

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES
COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, November 19, 2024, 9:12 a.m.,

Bolton Building Auditorium

1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

COMMISSION MEMBERS:Ronnie Daniels
Jonathan McLendon
Matthew Mayfield
Jason Osborne (Via Phone)
Cammack "Cam" Roberds**ALSO PRESENT:**Joe Spraggins
Sandy Chesnut, Esquire
Steven Eckert, Esquire**REPORTED BY:**Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich
mburdine@sbmreporting.com

1 CAM ROBERDS:

2 Welcome, everybody, to the Mississippi
3 Advisory Commission on Marine Resources meeting,
4 dated Tuesday, November 19th.

5 I want to ask Commissioner Mayfield if
6 you can lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

7 (Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 Thank you, Commissioner.

10 General Spraggins, you want to lead us
11 in prayer?

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 Yeah. And before we start, just, you
14 know, we've got a little disturbance out there.
15 Hopefully, everything is just going to be rain for
16 today, and that will be it.

17 And looks like everything is
18 happening -- hope it doesn't cause any damage to
19 the -- it's going back up to the northeast and
20 going to cut across there where North Carolina and
21 South Carolina has already had devastation and
22 don't need any more, and a lot of Florida. So
23 let's keep them all in our prayers, you know,
24 everybody out there, so let's keep them there.

25 (Moment of prayer.)

1 CAM ROBERDS:

2 So we have the minutes from
3 October 22nd. Do we have any questions?

4 If not, do we have a motion to approve?

5 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

6 I will make a motion to approve the
7 minutes.

8 RONNIE DANIELS:

9 Second.

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 All those in favor?

12 (Unanimous vote.)

13 CAM ROBERDS:

14 Do we have the -- has everybody had an
15 opportunity to review the agenda? If so, are
16 there any questions?

17 If not, do we have a motion?

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Motion.

20 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

21 Second.

22 CAM ROBERDS:

23 All those in favor?

24 (Unanimous vote.)

25 CAM ROBERDS:

1 All right. Director.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 Okay. We're going to start with
4 employment contracts, and Emmett Carstens has been
5 promoted to Environmental and Natural Resources
6 Specialist III at the Grand Bay NERR.

7 We have two new hires as -- Dena Thomas
8 has just started with Dispatch II for Marine
9 Patrol and Jason Mauffray, who -- Accountant III
10 in our Office of Finance.

11 So we're glad to have those on board and
12 always glad to be able to promote. Any questions
13 on that?

14 (No response.)

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 Okay. Contracts, we've got one with
17 USM. It's 2.5 million. This is a five-year
18 contract. We do a master contract with them every
19 year -- ever so many years, every five years.
20 And, you know, in the past, we have done like
21 5 million, but we never used all of it or anywhere
22 close to it, so we decided that it was best for
23 finance and all just to lower it down, and they're
24 fine with it. Everybody is good. We can always
25 raise it if we need to.

1 Any questions on that?

2 (No response.)

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 Okay. Agency update, we've got -- our
5 next Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday,
6 December 17th at 9:00 a.m.

7 Any questions or any problems with that?

8 RONNIE DANIELS:

9 When?

10 JOE SPRAGGINS:

11 Tuesday, 19th -- the 17th.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 The 17th.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Jason, are you on?

16 JASON OSBORNE:

17 Yes, sir. I'm here.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 Okay. All right. Good.

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 I'm good.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 Everybody good? All right. So we'll
24 stay with that date.

25 We had an update on our GOMA meeting

1 October 23rd and 24th in Gulf Shores. We had a
2 good meeting, which was a kind of an annual
3 meeting that they have. Basically, just looking
4 at things that we're going to do and how we're
5 going to move forward with GOMA. It's no big
6 changes. Nothing big, major, any different than
7 what we have been doing over the last few years.

8 GOMA is doing very good and they've been
9 getting grants and everything works for them.
10 We're able -- they're the ones that are sponsoring
11 and helping us with the federal side of the
12 derelict vessels, so they're doing a great job
13 with that. And then we're looking at several
14 other programs that we're looking at.

15 Rick, is there anything that I am
16 missing on that?

17 RICK BURRIS:

18 (Shakes head.)

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 All right. Any questions on GOMA?

21 (No response.)

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 Tidelands check, we received it.

24 Secretary of State, \$11 million, so thank you,
25 Secretary. We appreciate that.

1 And the money is already being
2 allocated. There was about -- a little over
3 5 million of it that was going to public access,
4 in which Sonja, I'm sure, has sent that out
5 already to everybody. We have signed those.

6 We had about a million two in bond debt
7 that we had to pay, and about a million of it is
8 also set aside to pay prior year projects. So,
9 you know, we never know what we're going to have
10 in the prior year that keeps coming in, so we have
11 to have prior year projects there. We've never
12 spent the total 11, 12 million at one time, but
13 it's come close a couple of times, so this will be
14 good.

15 And then we have got about -- a little
16 over 3 million that we can do managed projects
17 with, which makes it mainly -- helps us run the
18 agency. It does -- obviously, it pays for the
19 Tidelands, the monitors and several jobs in it and
20 then it also pays for Lyman Fish Hatchery and, you
21 know, to be able to keep it operational. And it
22 pays 50 percent of what it takes to operate the
23 Heritage and 30 percent of what it takes to
24 operate the NERR. And then we subsidize Fisheries
25 with things that they do as far as different

1 programs that they have and then some others in
2 the agency also.

3 And we also do things like, you know, we
4 pay the -- for our flights that we do to fly over
5 and check the amount of boats and everything,
6 what's going on. So it's a pretty good program,
7 and we're doing good there.

8 Any questions on the Tidelands?

9 (No response.)

10 JOE SPRAGGINS:

11 All right. We've got an update on Gulf
12 Council. Well, that was in St. Petersburg and --
13 during the election night, of all times. We had
14 to have that during the election. I told them --
15 I said, y'all need to pick another week, you know,
16 and we ought to not have it during a time we have
17 an election, but they -- you know, it was just the
18 way it worked out.

19 But anyway, MS Creel is going forward.
20 We're moving forward with MS Creel. We're having
21 a few little loopholes with that right now.
22 Obviously, Washington is not funding things
23 right -- as they have been as quickly. And with
24 the change in command coming in January, there is
25 some funding issues, and the question is, will

1 they or will not -- they not be able to get the
2 funding through by the end of year so we can be
3 ready in January. If not, I told them we will
4 give -- we will fund it out of the agency.

5 I tell you, we're not going to let this
6 fail. We're going to keep going forward and no
7 matter what happens, we're not going to let it
8 fail and we're going to be able to make sure that
9 we get it done until NOAA can start funding the
10 project.

11 But we do not want MS Creel to back up.
12 We want it to move forward. That's, I think,
13 going to help us so much with our -- especially
14 our snapper resources and what we'll have to be
15 able to -- what our allocation will be.

16 And it's also going to help us, too,
17 though, because we're going to have a better
18 understanding of what we have with even speckled
19 trout and other fish because it will be basically
20 an all-across-the-board. And that's something
21 that we have been wanting to do with Tails and
22 Scales for years, but it's just so expensive. We
23 couldn't have done it. We could have never done
24 it with Tails and Scales to be able to do it, the
25 whole gamut. So this way, we might be able to do

1 that and maybe we can get a lot better
2 understanding.

3 Once we get that done, then basically,
4 MRIP will be out and we'll be doing it. And,
5 hopefully, the federal government will help still
6 fund us their part of the MRIP that they're giving
7 right now, and then we'll just make it up with
8 what we were doing with our Tails and Scales so it
9 should be kind of a wash. If everything works
10 out, it ought to be a wash and not too much out of
11 the way.

12 Amendment 59 and 60 is still working,
13 and so we'll see. That's basically talking about
14 the allocations of -- if we do get additional
15 snapper, you know, for the private, for the -- I
16 mean, excuse me, commercial side of it and what
17 we're going to be able to do with it.

18 Jason, do you have anything to add to
19 the -- to that? Jason is also on the Council.

20 JASON OSBORNE:

21 No. I think you summarized it pretty
22 well.

23 I think it was a pretty good meeting
24 overall. I think there is some interesting
25 conversations happening at the next Council

1 meeting, so I'm looking forward to, you know,
2 trying to figure out where the fights are going to
3 be, but, ultimately, I think we're in a good
4 position there.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 Okay. Any questions?

7 CAM ROBERDS:

8 I've got a question. I have a question
9 on snapper.

10 I see that the -- they came out with
11 additional ACL for -- or actually, they never meet
12 the ACL on the federal -- the federal waters and
13 that gave the opportunity for for-hire and for
14 folks with the commercial permits to be able to go
15 in the federal waters.

16 Is that -- as far as the recreational
17 side, I mean, there is no opportunities for the
18 rec guys to be able to go in the federal --
19 whenever they put that together, they said only
20 the commercial-for-hire and then the --

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 Yeah, it's a -- Trevor, come up. You
23 know more about that than anybody in the world.

24 But this is basically what it did.
25 It -- they have like three-point-something million

1 and they only caught 2.3 million. And so what
2 they want to do is go back and open it back up to
3 the end of the year, I think is what they're
4 looking at.

5 And the one thing that we did is that we
6 decided in our order that we put out that we
7 closed the state waters, nine miles -- out to nine
8 miles. They can't use it because we don't want to
9 go out and, you know, basically rape the reefs and
10 everything else in that nine miles that we would
11 do.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 Yeah.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Trevor.

16 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

17 Yeah. The federal-for-hire ACL is right
18 at 3 million pounds. We've only harvested
19 2.1 million pounds. It looks like the underages
20 are occurring in every state, so each one,
21 Florida -- Florida, Alabama and Louisiana, from
22 what I have seen, are under. A couple are 250-;
23 one is 200-; the other one is 50,000 pounds. And
24 all that just culminated into leftover ACL to be
25 reopened.

1 They have reopened in the past. I think
2 two years ago was an additional week. That didn't
3 turn out to be fruitful, because as y'all can
4 imagine, it's probably a little difficult to book
5 those kind of trips this time of year with the
6 weather and everything else. And I think after
7 observing that, they decided just to go ahead and
8 open up from November 18th all the way through the
9 end of the year, and that was a decision at the
10 federal level.

11 Now, to clarify, it's only for the
12 federally-permitted for-hire guys. It's -- the
13 commercial guys, that entire group is still under
14 quotas and tax and everything, so -- sorry, IFQs,
15 so they can basically harvest the poundage that is
16 allotted to them throughout the year.

17 CAM ROBERDS:

18 Right.

19 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

20 That's how they're constrained. This is
21 only the federally-permitted for-hire guys.

22 CAM ROBERDS:

23 Got ya. Okay.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 Yeah. We normally -- they do that -- it

1 starts sometime in June normally, right?

2 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

3 (Nods head.)

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 And then goes to about, what, August?

6 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

7 Yeah. It's been steadily increasing
8 over time for the last six or eight years. So it
9 started out as June through July. Then got
10 extended a little bit more and, I think, it was at
11 84 days for the last little while. And so there
12 is more and more time and the ACL is not getting
13 caught, so this time they tried to reopen to
14 provide that.

15 And there's been conversations at the
16 Council level, I think, of different opening
17 schedules and everything else to make sure that
18 the reopening doesn't happen at the end of the
19 year, but those are going to be ongoing for a
20 little while.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 Yeah. One of the things that we're
23 voting on in the Council -- I think it's coming up
24 in January, right, that we'll go final with it --
25 that basically as to the season itself, normally

1 it's been in June and all whenever we opened up
2 the federal side of it, and I think we're going to
3 make it to where the federal-for-hire and all can
4 open up the same time that we open up our
5 recreational-for-hire, you know, for -- and we're
6 all shooting -- the majority of the people are
7 shooting for -- and I don't want to say this is
8 100 percent of how it's going to go.

9 And, Jason, you can chime in, too, if
10 you -- on this if you have any different, but the
11 majority is looking at probably the weekend before
12 Memorial Day as the opening for everybody.

13 Now, there was some options of opening
14 up the 15th of May and there was some options of
15 opening up all the way in April, but I think
16 that's where it's at.

17 Jason, do you remember if there's any
18 different on that?

19 JASON OSBORNE:

20 I'm sorry. Repeat that again. Do I
21 remember what?

22 CAM ROBERDS:

23 Will you repeat it?

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 Oh, Jason --

1 JASON OSBORNE:

2 Yes.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 -- what we're talking about is the
5 federal-for-hire being able to change the date
6 until probably the weekend before Memorial Day, I
7 think, is what we're talking about on the Council
8 and voting on it in January.

9 JASON OSBORNE:

10 Yes, sir.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 Okay. So I think it will be good with
13 that.

14 Any questions for Trevor?

15 JASON OSBORNE:

16 Yeah. I think there was -- I think
17 there was only one potential objection to that and
18 I don't think he was hardened in his objection,
19 the guy from Florida, but I think that is going to
20 pass through.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 Yeah. I know Louisiana was trying to --
23 you know, they normally had opened up in April or
24 something. They was talking about doing it all
25 the way back, and they looked at -- Texas and

1 others looked at -- we all looked at the 15th of
2 May. And I think after everything came down that
3 we pretty much -- four of the five states have
4 decided that -- I think that we're looking at the
5 weekend before Memorial Day, and if that's the
6 case, all would have to go that way, I would
7 think.

8 RONNIE DANIELS:

9 So if that happens, will rec and
10 state-for-hire, will they still be opening on
11 Memorial Day?

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 Yeah. Memorial Day weekend.

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15 It will still be the same time?

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 Yeah. What this is going to allow is if
18 there is a federal-for-hire boat that's going out
19 there and basically they've got a charter that
20 weekend, you know, that they've got charters, they
21 can go out and they could still go catch, you
22 know, snapper.

23 Whereas, now they can't wait. They have
24 to wait till it opens, and so it's just going to
25 make it a little different. But I think it's best

1 overall we get it to where everything is aligned
2 100 percent.

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 It just seems like we're up -- at this
5 point right now, we're catching our ACL, you know,
6 and the other states aren't, so it is lopsided. I
7 mean, everybody has to --

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 Our ACL is so low is the problem.

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 It's crazy.

12 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

13 Yeah. And that was -- the conversation
14 was opposite in the beginning of this whole thing
15 before calibration.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 Well, and there's also -- there is a
18 conversation being brought forward, and I brought
19 it up this last meeting. And I asked Andy with
20 NMFS to basically do it and look at it with a
21 study with the Council to be able to say that if
22 we come to the end of the year of 2024 and there
23 is allocation left in the Gulf and one state is
24 over and one, you know -- and another is under,
25 could we use that allocation to keep somebody from

1 having to pay back?

2 And that's the -- you know, they do that
3 in the Atlantic district and all and some others,
4 and the question was -- and I think that's
5 something that's amenable to everybody. I believe
6 everybody is on board with it. They want to do
7 it. It's just going to probably -- it will
8 probably be 2026 before it goes in effect, if I
9 had to guess, because it's got to go through all
10 its wickets. But at least that would be something
11 like last year, when we went over X amount of
12 pounds, we wouldn't have had to pay it back
13 because we had three -- two states that were under
14 or three states that were under and we could have
15 easily, you know, done that.

16 It would be something that would be
17 voted year to year to year by the Council because
18 that way, it wouldn't be something that you can
19 just -- you know, one state could abuse it or
20 whatever. But, anyway, we're getting forward.
21 We're moving. Hey, we're getting somewhere.

22 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

23 Yep.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 And it looks like we're doing good with

1 it.

2 Anything else on snapper?

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 Thank you.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 Okay. Thank you, Trevor.

7 Oyster season opened on the 13th and
8 guess what? We went for a month and a half with
9 no rain and guess what happened? We should have
10 opened the oyster season in October because we
11 could have got some rain then. But anyway, that's
12 just the way nature does it.

13 And the first day was very bad. The
14 winds and the rain was pretty horrible. The
15 second day was a little better. The third day was
16 a little -- and the fourth, you know, it's getting
17 there. And then, obviously, today we're shut
18 down. There is not anybody out there, I don't
19 think, oystering today at all.

20 We'll look at -- what we had to do, we
21 had to close some waters to start with on the
22 first day. We'll look at what we have to do after
23 today with the rain that we had last night and
24 what we'll do, but we'll adjust. Don't worry
25 about it. We're only -- what are we, about less

1 than -- right at 300 sacks of oysters, somewhere,
2 just short of 300 sacks, but that's fine. But
3 that's 300 sacks more than we've had in five
4 years.

5 And the other thing is that we're going
6 to adjust. We'll adjust to a point that we know
7 we've got a number that we want to look at and
8 we're going to keep looking at that number. And
9 if we don't overcatch that, we'll be fine, and I
10 don't think we will.

11 And we'll either decide here in the next
12 week or so that -- if we're going to change the
13 number of sacks and go from 10 to 15 or whatever,
14 and I think that's in our order that we can do
15 that and we can just change it.

16 Do we have to ask the Commission for
17 permission on that? I think that we got that in
18 the thing originally when he did it.

19 SANDY CHESNUT:

20 Yeah. It's in the opening order so
21 you're fine.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 Huh?

24 SANDY CHESNUT:

25 It's in the opening order, so you're

1 okay.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 Yeah. And I was looking at Rick. He
4 was shaking his head both ways.

5 But anyway, long story short, I think
6 that, you know, what we'll do is we will probably
7 run this one and it goes to the -- is it the 25th?
8 I think it is, right before Thanksgiving. And,
9 you know, we'll probably -- and see what happens
10 there.

11 And once we get that day -- once we get
12 through that, then we'll turn around and decide
13 where we're at, unless we decide to do something
14 this week, but I doubt it because it's already at
15 that point.

16 But then we'll go back in our next
17 season and we may open it a little earlier than
18 what we have or we may wait and open again in
19 January some more. But we will get it done and we
20 will get -- or we may change the allocation from
21 10 to 15 or whatever sacks just to be able to see
22 what we can do.

23 All right. Any questions?

24 (No response.)

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 Nature just didn't work with us right at
2 the start here.

3 All right. If you were -- saw where the
4 Governor -- I was there with the Governor the
5 other day when he announced the restoration
6 projects for -- on November 13th, 110 million.

7 Out of that, there was quite a few of
8 those projects from South Mississippi, and one of
9 the major reasons for that is because we have
10 RESTORE Act, which has to be spent in South
11 Mississippi, and we also have the GOMESA, which
12 has to be spent in South Mississippi, and we have
13 Tidelands projects that have to be spent in South
14 Mississippi. So we -- those things have to
15 happen.

16 And then there is other projects that
17 are funded by the Legislature and the Governor and
18 all, the Governor's Council that are done, and --
19 but it's all the South, the areas have to be done
20 here.

21 We have a couple new projects that were
22 added at the last minute. We -- basically, it was
23 the projects that were done in the bill that was
24 passed in -- this past April and went in effect
25 July 1st as far as our GOMESA. But we did add

1 some projects up to about \$8 million, and some of
2 the projects was to -- basically, we're going to
3 be able to start mapping our harbors now, and
4 we've got a project we're using with NOARC to be
5 able to map the harbors. And we're going to be
6 able to map each one of the commercial harbors
7 across the Coast to where we can now have a
8 baseline, and that baseline will say that this is
9 where we're at today and this is what would happen
10 if we have a storm or anything else. And then
11 we'll be able to be -- have something for them to
12 be able to fight FEMA for to be able to get it
13 replaced.

14 And we're -- this is a five-year
15 program, and it will continue. And then we'll be
16 updating it, and then we'll look at it at the five
17 years and probably have to put more funding into
18 it if we want to continue. But that's a great
19 deal.

20 We also funded \$3.2 million, I think it
21 was, for USM to start a development and it's
22 basically to develop an aquaculture, an
23 aquaculture development course, and so basically
24 helping people learn how to get into aquaculture.
25 So that's going to be great. That's going to be

1 something that works out for us.

2 A couple of other things that we funded,
3 but we also funded some stuff in -- for Gulfport
4 for their sewer system over there. They've got a
5 bad problem in one area there and we gave them
6 about 1.7 million to be able to update that some
7 and be able to keep it going until they can get
8 the final fix and what they need on it.

9 We did give -- and IMMS got \$1 million
10 to be able to go forward and help build that new
11 hospital, so we'll have a new hospital to take
12 care of the dolphins and the turtles and
13 everything else here. So I think that's a great
14 deal too.

15 And then the last 800,000 of it that we
16 spent was to be able to continue our study for
17 the -- it's basically land and where we're at and
18 where we say the insurance ought to be for this
19 level, this level, this level. And it's -- what
20 we're looking at is basically setting the zones
21 and being able to get FEMA to understand in
22 changing the zones that we're doing to say that,
23 you know, what was done after Katrina is not
24 100 percent sure where we need to be now.

25 And I think it's going to help a lot of

1 people if we get this done, so this will be
2 something that can change the insurance rating and
3 can change where you have to have flood insurance.
4 It can change a lot of things.

5 Any questions on that?

6 (No response.)

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 All right. On-bottom leasing, we'll
9 start December 2nd reviewing everything. We're
10 already reviewing a lot of them. Hopefully, we'll
11 get these things done and be able to get the
12 on-bottom lease started at the first of January to
13 people.

14 So we're -- right now, what we're doing,
15 if somebody has put an application in, we're
16 looking at it and then we're going back and seeing
17 if there is anything missing and telling them,
18 hey, you need to correct this. So we're trying to
19 be proactive with it to make sure we've got as
20 much as we can to get it done.

21 Bonnet Carré update, I have got one
22 somewhere here.

23 All right. Sorry about being
24 long-winded.

25 The financial assistance for the

1 commercial fisheries and seafood dealers, charter
2 fishermen businesses, funding is 7.9 million and
3 we've spent 7.675 of it. So commercial was
4 7.1 million of that and charter was 573,000.

5 Round 2 opened for new applicants in --
6 October 28th and we will close November 26th.
7 What we're talking about there is, some people
8 that either didn't get to put their information in
9 because they was out fishing somewhere or whatever
10 and, you know, they just didn't see it and didn't
11 know it. So we did have some extra money that we
12 were able to put back into this program, and we're
13 looking at it and we're trying to -- if you
14 applied the first time, yours is already done.
15 And -- now, if there's something that you didn't
16 apply for the first time, that's entirely
17 different. But if you applied the first time,
18 it's already been done, and this is just for
19 anything that was outliers that was sitting there.

20 The application is only for eligible
21 participants that missed the first round.
22 There's -- 74 applications have been received so
23 far, so there is some people that did miss some
24 things on it, and so we're going to see if we can
25 help.

1 Also, our grant program for new and
2 emerging seafood processing technologies is
3 3.7 million, roughly. We spent about 83,000 of
4 that. That period -- that grant application
5 period opened on July 15th and closed on
6 September 13th. The staff has approved 27
7 applications meeting program requirements and are
8 addressing the disbursement requests now. The
9 cap -- proportional payout plan will be capped
10 with the amount requested at 1.5.

11 In other words, if you spend more than
12 1.5, you're not going to get anything for the --
13 that point. I'm not saying you're going to get
14 1.5. We don't have that kind of money, but the
15 one -- the point is we're using that as a cap to
16 start with and working from that point down. So
17 whatever the number is, that's what we're going to
18 be able to do.

19 Any questions on that?

20 (No response.)

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 Okay. Shellfish harvest training video
23 is funded with \$77,000. We're in the process of
24 finalizing the script and education and stuff to
25 be able to teach people how to be able to do the

1 shellfish.

2 That's basically an update on where we
3 are at on it. The other projects are working.

4 Anything else on the Bonnet Carré?

5 (No response.)

6 JOE SPRAGGINS:

7 All right. We're anxiously waiting to
8 find out who's going to be the head of Commerce.
9 I haven't seen it, unless he announced it last
10 night and I didn't see, but we're looking to the
11 Secretary of Commerce because the Secretary of
12 Commerce then will appoint the heads of NOAA, and
13 so that will tell us who we're going to deal with.
14 And there's big things for us to be able to look
15 at.

16 I think that Senator Wicker will still
17 be on the commerce committee. He's not going to
18 be the chair because he's going to take the chair
19 of military affairs, so I think that we'll have
20 someone. But we'll be looking at it and seeing
21 what we need to do. I don't know what the change
22 will be. I don't know what the new person -- I'm
23 pretty sure they will change the secretary, but
24 I'm not sure what they will do as far as under
25 that. That will be left up to that person, so

1 we're in limbo right now to see what happens.

2 All right. We will be closed
3 Thanksgiving Day and the day after, so the
4 Governor has been gracious and gave us that. So
5 if you need -- and everybody but -- you know,
6 Marine Patrol never closes, so they'll be open.
7 If you're thinking I'm going to be out there for
8 free, we're out there, aren't we?

9 KYLE WILKERSON:

10 That's right.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 All right. Last thing, we've got
13 vessels, derelict vessels update. 171 derelict
14 vessel cases have been reported; 142 have been
15 removed; 29 are pending removal and nine received
16 court orders for removal.

17 All right. I think that's got that.
18 Now, we're down to any -- I don't think there is
19 anything else on the updates, except for the
20 action update and we need to do that.

21 STEVE ECKERT:

22 Good morning, Commissioners and
23 Director. At the October 2024 meeting, the
24 Commission recommended and the Director approved a
25 limited oyster season in the Western Mississippi

1 Sound to be open, as the Director discussed this
2 morning, for periods in November and December with
3 sack limits of 10 sacks per day per vessel, with
4 an opening order to be issued detailing areas of
5 harvest and harvesting methods.

6 And that's all the action items that we
7 have for today's update.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 Any questions on those?

10 If not, Mr. Chairman, that's my report.

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 Well, thank you, sir. Appreciate that.

13 Commissioners, do we have anything to
14 report for the month?

15 I will just say I appreciate the staff
16 and the entire, you know, organization here to be
17 able to push the snapper. What you guys are
18 doing, it -- we see it on the recreational side,
19 so we appreciate that.

20 All right. Moving on to --

21 JASON OSBORNE:

22 Hey. Hold on a second. Hey, guys.

23 Sorry.

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 Come on.

1 JASON OSBORNE:

2 If I could (inaudible) political intel
3 on what I'm hearing from D.C. and the new
4 administration that we need to pay attention to,
5 which as odd as it sounds, this new kind of -- I
6 don't even know if it's a governmental entity, but
7 the effort that Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy are
8 putting together -- I think it's Department of
9 Government Efficiency. I know a few folks that
10 are working inside of that effort, and NOAA is
11 apparently on the chopping block in some fashion,
12 so we need to be mindful in kind of how to
13 navigate that. Luckily, you know, our delegation
14 in D.C. is going to be pretty strong in that
15 regard.

16 As it relates to Department of Commerce
17 and who the secretary is going to be, I don't have
18 any -- I have heard some names, Linda McMahon
19 being one of them, but it could be anybody at this
20 point.

21 But, General, it's going -- I think
22 there is going to be a lot of work that we're
23 going to need to do at the beginning of the year
24 to make sure that the stuff we like stays and the
25 stuff we don't, we're okay with it going away.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 Yeah, I understand that. And, you know,
3 there is a lot of things in that. Just to give
4 you an idea, we were talking about doing some
5 things at GOMA the other day even to where we just
6 said, hey, we're just going to hold back. We're
7 going to hold back and not spend that money right
8 now because we don't know if we're going to be
9 able to get it replenished or not.

10 So there is a lot of issues that are
11 going on. Obviously, they're looking at ways of
12 cutting the government and which I can't argue
13 with that. But the thing is, we've got to find
14 out what's going to survive, and it's going to be
15 something that probably we won't know until
16 probably the middle of next year, I would say, to
17 a point.

18 So we're going to have to look at a lot
19 of things and, hopefully, we'll be able to keep
20 our program. We're going up -- the five state
21 directors are going up in February to meet with
22 the Senators and Congressmen from the Coast and so
23 we'll see what we can do about helping out in any
24 way we can.

25 Thanks, Jason.

1 JASON OSBORNE:

2 Yep.

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 Appreciate it, man.

5 Moving on to Chief Wilkerson on the
6 citations report.

7 KYLE WILKERSON:

8 Good morning, Commissioners, Director,
9 Legal.

10 October was a very compliant month.

11 Everybody played well with others.

12 And, Director, I thank you, but you are
13 correct. Marine Patrol never sleeps, and we're
14 out there every day, every hour.

15 So in saying that, the -- nothing really
16 jumps out at me on this report. There's a few
17 odds and ends. There is a few woodlands
18 violations that we took care of. Just kind of
19 fell upon us and we handled that with -- we
20 expedited that with a deer and -- as y'all
21 probably looked at it -- and we handled that
22 business. And we -- Wildlife also assisted with
23 that also.

24 But other than that, I will take any
25 questions on what I can give you information-wise.

1 CAM ROBERDS:

2 Any questions?

3 (No response.)

4 CAM ROBERDS:

5 Appreciate it, Chief. Thank you for the
6 information.

7 KYLE WILKERSON:

8 Thank you.

9 CAM ROBERDS:

10 All right. It looks like we're moving
11 down to the -- looks like Bureau of Wetlands
12 permitting, maybe, Katie Nelson.

13 KATIE NELSON:

14 Yes. That's me. Thank you.

15 All right. So thank you for the
16 introduction, and good morning, everyone.

17 My name is Katie Nelson, and I represent
18 the Office of Coastal Resource Management. Today
19 I will be presenting a request for a permit by
20 Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

21 The proposed project is located near
22 Buccaneer State Park in Hancock County near
23 Waveland and Lakeshore communities. It is in the
24 General Use District.

25 The agent on the project is

1 Neel-Schaffer. And the proposed project purpose
2 and need is to remedy harm to Gulf Coast resources
3 caused by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill by
4 creating subtidal reef habitat to enhance
5 secondary productivity and improve recreational
6 fishing opportunities.

7 The applicant is proposing to fill
8 unvegetated Coastal wetlands for the construction
9 of a submerged artificial reef. It's actually --
10 there are two portions of the proposed artificial
11 reef. There is a shoreward portion that will be
12 subtidal, will be made up of approximately 106.9
13 acres of limestone cultch material. Maximum cubic
14 yardage will 4,000 -- 473,000 cubic yards of
15 material. The portion of the permit for this part
16 will be conditioned to not allow harvesting until
17 required monitoring is completed.

18 Then, the secondary portion of this
19 artificial reef is gulfward, will be a gulfward
20 block reef made up of a 0.2 acres of manufactured
21 concrete blocks. Each block will be three by
22 three by three, and a total of 1,120 blocks will
23 be placed in clusters of 32. And this portion --
24 the gulfward block portion will be about 100 feet
25 from the subtidal reef part. And the clearance on

1 both of these reefs will be three feet.

2 And here is the project location. On
3 the left is just satellite imagery, but on the
4 right-side map is the project footprint. As I
5 said, you know, the shoreward portion and then
6 there is the gulfward portion that will be made up
7 of the blocks.

8 And you will also see on the right side
9 the topographic map is south of Buccaneer State
10 Park, and it will be approximately 1,000 feet from
11 the shoreline, which is in the riparian zone
12 of Mississippi Department of Wildlife's --
13 Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, as well as Coastal
14 Preserves, and we have received approval from both
15 for the reef to be placed within their riparian
16 zones.

17 On the left side is just a cross-section
18 of the cultch material and reef blocks showing
19 that neither will exceed the three-foot clearance,
20 and then there is a representation of the type of
21 reef block that they will be using on the right
22 side, and then just below that is the cluster
23 layout that they are intending to place the reef
24 blocks in.

25 So as I said previously, the project

1 area is in the General Use District, but the
2 applicant is requesting a use plan change to a
3 Special Use District S-6 for restoration and
4 enhancement areas.

5 They are justifying this request by
6 stating that there is significant public benefit
7 in the activity. Impacts to public access and
8 adverse environmental impacts have been minimized.
9 The general public and governmental entities have
10 been notified of the project, and a public hearing
11 has been held.

12 They are also requesting a variance for
13 the fill of Coastal wetlands and justifying the
14 variance by saying that the activity requires a
15 waterfront location, there is significant public
16 benefit in the activity, and the public hearing
17 has been held.

18 Notification of the project ran in the
19 *Sun Herald* on September 8th, 15th and 22nd. It
20 also appeared on our website from August 30th to
21 September 30th of this year and we held a public
22 hearing in Hancock County on October 24th.

23 We did receive some public comments and
24 we've summarized them. They're on the slide, but
25 I will go through each of the questions and then

1 give our answer to the questions.

2 So the first part, there were questions
3 about whether there would be onshore structures
4 that may affect scenic qualities of the area. And
5 we are -- DMR is only reviewing impacts by --
6 excuse me. Only reviewing impacts submitted by
7 DEQ, which include just subtidal reefs. There
8 might be other projects in the future for onshore
9 structures, but this project is only being
10 evaluated for subtidal reefs.

11 The next question we received, why beach
12 renourishment doesn't take place south of the
13 Gulfside Assembly property. Gulfside Assembly is
14 one of the adjacent property owners. I believe
15 it's east of the Buccaneer State Park. But they
16 were asking why beach renourishment doesn't take
17 place in the front -- or excuse me, south of their
18 property on the beach.

19 And we answered by saying the beach
20 renourishment is not the responsibility of the
21 MDEQ or MDMR. However, we did check Hancock
22 County's renourishment permit and the part of the
23 beach that the Gulfside Assembly is asking about
24 is -- was excluded, and we don't know why those
25 portions were excluded.

1 They also asked what material would be
2 used, and we covered that in the previous slides.
3 That would be cultch material and manufactured
4 reef blocks.

5 Why did I do that? Sorry.

6 What effect will there be to the
7 material during a hurricane? And that information
8 will be covered in whatever DEQ's adaptive
9 management plan will be. If the material moves
10 around and causes any damage, the permittee will
11 be responsible for those repairs.

12 Are there any other reefs in the area?
13 And there are no existing oyster reefs in the
14 proposed project -- in the proposed project
15 footprint.

16 Will this project affect beach
17 renourishment? And no, there is -- this project
18 is not anticipated to affect any beach
19 renourishment, as the reef itself will be
20 constructed up to 1,000 feet from the shoreline.

21 And will there be harvesting of any
22 oysters? The permit MDEQ receives will be
23 conditioned so that no oyster harvesting will be
24 allowed during the monitoring period. After their
25 monitoring period is finished, oyster harvesting

1 in the area will be determined by MDMR based on
2 the same rules for other oyster reefs.

3 We did not receive any comments from the
4 other offices of DEQ that we send applications to.
5 MDAH gave no comments, and Secretary of State had
6 no objections to the project.

7 After a thorough evaluation of the
8 project, based on decision factors in our
9 Mississippi Coastal program, the project would
10 serve a higher public interest by providing
11 habitat to enhance Coastal resource productivity
12 for many species, such as shrimp, blue crabs,
13 oysters and fish, restoring injuries to natural
14 resources caused by the Deepwater Horizon Oil
15 Spill and increasing recreational fishing
16 opportunities.

17 Therefore, the staff recommends a motion
18 to the Commission to recommend to the Executive
19 Director to approve the requested variance,
20 approve -- excuse me, approve the requested use
21 plan change, approve the permit as requested and,
22 additionally, condition the permit to contain the
23 following: Submission of an adaptive management
24 plan to be reviewed by MDMR staff prior to
25 construction of the reefs, coordination with U.S.

1 Coast Guard for necessary navigational aids at the
2 project location, as well as an SAV inspection
3 during the growing season prior to implementation
4 of the project. The survey report should be
5 submitted to MDMR wetlands permitting staff at
6 least 30 days prior to project commencement.

7 If SAV is found in the project area, a
8 final review and approval of -- or excuse me,
9 approval by MDMR staff should be required prior to
10 project commencement. And these are conditions
11 that have been added to DEQ restoration project
12 permits previously.

13 Are there any questions?

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15 So just so I'm clear, the blocks are
16 going subtidal, though, right? They're not going
17 to --

18 KATIE NELSON:

19 Correct.

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 -- rise above the waterline?

22 KATIE NELSON:

23 No, nuh-uh, no. No portion of this reef
24 will exceed three feet below, so negative
25 three feet. Does that make sense?

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 I think that's all great. I'm happy to
3 see it coming in. You know, it's going to provide
4 some great opportunities of fishing.

5 But I'm just curious, are the blocks
6 there just for that reason or does it play into
7 the oysters somehow?

8 KATIE NELSON:

9 As far as what the application says,
10 this is -- it's secondary productivity for
11 multiple species. It's not -- it's not just for
12 oysters. I'm not sure how much oysters like the
13 reef blocks. I'm not sure, but it's -- as far as
14 what's stated in the application, it's just for
15 all the little vertebrates and invertebrates.

16 RONNIE DANIELS:

17 I like all of it. More structure over
18 there would be great. I'm absolutely in favor of
19 it.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 Yeah. I mean, anytime you put substrate
22 down that way in that area, it's going to be a --
23 it's in the riparian rights, I think, is where
24 we're at, so there is going to be oysters that's
25 probably going to attach to it and there's going

1 to be some oysters in there and all. But they
2 will not be harvestable oysters for that, at least
3 for the five years, I know for sure, because
4 that's what the program is. And so there won't be
5 anything harvested in there by that time.

6 And I'm not sure. Rick, are there any
7 plans to put any oysters on that?

8 RICK BURRIS:

9 No, sir. As Katie mentioned, this is a
10 secondary productivity reef, so it's not
11 necessarily designed to be an oyster reef. It
12 will grow oysters and it will -- just like any
13 hard substrates you put out there, it's going to
14 have oysters and barnacles and things like that,
15 but it's designed basically as a -- more so a
16 fishing reef that's capable of growing oysters.

17 So there's not going to be any -- any
18 additional oysters or spat-on-shell or anything
19 like that added to it, but it will provide a
20 benefit for the oyster resource. It could be a
21 spawning reef. That's kind of what we're looking
22 at it to be in the future if everything goes
23 right.

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 I like it.

1 CAM ROBERDS:

2 It's kind of hard to tell, but I think
3 the -- maybe the blocks are there to help just for
4 the longevity of the reef.

5 RICK BURRIS:

6 Yeah. That was designed by -- I can't
7 remember the firm that they used, but it was
8 designed by the engineering firm for, I believe,
9 some like low-level siltation. And then the way
10 it is, there is a lot of crevices and things for
11 refuge for various species.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 Well, you guys answered my question in
14 the final slide about the navigational aids.
15 That's the only other question I had.

16 Does anybody else have any questions or
17 concerns?

18 If not, do we have a motion to take the
19 staff's recommendation?

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 I'll make the motion.

22 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

23 I'll second.

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 All those in favor?

1 (Unanimous vote.)

2 CAM ROBERDS:

3 Thank you very much.

4 KATIE NELSON:

5 Thank you.

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 All right. Skipping on down to Public
8 Affairs, Ms. Charmaine.

9 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND:

10 Good morning, the Mississippi Department
11 of Marine Resources had 61 media mentions since
12 the October MACMR meeting. News items included
13 reopening the 2019 Bonnet Carré Spillway Fisheries
14 Disaster Recovery Program, the Coffee Creek
15 pavilion and outfall project, the Tidelands Trust
16 Fund check presentation with the Secretary of
17 State's office and the opening of oyster season.

18 The Office of Marine Patrol took part in
19 BooFest at Ocean Adventures Marine Park
20 October 26th, Touch a Truck with Holly Trinity
21 Catholic Church on October 28th, Career Day at
22 East Hancock Elementary School October 29th and
23 Ocean Springs School District's Trunk or Treat
24 October 31st.

25 November 8th, Ellen Coffin with the

1 Shellfish Bureau gave a presentation on off-bottom
2 oyster aquaculture with the USM's marine biology
3 students.

4 And Director Spraggins and Rick Burris
5 gave a presentation to the Biloxi Rotary last week
6 that included an agency update, as well as
7 information on the Deer Island expansion project.

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 Any questions?

10 (No response.)

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 Thank you very much.

13 It looks like we have a '25 funding
14 recap and '26 application recap, Ms. Sonja Slater.

15 SONJA SLATER:

16 Good morning. I'm Sonja Slater with --
17 the Tidelands coordinator for DMR. I'm just going
18 to go over with you our applications that we
19 received for the FY26 fiscal year. I have a copy
20 of the book that has all the applications in it if
21 any of y'all want to review it.

22 Tidelands always accepts applications a
23 year in advance, so we have already accepted
24 applications for FY26. And our next application
25 cycle -- which I thought we corrected this -- is

1 for FY27 and it will have -- it will occur
2 May 31st of 2025 and it will end July 1st of 2025,
3 and then the awards will come down in October or
4 November of 2026, but that will be for the FY27
5 application cycle.

6 The FY26 application cycle, we received
7 75 applications in total, requesting over
8 \$30 million in funding. 39 of those were public
9 access applications, requesting 22 -- over
10 \$22 million in funding and 36 were managed
11 projects applications, which include the MDMR,
12 USM, MGC and some miscellaneous-managed projects
13 requesting over 7.3 million.

14 We were appropriated \$11 million, as the
15 Director mentioned earlier, in FY25 funding cycle,
16 and we have awarded most of those projects. All
17 the public access projects have been awarded.
18 They -- in that \$11 million, that gave us 5.3 for
19 public access. 4.5 went to 13 different projects
20 within the cities across the three Coastal
21 counties, and one miscellaneous project, which was
22 the USM project and two Board of Supervisor
23 projects for 600,000.

24 Our managed project funding, we received
25 3.8 million for managed project funding for the

1 MDMR. We had 1.5 million funding for the bond
2 payment that has to be made and another 1 million
3 for prior year expenses. Prior year expenses
4 applies to projects that were awarded prior to
5 this fiscal year that are still in the works of
6 being completed. We don't want those funds to
7 interfere with the new funds.

8 Any questions?

9 (No response.)

10 SONJA SLATER:

11 Thank you very much.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 Thank you.

14 All right. Trevor, you have been
15 sitting back there anxious. Come up and tell us
16 about these records.

17 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

18 Oh, yeah. We've got a couple of good
19 stories on these.

20 So we've got three records today. First
21 is a conventional tackle, Atlantic Stingray,
22 *Dasyatis sabina*. This is actually probably on the
23 top 15 of species caught, and we've never had a
24 record for it. It's the first one. So we've had
25 probably millions caught down here and no one ever

1 submitted it because they thought that there was
2 already a record.

3 But we've got a new record, eight
4 pounds. It was a giant. The angler was
5 Mr. Jawaun Walton. There is a picture of the
6 stingray. There is Mr. Walton with the stingray.

7 Next up, youth conventional, our man,
8 Rodie Armes showing up with a sharpnose shark --
9 he's been trying for this one for a while --
10 11 pounds .64 ounces. There is the shark. There
11 is Rodie with the shark.

12 And then we had a northern kingfish come
13 in, so this is a new record too. This is the
14 third of the ground mullet or the kingfish species
15 that we have that we don't see very often.

16 Mr. Chris Barlow actually broke this
17 record three days prior to Mr. Wrightson, but
18 Barlow took Mr. Wrightson and his father out and
19 they ended up breaking Mr. Barlow's record three
20 days after he submitted it. So a new record of
21 6.08 ounces. There is a picture of the fish.
22 It's got that high dorsal fin, which
23 differentiates it from the other ground mullet
24 species. And there is Cooper with that fish.

25 That's -- all we need is a motion to

1 recommend the adoption of the new state records.

2 CAM ROBERDS:

3 Appreciate that, Trevor.

4 Anybody have any questions?

5 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

6 I will make the motion that we adopt the
7 record.

8 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

9 Second.

10 RONNIE DANIELS:

11 I'll second.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 All those in favor?

14 (Unanimous vote.)

15 CAM ROBERDS:

16 Thank you.

17 All right. It looks like Ayesha Gray
18 for the Grand Bay NERR Interpretive Center
19 Redesign. I didn't say that right.

20 AYESHA GRAY:

21 That's fine. Good morning.

22 Yeah. This is the Interpretive Center
23 and our redesign. So about September in '22, we
24 submitted a proposal to the Institute of Museum
25 and Library Services. We submitted to this

1 particular group because the -- Senator Wicker's
2 office asked us to. I think a lot of these grants
3 had gone to northern states, and he wanted to see
4 some of them come down South.

5 So the project was called "Visualizing
6 Interpretive Space Through Integrative Team Work,"
7 and what this was, was a planning, a
8 collaborative -- community collaborative designing
9 process so that folks could meet. Folks from the
10 community, educators that we work with, employees
11 of the NERR, employees of other types of programs
12 like ours could all meet and discuss what we would
13 like to see at the Interpretive Center at the
14 NERR.

15 So next slide.

16 So through all of that work, this is
17 some drawings of what we have come up with. And
18 so worked with Taylor Studios, who are actually
19 the folks that did the original Interpretive
20 Center that we have now, so they were very excited
21 to help us refresh our Interpretive Center with
22 new education displays.

23 So next slide. Actually, stay on this
24 slide.

25 The central theme of this is kind of

1 what all of the displays kind of rotate around or
2 relate to, and ours is -- much of the value of our
3 Coastal ecosystem is revealed in the unseen and
4 unheard, and so visitors will peer through this
5 interpretive gallery and they're struck by its
6 visual abundance.

7 A pitched interactive site map instantly
8 attracts -- that's in the -- that's the laser.
9 Whoops. Sorry. The laser that doesn't work.

10 Right in the center there, you can see
11 that pitched map, and that will attract the
12 reserves. And there will be light-up features
13 which will show different -- like where our
14 monitoring sites are, where different features of
15 the estuary and marsh, our boundaries and things
16 like that.

17 The floor waterway is -- provides
18 discovery pathways through the exhibit, and so if
19 you look at the floor, the purpose of this is to
20 show the estuarine water that mixes with the
21 Coastal waters and to learn about the processes
22 that govern estuaries.

23 There is a diorama on the right side
24 that interprets the wet pine savanna, but also the
25 remediation and the habitat restoration actions

1 that we do, so they'll be part of that. That's a
2 burned wet pine savanna and part of it where it's
3 showing where it's just coming back and part of it
4 showing where it's more mature.

5 It will have lots of animals and
6 touchables in this diorama, so everything in there
7 is for kids and adults to touch. There is
8 recordings that they can hear and interpretive
9 displays.

10 And there is also a fun little burrow
11 that will have a gopher tortoise model in it, but
12 it's also -- you can switch it out so you could
13 put a raccoon in there or you could put an
14 armadillo in there or an owl. We have a project
15 that looks at all the different animals that use
16 these gopher tortoise burrows, and so we asked for
17 them to include a way to display that.

18 Towards the windows, the visitors will
19 explore another diorama of carnivorous plants that
20 interpret the fascinating methods that they use to
21 acquire nutrient in the tannin-soaked landscape.

22 And then if they continue along the
23 windows, they'll have binoculars where they can
24 look out. There is an elevated platform so they
25 can see the pine savanna out through the windows

1 better than they can now.

2 And there's also -- it's also a good
3 area to do a classroom experience. So because
4 it's an elevated kind of stairs, you can also sit
5 children there for discussions about these
6 different features.

7 And then on the left side of the space,
8 we have an herbarium, a turbidity and filtration
9 interactive that all show the importance and
10 necessity of ecosystems and highlight how we are
11 to maintain it.

12 We will have live displays here. So you
13 can see on the left side the -- Tobi is our
14 diamondback terrapin, and we have a bigger tank
15 and kind of more focus on Tobi in this rendering
16 of our Interpretive Center.

17 On the right side, we'll have fiddler
18 crabs in a tank there. That could also be
19 switched out with other things if we run across a
20 snake that would need rehabilitation, some corn
21 snake or something. We could also display it
22 there or hold it there.

23 Next slide.

24 So that's just the overview, so you can
25 kind of see the platform, the viewing platform.

1 You can see, you know, the center map and kind of
2 how things are laid out.

3 And the next slide.

4 This is a lot of what we were just
5 talking about.

6 Next slide.

7 And then some labeling of that, same
8 things. And then this shows the carnivorous plant
9 interactive, and you can see that there is the
10 diorama of all of the different types of
11 carnivorous plants. And then the interactive
12 there is kind of these disks that you drop through
13 the pitcher plant and they can be pinned at
14 different locations and show like different stages
15 of digestion of whatever it is, the insects or the
16 anoles or lizards that, you know, drop into those
17 that then get digested. And so it's just kind of
18 fun.

19 So the project -- budget range for this
20 project is between 800,000 and \$1 million. That's
21 what we asked them to aim for. Many of the
22 features of our current Interpretive Center we'll
23 retain, like especially our highlighting of Clyde
24 Brown and different community members that helped
25 establish the NERR. That display will be moved to

1 the -- closer to the front doors, so when you come
2 in, we thought Clyde Brown would greet you and you
3 could learn about the community members that
4 helped establish the NERR.

5 The project can be funded through the
6 procurement, acquisition and construction funding
7 that's offered to the NERRs every year. There is
8 a new round of funding each year for that, and it
9 would require a 30 percent match. And so I'm
10 working towards -- with the Director towards
11 getting the match kind of collected together, so
12 we will be ready to submit a proposal for this
13 project.

14 Do you have any questions?

15 CAM ROBERDS:

16 You guys are creating a very educational
17 space right there. I think that's really nice.

18 AYESHA GRAY:

19 Yeah.

20 CAM ROBERDS:

21 Any questions?

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 It's great. I look forward to trying to
24 bring my kids over there.

25 AYESHA GRAY:

1 Great. That's awesome.

2 CAM ROBERDS:

3 Thank you.

4 AYESHA GRAY:

5 Thank you.

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 So do we have any other business? We do
8 have a public comment from Mr. Ralph Humphrey.

9 Mr. Ralph, your name and address, and
10 you've got three minutes. You know the routine.

11 RALPH HUMPHREY:

12 Yep.

13 CAM ROBERDS:

14 Thank you.

15 RALPH HUMPHREY:

16 Good morning. My name is Ralph
17 Humphrey, and my address is 4039 Brandon James
18 Drive in Biloxi, Mississippi. And I'm the
19 president of the Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks.

20 I'm here to let y'all know the
21 long-awaited artificial reef with the cockroach on
22 the back of it is heading out this weekend. It's
23 going to pull away from the dock on Sunday, late
24 Sunday afternoon, and it's going to be deployed
25 Monday morning. It will be on site ready to go

1 Monday morning.

2 And we've coordinated with WLOX, the
3 Artificial Reef Bureau Director, Travis Williams,
4 and everything is ready to go. So I know a lot
5 people having been asking about it. They've been
6 anxious to -- when is it going to go out? So now
7 is the time. It just took a while to coordinate
8 schedules and good weather. It's been blowing
9 pretty hard, as y'all know, for the last few
10 weeks, but anyway, it's ready to go.

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 Great, Ralph. Looking forward to it.

13 RALPH HUMPHREY:

14 Okay.

15 CAM ROBERDS:

16 Hopefully, we'll see some coverage on
17 the news with it. That would be great.

18 RALPH HUMPHREY:

19 Yeah.

20 CAM ROBERDS:

21 All right. Is there any other questions
22 or comments from anybody?

23 If not, do we have a motion to close?

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 I'll make a motion.

1 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

2 Second.

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 All those in favor?

5 (Unanimous vote.)

6 (Meeting adjourned at 10:13 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 6th
16 day of December, 2024.

17
18 /s/ Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich

19
20 Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich
21 My Commission Expires 4/03/28
22
23
24
25