

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 11:00 a.m.,

Bolton Building Auditorium

1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Ronnie Daniels
Jonathan McLendon
Jason Osborne
Cammack "Cam" Roberds

ALSO PRESENT:

Joe Spraggins
Sandy Chesnut, Esquire
Steven Eckert, Esquire

REPORTED BY:

Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich
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1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

3 Welcome to the January 16th, MACMR meeting. Thank
4 you for being here. We're going to go ahead and
5 call the meeting to order now.

6 I'd like to ask Commissioner Osborne to
7 lead us in our Pledge of Allegiance today.

8 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

9 JOE SPRAGGINS:

10 I think somebody stole a piece out of
11 it. We'll have to get ahold to that.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 We're going to have to tighten up the
14 security around here.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 I tell you what. Got to tighten up
17 something.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Director, you mind leading us in prayer
20 this morning?

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 I'll be glad to. First off, you know,
23 I'd just like to thank y'all for being able to
24 come to -- at a different time, but we felt like
25 with the weather this morning it was best to delay

1 this some and I hope everybody is okay with the
2 weather. I know you better get ready for tonight.
3 I don't think it's been that wind chill in single
4 digits in a long time in South Mississippi, and
5 it's going to happen tonight, so hopefully
6 every -- and it's -- the problem is, it's going to
7 be for a long time, several hours instead of
8 30 minutes, so get ready. Somehow or another,
9 we've got the North Pole in South Mississippi.

10 All right. If you would, please, go
11 with me in prayer.

12 (Moment of prayer.)

13 RONNIE DANIELS:

14 Thank you, Joe.

15 I'm glad I didn't have to leave at 8:00.
16 I'd have had to chisel my door open.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 I tell you, I had to chisel mine about
19 7:30 this morning.

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 Yep.

22 All right. Approval of minutes. Do we
23 have any discussion on the December 19th minutes?

24 (No response.)

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1 Do we have a motion to approve?

2 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

3 I will make that motion.

4 JASON OSBORNE:

5 I'll second.

6 RONNIE DANIELS:

7 I'll second. All right.

8 All in favor?

9 (Unanimous vote.)

10 RONNIE DANIELS:

11 Approval of today's agenda. Do we have
12 any discussion on the agenda?

13 (No response.)

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15 Motion to approve?

16 JASON OSBORNE:

17 I will make that motion.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 I'll second it.

20 All in favor?

21 (Unanimous vote.)

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 All right. Mr. Joe, we're going to turn
24 it over to you.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 All right. Let's see if we've got --
2 can we get the employment -- you see we've got
3 several new hires. Robert, he's not exactly a new
4 hire. Robert was with us and left and now he's
5 come back. We don't call that much of a new hire.
6 We just call it got him back. He went to the
7 portal and then we, I guess, was able to get him
8 back out of it and you know how that goes.

9 But we've got several other promotions,
10 and all. You can see them on the screen. I won't
11 read them out, but doing good. We're glad to have
12 the two new personnel. Robert being one of them
13 back with us, and we're always glad to have the
14 promotions.

15 Okay. Any questions?

16 (No response.)

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 There's no contracts, so we'll move
19 right along and go into the agency update.

20 First off, if you have a public comment,
21 TJ is somewhere back there in the back. There he
22 is, and just see TJ and get a -- he'll give you a
23 piece of paper and you can fill it out. We'll be
24 glad to bring it. And we like to do it during the
25 part of what you want to talk about, so if it's

1 something very -- at the start of it, please get
2 it to him now.

3 With the 2019 Bonnet Carré, we're
4 getting there. We're getting there. We're
5 updating, as we've talked about.

6 Traci, I do not have that sheet you sent
7 me. Do you have it with you?

8 TRACI FLOYD:

9 I do.

10 JOE SPRAGGINS:

11 Could you come -- would you mind
12 stepping up and briefing that? Somehow or
13 another, I lost that sheet.

14 TRACI FLOYD:

15 Good morning. So just a recap, on Job
16 Titles 1 and 2, which was the financial
17 assistance, all the charters have been paid out.
18 We have 29 of 31 signed dealers' agreements that
19 have received their final payout.

20 We have 267 of 293 signed commercial
21 fishermen agreements for their payout. We have
22 about five who are still in process, so we have
23 some folks that are waiting for that second
24 payment to sign, for their personal reasons. And
25 we hope that next round will come at the end of

1 January.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 Yeah. And the next round, we're talking
4 about the commercial fishermen and, you know, if
5 they -- if they were oystermen and they had it,
6 they got 15,000 in the initial. And if they was
7 other than that and didn't have oyster but shrimp
8 or whatever, finfish or crab, they got 7,500.

9 Now, what we're able to do is go back
10 after that point and look at it and whatever they
11 would -- we think from their four years prior,
12 whatever they would have been -- would have made
13 in 2019 that they didn't, we can pay them up to
14 108,000. Isn't that --

15 TRACI FLOYD:

16 That's a -- yeah, that's correct.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 Up to \$108,000 we can pay back on what
19 they lost, so we're going to be able to make a lot
20 of fisherman halfway well for a little bit, you
21 know, and that's just for that one year.

22 The ones that are not going to be able
23 to get whole that were over \$108,000 in loss,
24 they're the big main shrimpers or whatever and,
25 you know, companies and they were able to go

1 somewhere like Florida or wherever and do some
2 fishery. So maybe they wasn't hurt as bad because
3 they could make it up, but we can get them up to
4 that point.

5 And so hopefully, we'll be able to --
6 we'll take this off of trip tickets and it will be
7 off of what they have turned in for trip tickets
8 of prior years and all, and hopefully we can make
9 a lot of people a little bit close to whole and
10 keep them in the business for a little bit longer.

11 TRACI FLOYD:

12 Yes, sir.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 Is that right, Traci?

15 TRACI FLOYD:

16 Yes, sir.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 And then also, we're working on the
19 processers, and we're being able to give them
20 and -- we'll be doing some stuff there where they
21 can turn in and tell us that they need to purchase
22 this type of equipment for whatever and we'll be
23 able to help them with that. What was the number
24 on that? 2 and a half, 3 million?

25 TRACI FLOYD:

1 So that was 3.6.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 3.6 million that we have for that.

4 TRACI FLOYD:

5 Which includes a little staff time
6 and -- but most of it is for the processing.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 Yeah. But anyway, it's in a round-about
9 figure. So we'll be able to help them to be able
10 to upgrade their equipment. That's what we're
11 trying to do with that and basically where you
12 can -- you know, a lot of the Louisiana and
13 everybody else has got better equipment because
14 they got money to do it. We're going to try to do
15 what we can to be able to help ours get back on
16 board.

17 Anything else on that?

18 TRACI FLOYD:

19 I would mention, in February we will
20 have the commercial fishermen safety program where
21 we will give them -- reimburse them to have safety
22 gear for their -- to make their livelihood more
23 safe, you know, their vessels.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 And we're also, you know, hoping to do

1 some stuff with off-bottoms that we have got in
2 our -- we have that in the grant, but we're doing
3 some oyster stuff out of the grant, too, you know,
4 where we're replenishing some oyster reefs and
5 all.

6 We're working on a lot of things with
7 it, so the grant is going to help pay for a lot,
8 and I think that a lot of people will benefit from
9 it and we will be able to move forward in the
10 agency.

11 And we also applied and were granted
12 another 3 million starting in 2020, right? Isn't
13 that right? Was it 3 million? Is that right?

14 RICK BURRIS:

15 (Nods head.)

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 Rick is shaking his head. So we haven't
18 received that yet, but that will be mainly for the
19 oysters and shrimpers and stuff and, you know, to
20 be able to help them for what they lost in 2020
21 compared to what they had.

22 We did not get approved for 2021. We're
23 still working on trying to get some other stuff,
24 but it seems like, especially -- the only thing
25 would be the oysters that we're still losing in

1 2021. We don't know if we're going to get
2 anything or not, but we're still trying every day
3 to help them.

4 TRACI FLOYD:

5 Yes, sir. Thank you.

6 JOE SPRAGGINS:

7 Any questions?

8 (No response.)

9 JOE SPRAGGINS:

10 Okay. Thank you, Traci.

11 TRACI FLOYD:

12 Thank you.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 All right. Legislative sessions in --
15 going wide up. They're there today. And so if
16 you haven't seen, we do have a new chairman over
17 at Marine Resources in the house, and that's Brent
18 Anderson. And Brent is a good friend of us, and
19 Timmy moved out over to the water side and doing
20 some stuff with soil and water, so he is over
21 there. But he's still on the committee. But we
22 have Brent and he will be helping us out.

23 And then on the House side, we have
24 Senator Thompson, and Senator Thompson is our new
25 chairman over there. And so we've been working

1 with him, too, and that's not a problem. And he's
2 been working with us all along. He was the
3 co-chair before, so I think we'll be doing fine.

4 We're still trying to figure out the
5 appropriations side of it because they broke
6 appropriations down to like A, B, C and D and E
7 and one of them -- they're going to take -- like,
8 my understanding of it will be the Department of
9 Marine Resources, Department of Wildlife and
10 Fisheries and Department -- DEQ and some others
11 and put them in one lump sum and that way, then
12 they'll have -- there will be an A, B, C or
13 whatever number it is. And they will be the
14 appropriations people that we go to, and then they
15 will take it and work it through. And then I
16 think John Read is the head of appropriations for
17 the House, so it will all go back through them
18 still for the final stamps, is my understanding.

19 But we'll work it out. We'll figure it
20 out, which way we need to do it. The session is
21 going to go to the end of April this year, so, you
22 know, we've got a while to get it done. And we
23 have to get our bills in, I think, the first of
24 February, somewhere along in there. We've got to
25 get the stuff in there and we'll be able to move

1 forward with that. We still just have small -- we
2 don't have anything big.

3 Any questions on the legislators?

4 (No response.)

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 All right. Second floor, it's going to
7 be off-limits, anything on the other side of it.
8 Is that west side or south side? South side,
9 yeah. I can't keep my mind straight. I can't
10 keep my mind -- I'm not in a jet, so I don't know
11 which way I'm going.

12 But the south side, the whole thing for
13 fisheries is being redone. The Department of
14 Finance and Administration is redoing it for us
15 and they're just going to come in and gut
16 everything on that south side at one time. We've
17 got all the people moved to other areas. And
18 they're going to gut everything out and then start
19 rebuilding it, and it will be a whole lot better
20 in the near future.

21 We're hoping -- TJ, tell me if I'm wrong
22 by a yes or no -- around the summertime?

23 TJ MORAN:

24 Around Memorial Day hopefully.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 Huh?

2 TJ MORAN:

3 Around Memorial Day hopefully.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 Yeah. Somewhere along in there having
6 it finished, so much needed. They have been
7 working in all kind of travesty conditions with
8 the cubicles and everything else, and now they're
9 going to have something decent. We're getting
10 some new furniture there for them, so they're
11 going to have something decent there too. And
12 we're glad to do that for fisheries.

13 And so if you have got any questions,
14 you're going to -- to find somebody in fisheries,
15 you're going to have to jump around all over the
16 agency because they're everywhere, and -- but let
17 us know and we'll get you.

18 Any questions on that?

19 (No response.)

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 All right. Gulf Council, we've got --
22 we have it starting on the 29th in New Orleans,
23 and so we will be working on that. I know that
24 they are going to bring up the -- if you haven't
25 noticed, you know, and we have put in -- we're

1 working with the Mississippi Creel, MS Creel and
2 we're getting that started and that's going to be
3 a big thing. Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi are
4 all under the LA Creel type, and we're doing that
5 for this year. And hopefully we'll get -- be able
6 to take samples and take -- be able to take
7 surveys and all under that. And when we get that
8 done, then we will be able to look at it and I
9 think it will definitely help us as far as our
10 reef fish and everything else.

11 And we'll probably get a lot of other
12 things with the seatrout, spotted seatrout and
13 other things that will come in, the redfish and
14 everything else. We will get a lot of different
15 capabilities of managing that resource. And this
16 is something that NOAA is paying for so that's
17 even better. So they're paying for it and that
18 means they're on board with us. And by them
19 having -- on board with us, we'll probably get
20 NMFS on board, and NMFS will be able to help us
21 get this and implement it. And I think our
22 60-something thousand pounds of red -- of snapper
23 will probably go up a lot, and we'll probably get
24 back closer to where we should be and I think this
25 will be a fantastic move.

1 Rick, is there anything else I missed on
2 that?

3 RICK BURRIS:

4 (Shakes head.)

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 So we will be talking -- that will be
7 one of the main topics that we'll be talking
8 about.

9 So next commission meeting is scheduled
10 for Tuesday, February 20th. Anybody got any
11 questions for that? Any problems.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 February 20th?

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Is that right?

16 RONNIE DANIELS:

17 Yeah. Okay.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 Okay. Offshore landing permits. You
20 know, we asked y'all to go with us and we did. It
21 went out for public comment. We had no comment as
22 far as I know, did we? And so now we're going to
23 be able to implement on February 1st to where you
24 have to have an offshore landing permit if you're
25 going to, you know, reef fish and that will give

1 us -- what this is going to do is take our sample
2 size from here to here (indicating).

3 It's going to be extremely better, and
4 hopefully the people will -- we'll have, you know,
5 a year or so that it will take us, just like we do
6 with everything else, to be able to implement it
7 100 percent. I don't think we'll be giving
8 anybody a ticket this year, you know, with it.
9 We'll be asking them to get -- you know, go back
10 and do it if we find out, but -- or catch them,
11 but I think we will work it out just like we did
12 with our snapper before with the Tails and Scales.
13 We'll work something out.

14 But I think this will be fantastic
15 because instead of 80,000 people they survey out
16 of NOAA, then it will be down to probably 15 or 20
17 or something like that, if we do it right,
18 thousand. And this will really help our sample
19 size in which it will turn around and give us a
20 better chance to be able to get the numbers the
21 way they should be.

22 Which one is it? There's one fish that
23 if we caught one in Mississippi we'd shut the
24 whole Gulf down?

25 RICK BURRIS:

1 Amberjack.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 Amberjack. If we caught one in
4 Mississippi, we'd shut the whole Gulf down.

5 RONNIE DANIELS:

6 How's that?

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 Because of the survey, the way it's done
9 in NOAA right now.

10 RONNIE DANIELS:

11 Oh, wow.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 So does that tell you something?

14 CAM ROBERDS:

15 That's crazy.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 That tell you how out of whack it is?
18 But this is going to happen, all right, so we'll
19 move forward.

20 Any questions on that?

21 (No response.)

22 JASON OSBORNE:

23 Crab trap cleanup is February 15th
24 through 24th. It's been put out. And Traci,
25 anything on that any different that they'll start

1 doing? It's stuff they do every year?

2 TRACI FLOYD:

3 Not every year, but --

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 Or every other year or something, but we
6 just -- go ahead if you've got something.

7 TRACI FLOYD:

8 No. We have funding to do a limited --
9 we have funding to do a limited cleanup this year.
10 And we'll do some more in the future, but we'll do
11 it cooperatively and set the dates with the
12 crabbers, so --

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 And this is GOMA funded?

15 TRACI FLOYD:

16 This one is GOMA funded, yes, that's
17 correct.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 Yeah, GOMA's funding this for us, so
20 that's a good deal.

21 JASON OSBORNE:

22 Have we -- we talked about this a couple
23 of meetings ago, about reaching out to schools and
24 having it as an opportunity for service hours for
25 some of these kids; is that right?

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 On the crab traps out in the Gulf?

3 JASON OSBORNE:

4 Wasn't that the abandoned crab traps?

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 Yeah. We did something, and you know
7 what --

8 TRACI FLOYD:

9 Yes, sir, we did. So we put out the
10 press release, and we can share that specifically
11 with anyone you would like us to. But we can --

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 We did? We put it out to the schools?
14 Did they get it?

15 TRACI FLOYD:

16 Well, we put it out as a press release
17 and on our web page, but we could --

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 Yeah. We'll -- if you have got one
20 especially, like -- that you want to talk with,
21 we'll send something to them.

22 JASON OSBORNE:

23 I'd say Stanislaus. And I think, what
24 -- Cam, didn't you say --

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1 I think Pass Christian would be great as
2 well.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 Where?

5 RONNIE DANIELS:

6 Pass Christian.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 Okay.

9 CAM ROBERDS:

10 St. Pat's.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 We'll just -- why don't we just send it
13 to the schools. Charmaine, we can send this to
14 the school systems and tell them if they would
15 like to do something in this to be able to do
16 service hours, we would be glad to work with them.
17 Can you do that?

18 CHARMAINE SCHERMUND:

19 Uh-huh.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 Thank you. I forgot about that.

22 JASON OSBORNE:

23 No problem.

24 TRACI FLOYD:

25 Thank you.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 Uh-huh. I forgot all about it.

3 Okay. On-bottom leases, we're working
4 on them. We had some comments, and the comments
5 came back to us and -- you know, that they thought
6 we needed to look at some other things and how
7 we're doing it.

8 We're working with the governor's office
9 as to how we want to move forward with this. And
10 also, we're working with the attorney general's
11 office and they're helping us. And we're going
12 through the wording and whether or not we need to
13 work this out the way it is and go in and test it,
14 you know, and do some additional things as far as
15 the person, what they qualify for and all or do we
16 need to start all over.

17 We don't know the answer yet, but we're
18 working on it and hopefully we will have an answer
19 for it in the next week and we'll be able to move
20 forward. I'd love to do -- whatever it is, I want
21 to be able to get to a point to -- by the end of
22 March that we can start letting people lease if
23 there's any way possible because we don't want to
24 miss another cycle.

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1 Uh-huh.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 Any questions?

4 CAM ROBERDS:

5 Do you think there is a possibility of
6 another round of requests for applications on
7 that?

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 Oh, sure.

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 Is there?

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 We didn't lease all of the property by
14 any means.

15 CAM ROBERDS:

16 Okay.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 And matter of fact, it's still out there
19 and somebody could just file right now if they
20 would like to because if there is something that
21 we haven't leased, they won't know that until we
22 get through with this.

23 CAM ROBERDS:

24 Got ya. Cool.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 Rick, you're shaking your head. Is that
2 all right?

3 RICK BURRIS:

4 Yes. No, you're right. When we get
5 through this initial round, whatever is remaining
6 we'll probably go back out and do something
7 similar. But there is a lot of -- there is a lot
8 of bottom that was not proposed to be leased. And
9 so whatever gets leased in the initial round, that
10 will be additional acreage after the fact, so --
11 and we see this going until we get most of the
12 acreage leased up.

13 CAM ROBERDS:

14 Great.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 And it will be the same thing, \$2 an
17 acre?

18 CAM ROBERDS:

19 It's \$3, I believe.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 \$3 an acre.

22 CAM ROBERDS:

23 Looking forward to it.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 Okay. And hopefully -- like I said,

1 we're trying to get this done so people can start
2 cultching and do what they need to do in the
3 springtime. And we're giving it -- and I know
4 it's -- it looks like we're dragging our feet, but
5 we're not. We're trying to -- there's nothing --
6 one thing about it is we want to make sure that
7 we're 100 percent correct in the way we do it and
8 we do it right 100 percent and not do something
9 wrong. Okay?

10 All right. Any questions?

11 (No response.)

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 The other thing is, derelict vessels.
14 134 that have been turned in, 85 have been
15 removed, 49 are pending removal and we've got six
16 that is in court orders.

17 Anything on that?

18 (No response.)

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 Other than that, sir, I think that's all
21 I have got to aggravate you with today.

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 Thank you, Mr. Joe.

24 Did we do the actions update?

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 No, we didn't, so that's mine. Sandy,
2 would you like to do that? You need to tell me I
3 didn't do it.

4 SANDY CHESNUT:

5 I was going to yell at you.

6 At the December meeting, the Commission
7 recommended and the Director approved the changes
8 to Chapter 8 of Title 22, Part 9 to go to the
9 Secretary of State's office for final approval,
10 and that was done. And that's it.

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 All right. Thank you, Sandy.

13 Now we're done with you.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Now you're done with me.

16 RONNIE DANIELS:

17 Now, we're done with you.

18 All right. Do any of our commissioners
19 have anything to report today?

20 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

21 I do not.

22 JASON OSBORNE:

23 No, sir.

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 No.

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 All right. Quiet month.

3 Marine Patrol, Chief.

4 KYLE WILKERSON:

5 Good morning. I will tell you what,
6 gentlemen and ladies, it's awful cold out there.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 Chilly.

9 KYLE WILKERSON:

10 We know -- we train for this and we
11 prepare for it, but when it hits, it's just --
12 it's brutal, and I'm a warm-weather guy myself.

13 Getting to business, everything looked
14 pretty slow this month, which is great. I like a
15 slow month. It means everybody is playing
16 properly. And not a lot of citations. I think we
17 had 75 citations total over 1,064 stops. Now,
18 that's a slower -- a slower month for us. We
19 normally range about 2,500 to 3,000, but December
20 is always traditionally slow due to the holidays.

21 I will field any questions if y'all want
22 to throw them at me.

23 RONNIE DANIELS:

24 You got anything?

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 All those fishermen are in a duck blind
2 or deer blind -- house.

3 KYLE WILKERSON:

4 That's exactly right. That's where I
5 was last month. That's why y'all missed me. My
6 captain back there, Captain Freeman, did a
7 phenomenal job I heard.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 And January's probably going to be slow
10 too.

11 JASON OSBORNE:

12 We tested Freeman last month just to
13 make sure that he was on it.

14 KYLE WILKERSON:

15 Well, very good. He's a sharp kid.

16 JASON OSBORNE:

17 Yeah.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Y'all be safe out there. That's nasty
20 out on that water in these conditions.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 I hope they're not out there today with
23 40-mile-an-hour winds.

24 KYLE WILKERSON:

25 No, sir. Only if you go out there and

1 we need to rescue you, we'll go out there and get
2 you.

3 RONNIE DANIELS:

4 Thank you, Chief.

5 All right. Next up, coastal resources
6 management, Ms. Willa.

7 WILLA BRANTLEY:

8 Good morning. I wanted to go through
9 some of our numbers for the past year. You all
10 see very few of what the permitting staff actually
11 does, so I do like to bring the numbers at the end
12 of the year.

13 For the last year, 2023, we had a total
14 of 810 actions that the permitting staff handled.
15 667 of those were either regulated by the state or
16 were regulated by federal agencies that we get to
17 review before they issue permits for them.

18 We had a combination of reviews and
19 pre-application meetings, 95. That number is
20 actually up this year. That's where people send
21 us information about their project, what the
22 impacts will be and we review it and see if it
23 needs a permit, if it's a regulated activity or
24 not; or if they know they have a regulated
25 activity and it's kind of going to be complicated,

1 we'll do a pre-application meeting and discuss
2 what they need to turn in their application so it
3 helps make the process go smoother.

4 We did have 48 reported violations this
5 year. Not all of those were actually violations.
6 I do have a little more details in the last slide
7 about those numbers.

8 This is just a comparison over the last
9 two years so we can see how the numbers have gone.
10 If you notice, this year, our second half numbers
11 went up significantly, but our total numbers went
12 down just a little. Usually, we have more actions
13 in the first half of the year and they drop in the
14 second half. We flip flopped that in 2023 for
15 whatever reason. We had fewer in the first half
16 but significantly more in the second half. So
17 we'll see how the first half of this year goes,
18 how our numbers will compare for next year.

19 We did go down a little bit in the
20 regulated activities and consistencies and up a
21 little bit in the other two categories.

22 And this is a little bit of detail on
23 the violations. Total, we have 48, but actual
24 violations were 26 of those, which means 22 we
25 went out to and there is no violation once we got

1 to the site. Out of the 26, we either issued an
2 after-the-fact for 15 or it was resolved
3 voluntarily by the property owner. There were 10
4 of those. And then there was one that had -- part
5 of it was covered by an after-the-fact and part of
6 it was a restoration of some vegetation that had
7 been damaged.

8 Of the ones that were actually
9 violations, 15 were reported by the public and 11
10 were found by staff when we went out to do site
11 visits for new applications.

12 So I just wanted to give a little bit of
13 the detail on the violations. And you see there
14 we did present one to the Commission that was
15 finished off with a \$1,500 fine.

16 There have been some presentations about
17 another violation in Ocean Springs, you may
18 remember. We only count them when they get closed
19 out and that one's not closed out yet, so it
20 doesn't show up in those numbers. So we don't
21 know exactly yet what the resolution is going to
22 be on that one.

23 So if you have any questions about the
24 details, I will be happy to answer them.

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1 Anybody?

2 (No questions.)

3 RONNIE DANIELS:

4 Thank you, Willa. Y'all run a lot of
5 the permits through there.

6 WILLA BRANTLEY:

7 Yeah. Thank you.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 They -- and also, I would like to tell
10 you, you know, there is a couple of them, what you
11 said, maybe have not been closed out. But I see
12 Ray is back there. Secretary of State is working
13 with us on some of the things, and I think the
14 Secretary of State has sent some letters to some
15 people in trying to get some things done.

16 Ray, we appreciate that. Tell the
17 Secretary we appreciate his help on that because
18 there's a couple of things that -- you know, that
19 people have done something and we're trying to
20 work it out. But we have got to have the
21 Secretary of State backing us to be able to go
22 forward, and we appreciate that. And we want to
23 just let people know that they are working with us
24 on it and we appreciate it.

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1 All right. Up next, finance and
2 administration, Ms. Brewer.

3 LESLIE BREWER:

4 Good morning, everybody. I'm presenting
5 the financials for December 31st, 2023.

6 At the end of December, our state
7 revenue was 4.3 million. Our agency revenue was
8 22.2 million.

9 State net income, 779,000, and agency
10 net income is 2.9 million.

11 And after six months of fiscal year '24,
12 we have 92.4 of our budget remaining, and the
13 Tidelands budget is at 67.

14 Any questions?

15 RONNIE DANIELS:

16 No questions. All right. Thank you.

17 LESLIE BREWER:

18 Thanks.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 And not to say, you know, after six
21 months we're not spending any money, but it's just
22 a matter of a lot of things come in at one time
23 toward the end. So don't think the 92 percent
24 means we have got that much in reserve.

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1 Ms. Charmaine, public affairs.

2 CHARMAINE SCHERMUND:

3 Good morning. The Mississippi
4 Department of Marine Resources had 11 media
5 mentions since the December MACMR meeting. News
6 items included shrimp season closing north of the
7 ICW on January 1st, the MDR Hatchery Bureau
8 releasing spotted seatrout, the marine information
9 calendars coming available and the Mississippi
10 Creel fishing survey.

11 The Office of Marine Patrol took part in
12 the inaugural parade for Governor Reeves on
13 January 9th in Jackson. Marine patrol also
14 participated in Adventures Church Club at Destiny
15 Church in Gulfport. They provided boat and water
16 safety demonstrations and information to the
17 children taking part in the event.

18 I also put calendars in the back of the
19 room there if anybody needs to get any, and if we
20 happen to run out, there is some in the front in
21 the licensing office as well.

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 Those are a hot commodity. I get phone
24 calls every year on when are they going to be out.

25 CHARMAINE SCHERMUND:

1 Yeah, we've already had some places call
2 to get restocked, so -- uh-huh.

3 RONNIE DANIELS:

4 Wow. That's good. People like them.

5 CHARMAINE SCHERMUND:

6 Uh-huh, they do.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 Got a lot of information on them.

9 RONNIE DANIELS:

10 Yeah. That's a valuable asset for us to
11 be giving to people.

12 All right. State records, we're going
13 to have Trevor come up. Margo.

14 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

15 Yeah, Miss Margo got her one.

16 RONNIE DANIELS:

17 Margo.

18 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

19 So it's a youth conventional tackle
20 record today. It's a silver perch, Bairdiella
21 chrysoura. The old record was 2.8 ounces. The
22 new record is 3.2 ounces, and it was Miss Margaret
23 Schindler.

24 Picture of the fish. There's Margo with
25 the fish, and all we need is a motion to adopt the

1 new state record.

2 RONNIE DANIELS:

3 I never knew what the actual name of
4 that fish was. We catch them sporadically.

5 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

6 They've got about five different names.

7 CAM ROBERDS:

8 I catch them all the time. I'm like,
9 that's a mix between --

10 RONNIE DANIELS:

11 Yeah. It's a cross between a white
12 trout. It's good. Throw it back.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 Good fish. Throw it back.

15 RONNIE DANIELS:

16 Well, that's great. And I would be
17 happy to make the motion to approve this for Miss
18 Margo. Her dad, Sonny Schindler, is a great
19 captain and a huge asset to the Mississippi
20 Fisheries.

21 So I will make that motion.

22 CAM ROBERDS:

23 I'll second it.

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 All in favor?

1 (Unanimous vote.)

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 Hey, before you go, anything on the MS
4 Creel?

5 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

6 So calls started this past week. We
7 have been working with Gulf States and the other
8 ones to get everything set up. It's moving
9 forward.

10 We released the press release recently.
11 We updated our website to include information
12 about it, basically frequently asked questions,
13 things of that nature, so if individuals call,
14 they can kind of -- at least get most of the
15 answers there.

16 If they have more information, if they
17 would like, we're using the Tails and Scales
18 hotline, which is routed directly to our staff for
19 them to call. And they can always call the main
20 line here and get directed to me or anybody else
21 to answer those questions.

22 But so far, haven't had too many calls.
23 We haven't gotten the data from the first week
24 back yet, so when we get that back, we'll be able
25 to kind of hit the ground running on it. But so

1 far, everything is running well.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 Yeah. And I know you put it out to the
4 public and everything in asking them to please
5 continue -- please do, you know, answer this and
6 please, you know, fill out surveys or whatever.
7 You're going to get phone calls. I think it's
8 phone call style.

9 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

10 Yeah. So it's all -- it's all phones.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 And you put out a number that you're
13 going to call from or some type of number?

14 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

15 Yeah. So it's going to be --

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 Of course, people see robocalls and say,
18 I ain't answering that thing.

19 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

20 Yeah. It's a 985 area code from South
21 Central Planning, who is currently doing the calls
22 for Alabama and Louisiana. They have been doing
23 Louisiana's calls for a while. They'll call
24 multiple times, so it's going to be repetitive.

25 CAM ROBERDS:

1 Oh, yeah.

2 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

3 And there's also going to be the option,
4 should the angler not want to repeatedly get
5 called or anything else like that, they can
6 provide an e-mail to be able to fill out the
7 survey electronically in the future should they be
8 selected. So we'll be populating that as time
9 goes on as well.

10 And yeah, basically if you have any --
11 like, if anglers or any of y'all's constituents
12 have any questions about it, it's not a burdensome
13 survey. It's short. It's sweet. We tried to get
14 it pared down as much as possible.

15 Louisiana is on the same page as that.
16 I mean, they designed it to be quick and easy, get
17 it filled out, don't try to bother anybody's day
18 and get the information, the basic information
19 that you need -- or we need as managers. So
20 that's the goal of the survey.

21 So if they get that call, try to answer
22 it, try to participate. And if you don't want to
23 get called again, try to provide an e-mail and be
24 able to do it that way.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 Will they leave a voice mail or
2 something if you have it?

3 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

4 I'm not sure. We haven't --

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 Yeah. They definitely leave a voice
7 mail and an e-mail.

8 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

9 You got it from Louisiana as well?

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 It's literally a two-minute -- or
12 one-minute conversation. I mean, it's painless.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 Okay. Yeah. I just haven't got a call,
15 so I didn't know.

16 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

17 Yeah. So our prompts are similar to
18 Louisiana. So if they left a voice mail, then the
19 same thing's happening on our end, so it's
20 prompted through that group.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 Do you have anything on the speckled
23 trout assessment?

24 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

25 We don't have a current spotted seatrout

1 assessment. So remember, I -- we talked about it
2 last year, I believe. We talked about the index,
3 how it's been, you know, for the last two years
4 with Bonnet Carré and the freshwater inputs.
5 We've seen a drop in the index, but not a
6 corresponding drop in the harvest, which leads to
7 lower SPR values.

8 And we haven't really moved forward on
9 that end as far as pushing any decision from
10 management. We've essentially kind of recommended
11 status quo, which is where we kind of -- that
12 conversation has led to when I presented it here.

13 We are working on a new assessment to
14 include the data for this year and hopefully the
15 upcoming year. It's a summertime assessment, so
16 we should be able to have it on the back end of
17 the year to hopefully get past this freshwater
18 influence and see what that index does. If it
19 continues to stay where it's at or continues to
20 drop, I think there will be some considerations
21 and some conversations to have about it.

22 But yeah, we -- the recommendation of
23 status quo remains simply due to the fact of the
24 large-scale perturbations in the environment with
25 Bonnet Carré, record rainfall in 2021 and

1 everything like that. We didn't want to rush to
2 the management decision if it was environmentally
3 based and a change in the fishery couldn't help
4 because usually when you change a fishery's
5 management regime, it's hard to have any
6 justification to change it back.

7 So it's kind of the same conversations
8 we have been having about multiple species. But
9 we should have an assessment on the back end of
10 the summer around August, September.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 Any questions?

13 (No response.)

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 One other thing, Commissioner Daniels,
16 would you talk to him -- in the last two months,
17 if y'all told me to do something or asked me to do
18 something, it may or may not have stayed in my
19 brain long with what was going on, but you were
20 talking about the charter boat stuff that's going
21 on in Louisiana.

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 Yes. I forwarded over the text that I
24 got to you.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 Yeah.

2 RONNIE DANIELS:

3 And I may have sent it to Matt. I'm not
4 sure. There's -- and I don't remember all the
5 details on it. There's some type of program that
6 they've funded in Louisiana, similar, it sounds
7 like, to the safety upgrades that we talked about
8 earlier for commercial fishermen, but this is
9 equipment upgrades that is grant money that
10 they're being able to provide to their charter
11 fishermen over there to upgrade things that they
12 may need. I don't know where the money is coming
13 from, but --

14 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

15 It's likely through Bonnet Carré. Most
16 of their stuff -- their program didn't include
17 direct pay. Their program is, I think,
18 reimbursements across each fishery, so it's
19 providing equipment, receipts and everything else
20 and being reimbursed based on that, not direct pay
21 to fishermen, the way we had. So that's where the
22 money is and where it's coming from, I believe.

23 RONNIE DANIELS:

24 Okay.

25 JASON OSBORNE:

1 What's the agency that --

2 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

3 LDWF, Louisiana Department of Wildlife
4 and Fisheries.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 Yeah. It's under Equipment
7 Modernization Grant Program.

8 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

9 Yeah. I'm not familiar with that one,
10 but I will look it up once we leave the meeting.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 I guess the question is -- maybe we can
13 check in with Louisiana to get and see --

14 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

15 Yeah, I'll call.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 -- and find out, you know, how they're
18 funding that and if there's something that we
19 missed the boat on by going and asking for it.
20 Maybe we can get ourself in that.

21 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

22 Yeah. I'll call Jason Adriance over
23 there and see if I can't get some answers.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 I apologize. I know Ronnie sent this to

1 me in December and somehow I missed it.

2 RONNIE DANIELS:

3 Thank you, Trevor.

4 All right. Did we end up with any
5 public comments?

6 JOE SPRAGGINS:

7 No, I don't have any.

8 TJ, do you have any?

9 TJ MORAN:

10 (Shaking head negatively.)

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 No public comments.

13 Do any of our commissioners have any
14 business today?

15 (No response.)

16 RONNIE DANIELS:

17 I have got business with a fireplace
18 today and a deer roast I put in the Crock-Pot this
19 morning.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 All right.

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 So everybody try to stay warm, stay
24 safe.

25 If we don't have anything else, can I

1 get a motion to adjourn?

2 JASON OSBORNE:

3 I will make it.

4 RONNIE DANIELS:

5 Second.

6 All in favor?

7 (Unanimous vote.)

8 RONNIE DANIELS:

9 Have a great day.

10 (Adjourned at 11:39 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

I, MELISSA BURDINE-RODOLFICH, Court Reporter and Notary Public, in and for the County of Harrison, State of Mississippi, hereby certify that the foregoing pages, and including this page, contain a true and correct copy of my stenotype notes and/or electronic tape recording of the public meeting, as taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated, to the best of my skill and ability.

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

Witness my signature and seal, this the

_____ day of _____, 2024.

/s/ Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich

Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich
My Commission Expires 4/28/24