

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 9:03 a.m.,

Bolton Building Auditorium

1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Ronnie Daniels
Jonathan McLendon
Cammack "Cam" Roberds

ALSO PRESENT:

Joe Spraggins
Sandy Chesnut, Esquire
Steven Eckert, Esquire

REPORTED BY:

Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich
mburdine@sbmreporting.com

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We
3 would like to welcome y'all to the January 17th
4 Mississippi Advisory Commission meeting.

5 I would like to start by apologizing for
6 my absence last month. I had a little mess-up
7 with my calendar there.

8 I would like to ask Commissioner Roberds
9 to lead us in the pledge this morning.

10 (Pledge of allegiance recited.)

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 Mr. Joe, you want to lead us in the
13 prayer this morning?

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Thank you very much. And, you know,
16 first before we start the prayer, I would just
17 like to tell everybody, you know, there is a lot
18 to be thankful for. If you saw what happened last
19 week with the tornadoes and they came through
20 Alabama and especially in Georgia and Mississippi,
21 there were some areas there -- we were lucky not
22 to have any damage. A lot of people had a lot. I
23 know there was seven people killed in Alabama.
24 I'm not sure of the other numbers, but, you know,
25 we're lucky every day that we're spared, so just

1 thank the Lord for it. And if we could, let's go
2 ahead and go to the prayer.

3 (Moment of prayer.)

4 RONNIE DANIELS:

5 Thank you, Joe.

6 We have got a whole list of minutes to
7 approve here. Can we get a motion to approve the
8 minutes from November 15th, 2022?

9 JONATHAN McLENDON:

10 I will make that motion.

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 I'll second. All in favor?

13 CAM ROBERDS:

14 Aye.

15 JONATHAN McLENDON:

16 Aye.

17 RONNIE DANIELS:

18 Motion to approve the minutes from
19 August 16th, 2022.

20 CAM ROBERDS:

21 I will make a motion.

22 JONATHAN McLENDON:

23 I will second it.

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 All in favor?

1 CAM ROBERDS:

2 Aye.

3 JONATHAN McLENDON:

4 Aye.

5 RONNIE DANIELS:

6 Aye.

7 And motion to approve the minutes from

8 December 13th, 2022.

9 CAM ROBERDS:

10 I will make a motion.

11 JONATHAN McLENDON:

12 And I will second it.

13 RONNIE DANIELS:

14 All in favor?

15 JONATHAN McLENDON:

16 Aye.

17 CAM ROBERDS:

18 Aye.

19 RONNIE DANIELS:

20 Aye.

21 All right. I need a motion to approve

22 of today's agenda.

23 I will make that motion.

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 I will second it.

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 All in favor.

3 JONATHAN McLENDON:

4 Aye.

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 Aye.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Aye.

9 All right. Mr. Joe, we're going to turn
10 it over to you.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 All right. Welcome to a new year, 2023.
13 We will see what happens here. We're looking
14 forward to a great year for the State of
15 Mississippi and Department of Marine Resources.
16 We're putting together a lot of things that we're
17 working on. We're finishing up a lot of different
18 issues.

19 One of the things that we're doing that
20 is going to be very, very important to South
21 Mississippi is we're finishing our Mid-Breton
22 Diversion, our study on it and so soon, we'll have
23 it done and be able to bring it out and let people
24 know what we see on the hydrology side of that.
25 And we're also going to be working on the one on

1 the ecological side of it, too, to see what's
2 going on.

3 That should happen in the next month and
4 we'd be able to -- hopefully be able by -- before
5 next month, be able to brief that and bring it
6 out, and so we'll know what we're looking at.

7 We -- if you have any type of public
8 comment, TJ is in the back back there, so just see
9 TJ, make sure you give it to him so we can get it
10 on the agenda.

11 All right. Let's see. We need a
12 motion, if we could, to modify the agenda. I'm
13 sorry. I messed it up. I should have done it
14 before you accepted it because I see this now. We
15 need to change the meeting from February 21st to
16 February 14th. The 21st is Mardi Gras. I don't
17 think we're going to get too much participation.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 No, probably not.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 So would y'all entertain modifying
22 the -- or just change it? Sandy, how do I need to
23 do that since I messed it up?

24 SANDY CHESNUT:

25 Director, we could actually take that

1 under other business and not have to modify the
2 agenda.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 All right. We'll just take it under
5 other business, then. Okay.

6 RONNIE DANIELS:

7 We'll go ahead and move it under there.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 All right. Legislative updates, we have
10 several things in the legislature right now. The
11 major thing that we're doing is -- you know, there
12 is a couple of things that we're working on to be
13 able to change the license where if you're on a
14 crab boat that everybody there doesn't have to
15 have a license. We'll make it to where it's the
16 same as it is for oysters and shrimp, so that will
17 be a good deal for everybody on that.

18 We're also changing the wording of what
19 a marina is and it's just basically clarifying it
20 and putting it more into what NOAA and EPA is.
21 It's nothing -- anybody that's already there is
22 grandfathered. It's not a problem.

23 We've got a couple of updates with --
24 the big one is going to be -- well, Marine Patrol,
25 we're doing some stuff with that and it's

1 basically just changing the wording to a say that
2 we can match up to the federal side of it, is what
3 we're looking at. It's things -- nothing real
4 major in it.

5 The other thing that we're changing is
6 the on-bottom leases, and we have got a new bill
7 written for the on-bottom leases. You know, we
8 had some last year, but they had some issues with
9 them and so we did not do any of that. So working
10 with the legislators and hopefully we will have
11 this done. They have already introduced the bill
12 or about to put it -- and so they're -- it's going
13 to be a bill where we sat down with the staff and
14 we decided on the Western Gulf what we really need
15 to keep as far as DMR to be able to do public
16 reefs so we can have it for two things, Number 1,
17 the public reef area, and then also for a --
18 reproduction and being able to keep the estuary
19 going and make sure we're doing it.

20 The rest of it, we're going to offer up
21 for lease, and we have it in different areas and
22 showing them what we're going to do. Some has
23 already been leased and it will be according to
24 whatever we have spent on it. And the way it will
25 work is if it's just bare ground, we may not

1 charge but \$2 an acre to be able to do it. But if
2 it's full of cultch, it may be, you know, \$10 an
3 acre, you know, so it's going to be a number.
4 There is going to be a number in there that we
5 work with because it's not fair to give you
6 something that the State has already spent money
7 on and then we have to go buy it and put it on
8 there. So we're going to try to make this as
9 equal as we possibly can.

10 I have got a lot of people that are very
11 interested in trying to get into on-bottom oysters
12 and hopefully this will work and we'll see what's
13 going on with that.

14 We're in the process now of working on
15 the off-bottom -- I mean, the oyster setting
16 facility as to how we want to operate. We did a
17 feasibility study and it came back basically what
18 it would cost us to do it. Now, we're doing
19 another expanded feasibility study on it and
20 hopefully that will go through.

21 We're working with DEQ on it and
22 hopefully we will have permission to do that in
23 the next month and we'll be able to move forward.
24 And I think it will be a way -- the idea is to be
25 able to put the oysters in the water and so we're

1 going to try to do what we can to do it the best
2 way possible.

3 Have I missed anything, Rick, on the
4 legislature? There's probably another one or two.
5 They're minute whatever they were and I can't --
6 Sandy, do you remember anything?

7 SANDY CHESNUT:

8 No, sir.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS:

10 Okay. So we'll be working with them and
11 see what they can do.

12 I'm also going to talk to the
13 legislators about getting us some extra money to
14 be able to do our own MRIP studies and do it in
15 the way we need to do it and do it Mississippi
16 style and to work it out. So I'm going to talk to
17 them about it and see what the deal is. But, you
18 know, we will talk more about that in a little
19 bit.

20 Any questions on legislation?

21 (No response.)

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 Well, is there anybody that didn't see
24 the whale? You know, kind of an ironic situation,
25 but, I mean, I guess looking at it from all

1 indications I was given, that was a very juvenile
2 whale, only like 15,000 pounds and only like
3 30 feet long, instead of being 80 feet long and
4 100,000 or more pounds, whatever they get up to.
5 But it was a fin whale; is that right?

6 At first, they thought it was a Rice's
7 whale, which is really rare. There's only 33
8 known in existence, and I'm glad it wasn't one of
9 them so at least we don't have something like that
10 taken out of the system. But this one is not --
11 there's maybe 4- or 5,000 of these, I think, known
12 in existence, but it's very rare.

13 I have not been given the official
14 results on it and I don't know if anybody else has
15 yet. And I'm sure they're working on it, and
16 Moby and that group and everybody is working on it
17 so we'll know what caused the whale to pass away.
18 But it brought a lot of attention in South
19 Mississippi.

20 Council meeting, we've got it on
21 January 30th to February 2nd in Baton Rouge. We
22 will be talking -- and I will wait and let Trevor
23 talk more about this when we get to it, but we
24 will be talking about snapper. And Trevor has
25 fought hard for us. And I tell you what, he did a

1 great job for us last week over at SSC. Trevor,
2 thank you very much. And he did a great job
3 fighting hard for us over there, and we will talk
4 more about it as to what's going to happen.

5 I don't know the answer. I know that
6 everybody is trying to work with us and we're
7 trying to do the best we can. They have to do
8 what they have to do scientifically and I can't do
9 anything about it. But they all know Mississippi
10 is not overfishing and we're doing the right
11 thing. But we have to live by the rules and
12 that's what we will do and we'll do what we need
13 to do.

14 MDMR Capitol Day will be Wednesday the
15 8th of February at 8:00 a.m. that morning, so
16 we'll go up and have a Capitol Day. Charmaine has
17 not been able to pull the strings to get my
18 biscuits in there yet and my shrimp and grits, but
19 we're going to be there. We'll be showcasing the
20 DMR, so if you want to, come up there.

21 About derelict vessels, started
22 July 1st. As -- the report I have right now,
23 71 -- we have 71 that we have been tracking. Out
24 of that, 53 have been removed. Eighteen are
25 pending removal and we have zero court orders

1 right now, so we're doing good. It's amazing.

2 And Steve and them have worked hard on
3 that, and Roy. We have a new person, Glen
4 Terrell, that's helping with it too. They have
5 been working very hard on this and it has turned
6 out very good to be able to move that many
7 vessels. And I tell you what, they're keeping it
8 going. And Roy is out there chunking one out
9 somewhere. If there's one out there, he will find
10 it, so he's doing a great job. And I think the
11 legislature, we're going to ask them to continue
12 funding this, which I think they will with no
13 questions.

14 We've got President's Day coming up on
15 February 20th, so that's the day before Mardi
16 Gras. So since we're changing -- we're going to
17 look at changing the meeting, I don't think it
18 will make any difference for that.

19 Until I think of something different,
20 that's all I have right now, sir.

21 RONNIE DANIELS:

22 Thank you, Joe.

23 Do any of our commissioners have
24 anything to report today?

25 SANDY CHESNUT:

1 You need to go into employee contracts.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 Oh, I see. She didn't put this on the
4 list. Never mind.

5 All right. Agency update, employment
6 contracts. We've got them?

7 SANDY CHESNUT:

8 Yeah, do that first.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS:

10 Yeah, that was not on my list.

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 I miss one month and you can't figure
13 out how to work everything out?

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Hey, you know, I --

16 MS. MATTA:

17 It's my fault. It's always my fault.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 Glen Terrell is our new contractor in
20 case you -- he's in internal affairs/CID and he's
21 also helping out.

22 All right. Any -- we did the agency
23 update, right? Is there anything else I missed on
24 the agency update? I did all that, and actions.
25 We've got a contract?

1 SANDY CHESNUT:

2 Oh, yeah.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 W.C. Fore, I thought we did that last
5 month. Oh, that's right. We couldn't pass it.
6 W.C. Fore, we've got a \$2.1 million contract to be
7 able to move some barrier island reef, offshore
8 artificial reefs.

9 So could we get a motion?

10 SANDY CHESNUT:

11 You don't need a motion for that.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 Don't need it. Okay.

14 SANDY CHESNUT:

15 No, we're good.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 Boy, 2023 is starting out good.

18 SANDY CHESNUT:

19 Okay. You ready for actions update?

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 Is that next on the agenda?

22 SANDY CHESNUT:

23 That's next on the agenda.

24 We don't have an actions update this
25 month because last month we didn't have a quorum.

1 But what we did was we went ahead and went on with
2 the presentations and those presentations are on
3 the agenda again this month. That's G1A and K1A1.
4 And Commissioner Daniels wasn't able to come last
5 month, so he reviewed those presentations on line.
6 And when those presentations come back up, the
7 Commissioners can ask questions and make their
8 motions then. And that is it.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS:

10 All right. So we don't need to do
11 anything?

12 SANDY CHESNUT:

13 Not until you get to those items.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 And then we'll just go ahead.

16 SANDY CHESNUT:

17 Yeah.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 All right. Am I back on track yet?

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 I think you're done.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 It's time to be quiet.

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 All right. Nothing for any of the

1 Commissioners to report today.

2 Chief, we're going to go ahead and bring
3 you up.

4 KYLE WILKERSON:

5 Well, how is everybody doing? I mean,
6 it's a new year and we're looking forward to it.

7 Our December itself was not a slow
8 month, but it was above average on some of the
9 citations and everything. Nothing really jumps
10 out at me. I mean, the fin whale and then we had
11 a manatee wash up too. We assisted on both
12 dealing with that. We were -- it was televised,
13 so we were -- I don't know if it's good PR or
14 negative PR, but we got it, so we have to live
15 with it.

16 But at the end of the month, it was a
17 really good month on stopping -- I meant, let me
18 take that back, not stopping people, but assisting
19 people. There was about 1,300-plus stops and it
20 went really well.

21 So any questions, please address them?

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 Anybody else got anything?

24 (No response.)

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1 Looks good, Chief. Keep it up.

2 KYLE WILKERSON:

3 Thank you, sir.

4 RONNIE DANIELS:

5 Thank you.

6 All right. Coastal Resources
7 Management, looks like we're going to have
8 Jennifer Wilder up.

9 JENNIFER WILDER:

10 Good morning. So I presented a request
11 for a permit for reconstruction of a historical
12 jetty in Pass Christian last month, so if you have
13 any questions. Ms. Jill is also here again if
14 y'all have any questions for her.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 I think y'all thought it was good,
17 everybody?

18 CAM ROBERDS:

19 Yeah.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 Ronnie, you thought it was good too?

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 I wasn't here last month.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 I said, Ronnie, you thought it was good.

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 This looks like it's in my backyard.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 If y'all want to see something, we can
5 show it to you. We just didn't know if you wanted
6 to go through any of it or not.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 No. I want to just look through it real
9 quick.

10 JOE SPRAGGINS:

11 It's basically where they had some area
12 there before and she is just trying to replace a
13 lot of it.

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15 Okay. That's right.

16 CAM ROBERDS:

17 That's the existing -- right there,
18 yeah. They're just building a new one.

19 RONNIE DANIELS:

20 Looks fine to me. So do we need to make
21 a motion on this?

22 JENNIFER WILDER:

23 I have pulled up a slide because we're
24 requesting that you approve the requested variance
25 and the permit as requested.

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 Okay. Do we have a motion to accept the
3 staff's recommendation?

4 CAM ROBERDS:

5 I will make a motion to accept the
6 staff's recommendation.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 I will second that.

9 All in favor?

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 Aye.

12 JONATHAN McLENDON:

13 Aye.

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15 Aye.

16 Thank you.

17 JENNIFER WILDER:

18 Thank you.

19 RONNIE DANIELS:

20 All right. Ms. Leslie.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 Brandy is going to take her place today.

23 MS. BUSBY:

24 Good morning. Leslie couldn't be here
25 this morning, so I'm filling in for her.

1 Okay. My name is Brandy Busby, Director
2 of Finance. I will be presenting the agency's
3 financials for the month ending December 31st,
4 2022.

5 At the end of December our state revenue
6 was 4.6 million. Our total agency was
7 19.4 million.

8 Our state net he was 959,000, and our
9 total against net income was 3.7 million.

10 After six months of Fiscal Year 2023, we
11 have 89.8 percent of the operating budget
12 remaining, while the Tidelands budget has
13 76 percent remaining.

14 Do you have any questions?

15 RONNIE DANIELS:

16 No, ma'am. Thank you.

17 MS. BUSBY:

18 Thank you.

19 RONNIE DANIELS:

20 All right. Charmaine.

21 MS. SCHMERMUND:

22 Good morning, Commissioners, Director
23 Spraggins, legal.

24 The Mississippi Department of Marine
25 Resources had four media mentions since the

1 December MACMR meeting. News items included
2 shrimp season closing north of the Intercoastal
3 Waterway and our marine information being
4 distributed along the Coast. The calendars are
5 still available here at the Bolton Building and at
6 locations along the Coast for anyone still looking
7 to get them and I also have come some in the back
8 as well. That's it.

9 RONNIE DANIELS:

10 Apparently, those are a hot-ticket item
11 in Pass Christian.

12 MS. SCHMERMUND:

13 Everywhere.

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15 Thank you, Charmaine.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 Is the boat show this weekend?

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 No. The boat show is going to be first
20 weekend in February.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 First weekend in February.

23 RONNIE DANIELS:

24 Yeah, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

25 All right. Trevor.

1 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

2 You want to ahead and cover snapper for
3 the record? Yeah.

4 First off, good morning, Commissioners,
5 everyone. We had a meeting. The SSC held their
6 January meeting in which we covered the motion
7 that was passed by the Council to review the red
8 snapper calibration ratios for the states to
9 derive any updates to those calibrations ratios
10 that they saw fit.

11 Florida, Alabama and Mississippi took
12 advantage of this motion. All presented
13 information. Louisiana still only has one year of
14 data to work with, so there's nothing changed.
15 Texas still continues to use their landings.

16 For our state, I presented the scenario
17 that was provided to y'all in previous meetings in
18 which we used Waves 3 and 4 in years '18 through
19 '20 and provided our justifications as to why we
20 thought that was the appropriate way to move
21 forward.

22 They were a lot of questions for every
23 presentation. I mean, this is 25 or 26 of the SSC
24 members, which represent a lot of folks from the
25 academic community, the federal fisheries

1 biologists, state fisheries biologists across the
2 board.

3 So there was a lengthy discussion. It
4 lasted almost 10 hours in total. At the end of
5 it, we were -- we provided substantive evidence
6 and essentially were -- you know, our ratio was
7 granted, what we had proposed.

8 Now, what had changed in that ratio --
9 and it was oversight on our part and also when we
10 submitted the proposal it wasn't caught, but the
11 CHTS to FEC ratio, which is the Costal Household
12 Telephone Survey to the Fishing Effort Survey,
13 that's both calibrations of MRIP, rather than it
14 being a fixed ratio because we had used, right,
15 because I used -- we used the table that was
16 provided to us in 2020 when the initial
17 calibrations were used. So we used the ratio of
18 2.18.

19 That ratio varies in time because it's
20 model based and it depends on which years and wave
21 you use. It forms to that year. So that ratio
22 went from 2.18 to 1.66, so rather than the 109,000
23 pounds, it's now at -- our ratio gives us 82,000
24 pounds.

25 So we have an improvement, right? We

1 went from a 60 percent reduction to a 50 percent
2 reduction. It was scientifically reviewed
3 thoroughly and the SSC did what they were asked to
4 do by the Council.

5 The options now, I know the director
6 said, you know, we've got to work through some
7 things. Now that it's outside of the scientific
8 side, the Scientific and Statistical Committee, it
9 goes up to the Gulf Council and that's a whole
10 'nother discussion than can happen on the
11 management side of things and everything else.

12 So we're continuing to look for options,
13 continuing to try to get us to that original
14 number to what was proposed, that 110- to 120-
15 range, but for now we had -- we did have an
16 improvement. And I think the biggest thing to
17 take away here is that the SSC, the federal
18 managers, they realize -- they understand the
19 position we're in now. They -- I know sympathy
20 doesn't really get you very far in a lot of cases
21 like this, especially in the scientific realm, but
22 there was a lot of sympathetic views and
23 understanding to what Mississippi is facing right
24 now and how variable the estimates are that are
25 coming out of our state and the difficulty we're

1 facing in the calibration.

2 This is one other thing. The motion
3 passed 11 to five, with five abstentions and a
4 couple of folks absent. That shows you how -- you
5 know, how divided the room was, to a degree, how
6 much thought process there was because the views
7 ranged anywhere from use all available years '18
8 to '21 or whatever else, to the proposal that we
9 provided was accurate, to let's just use Tails and
10 Scales for what they are, right? All of those
11 options were discussed across all the members.

12 So it's just a -- it's very difficult to
13 come to a consensus decision on the scientific
14 side with the SSC when there is so much
15 information there that just counters one another.
16 And both surveys do exactly what they are supposed
17 to do; both of them are sound.

18 Yeah, it was just a -- it was tough
19 discussion, but I would say we came out overall
20 positive. I know it still -- probably doesn't
21 seem that way with a 50 percent reduction, but we
22 took a step in the right direction and now it's
23 moving to the next side to see if we can't work
24 out something on the management side of things.

25 But if y'all have any questions, I'd

1 encourage y'all to ask, just -- I'm sure we're
2 going to start getting some questions from your
3 constituents and everybody else soon.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 Trevor -- and also, for people to
6 understand, you know, they don't -- I don't think
7 anybody there agrees that the MRIP works and it
8 should work for the State of Mississippi. I don't
9 think they agree with that at all. But because
10 the allocations and the numbers were given off of
11 MRIP is the reason they're saying they have to
12 stay within them; is that correct?

13 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

14 Yeah. So right now the current -- the
15 current overall ACLs are derived from the MRIP
16 CHTS, which is the Costal Household Telephone
17 Survey. Those numbers were derived and they have
18 been used on the management side for the last
19 seven years now.

20 What occurred, if y'all remember, just
21 go back in time a little bit, right, 2017, we had
22 a federal extension from the Secretary of
23 Commerce. Thirty-nine additional weekend days
24 were applied to the season.

25 The very next year, there were EFPs that

1 were requested for all of states. In those EFPs,
2 each of the states requested what they thought
3 should be their appropriate number to use for
4 those EFPs. And what we used was the 2017
5 harvest, because prior to that, we had
6 non-compliant state seasons, limited federal
7 seasons, all kinds of stuff; so we went ahead and
8 went with the application of, well, what we
9 harvested in 2017, we'll put that forward and
10 we'll use Tails and Scales to monitor.

11 Now over time, what happened is '18 and
12 '19 occurred with EFPs. It was successful, and
13 then we moved into state management. And when we
14 moved into state management, you operated outside
15 of the extended fishing permits and then this
16 calibration started coming up where you had to
17 calibrate to what the current ACL was. And that's
18 when kind of this started because right now, Tails
19 and Scales is about 50 percent of what CHTS
20 produced in the past.

21 So that's kind of the situation that
22 we're in. We did the best we could with our state
23 to request exactly what we thought we needed and
24 three years later, the scenario changed and
25 brought in state management and brought in

1 calibrations.

2 So it's a difficult management scenario
3 to go through in trying to fight for them, but we
4 are a very small amount of the quota. Three and a
5 half percent is all we requested in the beginning.

6 JOE SPRAGGINS:

7 I mean, and on the scientist side of
8 this and all, they worked hard on this. And I
9 think if you looked at it, 150,000 pounds, give or
10 take a few pounds one way or the other, over the
11 years, that has been a good number for the State
12 of Mississippi. And that is a number that I
13 believe the scientists have told me that this is
14 not overfishing. This is doing what we need to
15 do. This is harvesting the amount we need to
16 harvest if we do it.

17 This year we stayed open 100 and -- how
18 many days? I don't know -- all the way into
19 December and all we only caught, what, 128,000
20 pounds, something like that? I forgot that exact
21 number. Do you have that, Trevor?

22 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

23 Yeah. So we were open for 187 days
24 total and we caught 85.8 percent of the ACLs,
25 about 130,000 pounds.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 So the point I'm getting at is, the
3 management of it by us going back and using the
4 2017 figures turned out to be pretty good. It
5 turned out to be a very good allocation for the
6 State of Mississippi.

7 The MRIP is just a thing that's causing
8 it not to work. And you've got to understand the
9 MRIP, they've got 80,000 people who bought a
10 saltwater fishing license in the State of
11 Mississippi last year.

12 Well, they send out a number of surveys
13 to these people, a telephone survey, they call
14 them or whatever and they question, did you go
15 fishing this year. Well, if you did, then you
16 fished every day and you caught the maximum amount
17 that you could catch with about five people on
18 board. That's about -- am I correct, similar to
19 that, something in that neighborhood? I know I'm
20 exaggerating some.

21 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

22 No. The figure of the overall trips
23 that are taken from MRIP on angler trips in
24 comparison to the license database shows that on
25 average, each angler has to take, I think, 57

1 trips a year, which is a trip every weekend plus
2 one, which even our most avid anglers strive to
3 accomplish, right?

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 The weather is not there either. And,
6 you know, the amount of boats that they was saying
7 that we would have done was, you know,
8 astronomical on the amount than we even have on a
9 normal day. Even the Fourth of July, we didn't
10 meet it on the Fourth of July what they were
11 thinking.

12 But the point I'm getting at is, they
13 know this. They know they've got skewed data.
14 They know it's not correct, but they have nothing
15 to do but follow what they have. Now.

16 There is a lining at the end, right, and
17 the lining at the end is we've got another two
18 years or year and a half to when we do a complete
19 new assessment?

20 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

21 Yeah, it should be two to three years.
22 When the research track assessment is finished and
23 the operational assessment goes through, that will
24 provide new management advice for the fishery.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 And then they will use state data; is
2 that correct?

3 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

4 Yeah. The motion that was passed within
5 the research track is to take what has been
6 completed from transition group process, which is
7 essentially the research across the different
8 surveys, not just ours, but Alabama's, Florida's
9 and MRIP, start to figure out where these
10 comparisons are and figure out what the main
11 issues are. And at that point, once we flesh that
12 one out a little bit, we'll then be able to try to
13 use the state information and the derived
14 information into the new update assessment for
15 management advice.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 And, you know, another offense. What
18 was it, 2016, we had three days?

19 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

20 2017 it was proposed to be three days.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 And then we went to 39.

23 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

24 Thirty-nine extension from the Secretary
25 of Commerce directly. It wasn't an agency

1 decision.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 But, I mean, just think about it, we
4 have come a long way even to where we're at. We
5 can still manage our resource. And we can still
6 be open Memorial Day weekend and we can still be
7 open through July the Fourth just like we normally
8 do. I believe that will be fine. Then we'll come
9 back and then manage it accordingly of what we
10 need to do.

11 But as far as the charter boats and
12 other people, we want to give them as much advance
13 information of what we can so they can book their
14 trips and do things that they need to do. And we
15 will make sure that we work it, and I believe we
16 can work within what we have here.

17 I can tell you that NOAA is talking to
18 some other states and trying to help us, so we
19 might even get a possible bump in what we're
20 getting now. That could be a possibility. I
21 won't say why and who, but I'm just telling you
22 they understand. They understand. It's just that
23 their hands are tied and I believe that's the best
24 way of putting it, unless you've got a better way,
25 but you're a lot smarter about it than I am.

1 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

2 I have just been dealing with it, I
3 think, a lot. So yeah, I mean, the difficulty of
4 it is that MRIP itself is on all scientific review
5 and statistical rigor. It is statistically
6 appropriate. It does everything it's designed to
7 do and everything it's supposed to do.

8 The thing that wasn't taken into account
9 to a degree, right, when a pilot tests all that
10 were done, because they were done in states like
11 Florida and North Carolina, is that there was this
12 thought process that the survey should just be
13 high throughput all times of the year.

14 And what happened in the implementation
15 side of it is when you get to small states like
16 ours where you're not intercepting as many anglers
17 and you're not seeing hundreds of anglers on a
18 day, all of a sudden, you start getting to the
19 point where one survey on one day is
20 representative of the entire two-month period.
21 And that can play out, you know, somewhat variably
22 if we have a Wave 5 where we're open for five days
23 and we get a survey that's on a Saturday at West
24 Beach in Jackson County and the weather is good.

25 All of a sudden that ratio of anglers,

1 right, we stopped 40 anglers that are red snapper
2 fishing, that's representative of the entire ratio
3 of the entire month, so then all that effort from
4 that month, that ratio, the effort gets attributed
5 to that. And so all of a sudden, it seems like
6 we're harvesting 130,000 pounds when in all
7 actuality, we just have one survey that was on the
8 wrong day and it played out exactly the way that
9 was it was designed to.

10 It's just -- it's the nature of it. But
11 there's nothing taking it back, saying that what
12 they did isn't scientifically appropriate or
13 statistically valid because that has been vetted
14 multiple times. It's just the difficult nature of
15 trying to compare two surveys that do
16 fundamentally different things and produce
17 fundamentally different results. That's kind of
18 the conundrum we're in.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 When you've got five states operating
21 five different ways --

22 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

23 Yeah.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 -- and -- you know, it's entirely hard

1 for them to figure out what's right and what's
2 wrong. I'm thinking eventually we will get to a
3 point where state surveys are there and state
4 surveys have the majority of the weight on it.
5 And that will be good because our state surveys
6 are the best one in the Gulf. I believe
7 wholeheartedly to that. And we can justify our
8 survey better than any other survey. I would love
9 to have that survey to the point where I can do
10 more with it. I would love to be able to all reef
11 fish with it especially and -- you know, in the
12 future. But I mentioned doing speckled trout, but
13 they told me I was out in left field, so I won't
14 do that one.

15 There is ways to doing it, to be able to
16 do surveys, to be able to give us everything that
17 we can to match up to what we need to do.

18 Trevor, I just want to applaud you, I
19 really do you. What you did last week -- I
20 listened to lot of it. Washington listened to it.
21 Senator Wicker's sent me notification telling me.
22 I talked the state directors of the other four
23 states, they told me about it. The NOAA directors
24 told me about it. They said that you were
25 outstanding, and I agree 100 percent.

1 He was the greatest thing that we could
2 have had right then at that time as far as
3 speaking for Mississippi and we appreciate, you
4 Trevor.

5 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

6 Yeah. Well, I mean, it's everybody
7 here, right, staff and everybody that's been the
8 doing the research for a while.

9 And one thing, not to cross over a
10 little bit, is that as we -- you know, there is a
11 reason why we want the work to be completed within
12 the transition group as far as the research and
13 everything else goes. That's why there was
14 hesitancy to apply the state data directly into
15 the assessment -- the research track assessment
16 now. It's because there is a lot of work to be
17 done and to figure out what's going on with our
18 state and MRIP and everything else before we rush
19 through and start applying in-state data and
20 deriving new management advice and getting stuck
21 with that management advice.

22 To us, the proper direction is to figure
23 out where the misses are, figure out where
24 disparities are. That way, we have a better
25 understanding. That way, when the research track

1 assessment is done and the operational assessment
2 is conducted, all states and stakeholders can have
3 confidence in what's being done. That way, when
4 it comes out no one is sitting there questioning
5 all of it.

6 Now, it's red snapper, so I'm sure
7 there's going to be some questions, but at least
8 there will be some confidence across the board
9 with it.

10 RONNIE DANIELS:

11 So are y'all saying within a year or
12 two, maybe three, that's whenever our data will
13 start being applied?

14 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

15 So it will be put into an assessment.
16 So right now, the state data, since it's been
17 derived -- this is the newest assessment that's
18 coming out. The last one wasn't run while all the
19 state data were done and finalized.

20 So in order to put that into an
21 assessment, you still have to calibrate the entire
22 time series back in time. We can't just throw
23 five years of Tails and Scales in there and say,
24 let's figure it out. The assessment is scaled
25 back all the way to 1981 for landings and then

1 goes even further back with outside information
2 that was derived. So I'm pretty sure the landing
3 stream goes back to near the 1900s.

4 So within that, there is work to be done
5 as far as going back in time. And I certainly had
6 my hesitancy on going ahead and trying to make
7 those comparisons now when we're talking about
8 everything we've been talking about. So to me,
9 it's more important to figure out where -- why
10 what's happening to Mississippi is happening. Why
11 are Wave 5 estimates so high and variable? Why
12 does Wave 3 estimate go from 200,000 pounds to
13 600,000 pounds to 800,000 pounds, right? Let's
14 figure out that stuff before we go ahead and try
15 to cement this whole thing and say, this is the
16 comparison between the state surveys in MRIP, this
17 is how we go back in time, this is the new
18 management advice we're getting. To me, it's more
19 important to figure out that side of it because
20 that will give us more confidence in the accuracy
21 of the information that's coming out and more
22 reliability on the management advice that comes
23 out of assessment.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 And Trevor, the -- Alabama took a

1 substantial cut also in this, right?

2 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

3 Yes. So they improved kind of like we
4 did. I think that we went from 50 percent to
5 40 percent. So they were -- they proposed two
6 years, '20 and '21. And the motion that was
7 passed was for years '18 to '21.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 But -- and also that -- you know, once
10 again, we have got to live with what we've got.
11 We've got to understand what we're doing. You
12 know, NOAA is Big Brother and it's going to tell
13 us what we have and we're going to have to find a
14 way to live within what we do. That's one thing I
15 will never ask anybody to do and that is to
16 violate policy or anything else or do something
17 that's illegal.

18 Now, I didn't understand -- you know,
19 one of the things that got me, and Trevor and I
20 talked about this and others, Louisiana used
21 one-year data. And with one-year data was able to
22 set what they needed and they came out very good
23 with it, but yet, they're telling us that five
24 years' data is not good enough.

25 And that's why I -- you know, what's why

1 I keep putting them -- I'm not letting them sit
2 still on this. And I'm like, okay. And their
3 answer was, well, Louisiana did one year against
4 one year. You know, we married up. And they
5 married up against MRIP. And they do kind of a
6 similar study to MRIP, and ours is different than
7 that.

8 But the point is I'm not letting them
9 back off. We're not going to back off on them.
10 We're not going to be anything. We're going to do
11 what we need to do. We have fought this out.
12 We've -- it's been, what, four years now that we
13 have been fighting it very hard?

14 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

15 Yeah. Yeah. When the comparisons
16 started coming out between the two surveys and
17 figuring out these patterns. We just learn more
18 and more every year as we continue to look into
19 the data.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 If we'd have given four years ago we'd
22 have 50,000 pounds and that would have been it for
23 a long time.

24 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

25 Uh-huh.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 But we haven't given in and we're not
3 going to give in. And we're going continue to
4 fight for it. We're going to continue to do what
5 we need to do.

6 And I do want to make another
7 announcement on this as far as the Council. Dale
8 Diaz is stepping down as the director of the
9 council. And Dale came to me last week and he
10 asked me about it and told me what he wanted to
11 do. And it will come out public today, and as of
12 the end of January, he will be stepping down as
13 the president of the council for Gulf Council.
14 Dale is doing it. It's just a lot for him right
15 now in his life and what he's doing. And he has
16 done a fantastic job.

17 And the other thing is the council --
18 the Gulf Council, we are going to be able to do
19 the federal side of it this year where we have two
20 big events, one in the spring and one in the fall.
21 Well, it would have meant he would have had to
22 have another whole year to be able to do it in
23 public -- you know, do what needs to be done.

24 He feels like -- and being as
25 non-selfish as he is because he's not selfish at

1 all, he said, I think it's best for me to step
2 down now and not wait till August so we can put a
3 new person in there that can be able to do both of
4 those meetings and continue to do it. And I think
5 that is admirable.

6 And I don't think Dale is here, but we
7 will -- we thank him for what he has done. He was
8 the president last year. He's been the vice
9 president for three years -- two or three years
10 and is the president this year, so he has --
11 chairman, and he has done a heck of a job and
12 doing a great job doing it. And we understand
13 that, but life goes on.

14 You have to do what you need to do, and
15 I'm sure it takes -- the travel itself being the
16 president -- the chairman of that council is
17 unreal. Just the traveling is unreal, itself.
18 And, you know, he's like me. He's not getting any
19 younger. He needs a day or two off every now and
20 then to do something.

21 So anyway, we will be looking at that.
22 We will be looking at who is -- Greg Stunz is the
23 vice chair right now. As to whether Greg will
24 step in or not, I don't know or whether he'll just
25 say, hey, since I time out in June, he may not. I

1 don't know. And we may pick a completely new
2 chair, so we will see what happens there.

3 But before y'all saw it on the news, I
4 figured I will tell you about it and it just came
5 out this morning. But Dale is a great guy, done a
6 great job. But once again, we will still have --
7 he'll still be on the council with us and he'll
8 still be talking for us. Okay?

9 Trevor, don't forget our saltwater
10 fishing record.

11 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

12 Let's do it. All right. So we've got
13 one from the previous meeting. It's a scrawled
14 filefish. Old record, 4.8 ounces. New record is
15 three pounds, 2.45 ounces. Angler is Tommy
16 Phelps. Pictures of the fish. Picture of Tommy
17 with the fish.

18 And just need a motion to recommend the
19 adoption of new state record.

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 Do we have a motion?

22 JONATHAN McLENDON:

23 I will make the motion.

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 I will second.

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 All in favor?

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 Aye.

5 JONATHAN McLENDON:

6 Aye.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Aye.

9 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

10 We will have some interesting ones next
11 month. We've got a mutton snapper, which we've
12 never had on record here. And there is a
13 smooth-hound species that we also don't see very
14 often, so we will have some cool ones.

15 RONNIE DANIELS:

16 Nice. Thank you, Trevor.

17 Other business, can we have a motion to
18 move the February meeting to February 14th, 2023?

19 CAM ROBERDS:

20 I will make a motion to move the
21 February 21st meeting to February 14th.

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 I will second that.

24 All in favor?

25 CAM ROBERDS:

1 Aye.

2 JONATHAN McLENDON:

3 Aye.

4 CAM ROBERDS:

5 Aye.

6 RONNIE DANIELS:

7 Do we have any public comments, Joe?

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 I don't see any public comments.

10 Anybody have any?

11 (No response.)

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 All right. Do we have a motion to

14 adjourn?

15 CAM ROBERDS:

16 I'll make a motion to adjourn.

17 JONATHAN McLENDON:

18 I will second.

19 RONNIE DANIELS:

20 All in favor?

21 Aye.

22 CAM ROBERDS:

23 Aye.

24 JONATHAN McLENDON:

25 Aye.

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 Thank you, everyone.

3 (Adjourned at 9:46 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

1
2 I, MELISSA BURDINE-RODOLFICH, Court Reporter
3 and Notary Public, in and for the County of
4 Harrison, State of Mississippi, hereby certify that
5 the foregoing pages, and including this page,
6 contain a true and correct copy of my stenotype
7 notes and/or electronic tape recording of the
8 testimony of the witness, as taken by me at the
9 time and place heretofore stated, to the best of my
10 skill and ability.

11 I further certify that I am not in the employ
12 of, or related to, any counsel or party in this
13 matter, and have no interest, monetary or
14 otherwise, in the final outcome of the proceedings.

15 Witness my signature and seal, this the
16 _____ day of _____, 2023.

17
18 _____
19
20 Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich
21 My Commission Expires 4/28/24
22
23
24
25