

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES
COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, August 16, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Bolton Building Auditorium
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Commission Members:

Ronnie Daniels, Chairman
Cammack (Cam) Roberds, Vice Chairman
Jonathan McCLendon

Also Present:

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

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Good morning ladies and
2 gentlemen. Thank y'all for coming out today.

3 We are going to go ahead and call to order our
4 August 16th commission meeting. I am going to ask Jonathan
5 to lead us in the pledge.

6 (Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

8 Mr. Joe, you want to lead us in a prayer this
9 morning?

10 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes, sir.

11 Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for the
12 opportunity to serve and Lord we ask that you just take
13 this agency and take this commission and give us the
14 wisdom to do what you would have us to do and let us do it
15 the way you would have it done. We ask this in Jesus
16 Christ's name. Amen.

17 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have any discussion
18 on the minutes from last month?

19 (No response.)

20 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion to
21 approve the minutes?

22 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion to
23 approve the minutes.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.

25 All those in favor?

1 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

3 COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: Aye.

4 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion to
5 approve today's agenda?

6 Do we have any changes, Joe?

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: Not that I'm aware of.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll make a motion to
9 approve the agenda.

10 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll second it.

11 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All those in favor?

12 COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: Aye.

13 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

14 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Mr. Joe, we are going to
16 turn it over to you.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: Let's see if I can get myself
18 lined up here.

19 As far as employment contracts, Michael Smith is
20 a new hire with law enforcement.

21 Nicholas McDaniel is a new hire with law
22 enforcement.

23 Caleb Vick is a new hire with law enforcement.

24 Jermellody Christian is a new hire with CZM
25 Grant Administrator.

1 Jeffery Payne is promoted to Law Enforcement
2 Officer Team Lead Lieutenant.

3 Matthew Kasovich is promoted to Law Enforcement
4 Officer Team Lead Lieutenant.

5 Kaitlyn Payne is promoted to Law Enforcement
6 Officer I Private. She came out of dispatch with us.

7 Neva Hosty is promoted to Dispatcher II.

8 Ellen Coffin is promoted to
9 Environmental/Natural Resources Specialist Team Lead.

10 Jennifer Wilder is promoted to
11 Environmental/Natural Resources Specialist Team Lead.

12 We have a new lawyer on board with us, Mr.
13 Steven Eckert, and he is with the Attorney General's
14 office.

15 Any questions on the new hires and promotions?

16 (No response.)

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: As far as an Agency update, the
18 internship we had started June 1st and ended July 29th. I
19 know we have two, or three, that have been hired out of
20 it. That is fantastic. Anytime that we get to hire
21 people out of the internship, it is a fantastic deal. We
22 have quite a few people that have come to us in the Agency
23 because of that.

24 I tell you what. If you missed the Neshoba
25 County Fair, you missed a party. You missed a blast. It

1 was a good time up there.

2 The Mississippi Coast day was on the 28th I think
3 it was and we had thirty, or thirty-five, vendors there.
4 We had the whole area covered in tents. It was covered up
5 and everybody in the world was coming by and they were all
6 getting different things from the Gulf Coast and people
7 were telling them about the Gulf Coast.

8 At the Red Clay and Sand Mixer on Wednesday
9 night, we fed six hundred and fifty people that came
10 through the line, and, then, we took I don't know how much
11 to the cabins around us. It was a fantastic deal and I
12 tell you what, the seafood was fantastic.

13 The Marine Patrol and other parts of the Marine
14 Resources cooked that food. We have ruined them now
15 because they want it forever. That's the way it is.

16 One of the leaders from Neshoba said that now we
17 are really worried that the Gulf Coast may take over
18 Neshoba County Fair. I told him, well, we are going to
19 take over a day, or two, of it.

20 we had a good time. It was a lot of fun and
21 well done.

22 Last Friday we had MDMR day. We had a great
23 day. We just took the whole day with everyone. We had a
24 great time and got a lot of things accomplished, as far as
25 people in the Agency getting to know each other and

1 basically working with each other, and we did some team
2 building.

3 we had Judge Webb. Tommy Webb out of Kansas
4 came and spoke to us.

5 It was a fantastic day. We really enjoyed that.
6 We had a great time and I appreciate all the people that
7 helped us do that.

8 We've got the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
9 Council the 22nd through the 25th in Corpus Christi. Myself
10 and Rick will be there. We will be trying to keep our
11 head above water with NOAA and the rest of the group. So
12 far we are doing pretty good. We will see where we are.

13 If you have an idea that you would like to give
14 some blood, we are going to do it here on the 29th at 9:00
15 a.m.

16 It is from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It is
17 basically being hosted by DMR, but anybody who would like
18 to come can come and give blood, and it is always a great
19 thing to help out the community with that.

20 George, come up here. Just come up to the
21 podium.

22 George Ramseur, for those of you who don't know
23 him, he is a Coastal Resources Management Specialist. He
24 came to work with us in 2006 and to 2014 he was in that
25 position. Now he is the Director of Coastal Restoration

1 and Resilience from there to 2021.

2 George built the largest island we rebuilt
3 around here. If you haven't seen Round Island, you need
4 to go look at it. Three point three million cubic tons of
5 dredge material came out of Pascagoula navigation channels
6 and all, and George was instrumental behind that.

7 He has worked hard with us. He specializes in
8 hydro model base ecosystem planning and restoration.

9 I can tell you he has worked with us with
10 Louisiana a lot. He has helped us to do the things in
11 Louisiana to be able to get with CPRA and be able to keep
12 a good relationship.

13 I can't say enough about George. I tell you he
14 has been a great person with us, but George is retiring
15 the end of this month and going to work with another
16 company. I can't blame him. I enjoyed having him.

17 I just wanted to tell you George we appreciate
18 you and thank you so much. We appreciate you being with
19 us.

20 (Applause.)

21 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Thank you Joe so much. Thanks
22 everybody here.

23 I think you kind of summed it up in your opening
24 prayer Joe. It is an opportunity to serve. Having had
25 the chance to do that and feel some effectiveness in that

1 role, it is something pretty unique.

2 I appreciate it very much.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you and we wish you the
4 best.

5 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Thank you.

6 JOE SPRAGGINS: We are going to be closed Labor
7 Day so don't come in here. That is September the 5th.

8 Also, we've got the Gulf States Marine Fisheries
9 Commission on October the 17th through the 19th in San
10 Antonio.

11 We have the Gulf of Mexico Alliance meeting on
12 October the 20th in Gulf Shores.

13 The Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council
14 meeting October 24th through the 27th will be here. I think
15 it is at the Beau Rivage. We were able to bring it here
16 so maybe y'all can come listen to some of the meetings and
17 be there for that.

18 We had an auction at Lyman and I tell you what;
19 I didn't know how much equipment we had. We had some
20 stuff up there. There was everything from fish tanks all
21 the way down to a battery, or two. I don't know what was
22 sold.

23 Patrick, have you got an update on that?

24 PATRICK LEVINE: I can give an update on it
25 really quick.

1 we closed the bids on August the 9th. we tallied
2 everything up yesterday and beginning today the winners of
3 those auction items will be updated.

4 Like Director Spraggins said, we had trolling
5 motors, we had engines and we had props. we had all kinds
6 of equipment, boat trailers.

7 what is huge for the agency is that we have been
8 able to put that stuff in auction and we took a little bit
9 different approach by things that would have been scraped
10 in the past. They say one man's trash is another man's
11 treasure and in this opportunity we have proven that.

12 There were people who wanted some aluminum boat
13 trailers and who wanted some engines.

14 I am going to round it up. Around a hundred and
15 forty thousand dollars will be coming back to the Agency
16 out of that equipment that is being sold.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: Appreciate it.

18 while you are up there, why don't you give us an
19 update on derelict vessels?

20 PATRICK LEVINE: Say that one more time.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS: The derelict vessels.

22 PATRICK LEVINE: I tell you we have been working
23 extremely hard on the Derelict Vessel Program with our
24 legal staff, with Ms. Sandy and with Steven, Roy Lipscomb,
25 Jack Ewing and Russell have been working really hard on

1 identifying the vessels.

2 Really good news. It is absolutely amazing that
3 beginning July the 1st, when you start contacting people
4 and telling them that they may be penalized for not
5 removing a vessel, they started moving some of them.

6 I would say somewhere in the neighborhood of
7 fifty percent of the vessels that we have had on a list
8 for a couple of years, they are gone. We are extremely
9 thankful for that.

10 We are continually working on the other vessels
11 that are out there and are going to be very, very soon, as
12 a matter of fact today having a meeting to finalize
13 hopefully the scope of work and what it will look like on
14 putting it out for bid for vendors to go out there and
15 start removing the ones that people have not moved.

16 That process is happening and, if y'all hear of
17 any other derelict vessels that are out there, if you go
18 on the website dmr.ms.gov and you go to programs, under
19 programs you can see derelict vessels right there. You
20 can click on it and fill out a vessel of concern report
21 and we will get on it immediately.

22 Thank you to everyone who has helped us in that
23 program so far.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS: It has worked very well. I thank
25 the legislators and the governor for passing that bill for

1 us because without it we didn't have the grounds to do the
2 things that we are able to do now.

3 Before it had to be either spilling some type of
4 liquid, or it had to be impeding the waterway, for us to
5 be able to ask to remove it.

6 Now we can remove anything that is derelict, or
7 abandoned.

8 Appreciate it, Patrick.

9 PATRICK LEVINE: Thank you.

10 JOE SPRAGGINS: We had a thing called sec square
11 and it was passed by the legislature this last year. It
12 basically realigned everyone. It realigned everyone in
13 all the states in all the agencies.

14 It was questionable about how good it was going
15 to be at one time, but I think it has turned out to be
16 pretty good. We were able to give quite a few raises this
17 year that we were able to raise some people's salaries and
18 get them close to where they should be. They are not
19 there yet.

20 There is a thing called market and that is what
21 we are shooting for. We are going to try to keep on
22 moving this forward until we get our personnel up to
23 market value. That is what they should get paid.

24 It has really worked out great and we appreciate
25 it.

1 One of the big things it has done is it has
2 brought our law enforcement up to where we are competitive
3 with Harrison County and Biloxi and Gulfport and others so
4 we can compete now. We can start a law enforcement
5 officer out at the same as they are paying and that is
6 great. That helps us a whole lot and it helps us to keep
7 our law enforcement officers in there. We appreciate it.

8 We have a thing called Charter Boat License
9 Recreational Permits.

10 Rick, come on up for a second. You and I have
11 been working on that. This is something that is going to
12 come up in Gulf Council. We need to look at it and decide
13 what we need to do.

14 Rick, I will let you give a little synopsis of
15 it, since you know it better than I do.

16 RICK BURRIS: You have been hearing about FES and
17 the way that MRIP acknowledges effort and I don't want to
18 say antiquated, but it is not an accurate system. That is
19 the disparity between the numbers that we have in Tails n'
20 Scales and the numbers that MRIP has with their Red
21 Snapper landings. Red Snapper is just an example.

22 The effort is the problem so we have been
23 talking with some of the other states. One of the ways to
24 gauge effort is through license sales. As you know, we
25 sell approximately eighty thousand saltwater recreational

1 fishing licenses in the state and there are only two to
2 three thousand that are registered Tails n' Scales users.

3 That low percentage, less than five percent, or
4 around five percent of our licensed saltwater anglers
5 actually participate in the Red Snapper fishery. It is a
6 little bit more than that probably, if you add people in
7 the boat.

8 They are surveying all of these licensed anglers
9 and we discovered they are surveying a lot of unlicensed
10 anglers and that is going into driving the effort.

11 One way to get around that is to do something
12 similar to what Louisiana and Alabama have which is an
13 offshore landing permit. If you are going to fish for
14 Federally-managed species, you have to have a specific
15 permit that allows you to do so.

16 There has been some talk of the Federal
17 government controlling it. If you are going to fish in
18 Federal waters, you need a Federal license.

19 The states don't really agree with that. We
20 believe that we can manage that a lot better than the feds
21 can. So we are going to talk about potentially developing
22 some sort of endorsement, or permit, to where if you are
23 going to fish out of your state in Federal waters that you
24 purchase that and that way the effort can be honed in to
25 just those people fishing in Federal waters because what

1 they are doing is they are taking anybody that is fishing
2 for any species counting that as effort and it is
3 accounted for in, for instance, Red Snapper.

4 That is one of the reasons why our numbers are
5 so inflated with MRIP surveys compared to Tails n' Scales.

6 We want to start looking into that. We talked
7 to some other states. They are on board. Like I said,
8 Louisiana and Alabama pretty much have it already, but if
9 we could get all the states on board it would be a step in
10 the right direction.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: The biggest thing is we don't
12 need the Federal Government telling us how to manage our
13 resources and that is exactly what they are trying to do.
14 They are trying to do this and they are trying to come in
15 to more of a management of our resources. We know how to
16 manage it and we can manage it as good, or better, than
17 anybody else, and we need to be able to do that.

18 I have talked with other states and I hope that
19 we will be able to keep that away to where we can just
20 keep the status quo and let us do our own.

21 RICK BURRIS: That's right and just to mention,
22 we are not talking about a license. We are not talking
23 about a whole lot of additional cost. I don't know what
24 it would be, but it would be a permit, or endorsement.
25 That way the Agency could control it. It wouldn't be any

1 major expense to the angler.

2 we believe if there was a Federal license, it
3 would be probably a substantive cost because they would
4 have to fund the management of those licenses and whatnot.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS: Trevor, do you have anything else
6 to add to that?

7 Trevor is our SSC guy so we have got to keep up
8 with him pretty hard.

9 TREVOR MONCRIEF: Essentially how these estimates
10 are calculated and why this is a better approach than what
11 is being done now, right now they are using an address-
12 frame and a license-frame to send out mail outs.

13 Anybody that has a recreational license, y'all
14 might have gotten these in the past. Essentially it asks
15 how many days you fished off a boat, how many days you
16 fished off the shore.

17 Once those responses come back, they are
18 partitioned out based on whether they match to the license
19 data-frame, or not.

20 For our state, we have unmatching which
21 attributes them to an unlicensed category and the
22 unlicensed group is a lot larger than the licensed group
23 and that inflates our harvest estimates.

24 The other thing is that that effort is then
25 partitioned into where you fished.

1 Ronnie, you have probably had a lot of MRIP
2 folks come up to you from our group. They give surveys
3 and everything else like that. They ask you where you
4 fished and you state within three miles, or outside of
5 three miles.

6 The responses our staff gathers on those surveys
7 is how some of that effort is partitioned out. When we
8 have a lot of folks that went Red Snapper fishing, for
9 instance, we go to West Beach, or anything else like that,
10 our proportion of folks fishing out in the EEZ go up, so
11 we have a higher effort estimate that comes across.

12 This entire process will essentially narrow down
13 that frame of anglers that we are going to be asking how
14 many times they fished so that we don't have this effect
15 from this large group of unlicensed anglers pushing in on
16 our effort estimate and causing it to inflate and
17 hopefully what we will see is that the magnitude will be
18 more in line with what we think it is and the patterning
19 will match what we think it is because right now we are
20 not seeing that.

21 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Basically, in a nutshell,
22 if we sell eighty thousand recreational licenses, they are
23 accounting for each one of those people catching offshore
24 species, or Red Snapper.

25 If we had this permit, then, you can narrow it

1 down just to the people who have that permit.

2 Right?

3 TREVOR MONCRIEF: To a degree, yes.

4 Essentially, what it will allow us to do is send
5 out specifically targeted surveys to those individuals to
6 ask them how many times they fished.

7 The overall universe will be smaller because you
8 will have folks who are actually reef fish fishing.

9 what it will also help is partitioning that
10 effort from what is called this unlicensed group, or the
11 unmatched group. Essentially, they are licensed anglers
12 that are responding that aren't matching to the license
13 data-frame, so they are being attributed to this larger
14 group.

15 Hopefully, everything we are doing here will
16 kind of narrow all of this stuff down so that when we get
17 these responses, it will be attributed to the license
18 holders and that will be a little bit more reflective of
19 the magnitude of harvest because four trips each for ten
20 thousand anglers is still a lot less than one trip per
21 three hundred and eighty thousand unlicensed anglers, and
22 that is kind of where we are right now is figuring that
23 out.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS: while you are standing there, why
25 don't you talk about snapper?

1 TREVOR MONCRIEF: All right. We reopened snapper
2 season on Friday. There were a lot of storms in the area
3 on Friday, so we had limited amount of participation. It
4 picked back up on Saturday and Sunday, and we harvested
5 around five thousand pounds. A little bit lower effort
6 than we would expect, but we have kind of seen lower
7 effort throughout this year because of the gas prices and
8 everything else. We will just see how it all kind of
9 plays out.

10 I think right now we are sitting at around sixty
11 percent of the ACL being harvested. We've got a little
12 way to go. We will see what Labor Day and all of that
13 brings as far as pressure. If these gas prices go down, I
14 think we will have a lot more folks starting to get out on
15 the water.

16 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Trevor, I've got a
17 question for you and Joe as well, I guess.

18 I got a phone call, or a text message last night
19 and phone call this morning and the question posed to me
20 was why do we not do a projected closure date for the end
21 of the season like we do the first part of the season?

22 where he was going with that is he is a charter
23 boat captain. He's got clients saying, can we Red Snapper
24 fish in the middle of October? Is it still going to be
25 open?

1 He doesn't have anything to give them.

2 TREVOR MONCRIEF: The tough part of projecting
3 out a closure date is that we might not be able to foresee
4 the effort.

5 For instance, if you had asked me this question
6 in 2019, we would have said, well, that is probably
7 something we can look into and try to project a closure
8 date.

9 Then, 2020 happened and our effort skyrocketed.

10 Then, we have what has happened this year
11 compared to 2021. The 2021 season kind of extended out a
12 little bit longer and at the beginning of the year we
13 never could have predicted that. We would not have seen
14 it coming.

15 Then, this year with gas prices and everything
16 else, it is really hard to go out to a definitive date.

17 We have projected in the past and we have run
18 projections, and, then, tested to see where we always
19 ended up and there have been times that we closed on a
20 weekend because we thought that we would be going over and
21 ended up a storm popped up over the weekend and tanked
22 effort, and, then, we had to reopen and reopen.

23 It is just a difficult fishery to establish a
24 closure date for because it is so dynamic. We can try to
25 provide rough dates to that degree, but there is a high

1 probability that we either close earlier than that, or we
2 will have to close on the established closure date and
3 reopen at a later date. That is just something we try to
4 avoid.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS: Can we pretty much just say
6 because of where we are sitting today at sixty percent and
7 we are in the middle of August can we feel comfortable to
8 go through the end of October?

9 TREVOR MONCRIEF: Yes. I'm fairly positive we
10 will be open through the end of October.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: We can tell them the end of
12 October we feel comfortable with?

13 Does that make sense?

14 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I think that will give
15 them a good idea.

16 TREVOR MONCRIEF: When we see it coming, we try
17 to let folks know as quickly as we can. We don't want to
18 give them three days before the season closes. We try to
19 project out as far as we can so we can let folks know.
20 Sometimes it is just not possible.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS: One other thing is we are going
24 to talk about it. I have talked to council about it. I
25 would like Mississippi to move in the direction of coming

1 out from under MRIP and NOAA. I would like for
2 Mississippi to move in that direction to follow Louisiana
3 and Texas and to be independent.

4 It is going to mean the legislature is going to
5 have to allow us to spend some money to do it and maybe
6 allocate a little bit for us, but it's not that much. We
7 are talking around six hundred grand a year, or something
8 in that neighborhood, to be able to do it. I think we can
9 definitely do that.

10 We can manage our resource better. This way we
11 can have our opening. We will still do surveys. We will
12 still do that things that need to be done. That is how we
13 will manage it, but we will do it under our surveys and
14 not under theirs. I like that a whole lot better.

15 I have told NOAA. They are not happy with me.
16 I have told them that.

17 I think if you saw the letter that Senator
18 Wicker sent out, he wasn't happy either and neither were a
19 lot of the other senators from the Gulf, and I think that
20 they explained to him that MRIP is not working.

21 I tried to explain that to them last time at the
22 Gulf Council, that the system of broken and needs to be
23 fixed, and they don't want to fix it.

24 Whenever you take the State of Mississippi and
25 you take five days in a two-year period and jeopardize us

1 for three months each of fishing every day catching the
2 limit and the fourteen hundred boats and we could fish for
3 five days and probably didn't have four hundred boats in
4 the five days.

5 It is amazing and they just will not look at it.
6 They will not.

7 Trevor, come on. You know all of this better
8 than I do.

9 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Joe, I've got a quick
10 question, too, on that.

11 If we took that into our own hands, would that
12 only include the three miles past the barrier islands?

13 JOE SPRAGGINS: It would include nine miles.

14 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Nine miles?

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: Nine miles, plus it would also do
16 the reef fish.

17 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: If we landed at a port in
18 Mississippi private, or public, regardless, would we go
19 past that nine miles, if we were doing our own?

20 TREVOR MONCRIEF: Doing this would not allow for
21 us to oversee, or supersede, any Federal rules and
22 regulations that were out there, but what it would do is
23 that we would still calculate the harvest estimates for
24 each area that is being fished within nine miles.

25 I will say to the Director's point that we have

1 been working within the transition group which is a group
2 that was assigned by the council to work through some of
3 the stuff.

4 We have provided comments multiple times. We
5 have given presentations and we are still working with
6 them to try to figure out exactly what is going on within
7 Mississippi.

8 There is a research plan coming up to look at
9 some of these things and we are going to be doing some
10 research with Tails n' Scales, too, to try to make it even
11 better than it is now.

12 I will say as a state we have been in constant
13 contact with them for the last couple of months. Since
14 this transition group started, we have provided our
15 hypotheses, what we think is happening and try to figure
16 out ways to fix these things.

17 Some of them are within the license DataFrame
18 and that is what we are working on now and getting that in
19 a timely manner and transferring it over.

20 Some of it is figuring out surveys. If I send a
21 surveyor out to Gulfport Lake in the middle of the winter,
22 they might get some surveys; they might not, and there are
23 a lot of sites that are like that where I can send someone
24 out for six hours and they get two surveys. It might not
25 contribute as a whole and it might lead us into this small

1 sample size scenario that we are running into.

2 We are throwing everything we can out there. We
3 are trying to work with them the best we can to improve it
4 and it is leading down the road to what the Director has
5 said. At some point we are going have to decide what is
6 best for our state and what is best for our anglers, as
7 far as continuing to provide them access, and that is kind
8 of where we are right now.

9 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That was something I
10 couldn't wrap my head around last time we talked about all
11 of this was the sampling sites and when they were there.
12 A lot of those seemed like they aligned their times when
13 people just weren't going to be fishing out in those
14 areas.

15 TREVOR MONCRIEF: That is kind of what we talked
16 about a fair amount with them and it is actually gaining
17 traction on the east coast as well. They are asking the
18 same questions.

19 Some of that comes down to the design of making
20 sure you have coverage across not only high-use sites, but
21 the low-use sites because you don't want something to be
22 happening in a low-use site that is completely different
23 from what the fishery is observing anywhere else.

24 Our argument has been for sites like Gulfport
25 Lake and up in the rivers and everything else, most of

1 those folks are one dimensional. They are doing one thing
2 and we are pretty confident to say that the patterns we
3 are observing at one probably cover the rest of them as
4 well.

5 we can take some of the surveys and partition
6 them to medium-use and high-use sites. We can increase
7 the number of surveys and not have the sample size problem
8 that we are having.

9 we are exploring every avenue we can as a state
10 and it is leading us into some tough decisions at the
11 moment.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS: Trevor is doing a great job with
13 us on the SSC and fighting for us, but they are still
14 holding hard. Trevor will tell you, they are still
15 holding hard and they are saying that they are going to
16 cut two-thirds of the State of Mississippi's allocation,
17 if they get their way with it.

18 There is no way you can take best available
19 science and say that. If you could, we would be okay. If
20 it was true, we would be all right.

21 I don't think there is a single soul in this
22 Department of Marine Resources that would not support
23 something we thought was overfishing, but we are not and
24 that hundred-and-fifty thousand pounds is about right for
25 Mississippi. It works good. We have seen that. Plus, or

1 minus, a little bit wouldn't hurt either way, but we don't
2 need to get very much off of that.

3 Just to throw those two months out the two
4 years, would have brought us back almost in line with what
5 they were looking at, but they just can't understand.

6 They are going to take their data and they are
7 going to use their data. Trevor knows this a lot better
8 than I do, but it is not correct and there is just no way
9 it works.

10 TREVOR MONCRIEF: The argument we are having is
11 exactly that, trying to at least throw out some of the
12 low-use ones that are causing some of these problems, and,
13 then, looking into all the ways to see what is causing the
14 spikes that we are seeing.

15 Right now it is that partitioning of effort
16 across the board and where that effort is coming from.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: We are sitting here at sixty
18 percent right now. Alabama is at twenty percent, thirty-
19 five or forty percent.

20 A lot of it is due to the pure facts of cost of
21 fuel and everything else. It is not just so much the cost
22 of fuel. It is the cost of people coming down to go to
23 the beaches because they can't afford to pay twenty-five
24 hundred dollars for four days on the beach and go fishing,
25 too. A lot of things have gone crazy. We will see what

1 happens there.

2 Louisiana is kind of holding their own,
3 I don't know about Texas. Never hear from them.
4 I don't now about Florida because we don't hear
5 from them.

6 TREVOR MONCRIEF: Louisiana did raise their bag
7 limit.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes, they raised it to three, but
9 they did that last year. They felt they had to do that to
10 keep their quota where it was. It's okay. It is going
11 good.

12 Common sense we understand, but not when you
13 start trying to skew it one way, or the other, and it is
14 so far skewed.

15 As I told them the other day, in statistics when
16 I -- it has been a long time since I have been in college,
17 but Trevor you have been there since I have and I think it
18 is still the same. The variable on just about anything is
19 four percent. In statistics, if you look at it, the
20 variable is around four percent.

21 well, we are inside four percent. We are at
22 three point five five percent and how do they even worry
23 about inside the variable and they try to tell us that
24 that is going to right the ship. To take out the smallest
25 thing is not going to do it. Righting the ship by taking

1 out the smallest is not going to do it.

2 If they are going to right the ship, take out
3 Florida, take out Alabama, part of that. I'm not against
4 them, but if you are going to right the ship, take it out
5 from where it is, if you are saying we overfish when
6 they've got two million pounds and we've got a hundred and
7 fifty-five thousand pounds.

8 TREVOR MONCRIEF: A lot of this stems from what
9 y'all can view as standardized stream, or stream across
10 the board.

11 Things we pointed out is even if you add the
12 most standardized and rigorous program across the board
13 with all of these statistics like MRIP does, it is a huge
14 program. It covers us, the east coast, Hawaii across the
15 board, but just because it is a standardized implemented
16 federal program does not mean it lacks biases and where we
17 see those biases occur is in smaller states.

18 That is what we are dealing with right now.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you Trevor. I hated to
20 take up so much of your time today, but I felt y'all
21 needed to know these things because these are things that
22 are coming up at the Gulf Council and y'all need to know
23 what is happening with that, also.

24 That pretty much completes the Agency update.

25 USDA Processors Grants, Traci, real quick.

1 We are getting some people in and working. Good
2 deal.

3 Any update on the Bonnet Carre?

4 RICK BURRIS: Unlike like most months, I do have
5 an update. We received some comments from OMB. They are
6 nothing substantive. We are currently addressing them.
7 We are almost done with them. We should get that back to
8 them this week.

9 Mainly it is just questions of how are you going
10 to do this, how are you doing to do that which is pretty
11 much addressed in the spend plan, but we are having to
12 readdress it. That has just been the theme here the past
13 few years, but OMB has reviewed it and they have sent us
14 comments. We are moving in a positive trajectory. That
15 is a good thing and hopefully this will be the last round.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS: It is at OMB?

17 RICK BURRIS: Yes. The comments that we are
18 sending back will go to OMB.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS: Senator Wicker will be the key
20 speaker today for lunch. I want to talk to him about it.

21 RICK BURRIS: Now, NOAA is the middle man. NOAA
22 sent it to me and said these are comments from OMB.
23 Hopefully these are the last comments from OMB and we can
24 proceed after that, but I can't control that.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: It seems to take forever to get

1 anything done.

2 The last thing is Actions Update, Sandy.

3 SANDY CHESNUT: At the July meeting the
4 Commission recommended and the Director approved two of
5 the four no wake zones that were requested from the
6 Jackson County Board of Supervisors in the Old Fort Bayou
7 waterway and they tabled the other, and the Director
8 approved those as well.

9 The Commission elected Ronnie Daniels as Chair
10 and Cam ROberds as the Vice Chair, and that is it.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: Any questions anyone?

12 (No response.)

13 JOE SPRAGGINS: Sir, that is our update from the
14 Agency.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you Director.

16 Do any of our Commissioners have anything to
17 report today?

18 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I've got a quick one,
19 Ronnie.

20 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All right.

21 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: We did our second annual
22 Bluefish Tournament. It is basically a tag-and-release
23 tripletail tournament.

24 Some of that funding comes from this department
25 for the Tripletail Program to Gulf Coast Research Lab. I

1 just wanted to say those funds were put to good use two
2 weekends ago. We tagged almost thirty tripletail in one
3 day. It was a great tournament and I just wanted
4 everybody to know that money is going to good use.

5 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That is great. The
6 tagging reports that come back on those are so
7 interesting.

8 One of the things that I learned whenever I was
9 doing it is how fast they grow. Those fish grow at an
10 incredible rate.

11 Chief, Office of Marine Patrol.

12 The Chief is not here today. Deputy Chief.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS: He is on the road.

14 DEPUTY CHIEF: Good morning everyone.

15 July was a pretty busy month. The numbers kind
16 of speak for themselves. Y'all have your report.

17 Just quickly off the top, we had twenty-six
18 hundred and sixty-eight stops in July. That is plus one
19 thousand from this time last year, and a hundred and
20 forty-one citations. That is versus fifty-six this time
21 last year.

22 If there is anything of particular interest to
23 anybody, I will attempt to answer any questions.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I don't believe so. Keep
25 up the good work.

1 DEPUTY CHIEF: Yes, sir. Thank y'all.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: Might I remind everybody
4 Mississippi is still the highest in the Gulf on intercepts
5 for snapper.

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Coastal Resources
7 Management, Greg.

8 GREG CHRISTODOULOU: This is a permit request by
9 the City of Biloxi. It involves the rebuilding of the
10 lighthouse pier at the intersection of Porter and Highway
11 90. It is in the General Use District and the agent is
12 Seymour Engineering.

13 The majority of this project is the
14 reconstruction of the pier. You can see three hundred and
15 forty-five by eight initially. Then, there will be a
16 covered pier section, and, then, another couple of open
17 pier sections with a T at the end (indicating slide).

18 Another portion of this project comprises a
19 jetty. This is not your typical jetty like you think of
20 that protects harbors, or boat channels, or anything like
21 that. This jetty is basically more functioning for
22 resiliency and access to the water.

23 Most of y'all are pretty familiar with the Coast
24 and how you see areas that have been there for years like
25 Moses pier, the jetty that leads to Moses pier, jetties

1 that lead to Courthouse, Washington Avenue in Bay St.
2 Louis, et cetera.

3 This is an opportunity for them to put this
4 structure there to allow more access. The sand beach
5 doesn't allow a lot of access to people who are
6 handicapped, or riding on scooters, and things like that.

7 You will have this jetty that will have a
8 sidewalk on top of it and it will allow access for those
9 folks, as well as we do know in the past that jetties have
10 also been a good fishing area. Anytime you have a chance
11 to put some structure out there, you do get an attractant.

12 Also, another portion of the project, final part
13 is the dredging for the project for the access. This will
14 be temporary. The material will be sidecast to the side,
15 and, then, it will be placed back when the work is
16 complete.

17 They have requested a variance for the fill
18 associated with the jetty. This is not the greatest
19 drawing in the world, but the jetty will be approximately
20 a hundred and twenty feet over the sand beach, and, then,
21 another two hundred and forty feet out into the open water
22 areas. Then, the piers will extend from the end of the
23 jetty.

24 Now, one thing that we commonly get associated
25 with jetties especially on the front like this is you have

1 a buildup. Because of the way the currents work, you have
2 a buildup of sand on the east end and you have the area to
3 the west of the jetty that gets scarred, et cetera.

4 well, in this case, Harrison County who
5 administers the sand beach has written in a letter when
6 they submit the permit applications that they are okay
7 with this. They understand that that could be a
8 consequence of the project. They are onboard knowing that
9 this could occur.

10 Here are just some pictures of how it is
11 currently. You do see that the beach has eroded
12 substantially. There have been past permits in place to
13 renourish the beach. Then we have a view looking towards
14 the west.

15 This project was placed in the Sun Herald and on
16 the DMR website. We received no comments.

17 we also had a public hearing to justify the
18 variance request and we had no comments for that as well.

19 DEQ is reviewing the project.

20 Archives and History had no objections.

21 wildlife Fisheries and Parks had no objections.

22 The Secretary of State has said that the area is
23 already under an existing Tidelands Lease.

24 In this case, the staff recommends that the
25 project serves a higher public purpose by providing more

1 resilient structures. The jetty will provide attachment
2 sites to provide secondary productivity and provide refuge
3 for marine organisms.

4 The staff requests a motion that the Commission
5 recommends to the Executive Director the approval of the
6 variance and the permit.

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Have we got any questions?
8 (No response.)

9 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: If we don't have any
10 questions, do we have a motion to approve the staff's
11 recommendation?

12 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion.

13 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second it.

14 All those in favor?

15 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

16 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

17 COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: Aye.

18 GREG CHRISTODOULOU: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

20 It looks like we are going to have Ms. Brewer up
21 for Finance and Administration.

22 LESLIE BREWER: Good morning everyone. I'm
23 Leslie Brewer CFO. I will be presenting the financials
24 for the month that ended July 31st, 2022.

25 At the end of the month our State and our Agency

1 Revenue was three million dollars. Our State Net Income
2 was two point eight and our Agency was two point four.

3 After a month, both of our budgets were at
4 ninety-nine point five percent.

5 Does anyone have any questions?

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I am glad you are in
7 charge of all of those numbers and not me. Thank you.

8 LESLIE BREWER: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Ms. Charmaine.

10 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Good morning.

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

14 News items included Red Snapper season
15 reopening, the Red Snapper project with GCRL and the
16 Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety Block
17 Grant.

18 Seafood Technology hosted a Basic Seafood HACCP
19 training with ten registrants. The training was held July
20 the 27th through the 29th in the Bolton Building.

21 MDMR staff participated at One Coast Day at the
22 Neshoba County Fair. On July 27th, we fed Gulf-fresh
23 Mississippi seafood to an estimated right hundred guests.
24 we also promoted the Mississippi Seafood program with a
25 booth featuring promotional materials the morning of July

1 28th. Many agencies and organizations from the Gulf Coast
2 attended One Coast Day to promote everything our coast has
3 to offer.

4 Mississippi Seafood also attended the Great
5 American Seafood Cook-off in New Orleans on August 6th.
6 Cooper Miller with Forklift in Tupelo represented
7 Mississippi after winning the Mississippi Seafood Cook-off
8 in May. He competed against chefs from thirteen states.
9 Chef Cooper did an amazing job with his dish, but
10 Massachusetts took home the win.

11 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

12 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: We are going to have a
14 public comment.

15 GILBERT RAMSEY: I'll wait.

16 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: You are going to wait
17 until the end, Mr. Ramsey?

18 GILBERT RAMSEY: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All right. We will put
20 that to the side.

21 These are always my favorite. Now we are going
22 to get to Marine Fisheries and we've got some new records.

23 TREVOR MONCRIEF: We've got a couple of Youth
24 records this month.

25 First is the Youth Conventional records and

1 these will go to Mr. Rodie Armes. He brought them in a
2 couple of weeks ago.

3 The first one is a Leatherjack with a new record
4 of two point four ounces.

5 There is a picture of the fish and a picture of
6 Rodie with the fish.

7 He also had a Youth Fly Record for a Ladyfish,
8 Elops saurus. That was two pounds seven point six eight
9 ounces.

10 There is a picture of the fish and there a
11 picture of Rodie with the fish. He has learned that long-
12 arm technique really well.

13 We just need a motion to recommend the adoption
14 of these state records.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That young man must have a
16 whole wall full of pictures at his house.

17 GREG CHRISTODOULOU: He is getting close.

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I will be happy to make
19 the motion.

20 Do we have a second?

21 COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: I'll second it.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All those in favor?

23 COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: Aye.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

25 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

2 Do we have any other business?

3 (No response.)

4 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All right Mr. Ramsey. Now
5 you are up.

6 GILBERT RAMSEY: Good morning.

7 In the past I went to the Gulf Coast Research
8 Laboratory seminar and at this seminar I was introduced to
9 Gulfport Robotics students and the students approached me
10 and inquired how they could help me.

11 what we have done is we have developed a robotic
12 lifting system to accommodate disabled people from the
13 pier onto the boat and back onto the pier.

14 They got an MIT grant and I was recognized for
15 this introduction.

16 what I am trying to introduce is an opportunity.
17 I have seen the Army Corps of Engineers develop the pier
18 on Deer Island. In 2015 it was introduced for
19 accessibility.

20 well, what does that do for the disabled
21 community, amenities for loved ones and caretakers?

22 The caretakers right now they have blown-up
23 balloons they are trying to utilize from the University of
24 Southern Mississippi and it is difficult to go to the
25 sand, and the visitors center has one they introduced and

1 it is difficult to go through the sand.

2 The hunting industry uses track wheelchairs in
3 the woods.

4 why don't we bring the track wheelchairs to the
5 islands for the disabled community and their loved ones
6 and caretakers to enjoy nature, six zero six Outdoor
7 Stewardship Program and Master Nationalist Program, Eric
8 Sparks?

9 I am trying to make sure it is implemented
10 appropriately in our community, including Heritage Trails
11 partnership. It is called Mr. Ryan Vega, Veterans
12 Government Innovation System, VA Innovation and what it
13 includes is bringing out the initiative they are doing,
14 collaboration to initiate economic development health
15 purposes for our loved ones and caretakers for our
16 brothers and sisters in the armed forces.

17 I am here to help you to represent this
18 appropriately, and I will be representing at city hall at
19 1:30 to introduce it and the Mississippi Development
20 Authority initiation.

21 I am coming forth with this appropriately, and
22 with our bottled water company. We have a veterans
23 bottled water company we launched out of Collins,
24 Mississippi. We have donated houses, cash and dormitories
25 with the proceeds.

1 I am doing vending machines with the Mississippi
2 Department of Rehabilitation Services to accommodate
3 workforce development, economic development opportunities
4 for these ladies and gentlemen that are not capable of
5 doing appropriate positions.

6 I want to purchase eighty acres north of Ocean
7 Springs to develop organic gardening to feed the homeless,
8 horseback riding for the blind and everything.

9 I am coming forth to enhance the recreational
10 opportunities, paraplegic fishing tournaments.

11 I was representing this appropriately before the
12 pandemic with Mr. Jamie Miller and all three counties
13 before the pandemic.

14 I'm coming back out of the woods and I am
15 focused because I'm on the right medication. I'm not
16 sporadically speaking anymore.

17 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: We appreciate that, Mr.
18 Ramsey.

19 GILBERT RAMSEY: I just want to help y'all
20 understand this.

21 Thank you very much for your assistance and
22 guidance.

23 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

24 If we don't have any other comments, do we have
25 a motion to adjourn?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.

All in favor?

COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER McCLENDON: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Everybody have a good day.

CERTIFICATE

1
2
3 I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter,
4 do hereby certify that the above and foregoing forty-two
5 pages, including this page, is a true and correct
6 transcript of the August 16, 2022, meeting of the
7 Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine Resources, as
8 taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated in the
9 aforementioned matter in shorthand, with electronic
10 verification, and later reduced to typewritten form to the
11 best of my skill and ability; and, further, that I am not
12 a relative, employee, or agent, of any of the parties
13 thereto, nor financially interested in the cause.

14
15
16 S/ _____
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25