MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, August 17, 2021
9:00 a.m.
Bolton Building Auditorium
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, Mississippi

Commission Members:

Ronnie Daniels, Chairman
Natalie Guess, Vice Chairman (via Zoom)
Cammack (Cam) Roberds

Also Present:

Joe Spraggins, Executive Director DMR
Sandy Chesnut, Esq., Assistant Attorney General
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to get today's meeting underway.

This morning I am going to ask Commissioner Roberds to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance recited.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: As you can see, this morning we've only got two commissioners up here.

Commissioner Guess, we've got her on a phone call. She will be participating in the meeting, even though she is not here in person.

I am going to turn it over to the Director.

JOE SPRAGGINS: If we could, I would just like to do a little moment of silence.

Before we go into the moment of silence, I think most of you may have heard about Officer Tommy Jennings, one of our officers that had been with us for twenty-something years passed away less than a month ago and his family is taking it very hard. He was a good man. He had fought hard. He did everything he could for the community, and I would just like for you to remember him in this moment of silence, if we could.

(Moment of silence observed.)

JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank y'all and, if you can, too, let's keep our country in our minds and let's keep praying for our country and a lot of people in Afghanistan, pray
for them for what is happening to them right now.

It is a very tough thing. We went over there
and tried hard, but I tell you it is very tough for those
people right now to be able to get out. They know what is
going to happen to them and they can’t help it. They have
been there before. They have seen it and got the merit
badge and, also, the people in Haiti, please be with them,
too. They have been there before, too, a little over ten
years ago. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Joe.

Approval of minutes.

Do we have any discussion on the July 20th, 2021,
minutes?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: No discussion.

Do we have a motion to approve the minutes?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I’ll make a motion to
approve the minutes.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll second that.

All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Motion passes.

Approval of the agenda.
Do we have any discussion for today's agenda?
(No response.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion to approve the agenda?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion to approve the agenda.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll second it.

All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Motion passes.

Mr. Joe, it is all yours again.

JOE SPRAGGINS: Employment updates.

Michele Marroy is a new hire. She is in Procurement.

We have Todd Curry who is promoted to Senior Master Sergeant in Marine Patrol.

We have Shay Smith who is promoted to Master Sergeant.

Wyatt Webb who is promoted to Corporal.

Donovan Dawsey is promoted to a full-time job in Marine Patrol. He was in Port Security before.

We are proud to have all of those, especially the promotions and having the new ones coming in to help
us in contracting.

Any questions there?

(No response.)

JONE SPRAGGIN: We have no new procurements. I

don't think there are any procurement things up at this
time.

There are a couple of things that are happening
right now.

If you come in the main doors and you see all of
the new construction on the right there, it is going to be
licenses. You don't have to go upstairs anymore. You
just come through the main door down here on the first
floor and go in, and we will have that all set up and
ready to go.

License is moving under Marine Patrol. So
Marine Patrol will have control of that.

We have a beautiful nice little area set up
there with the glass so that we can work it. I think that
will help us a whole lot, as far as people being able to
get in and get their license and get out, and they have
security looking at it and it will be a good deal.

If you come up the stairs, or if you go up the
elevator, on the second floor when you get off, there is
going to be a new reception area, and that is where we are
going to move our reception for the DMR. If anybody is

Lucille Morgan, CSR 1251
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coming to meet with anybody from DMR, they can go to that
reception area, and, then, she can call and get the person
to come meet them, so we can have a little bit of control
of what is going on.

We've got a couple of guys out on the West Coast
today. They are doing kind of a round robin in Oregon and
the Washington area and they are looking at oysters.

Basically, we have been looking and trying to do
a setting facility for oysters where USM does the spat and
larvae, and, then we take it and put it on shell, and it
is projected at Port of Gulfport and put them on the shell
and put them out in the water.

Well, we are looking at a lot of places up in
the northwest that have been doing that and we are trying
to get some education on the aquaculture side of it and
see exactly what it would take and trying to find out if
this is feasible, if this is the way to go, or not.

We don't know that answer. All we know is that
we have been given money by RESTORE Act, or NFWF, to be
able to go and look at it.

We are looking at it. We have a group of
engineers that are trying to design it, tell us how much
it will cost to build it, tell us how much it will cost to
maintain it, to operate it, and, also, how much will we
possibly get as far as the number of oysters that we would
put into the water compared to the number of oysters that would live and what it would do for our oyster industry. This is another way of trying to build that oyster industry back as quick as we can. It seems like nature is not helping us sometime, but we are trying very hard.

    Red Snapper. We are at —
    Matt, is that a hundred thousand pounds?
    MATT HILL: Yes, sir, hundred thousand pounds.
    JOE SPRAGGINS: -- a hundred thousand pounds right now and we are still open. We plan to be open between now and through Labor Day, and, then, we will reassess it at that point.
    I think the snapper have gotten out in a little bit deeper water with this temperature. We may have to travel another mile, or so, to catch them, but there are still some out there.
    We are well below our limit, right now. We are doing good. Everything is working on it and hopefully we can keep that going for a while.
    On our CARES Act, Traci, have you got any update for that?
    TRACI FLOYD: Good morning.
    Yes, sir. We got our third round of comments back from NOAA on our CARES Act 2 proposal. We are
getting very close to finalizing. I am hoping within the next month we can start those applications.

JOE SPRAGGINS: We did get okay to do that second pay of the first round.

Right?

TRACI FLOYD: That’s right. We received the okay from NOAA. They are just approving our applicant list. That little bit of money we had left over from indirect costs will go to the fishermen in the industry.

JOE SPRAGGINS: I know that when we first started this, they wanted the money distributed before September. We are getting close.

Where are we?

TRACI FLOYD: I have no confirmation, but I am hopeful that they will extend that deadline because until they approve our process, we can’t begin our process. It is kind of a catch-22, but, hopefully, they will be able to extend that.

JOE SPRAGGINS: Do any of you have any questions on the CARES Act?

(No response.)

JOE SPRAGGINS: While you are still there, how about going over the applications for the TEDs?

TRACI FLOYD: Sure.

We have received forty-six applications. Of
those, forty have been processed, or paid. We have about six folks, right now, who need to turn in their invoices so they can be paid.

   JOE SPRAGGINS: Well, we are doing pretty good with that. We are about to get it under control.

   We did extend that for what, a month, or so?

   TRACI FLOYD: We extended for a month, and, then, we spoke with NOAA and extended it through July 31st of next year just in case they add some more TED regulations we can help those boats under forty foot.

   JOE SPRAGGINS: Any questions?

   (No response.)

   JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you, Traci.

   TRACI FLOYD: Thank you.

   JOE SPRAGGINS: As far as the 2019 Bonnet Carre update, we have done our part. We’ve got it in. We are waiting. The situation is sitting with the Budget Office in Washington, D.C. The Budget Office has to approve it. As soon as they give us some kind of go forward with it, that is what we will do.

   We have ours laid out and I think our plan is good and I think they are okay with the plan. It is a fluid plan and we can use that thing as we need to. If we see that we need more money in one area than the other, we can do that and if we see that one area is being taken
care of because we do have a lot of other things that are
taking care of different areas, now, especially like the
BP funds.
I am co-chairing it this year to go back with
the governor for the seafood. We are having meetings on
it and talking about what we are going to do, to be able
to enhance our seafood in the Gulf of Mexico.
Mr. Ryan Bradley is on that with me, too, I
think. I see him back there.
You are on that same committee, I believe?
RYAN BRADLEY: Yes, sir.
JOE SPRAGGINS: Hopefully everything will work
out pretty good and we will get something done soon.
We are very lucky. We have been given a pretty
good bit of money in south Mississippi. Let's hope we
spend it in the right way and do what needs to be done and
get our oysters and our shrimp and our crabs and our
seafood back.
Sandy, do you have the update on actions?
SANDY CHESNUT: Yes, sir.
From last month's meeting, we had two
regulations forwarded to the Secretary of State's Office
for final adoption. That was Title 22, Part 22 and Part
1, and, then, we had two regulations forwarded to the
Secretary of State's Office for Notice of Intent and that
was for 10 and 11.

There was a motion to change the date of the October Commission meeting from October 19th to October 12th.

There was a motion to recommend approval of the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission’s request for modification to remove the SAV mitigation proposal on the Port Bienville Canal in Pearlington.

There was also a motion to recommend approval of Jackson County Port Authority’s request for modifications to reduce the acreage of wetlands impact, to reduce the mitigation from creation of three point eight acres of tidal and tidally-influenced marsh to point nine acres, to remove the purchase of wetland mitigation credits and approve the variance requests contingent upon 401 Water Quality Certification from MDEQ.

There was a motion to recommend that the Executive Director approve the State Saltwater Finfish Records. Those records are listed on the next page (indicating slide).

The Director approved all the motions as recommended by the Commission.

We have one pending item still from the April meeting and that is the Benward/Barclay matter. That decision is not going to take place until all parties are
present. I think that meeting is scheduled for this afternoon, so we may have a decision on that next month.

That's it.

JOE SPARGGINS: Any questions, Commissioners?

(No response.)

JOE SPARGGINS: That's it. That is my report for today. I thank you very much, sir.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Joe.

Do any of our Commissioners have anything to report today?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Office of Marine Patrol. Chief, how are you doing?

KYLE WILKERSON: Doing well, sir.

How are you?

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Good.

KYLE WILKERSON: Good morning everyone.

You have the citation report there. We had a few oyster citations. Nothing just out of the ordinary.

We did have sixteen hundred and twenty-two contacts for the month which is very good, a few accidents and just miscellaneous citations.

I will field any questions.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Looks like it is on par there, Chief.
KYLE WILKERSON: The folks have been really busy this month which is pretty normal.

Now, we do have a presentation with Marine Patrol.

JOE SPRAGGINS: Chief.

KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir.

JOE SPRAGGINS: Give us a little update on what you found, as far as snapper.

Are we doing good, as far as the people having Tails n' Scales?

KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir. I was looking at the citation report. We had failure to register Tails n' Scales, three. It is down substantially. Evidently everybody is complying well with it. We had one over the limit which is not uncommon.

We are at eleven point three percent on checks.

JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you.

KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir.

What I was saying, Captain Strickland is going to do our presentation for this month. Kind of like last month, we are going to go over some changes.

I am going to give him the floor.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Chief.

MICHAEL STRICKLAND: Good morning Director, Commissioners, Ms. Chesnut.
First are the changes to Title 22, Part 12, for Vessel Seafood Transport in the State of Mississippi.

Changes to Title 22, Part 12.

We have removed wording that was already covered under Mississippi Code.

We referenced the applicable statutory, or regulatory, authorities.

We also updated the chapter structure and format to “Rules” and “Sources” to conform with the format prescribed by the Secretary of State’s Office.

Substantive changes.

There were no substantive changes made to any of the chapters.

The following rules were reworded to state the requirements in a more clear and straightforward manner.

Chapter 2, Transport Permit Required.

Rule 2.1, a transport permit is required for each vessel desiring to land seafood in the state, which is legally taken outside of the Mississippi territorial waters without obtaining a license under Mississippi Code Annotated 49-15-1.

Rule 2.2, a transport permit fee of one hundred dollars shall be paid upon issuance of said transport permit.

Chapter 3, under Penalties:
Rule 3.1, any unlawful act under this Part committed by any person, firm, or corporation, shall be deemed a violation of the provisions of this Part and shall constitute a misdemeanor. In the case of continuing violations, each day shall constitute a separate offense, and we reference Mississippi Code Annotated 49-15-28, 49-15-34 and 49-15-63.

Chapter 4, Chapters and Subchapters Declared Separable.

Rule 4.1, each chapter and subchapter of this Part is hereby declared separable and if any chapter, or subchapter, or part thereof, shall be held invalid, or unconstitutional, the balance of said Title 22, Part 12, shall remain in full force and effect.

Rule 4.2, violations of more than one chapter, or subchapter, of this Part, or part thereof, shall be considered separate and punished as such.


Notice of Intent.

It is our recommendation to the Executive Director that the new format and changes to Title 22, Part 12, be sent to the Secretary of State's Office for Notice of Intent.

The second part on changes to –

SANDY CHESNUT: (Interposing) Can we go ahead and
get a motion on Part 12, before we move on to Part 16?

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ve got one question on this. This Rule 2.1, the transport permit, does that pertain to recreational fishermen that may be fishing in Louisiana, or Alabama, waters and coming back into Mississippi?

MICHAEL STRICKLAND: No, sir.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Just commercial?

MICHAEL STRICKLAND: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion to approve?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I’ll make a motion.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll second that.

All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Motion passes.

MICHAEL STRICKLAND: Moving on to Title 22, Part 16, that is our Boat and Water Safety section on the Marine Waters of the State of Mississippi.

Changes to Part 16:

We have also removed wording that was already covered in Mississippi Code.

We referenced the applicable statutory, or
regulatory, authorities.

We updated the chapter structure and format to
"Rules" and "Sources" to conform with the format
prescribed by the Secretary of State's Office.

There were no substantive changes to Chapters 1,
6, 7, 8, 10 and 11. They remain the same.

Substantive changes to Chapter 2.

Definitions that we added:

A. COVERED RECREATIONAL VESSEL is a
recreational vessel that is less than twenty-six feet
overall in length and capable of developing one hundred
and fifteen pounds, or more, of static thrust.

C. ENGINE CUT-OFF SWITCH (ECOS). An engine
cut-off switch is a safety mechanism used to shut off
propulsion machinery when the operator is displaced from
the helm.

D. ENGINE CUT-OFF SWITCH LINK (ECOSL). An
ECOSL is the device that connects the operator to the
ECOS. The link must be attached to the operator, the
operator's clothing, or operator's personal floatation
device. It is typically a coiled lanyard, but may also be
an electronic fob.

Substantive Changes to Chapter 3 under
Restrictions:

Rule 3.1, a person may not operate, or give
permission to operate, on the marine of the State of Mississippi, a personal watercraft, or any other covered recreational vessel, unless it is equipped with an engine cut-off switch and an engine cut-off switch link attached to the operator while operating on plane, or above displacement speed, except when:

A. The main helm of the covered vessel is installed within an enclosed cabin, or

B. The vessel does not have an engine cut-off switch and is not required to have one because it is not considered a covered recreational vessel.

Rule 3.2, a vessel, or personal watercraft livery (vendor) owner, or the owner's agent or employee, shall prominently display these regulations governing personal watercraft:

A. Advise renters to read the regulations.

B. Within thirty days of the effective date of these regulations, add to the rental contract a statement that the renter, or operator, has read and understand the personal watercraft regulations. This statement shall be signed by the renter, or operator, and the livery (vendor) owner, retained in the files of the livery operator for at least thirty days and be made available to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources upon request.

We referenced Mississippi Code Annotated 59-21-
Substantive Changes to Chapter 4 under Reckless and Negligent Operation:

Rule 4.1, a person may not operate a vessel in the marine waters of the State of Mississippi in a reckless, or negligent, manner. Reckless and negligent operation of a vessel shall include, but is not limited to the following examples:

We highlighted the only thing that we added and that is towing a person, or persons, on water skis, aquaplane, or a similar device, during the hours between legal sunset and legal sunrise would constitute reckless, or negligent, operation.


Substantive Changes to Chapter 5, establishing no wake zones.

The only thing we added to Rule 5.1 is that the results and staff recommendation will be presented to the MACMR for their evaluation and recommendation to the Executive Director for potential implementation.

Substantive changes to Chapter 9, Rules of the
Rule 9.1 states that nothing in this chapter will excuse a boat operator from complying with any and all navigation laws and rules of the road as published in the United States Coast Guard Navigation Rules.

You can see the State Statutes that we referenced there and the C.F.R.'s as well (indicating slide).

The Notice of Intent. Recommendation to the Executive Director that the new format and changes to Title 22, Part 16, be sent to the Secretary of State's Office for Notice of Intent.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Have we got any questions?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: For no wake zones, it looks like it would go through the Board of Supervisors for that specific county prior, and, then, they would come to you guys.

Is that correct?

MICHAEL STRICKLAND: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do you want to make a motion to approve this one?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second it.

All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Motion passes.

Thank you.

MICHAEL STRICKLAND: We have the two titles that we discussed that were sent for recommendation at the last meeting. We are recommending those to the Commission for final adoption. They are Title 22, Part 10 and Part 11, as discussed in the previous meeting.

For Part 10, on July 20th, 2021, the Commission recommended to the Executive Director that the new format and changes to Title 22, Part 10, be sent to the Secretary of State’s Office for Notice of Intent.

The Executive Director approved the recommendation and the proposed regulation was filed with the Secretary of State’s Office on July 22nd, 2021.

Publication of proposed regulation.

The notice of the proposed regulation was published in the Sun Herald on August 6, 2021, and the notice of the proposed regulation was also posted on the MDMR website on July 23rd, 2021, as well.

There, you can see the publications (indicating slide).

Public comments were due to the MDMR by 5:00 p.m. on August the 16th, 2021. There were no public
comments received.

Recommend a motion to the Executive Director that the proposed changes to Title 22, Part 10, be forwarded to the Secretary of State's Office for final adoption.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Any questions?
(No response.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll make a motion to recommend final adoption.

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll second the motion.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: The motion passes.

MICHAEL STRICKLAND: Title 22, Part 11, Equipment and/or Nets Seized by the MDMR for final adoption.

Notice of Intent.

On July 20th, 2021, the Commission recommended to the Executive Director that the new format and changes to Title 22, Part 11, be sent to the Secretary of State's Office for Notice of Intent.

Executive Director approved the recommendation and the proposed regulation was filed with the Secretary of State's Office on July 22nd, 2021.
Notice of the proposed regulation was published in the Sun Herald on August 6, 2021, and the notice of the proposed regulation was also posted on the MDMR website on July 23rd, 2021.

You can see the Sun Herald publication and the website notice (indicating slide).

Public comments were due to the MDMR by 5:00 p.m. on August 16th, 2021. There were no public comments received.

Motion to recommend to the Executive Director that the proposed changes to Title 22, Part 11, be forwarded to the Secretary of State’s Office for final adoption.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Any questions on this one?
(No response.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I will make the motion to recommend final adoption.

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I’ll second that motion.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Motion passes.

MICHAEL STRICKLAND: Lastly, we just have an announcement. The City of Biloxi has filed for a new no
wake zone. That will be coming before the Commission next month.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Captain Strickland.

Ms. Leslie Brewer.

BRANDI BUSBY: I will be filling in for Leslie again this month. I'm Brandi Busby. Good morning everyone.

I will be presenting the Agency’s financials for the month ending July 31st, 2021.

At the end of July, our State Revenue was three million dollars. Total Agency Revenue was three million dollars.

Our State Net Income was two point eight million and our Total Agency Net Income was two point six million.

After one month of fiscal year 2022, the agency has ninety-nine point six percent of the Operating Budget remaining, while Tidelands Budget has ninety-nine point four percent remaining.

It is the same as last month. We are still waiting on our appropriations which may come in around September from DFA.

Do y'all have any questions?

(NO response.)
BRANDI BUSBY: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

Ms. Charmaine.

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

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources was mentioned seven times in local, state and national media since the July MACMR meeting.

News items included state fish records, dive teams finding sunken vessels near Ship Island and the passing of Marine Patrol Officer Tommy Jennings.

Marine Patrol took part in the Back to School Health and Safety Fair for the City of Gulfport on July 31st at Jones Park and Waveland Career Day on August 7th.

MDMR staff representing our Mississippi Seafood Program participated at One Coast Day at the Neshoba County Fair on July 29th. Many agencies and organizations from the Gulf Coast attended One Coast Day to promote everything our coast has to offer.

Our office also attended the Great American Seafood Cook-off in New Orleans on August 7th. Austin Sumrall with White Pillars in Biloxi was selected by Mississippi Seafood to represent our state in the cook-off which featured a total of thirteen U.S. states and Guam competing for the title of King, or Queen, of seafood.
Austin won first place, along with the crown and title, with his dish of "Snapper Three Ways". We are very excited that this will help promote all the great Gulf fresh seafood our waters have to offer.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Charmaine.
CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Thank you.
JOE SPRAGGINS: We've got the best seafood in America right here.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That's it.

Marine Fisheries, Josh Waters.
We have had a lot of records coming in this year.

JOSH WATERS: Yes, sir. Just two today.

Good morning General Spraggins, Commissioners, Ms. Chesnut. I will be presenting the State Saltwater Finfish Records.

The first one is conventional state record for Vermilion Snapper, Rhomboplites aurorubens.

The old record is five pounds one point zero ounce. The current pending record is five pounds three point two ounces. It was caught by Mr. James Landers.

Here is a picture of the Vermilion Snapper. Here is Mr. Landers holding the snapper.

Our last state record is for the Youth Conventional. It is a Ladyfish, Elops Saurus.
The old record was one pound fourteen point five
eight ounces. The new record is two pounds nine point six
ounces. It was caught by Riley Armes.

Here is a picture of the fish and here is Ms.
Armes holding the fish.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Those look good.

Do we have a motion to approve the new records?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.

All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Motion passes.

Do any of our Commissioners have any other
business today?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Joe, I believe you've got
something.

JOE SPRAGGINS: I do. I just wanted to bring it
up. Obviously, Gulf Council will meet again at the end of
this month in San Antonio.

One of the things that they keep bringing back
is our Red Snapper, our allocation and what we are going
to have for Red Snapper.
They keep bringing it up and we had asked to put this on hold until 2023 to be able to get the SSC to do some additional studies, but it will be brought back up. There will be a time in public comment. If any of you would like to call in on public comment, please feel free to do so, and there is a time that we can talk about this.

We look at it very hard and one of things that we have asked is -- the catch limit came out at three hundred thousand pounds more than what it was previously, but the overfish limit was over ten million pounds more, and this is from a stock assessment as far as Red Snapper assessment that they came back with.

What we are trying to do is we went back and we have asked the SSC and I'm not sure it ever really got put on the formal thing to ask, but we are going to try to make sure it does, for the SSC to come back and look at that and tell us why such a big difference, why there is such a big difference between the catch limit and the overfish limit; why was that such a large amount of numbers for one and just a small amount for the other.

The other thing is some of the things that have been used for Mississippi have definitely skewed ours to where it would be a lot lower than what it should be.

It is just because of a couple of years that
they looked at and what they did and, also, Trevor -- I
don't want to put him on the spot, but Trevor is on the
SSC with us, now. Thank you for doing that.

We are looking at it very hard to try to find a
way to be able to get them to understand that we are not
overfishing the Gulf of Mexico and we are not overfishing
the Red Snapper.

As a matter of fact, the team here at DMR gives
me a report at least once, or twice, a week about what is
happening there and they even look. If they have one
certain area that they are catching a lot of fish from,
they look at that for the possibility of do we need to
close that one little section to keep from overfishing it,
or do we need to do something else. They are looking at
everything that can possibly be looked at.

The other thing is they kept holding it against
us over the past and said, well, you can't use your state
information because it is not five years of it.

Well, it will be this year.

Is that right, Trevor?

2022 is five years.

Right?

TREVOR MONCRIEF: Yes, sir.

JOE SPRAGGINS: So we will have that five years
and we can show them what we are talking about.
This is a big situation and I would advise every
one of you if you want to listen to the Gulf Council, it
will be on Tuesday afternoon, basically. Well, Tuesday
from about probably 10:00, or 11:00, o’clock up to about
1:00, or 2:00, o’clock in the afternoon they will be
talking about this.

If you want to listen during that time, you can
go in and listen on the website and listen to Gulf
council, and, then, I think it is on Wednesdays when they
have the public comments that afternoon at about 2:45 to
5:30, if you want to come in and do public comment on it.

We are fighting it hard. I can promise you I
totally one hundred percent believe that the staff is
doing everything possible to make sure that we are not
overfishing and that we are not having any issues and we
are doing what is right and we are taking care of the
resource.

Please, if you talk to anyone else about it, if
you talk to your congressman, tell him about it, the
senators, anyone else, the state legislators. We need to
look at that very hard

Another thing real quick, too, if I can, we are
going to have a couple of meetings here in the next couple
of months on the Bonnet Carre again and on the Mid-Breton
Sound Diversion and we are going to talk about that.
There is a lot of information that needs to be brought up about it, and we are trying to get with Louisiana and talk to them about what is happening there. I don’t know the hundred percent answer. If I did, I would tell you, now.

Will the Mid-Breton Sound do damage?
I don’t know.
Will it do good?
I don’t know, but I tell you what, we need to find out and we need to find out before we allow something to be built to say whether or not it is going to cause any problems to our estuary.

We need to look at that very hard and I think Secretary Watson has called a meeting. So we are going to have a meeting with him, I think, on that, and, then, also I am working with the state legislators to have another meeting and we are going to talk about it to be able to bring this up.

We want everybody understanding what is happening there. There are still a couple of diversions north of the Bonnet Carre that could be looked at very hard. One is called the Union Diversion and that diversion is between the two big diversions, now, and what we could do -- I’m talking it is north of the Bonnet Carre and it is south of Morganza, but it could be a situation
to where that water could spill out to the east and go into a Cypress forest.

From the study by the scientists at Tulane, using 2019, they are saying that we could have cut about thirty days, or forty days, off of where the water would have been coming into the Gulf. That would have been tremendous, if we could have had something like that.

This could be something, if we have one like we had in 2018, or one like we had in 2016, or something to that effect, that it could almost dissipate it all to where we never had to open up the Bonnet Carre. That is something we need to look hard at.

If you get a chance, look up Union Diversion and you will be able to find it.

It is something that we could look at. It spills out into the east there. It goes into a Cypress forest, and, then, eventually it is going to run into Lake Pontchartrain. We understand that, but it is also filtered a lot and it is also taking a lot of the nutrients out of it before it gets there.

There are a lot of good things that could happen there and it would slow it down as to how long it would take to do it.

Just a thought. We are working hard at DMR. We are trying to do everything we can to make sure that we
are covering everything possible to rebuild this and to
stop what is happening to us. Hopefully we will be able
to do that.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Joe, on the snapper stuff,
did I hear you right that there is a nine point seven
million pound gap between the overfished and the ACL?

JOE SPRAGGINS: It is over that.

Trevor, do you remember?

The overfish limit went up ten million and
something pounds?

TREVOR MONCRIEF: Yes. The OFL was approved to
be ten million pounds above the ACL and it was through a
SSC vote on discussion of the Great Red Snapper Count and
the incorporation of it. When they incorporated the
snapper count, they raised the OFL ten million pounds, but
the ABC remained below that mark.

JOE SPRAGGINS: It was only three hundred
thousand pounds they raised it, wasn’t it?

TREVOR MONCRIEF: Correct.

JOE SPRAGGINS: Which is a huge disparity.

TREVOR MONCRIEF: Right.

JOE SPRAGGINS: I don’t know if there is anything
that has come up about it, but have y’all even set any
meetings to look at this?
TREVOR MONCRIEF: It hasn’t gotten brought up on
the SSC schedule again. With calibration coming back up
to the council, I am sure it will be on the agenda in an
upcoming meeting.

I think this next meeting, September, prior to
the next council meeting, we will be going over the
finalization of the Great Red Snapper Count report itself
and if the council asks us to reconsider the OFL and ABC,
that will be an item on a future meeting as well.

JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you, Trevor.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: We don’t have any public
comments turned in.

Did we have anybody here wanting to make a
comment?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Can I get a motion to
adjourn?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I’ll make a motion.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll second that.

All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you everybody. We
will see y’all next month.
(Whereupon, at 9:45 o’clock, a.m., the August 17, 2021, meeting of the Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine Resources was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the above thirty-four pages, including this page, is a true and correct transcript of the August 17, 2021, meeting of the Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine Resources, as taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated in the aforementioned matter in shorthand, with electronic verification, and later reduced to typewritten form 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/ __________________________

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