MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, June 21, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Bolton Building Auditorium
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Commission Members:

Ronnie Daniels, Chairman
Jonathan McClendon
Cammack (Cam) Roberds

Also Present:

Patrick Levine, Chief Operating Officer MDMR
Sandy Chesnut, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

Lucille Morgan, CSR 1251
COURT REPORTER
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COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the June 21st, 2022, Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine Resources meeting. Thank you to everyone for being here.

I would like to recognize Chris Vignes with Senator Wicker’s office. Thank you for coming out and joining us today, Chris.

We are going to call this meeting to order. I will lead us in our Pledge of Allegiance today.

(Pledge of Allegiance recited.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: We’ve got Patrick Levine sitting in for the Director today. The Director is watching online. He had to be out of town for some stuff today.

I am going to ask Patrick if he will lead us in our prayer today.

PATRICK LEVINE: Father, we do thank you and we praise you for the opportunity to be here today to make decisions for maintaining this beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast and, Father, we ask that you give us wisdom and guidance, that you would lead us and that we would follow.

Lord, we ask that you protect our fishermen, our patrol officers out on the water, for those that are out enjoying the great resources we have and that you keep
them same.

Lord, that you would help us to see the resource become bountiful and that it would be great.

We say thank you in Jesus's name. Amen.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Patrick.

Minutes from May 17th, 2022.

Do we have a motion to approve the minutes?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I’ll make a motion.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll second that.

All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER MCCLENDON: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: We are going to have a small change to today’s agenda. We are going to be removing F.2 from the agenda today.

With the removal of F.2, do I have a motion to approve the agenda?

COMMISSIONER MCCLENDON: I’ll make the motion.

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I’ll second it.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All in favor?

COMMISSIONER MCCLENDON: Aye.

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

I will turn it over to you, Mr. Patrick.
PATRICK LEVINE: Good morning.

I tell you it has been another productive month at the Department of Marine Resources. Often we look at our team and are so excited to see the people that are coming onboard, that are being promoted within, that want to be a part of the team, and we have a couple of employment updates this morning.

First up, you see Chris Graham, Austin Burmaster and William Larsen. Those guys have been contractors with us for some time now and we had the opportunity to bring them onboard full time. We are excited about that.

Katie Nelson is a new hire in Coastal Resource Management. We are excited about that.

In Marine Patrol, it is always exciting when you see the promotions that occur. Donovan Dawsey, Curtis Norfleet, Michael Fitts are all being promoted in the Office of Marine Patrol. I tell you those guys are doing a good job. They are doing a lot of good work out there on the water like everybody else.

Michele Williams, she recently was promoted to Human Resources Officer. I know that she has been working extremely hard in Coastal Resources and she had the opportunity to go forth and help the agency as a whole by transferring to Human Resources.

Even more recently, Kristina Broussard has been
promoted to an Environmental Natural Resources Supervisor position and she is going to be over the Seafood Technology Bureau. We are excited for Kristina.

Jason Rider was promoted to an Environmental Natural Resources Supervisor, also, being the Shellfish Bureau Director.

We are excited for them, and, then, we have our summer interns. It is so great that every year so many of our interns get the opportunity to be introduced to the Department of Marine Resources, the things that we get to be a part of on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and you see all of those interns written down below (indicating slide).

The other day I had one of them walk up to me and she said, “Mr. Patrick, what are the chances that when I finish my internship I could possibly be on the team of the DMR?”

That says a lot for the people that she is working with, the departments that she is working with and for the other employees that at the end of this internship they look forward to possibly being a part of this team. We are thankful for them and where it may lead in the future.

We are thankful for all of the employees that we have working, thankful for the interns and the difference
that they are making.

As mentioned before, Director Spraggins is online. He may have the opportunity to share with us in a little bit.

If you are here and you need to fill out a public comment form, fill out that public comment form located on the back table and hand it to Crystal Matta up here on the front row.

Crystal raise your hand real quick.

CRYSTAL MATTA: Yes, sir.

PATRICK LEVINE: If you have a public comment form, please be sure to get those filled out and brought to her.

There are a few deadlines coming up that we need to be aware of.

The first one is the Tidelands applications. The Tidelands applications are due in no later than July the 1st at 5:00 p.m.

If you have questions about that, you can reach out to Sonja and she will be glad to talk you through a Tidelands application, but that is going to be due July the 1st.

GOMESA applications, the same thing. The GOMESA applications are open. There are applications that are located on the Department of Marine Resources website and
that application process is going to close on July the 1st. Now, for those that may have applications that have been put in in the past and maybe you need to make some upgrades on the projects, or make some changes, be sure to notify Russell. Notify us and let us know of the changes that you have on your application, your previous application, and, then, if you have a new project that you want to submit, now is the time because that is going to close on July the 1st. Be sure to check on that.

It was mentioned last month about the legislation that is going into effect and one of the pieces of legislation that is going into effect pertains to derelict vessels and the removal of derelict vessels in the three coastal counties.

The legislature gave us the funding to remove derelict vessels and the authority to walk through the process of removing derelict vessels.

Now, we are going to need a little bit of help. If y’all know of anybody in the community that would be interested in being a part of the team by being put on a list that is going to go out for bids to remove derelict vessels, reach out to our Finance Office and ask them to make sure your name is on the list to remove derelict vessels because there are quite a few that are out there that are going to have to be removed very, very soon.
Make sure you get your name on that list and if y’all know anybody, you can give us those names and phone numbers and we will reach out to them because we are going to need some help accomplishing that goal.

If you have any questions on it, you can reach out to Russell Weatherly and he can help you out.

Another thing that is on the horizon and it may be a few weeks is that the agency has been in the process of going through all of its surplus equipment. One thing about it is we have boat engines and boats that they get a little tired, a little worn out and we have been storing those up. The same thing for vehicles. We have a few vehicles. We have some ATV’s and different equipment that it has expired its shelf life here at the DMR.

In the weeks and in the next couple of months to come, be looking for us to have an auction where we are going to be notifying the public that we will be getting rid of some of that surplus equipment.

One of the things that a lot of people are excited about right now is Snapper Season. It is amazing that we have a few days left in season number one and already I started getting messages and phone calls from people asking me what is the second season going to look like, and I can’t say that I really know. I am going to leave that up to Traci and her team.
We do know this much. There have been one thousand eight hundred and forty-two completed Tails n’ Scales trips.

Can you believe that Marine Patrol has checked two hundred of those, for over ten percent?

That is ten point eight percent of the vessels that go out get checked. I don’t know about y’all, but if were leaving my house and I knew that the Jackson County Sheriff’s Department was going to stop me ten percent of the time, I would probably drive a little bit slower because your odds are extremely high that you are going to get checked.

What is really great and hats off and kudos to our fishermen here on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, of the two hundred vessels checked only four of them were noncompliant. Only four of them were noncompliant. Put it this way in percentage. That is two thousandths of a percent.

Thank you to the people on the Mississippi Gulf Coast for valuing the resource we have in Red Snapper and making sure that we have that resource there in the future.

Of our ACL, thirty-three point seven percent of the ACL has been met with an estimated catch of fifty-one thousand sixty-three pounds.
I don’t know if Fisheries will mention it later, but the first season will close July the 4th at midnight, and I know that people are expecting a second season and we will be able to report on that later on, depending on the catch and what it looks like, but, right now, we are at thirty-three point seven percent of our ACL. We will see what the future brings.

There is a lot that is going on at the DMR. We will be closed on the 4th of July, on Independence Day, and we will be back to work ready to go on Tuesday, July the 5th.

That is all I have, sir.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

Are you going to touch on the processor’s grant and the Bonnet Carre?

PATRICK LEVINE: We are going to get Traci Floyd to come up and update us on the processor’s grant.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Okay.

TRACI FLOYD: Good morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Patrick, Sandy, distinguished guests.

We will begin accepting online applications on July 1st. It will run through August 16th. This will be for costs incurred January 27th, 2020, through December 31st, 2021, related to COVID, and there is a listing of what those can be on our website.
You will just need basic information, license number, contact info and, of course, proof of your loss. If you have any questions, call me, Erik Broussard, or the Seafood Technology team.

PATRICK LEVINE: Now, is that going to be a paper application, or is it going to be an online application?

TRACI FLOYD: It is online, but, if you need assistance, we are happy to help you here at the office.

PATRICK LEVINE: That is exciting. July the 1st we are going to get this going.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

TRACI FLOYD: Thank you.

PATRICK LEVINE: We don't have any update on the Bonnet Carre. Nothing to say there, as before.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Such a speedy process.

PATRICK LEVINE: It is a speedy process.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: It is moving too fast for an update on it.

PATRICK LEVINE: I am thankful that Chris is here and maybe he can help us out a little bit.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Yes.

PATRICK LEVINE: Sandy is going to give us some actions update from prior meetings.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Ms. Sandy.

SANDY CHESNUT: The Commission recommended and
the Director approved the following motions at the May meeting:

Variance and Coastal Zone Consistency for Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission for excavation, riprap, piers, four mooring dolphins and dredging.

Variance and permit for Huntington Ingalls for continual maintenance dredging and new dredging with the condition that the applicant be required to use a MDMR approved Beneficial Use Site.

Variance and issuance of a Certificate of Exclusion for Jackson County Port Authority for dredging, also with the condition that they be required to use the Beneficial Use Site, if available.

Variance and permit for Harrison County Sand Beach Authority for beach renourishment consisting of fill, borrow pits, repair of outfall structures and a ten-year permit for maintenance.

Permit for the MDMR to create an oyster reef of up to fifty-seven point five acres in the St. Louis Bay in Harrison County.

Proposed changes to Title 22, Part 18, for Special Permits was forwarded to the Secretary of State's Office for Notice of Intent.

There were two Saltwater Finfish records; Rock Hind by Trey Tinkle and Smooth Puffer by Phillip Overman.
That’s it.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Ms. Sandy.

SANDY CHESNUT: You are welcome.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: It looks like that is all for the Director’s Report.

Patrick, you did a great job today. Thank you.

PATRICK LEVINE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioners Report.

Do we have anything from any of our Commissioners?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I was just going to report on what I was telling the Chief a little while ago. I got pulled over, stopped, or just checked, last Wednesday and the staff was super nice and willing to have a good and easy conversation. We got through it really quick and it was a good experience.

Keep up the good work, Chief.

KYLE WILKERSON: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Great. That is always good to hear.

COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: I just want to give an update on what kinds of issues our fishermen are facing this year, just to give you an idea.

The first quarter imported shrimp totals are up over seventy-three million pounds, all the way to six
hundred and thirty-three million pounds just for the first quarter alone.

At American Shrimp Processors, we are estimating that the imported shrimp that are coming in are going to reach over two billion pounds into the United States here alone and we are also estimating consumption at one point five billion pounds. That is a lot of excess inventory.

Now, to put all of that into perspective, the entire amount of landings from the Gulf of Mexico, according to NOAA, were only seventy-three million pounds last year. The increase in the first quarter is equivalent to the entire landings for all of 2021 for the Gulf of Mexico.

These guys are also out there paying twice as much for fuel as they paid in years past and they are getting about thirty percent less for the product.

There are issues all the way around. We ask you to continue supporting our fishermen here and to continue asking the restaurants to make sure that the shrimp you are eating are domestic.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Very good. It is hard to beat a shrimp fresh out of the Gulf.

COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: Also, the American Shrimp Processors is asking USDA to participate in the Commodity Procurement Program.
We appreciate the support Senator Wicker has
given our fishermen in the past and we ask for continued
support for that.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

Marine Patrol. Chief.

KYLE WILKERSON: Good morning Commissioners,
legal, Mr. Levine.

May is normally our kickoff of the busy season,
but normally it is always busy.

Memorial Day weekend went well. No one was
hurt. There were a few minor injuries, but not one
succumbed to those injuries. Everything went well with
that.

Marine Patrol checked over twenty-four hundred
people not so much that weekend, but I’m sure that was an
accumulation of that weekend, most of it.

Once again, snapper went well. People were very
compliant. Just for this month of May, we only had one
possession of undersize Red Snapper and one no Tails n’
Scales. The other two fall under June.

Everybody is playing well and everything is
going really smoothly. Let me knock on wood.

Other than that, it is pretty self explanatory.

If you have any questions, I will field them at
this time.
I would like to say this, first. I know we are doing well. May was very smooth. June is very smooth right now. Let's just make sure July, 4th of July weekend, everybody has a good time and is very diligent on safety and just be very careful out there, but also enjoy yourselves.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I think one thing to remind people of, seeing seven alcohol-related incidents here, the 4th of July is coming up and you have got to be careful out there.

KYLE WILKERSON: Exactly, and we will be out there. We will be looking for that.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Yes, sir.

Thank you. Y'all keep up the good work.

KYLE WILKERSON: Thank y'all.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Coastal Resources Management.

GREG CHRISTODOULOU: Good morning everyone.

Greg Christodoulo, Coastal. I will be presenting the only agenda item today for Coastal.

This is a permit request by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality. It is part of one of the Restore projects from the BP oil spill.

It is located along the Hancock County shoreline from Bayou Bolan east to Bayou Caddy. It is in the
Preservation Use District and the agent is FC&E Engineering.

Impacts associated with this project are approximately seventeen acres of unvegetated waterbottom fill and that will be taken up by riprap breakwaters. They will have gaps in them to allow water to pass through, approximately twenty-five foot gaps between each section.

The applicant has requested a variance from Mississippi Coastal Program and also a Use Plan change. They want to go from a Preservation Use District to a Special Use-Restoration District, and they have justified the variances and the use plan.

Here is an outline just showing the area. The whole system is one point seven miles. It is going to be very similar to the breakwater that was constructed in the earlier round of the Restore Project that went from the Pearl River to Bayou Bolan, to this point right here. That project was much larger. It was almost six miles; Five point nine miles (indicating slide).

This one is smaller. It runs one point five miles from Bayou Bolan east to Bayou Caddy where the Corps of Engineers breakwater structure is, and, then, there will be a smaller two tenths of a mile portion right here at the mouth of Bayou Caddy (indicating slide).
Again, this is showing the project location. It is not going to be a perfectly straight line. It is going to meander a little bit because they are using the contours. They are trying to keep this structure in depths of three to six feet of water. They are not putting it in deep water. They are putting it just a few hundred feet off of the shoreline so it is more effective protecting the shoreline.

Also, another benefit associated with this is the secondary productivity. All the attachment sites will provide for algae, barnacles, oysters, muscles and in turn attracting other species, crabs and fish, both recreational and commercially important species.

Here is kind of a profile and side view, cross sectional view of the breakwater structure. At the top it will be fifteen feet wide. At the most, only about two-and-a-half feet will be exposed above the waterline (indicating slide).

The project was placed on public notice. We received no comments during the public notice, as well as the public hearing, as far as the justifications go, and there were no comments from the public hearing as well.

DEQ is reviewing the project.

Archives and History has requested a cultural resource survey.
Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks submitted no comments.

A rent-exempt Public Trust Tidelands Lease will be required from the Secretary of State’s Office.

The staff has reviewed the project and based on the project, results of the findings is that it will serve a higher public purpose by reducing the impacts to the marsh.

By the way, the earlier project, the one that is already in place now, they have seen an eighty-five percent reduction in the loss of the marsh in those sections and in some areas there has been some marshes accreted as well.

Also, like I mentioned, the structures will provide many attachment spots for invertebrates and algae.

Staff requests that the Commission make a motion that the Commission recommend to the Executive Director approval of the variance and the Use Plan change, along with contingent on clearance from MDEQ and Archives.

Any questions, I will do what I can.

If you’ve got really specific stuff, the engineering folks are here to answer those.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I don’t have a question, but I can tell you that is basically right there in my backyard and seeing what has happened with the initial
part of that, it has been great. It has done wonders for the fishing.

You can see areas over there where that marsh has started creeping its way out towards the rocks as opposed to us losing it as fast as we have.

I think it is a great project, really good for Hancock County.

Any questions?
(No response.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll make a motion to approve the staff’s recommendation.

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I’ll second the motion.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Greg.

GREG CHRISTODOULOU: Thank y’all.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Ms. Leslie, Office of Finance and Administration.

LESLIE BREWER: Good morning everyone.

I’m Leslie Brewer, CFO. I will be presenting the financials for the month ended May 31st, 2022.

At the end of May our State Revenue was five point four million. Our State Net Income was a negative
six hundred and twenty-one thousand.

Out Total Agency Net Income was twenty-six point one million and our Total Agency Revenue was fifty-two point four.

We did get our GOMESA funding for May of twenty-nine point four million and we are still waiting on our state appropriations to cover that state deficit.

After eleven months of fiscal year 2022, we have seventy-eight point seven percent of our Operating Budget remaining, and, then, Tidelands has fifty-two point three percent.

Does anyone have any questions?

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: No ma'am. Thank you.

LESLIE BREWER: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Public Affairs, Ms. Charmaine.

CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Good morning everyone.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources was mentioned thirty-nine times in local, state and national media since the May MACMR meeting.

News items included shrimp season opening, Red Snapper season opening, Commissioner McClendon’s appointment to the Commission, USDA grant applications opening July 1st and boater safety with summer underway.

The Office of Marine Patrol has participated in
numerous events since the last meeting. These events include Career Days at Gulfport Central Middle School and Anniston Elementary School, National Maritime Day in Pascagoula, Boating Safety Day at West Marine, the City of Gulfport Kids Fishing program, and boat and water safety presentations at Long Beach Library and each of the eight locations of the Jackson-George Regional Library System.

The Shellfish Bureau’s Jason Rider and Ellen Coffin gave a presentation on oyster aquaculture at the East Central Library and Madison Parker, also in the Shellfish Bureau, gave a presentation at the Humane Society of South Mississippi’s Club Paws Summer Day Camp and Viking Village Summer Camp at Bayou View Elementary School.

Michael Lee at the Lyman Aquaculture Hatchery set up a table for Ocean Springs CTE Career Summer Camp discussing aquaculture and our agency’s work at the hatchery.

The Shrimp and Crab Bureau participated in Sand Jam 2022 – Turtle Up Mississippi in Ocean Springs where hundreds of visitors stopped by to learn about Mississippi’s wildlife and habitats.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Charmaine.
CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Thank you.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Before we get into Marine
Fisheries, we had one other omission on the agenda that we didn’t mention earlier. We just found out about it a few minutes ago. We are going to need to remove K.2 from the agenda today as well.

We are going to do one, and, then, skip right over to three.

Jason.

SANDY CHESNUT: If you would make a motion for that.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’m sorry.
Do we have a motion to remove K.2?
COMMISSIONER MCCLENDON: I’ll make a motion.
COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I’ll second it.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All in favor?
COMMISSIONER MCCLENDON: Aye.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.
COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Jason.
JASON SAUCIER: Good morning.
I will be presenting today for final adoption Title 22, Part 18, Rules and Regulations for Special Permits.

On May 17th, the Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine Resources recommended to the Executive Director that the new format and changes to Part 18 be sent to the
Secretary of State's Office for Notice of Intent.

The Executive Director approved the recommendation and the Notice of Intent for the proposed regulation was filed with the Secretary of State’s Office on May 23rd.

The Notice of the proposed regulation was published in The Sun Herald on May 25th and the Notice was also posted on our website on May 26th.

To the left there, that is the Notice of Intent filing with the Secretary of State’s Office, there is the public notice link and page on our website and the affidavit of publication with The Sun Herald (indicating slide).

No public comments have been received to date and the proposed regulation will be filed with the Secretary of State's Office for final adoption. The proposed effective date for the revised regulation will be thirty days from filing.

I will take any questions you have.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Any questions?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: We don’t need a motion on this, do we?

SANDY CHESNUT: Yes, you need a motion for final adoption.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll make the motion for
final adoption.

Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER MCCLENDON: I’ll second the motion

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER MCCLENDON: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

JASON SAUCIER: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

We are going to skip K.2.

Artificial Reef Update.

TRAVIS WILLIAMS: Good morning Commissioners, Mr.
Levine, Ms. Chesnut.

I just wanted to give y’all a brief update on
some of the things our program has been working on. I’m
Travis Williams. I’m the Artificial Reef Bureau Director.

Over the last couple of months we have been
working on a few things. I wanted to bring some of them
to y’all’s attention in case you may have seen some
releases.

This first slide here is of the R/V Hermes.
This was a vessel that was donated by GCRL’s program in
Ocean Springs.

Just a little bit of history. The vessel was
built in 1955 by Kremer Marine out of Gulfport. It was an important part of their field excursions with numerous research projects.

This vessel was donated to the Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks last year. Their organization cleaned the vessel and prepped it for deployment, and, then, on May the 18th, our agency deployed the vessel on FH-2 which is just approximately eighteen miles south of Pascagoula.

I've got a video here of the deployment. I don't know if it will play, but the video was provided by Mr. Cole Mavar who was out there on behalf of the contractor.

Everything went well with that day with the deployment. The vessel did rest upright on bottom. Some of the divers went down afterwards. As you can see from the drone video, it was a pretty good day for the deployment and everything.

At our staging facility over off of Reichold road in Gulfport, we like to accept a lot of secondary-use materials, typically concrete culverts from drainage projects, stuff like that. Last month we received a contract to put this material out.

We did five deployments, five barge loads which over eight thousand tons of the secondary-use concrete. Like I mentioned, it is mostly culverts,
manholes, box culverts and poles. We were able to create six new sites on FH-13 and we enhanced two existing sites with these materials.

From the photos, you can kind of see how they load the barge, and, then, actually here are some photos for the deployments.

It was a full day for the barge to get out there, and it took them a few hours to unload.

Any questions?

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That looks great. I like seeing more habitats being introduced for them out there.

Any questions?

(No response.)

TRAVIS WILLIAMS: Thank y'all.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

TREVOR MONCRIEF: Good morning Commissioners, Mr. Levine, Ms. Chesnut.

I will be talking about the Spotted Seatrout Endorsement, giving y'all an update.

As y'all are aware, the endorsement qualifications changed with the adoption of Title 22, Part 3. It had an effective date of May the 1st, 2022.

We have observed an increase in our overall endorsements. We've got fifty-two total with twenty-six of those occurring since the promulgation of the new
The following presentation will outline the current landings for the fishery and potential approaches to ensure the quota is met while also maintaining the consistency within the fishery.

Since we've got a couple of new Commissioners, we will go back through the past with the endorsement history.

It was established in 2014. The original rule was to have proof of five thousand dollars in seafood sales in any consecutive twelve months and that endorsement was valid for three years after the date of purchase.

In 2019, this was updated to the twenty percent income requirement with it being verified through the Trip Ticket Program -- that was an important addition to the regulation -- and was valid for one calendar year, January through December, and we also promulgated the hardship clause associated with it.

In 2022, the new regulation starting May 1st is a thousand dollars in finfish sales, or five thousand dollars in seafood product, once again verified through the Trip Ticket Program. It is valid for one calendar year, January through December, and the hardship could be considered based on sales one year prior to the hardship's
onset.

Our landings to date are twelve thousand three hundred and forty-one pounds.

Once again, we’ve got fifty-two total Spotted Seatrout Endorsements.

If you look at this figure on the right, we had a fair amount of landings occur in the month of February, higher than what we normally see, depressed landings through March and April, and, then, in May which is typically a bigger month for us we saw that increase in landings.

We do think the number of endorsements is having a positive affect on the amount of landings, but, if we forecast this through time, it is unsure whether we are going to truly meet the quota this year, or not, and, of course, we’ve got a few more months to really fine tune it, but right now it looks like we are going to be landing anywhere between thirty-five and forty-five thousand pounds.

With that, we are going to continue to evaluate and project the trends that are in the fishery and determine if we need to make future alterations to the endorsement qualifications.

I know Director Spraggins in on here. A couple of the options we have looked at so far; one is to make
sure the fishermen know about the hardship clause and make use of that should they fall under that qualification. Another one is to take the current regulations that we have in place, the thousand dollars of finfish and take that back in time to let them qualify for a year. We have also talked about the possibility of adding in new entrance into the fishery.

Now, those last two are going to take changes to regulation and it is going to take a little bit of thought, but we are looking at the landings, we are keeping all this stuff in mind and, once again, the goal is for us to meet the quota for this fishery and maintain the consistency within the fishery.

We still think the seventy-five total endorsements is the number for us to reach, based on the history in the fishery and that is kind of the goal that we are looking at.

Just a few more participants and a few more landings and I think we will be right back on track on where this fishery needs to be.

With that, I will take any questions.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: What about the hardship clause?

Can you give an example of that for people who don't understand what that is there for?
TREVOR MONCRIEF: Yes. The hardship clause is meant to be there just in case a fisherman runs into anything that is outside of their power, anything that would be a negative affect on their ability to be able to participate in the fishery.

Sickness is a common one that we see. If you come down with a sickness and are unable to go.

I think we have had a couple that have come in with boats being in the yard for a year, or being taken up.

It is kind of a broad range and essentially it comes down to things that affect your ability to be able to participate in the fishery that are uncontrollable by you.

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Have we exceeded our total landings to date in comparison to last year at this time?

TREVOR MONCRIEF: No, but it’s -- we are a little bit higher, I think, at this point, if I go back and think about it, but if you recall the affects that we had within the pandemic and the year after along with the Bonnet Carre Spillway in 2019, this fishery has been operating in -- it has been pretty chaotic over the last few years. It is hard to really judge this year to previous years and really that seventy-five is anchored on the last five years and primarily based in 2016 when there was primarily
a hook-and-line fishery.
That is where we get that seventy-five number from and we feel comfortable that is the number of participants that will keep this fishery consistent over time.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Jonathan, have you got anything?

COMMISSIONER MCCLENDON: No. I’m good.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

TREVOR MONCRIEF: I will be up here for the next one.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: This is my favorite one. I like these.

TREVOR MONCRIEF: We’ve got three finfish records.
The first one is conventional tackle. It is a Blackbelly Rosefish. I am not going to throw that scientific name out there. It is a new record. We haven’t had this fish yet. It is two pounds eleven point two ounces. The angler is Mr. John Wright.

Here is a picture of the fish and here is a picture of the angler with the fish.

The next one we have is an all tackle record. It is a Bigeye, Priacanthus arenatus. The old record was two pounds one point twelve ounces. The new record is two
pounds eleven point five two ounces. The angler is Harley Havard.

Here is a picture of the fish and here is a picture of the angler with the fish.

The last one we've got for you is an all tackle fishing record for the Unicorn Filefish, Aluterus monoceros. The old record was one pound two point zero six ounces. The new record is five pounds nine point eight ounces. The angler is Mr. Brandon Powell.

Here is a picture of the fish. It is a real pretty one. There is a picture of the angler with the fish.

All we need is a motion to recommend the adoption of the new state records.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion?
COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: I'll make the motion.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll second that.
All those in favor?
COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: Aye.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.
COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.
TREVOR MONCRIEF: Do you want me to touch on snapper season?
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Yes.
TREVOR MONCRIEF: Mr. Levine nailed it. It has been a pretty good season so far for everybody.

We had a large amount of effort occur in the first weekend, specifically that Saturday. It was one of the top five days we've had in the fishery. We did see a stark decrease in effort after that from the averages from the last couple of years. I suspect that gas prices have a pretty good affect on those individuals going out.

For the reopening what we will likely do, as we always have, is evaluate the landings after July 4th, see where it is, and we will try to coincide our openings to maximize the days where other federal species are open and also to make sure that we make it to that Labor Day mark like we have always intended to.

To add on to the Marine Patrol side of things, in the last couple of years our Fisheries staff has gone away from having a call center that is based out of state to taking that burden on ourselves and having Round Robin cell phones. They go through our Marine Fisheries staff.

This year with that large amount of effort and everything else opening weekend, we only got four calls from fishermen and a couple of those were 5:00 a.m., but four calls is a record. Usually we get a dozen, or more, on the opening weekend.

I think we have really been able to get the
fishermen participating in the app and doing it well, and it is really showing to be a team effort across the agency and also to our anglers participating.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That is really good, but that app is pretty simple. Once you get in there and do it one time, it is nothing to it.

TREVOR MONCRIEF: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Have we got any other business today?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Did we have any public comments?

PATRICK LEVINE: No public comments.

A thought. As we go out today, echoing what Chief said, as we are looking at Independence Day weekend, we want to encourage people to be safe, but I was just thinking about those men and women that are out there making sure we maintain those freedoms.

While we are out on the boat and enjoying the resources that we have, make sure we go out and thank those men and women that are out there still protecting our freedoms while we are out there celebrating and enjoying the fishing and swimming and boating.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Absolutely.

Do we have a motion to adjourn?
COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I’ll make a motion to adjourn.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll second that.

All those in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you everyone.

(At 9:44 o'clock, a.m., the June 21, 2022, meeting of the Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine Resources was concluded.)
CERTIFICATE

I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing thirty-six pages, including this page, is a true and correct transcript of the June 21, 2022, 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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