20 work with that.

21 I look at this as a win-win. It is a win-win to
22 me because we get Paul in a circumstance where he can have
23 a lot more people working with him to help him do what he
24 is trying to do in this hydrology especially and being
25 able to figure out what is going to happen to the Gulf of

1 Mexico.

2 with the Pearl River, with the Bonnet Carre,
3 with the Mid-Breton Sound, with anything that is changing,
4 he is going to be working on it and he has a group of
5 scientists that can help him, and he is also -- Paul
6 didn't tell you. He is going to be teaching again.

7 Right?

8 PAUL MICKLE: Grad students.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS: He is going to be working with
10 grad students and teaching again. So we will have an
11 opportunity for things to work out for us.

12 He has agreed that he is a phone call away, or
13 anything that we need he will help us with.

14 I picked at him this morning. I'm reading in
15 the Bible in the last book of Paul, and I told him it is
16 kind of ironic because I'm asking him to write something
17 for me this morning and yesterday I said, I guess I'm
18 getting my last writing from Paul.

19 It is an honor to have had the opportunity to
20 work with you, Paul. You have been a great asset to the
21 State of Mississippi and the DMR, and I want to wish you
22 and Lindsey and Tanner the best in the world, and I want
23 you to know that you can come to DMR anytime to visit and
24 even come back to work, if you want to.

25 we would be glad to have you, and we just

1 appreciate what you have done for us.

2 If I could, everybody on line, let's just give
3 him a big round of applause and thank you so much.

4 PAUL MICKLE: Thank you.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS: Commissioners, I am going to
6 shut up. I'm through, sir, unless you've got any
7 questions.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All right.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS: I will say real quick, Ronnie,
10 we are internally advertising for Paul's job right now
11 because I want to look internal first and make sure where
12 we have the capability. We got Paul from Internal. So we
13 want to look internal and see.

14 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Going to be some big
15 shoes to fill.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes. I'm through.

17 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do any of our
18 Commissioners have anything to report today?

19 (No response.)

20 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Office of Marine Patrol,
21 Chief Wilkerson, it is all yours.

22 KYLE WILKERSON: Good morning Commissioners,
23 Director, counsel.

24 I would like to say first off that I regret to
25 hear Paul is leaving. He has always been a staunch ally

1 for Marine Patrol and the DMR itself and always working
2 very closely with me and my department. I hate to see him
3 go, but he will always have friends with the Office of
4 Marine Patrol.

5 PAUL MICKLE: Thank you.

6 KYLE WILKERSON: Last month we started a little
7 experiment. I kind of had my captains doing the
8 Commission report. We are going to do the same thing this
9 month. My newly appointed Patrol Commander, Michael
10 Strickland, is going to do the report.

11 Michael, you have the floor.

12 MICHAEL STRICKLAND: Good morning ladies and
13 gentlemen. Thank you.

14 Everyone should have received the report from
15 Office of Marine Patrol.

16 As you can see, for this time of the year, our
17 citation totals were pretty typical. You have had a
18 chance to look it over.

19 I just wanted to know if anybody has any
20 questions?

21 (No response.)

22 MICHAEL STRICKLAND: I will take that as a no.

23 Again, thank y'all. Happy holidays, and I will
24 turn it back over to Deputy Chief Levine.

25 PATRICK LEVINE: Good morning Commission.

1 Today we are going to be reproposing the no wake
2 zone in Simmons Bayou, Eagle Pine Island area and Ocean
3 Springs. We proposed this in September, and I am thankful
4 to say that we have made it through hurricane season.

5 It has taken a little bit longer than I wanted
6 to, to be back before you today, but we had several storms
7 late summer that caused us to push this back just a little
8 bit.

9 Each of you should have received a PowerPoint
10 presentation, a video and an overhead of the no wake zone
11 in the portal for your review.

12 The initial request came in on August the 14th,
13 2020, for a proposal of a no wake zone there at Simmons
14 Bayou south of Eagle Pine Island in Ocean Springs,
15 Mississippi.

16 We made initial contact with the area and the
17 property owners on August the 19th, 2020. It was presented
18 in the September Commission meeting and asked for a
19 reproposal.

20 After going back and speaking with District 5
21 Supervisor Randy Bosarge, we made the decision to work
22 with the homeowners there at Simmons Bayou south of Eagle
23 Pine Island and talk with them about the no wake zone.

24 The initial thought process was could we shorten
25 the no wake zone and, after we went back and surveyed the

1 area, we realized that they had already made it as short
2 as possible to accommodate all the property owners in that
3 potential no wake zone.

4 As proposed in September, the no wake zone takes
5 approximately four minutes twenty-eight seconds to travel
6 at a typical idle speed.

7 we thought it would be good for you to be able
8 to see that no wake zone, to go out and get some drone
9 footage. So our IT Department went out, brought the drone
10 and flew the proposed area, and it was interesting that
11 when they went out there on November the 10th to take
12 footage, we were given a few surprises.

13 Going out there and preparing over a couple of
14 days, we had some people that went through there at a high
15 rate of speed and, as you will see in the footage, we had
16 a little bit of surprise to be able to see a blind spot
17 even from the aerial footage from the drone.

18 Brady, if you have that video, could you play
19 that, please, sir?

20 where you see these posts where we are coming
21 in, this would be the beginning of the no wake zone coming
22 in at this bulkhead (indicating video).

23 Each of you should have noticed, as we were
24 traveling in that drone going from west to east, when we
25 came around that corner, there happened to be a blind spot

1 and even from the level that the drone was operating to
2 our surprise there was a gentleman that was fishing in a
3 kayak.

4 we know that typically in this area of Simmons
5 Bayou, Davis Bayou there are a large number of kayakers in
6 that community. Had there been a vessel coming around
7 that corner at a high rate of speed they would have not
8 been able to see that kayaker in that corner. It became
9 known to us that there was an obvious blind spot in that
10 area.

11 we also have an overhead that I wanted to show
12 you that had the width of the bayou at each of those
13 points.

14 we know that coming into the beginning of the
15 bayou from the west that is a little bit wider, but it
16 serves as a funnel for boaters whenever they are coming
17 into the narrow part of the bayou where they probably feel
18 more comfortable operating. It is a little bit wider in
19 that area that you are looking at now, but still with the
20 number of vessels that are typically docked, or moored, in
21 that area, considering the proximity of the channel where
22 boat operators have no reaction time to deviate from the
23 channel and knowing that it is a place where people
24 congregate and play, the Office of Marine Patrol makes the
25 proposal that we consider making this a no wake zone in

1 the area of Simmons Bayou south of Eagle Pine Island,
2 Ocean Springs, Mississippi (indicating video).

3 This gives you an opportunity to see what the
4 property owners are looking at. Our office has worked,
5 once again, with District 5 Supervisor Randy Bosarge and
6 the Board of Supervisors are adamant that we should
7 consider making this a no wake zone.

8 Do you have any questions?

9 (No response.)

10 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you for that,
11 Patrick. It looks like y'all put some good time in there
12 laying this out.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That was pretty
14 interesting that drone. That is pretty cool.

15 with that being said, I'll make the motion that
16 we accept the staff's recommendation.

17 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that motion.
18 All those in favor.

19 Commission Guess?

20 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

21 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Bosarge?

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Aye.

23 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Gollott?

24 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Aye.

25 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Daniels,

1 aye.

2 Motion passes.

3 KYLE WILKERSON: Thank you, Commission. We
4 appreciate y'all. Merry Christmas.

5 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Same to you, Patrick.

6 That finishes up Marine Patrol.

7 Office of Finance and Administration, Ms.

8 Leslie.

9 LESLIE BREWER: Good morning Director,
10 Commissioners, legal.

11 My name is Leslie Brewer. I will be presenting
12 the financials for the month of November 30th, 2020.

13 At the end of November, our State Revenue was
14 three point seven million. Our Total Agency Revenue was
15 twelve point nine million.

16 Our State Net Income was one point two million.
17 Our Total Agency Net Income was three point six million.

18 Next slide, please.

19 After five months of fiscal year 2021, we have
20 eighty-six point eight percent of the Operating Budget
21 remaining, while the Tidelands Budget is sixty-six point
22 eight percent.

23 Does anyone have any questions?

24 (No response.)

25 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Doesn't sound like it.

1 We are good.

2 LESLIE BREWER: Thank you. Merry Christmas.

3 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you for that.
4 Merry Christmas to you.

5 Ms. Charmaine, you are up.

6 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Good morning
7 Commissioners, Director Spraggins, Ms. Chesnut.

8 The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
9 was mentioned eleven times in local, state and national
10 media, since the November CMR meeting.

11 Popular news items included Secretary Watson's
12 presentation of the Tidelands check to MDMR, public
13 comments for the CARES Act relief funding plan and an
14 update on our off-bottom oysters after Hurricane Zeta.

15 Public Affairs attended Infinity Science
16 Center's Our Oceans event on November 30th. The event was
17 held for home school students to learn more about our
18 waters and we assisted by handing out information
19 regarding our state's marine resources.

20 One other thing is Marine Patrol presented a
21 resolution to Ms. Janet -- I'm sorry. I don't know her
22 last name at the moment -- and we have a video of that.

23 I didn't know if IT was available to show that
24 video.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: Charmaine, we don't have volume

1 on it.

2 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: In the video, you could
3 hear Jack. I'm not sure why it didn't play the way it was
4 supposed to.

5 BRADY SMITH: You want me to try again?

6 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes, try it again real quick
7 because that is a very nice thing.

8 while we are doing that, I want to thank his
9 department for doing this. He put together this board and
10 had it all made up for you, and we appreciate it.

11 BRADY SMITH: I'm just going to play a couple of
12 seconds of it. Let me know if the audio works for you.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS: There is no video, but we got
14 the voice.

15 BRADY SMITH: I will restart it again.

16 (Viewing video.)

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: This was something we tried to
18 do back the first part of the year and obviously COVID has
19 hit and we wanted to do it in person. We wanted to be
20 able to bring his family here, but we just felt like that
21 it needed to go ahead and be done, and this was the best
22 way that we could get it done was to do a video, and I
23 appreciate them for helping. Marine Patrol and Marine
24 Fisheries did a fantastic job of putting that together.

25 Joe, that is some pretty good artwork.

1 JOE JEWELL: Thank you, Director. I appreciate
2 that. It was an honor.

3 Is that all, Charmaine?

4 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Yes, sir. That's all I
5 have.

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Charmaine, thank you for
7 that. That was a great video.

8 Office of Marine Fisheries. It looks like we've
9 got Jason Saucier with Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program.

10 JASON SAUCIER: Good morning, Commissioners.

11 I am going to present to you our proposal for
12 2021 Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program.

13 This gives you a brief summary of what the
14 program has done to date.

15 Our staff, along with a lot of volunteers over
16 the years, we have collected almost twenty-two thousand
17 traps through the program, since its beginning back in
18 1999.

19 We are proposing crab trap closure for all
20 waters within one-half mile of our mainland shoreline
21 sometime between January 15th and February 15th.

22 This will involve a ten-day closure. The first
23 seven days of that closure will be a time period to allow
24 the fishermen to get their gear out of the water in that
25 particular area, and, then, the removal would be allowed

1 the last three days of the ten-day closure.

2 The cleanup will be open this year to any
3 volunteers from the general public. We will also try to
4 get the word out through various means to the public so we
5 can get as much participation as possible.

6 All licensed crab fishermen will be notified
7 ahead of time with postcard mail-outs, legal notice and a
8 press release.

9 we will have drop-off sites in our three coastal
10 counties. It will likely be the sites that we have used
11 in the past; those being Bayou Caddy, Ocean Springs Harbor
12 and Pascagoula Point Park.

13 All recovered traps will be recycled at a scrap
14 metal facility.

15 This map shows the area that we are proposing to
16 close. That would be the green areas. It would include
17 all of our major bay systems, also Bayou Caddy, and, then,
18 a half mile off the mainland shoreline to include a half
19 mile off of Deer Island.

20 At this time, I will entertain any questions
21 from the Commission.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do any of the
23 Commissioners have any questions on this?

24 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, I have one.

25 From what I saw on the picture there, you were

1 going up north of CSX.

2 Are you going to, as well, notify the
3 recreational crabbers that you are going to do this?

4 JASON SAUCIER: That's correct. It will be all
5 recreational and commercial resident and non-resident
6 license holders.

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Have we been north of CSX
8 before on this cleanup?

9 JASON SAUCIER: Yes. Our previous cleanup which
10 was in 2019 included this area. We typically try to get
11 the bays in these closures.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good deal. I didn't
13 remember us going off CSX, but that is good. I'm glad to
14 see it.

15 Thank you, sir.

16 JASON SAUCIER: You're welcome.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: Commissioners, I think also --
18 Jason, tell me -- because of the tides and everything
19 else, we are looking at the last week of January.

20 Is that correct?

21 JASON SAUCIER: That's correct. We do try to
22 base it on tides. If we get a good low tide, it benefits
23 the program because we can find the traps easier and
24 volunteers can find the traps.

25 The tides we were looking at are those dates

1 that we were looking at which will be the 28th through the
2 30th of January would be the best weekend. So we would
3 actually do the cleanup on a Thursday, Friday and
4 Saturday. That is when the public will participate.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS: This will also help as much as
6 possible with Lent because I know crabs are a big
7 commodity during that time and not being able to impact
8 fishing.

9 Is that correct?

10 JASON SAUCIER: That's correct. We did check on
11 that. Lent does start in mid February this year. So we
12 are trying to get ahead of that. We know the market price
13 does change, and we are trying to have as little impact on
14 the fishery as we can.

15 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yesterday would have been
16 the perfect day. That was a bay drainer.

17 JASON SAUCIER: Just as a reminder, we are
18 closing within a half mile to allow the fishermen to
19 continue to fish. The commercial boats can still fish.
20 They will just need to move it outside that half mile.
21 That also kind of minimizes the impact to the fishery.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion?

23 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll make the motion.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Guess makes
25 the motion to approve. I'll second it.

1 All those in favor.

2 Commissioner Guess?

3 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

4 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Bosarge?

5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Aye.

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Gollott?

7 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Aye.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Daniels,
9 aye.

10 Motion passes.

11 Fishing records, Jonathan Barr.

12 JONATHAN BARR: Good morning.

13 We have one State Saltwater Finfish Record up
14 for consideration today.

15 It is an All Tackle record, Striped Mullet,
16 Mugil cephalus. The old record was four pounds four point
17 seven seven ounces. The new record is five pounds six
18 point nine five ounces, and the angler is Mr. Joey
19 Besancon, Sr.

20 Here is the Striped Mullet and that ladies and
21 gentlemen is a five-and-a-half pound mullet.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Goodness gracious. That
23 is a big fish.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS: That is a lot of Biloxi bacon.

25 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: How did he catch it?

1 JASON SAUCIER: He was gigging at night for
2 flounder and came up on them.

3 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That is a big one. That
4 is pretty cool.

5 Do we have a motion to approve the record?

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

7 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll make the motion, Mr.
8 Chairman.

9 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I think Commissioner
10 Bosarge got in there before you, Richard.

11 Do you want to second that?

12 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll second it.

13 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Bosarge
14 makes the motion. Seconded by Commissioner Gollott.

15 All those in favor.

16 Commissioner Guess?

17 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Guess is an
19 aye.

20 Commissioner Bosarge?

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Aye.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Gollott?

23 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Aye.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Daniels,
25 aye.

1 Record passes.

2 Do we have any other business today?

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: Commissioner Daniels, if I
4 could, just a couple little things.

5 Just wanted to let you know that we are starting
6 to take the debris out to the FH-13 area. It is coming
7 out of Ingalls. That debris is moving, now, and being
8 able to set up some new fish havens out there in that area
9 and reef fish.

10 We wanted you to know that it had a long delay
11 because of us not being funded and other things happening.
12 Finally, we are getting things headed in the right
13 direction there.

14 Also, the agency has nineteen confirmed COVID
15 cases and so far everyone of them has been okay. It is
16 just one of these deals that a lot of them contracted it
17 from outside, and, then, we did have a few that, because
18 it was contracted from the outside, came inside not
19 knowing they had it and some of the others were infected.
20 Everybody is doing good.

21 I just wanted to bring you up to date on that,
22 in case anybody asks you any questions.

23 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'm glad everybody is
24 okay.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: We have no public comments at

1 this time, sir.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: No public comments.

3 If we can get a motion to adjourn?

4 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll make the motion to
5 adjourn.

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second it.

7 Commissioner Gollott made the motion. I
8 seconded it.

9 All those in favor.

10 Commissioner Guess?

11 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

12 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Bosarge?

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Aye.

14 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Gollott?

15 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Aye.

16 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Daniels,
17 aye.

18 Meeting is adjourned.

19 Thank y'all. Merry Christmas to everybody.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: Merry Christmas to everyone.

21 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Merry Christmas.

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CERTIFICATE

I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing forty-one pages, including this page, is a true and correct transcription of the zoom webinar of the December 15, 2020, meeting of the Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine Resources, to the best of my skill and ability; and, further, that I am not a relative, employee, or agent, of any of the parties thereto, nor financially interested in the cause.

s/ _____

LUCILLE MORGAN, CSR 1251

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