

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES
COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 10:00 a.m.,

Biloxi City Hall, Second Floor,

140 Lameuse Street, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

COMMISSION MEMBERS:Ronnie Daniels
Jonathan McLendon
Matthew Mayfield
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 Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the
3 Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine
4 Resources for Tuesday, October 21st, 2025.

5 I would like to call on Commissioner
6 Daniels to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

7 (Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 Thank you, Commissioner Daniels.

10 Director, would you like to lead us in a
11 prayer, please?

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 I will, but before we start this
14 morning, the one sitting to my furthest right over
15 here, to your left happens to be an older man
16 today, so Happy Birthday, Ronnie.

17 RONNIE DANIELS:

18 Thank you, Joe.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 I won't ask your age, so we won't have
21 to embarrass you.

22 Can we go to the Lord in prayer?

23 (Moment of prayer.)

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 All right. Next up, we have the

1 approval of the minutes. Does anybody have any
2 questions on the minutes from September 16th?

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

4 RONNIE DANIELS:

5 Motion.

6 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

7 Second.

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 All those in favor?

10 (Unanimous vote.)

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 All right. The approval of the agenda,
13 has everybody had an opportunity to review the
14 agenda, and if there aren't any questions, do we
15 have a motion?

16 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

17 Motion to approve the agenda.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Second.

20 CAM ROBERDS:

21 All those in favor?

22 (Unanimous vote.)

23 CAM ROBERDS:

24 Executive Director's report, it's all
25 yours, General.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 Okay. First off, thank you for --
3 Biloxi for allowing us to be able to use the
4 building again. I have no idea when we will be
5 back in our building on Bayview. I know they're
6 working hard on it, and, you know, hopefully, we
7 will get something done in the next year, but
8 other than that, I can't tell you.

9 We might be able to move back into the
10 first floor some time before that and the second
11 floor, so we may be able to move some of the
12 people back, but I don't think we will have a
13 Commission room for a while because they're using
14 it for storage right now, so I don't know what
15 will happen there. Anyway, we will keep going and
16 we'll keep trying. And once again, we'll have a
17 lot better building when it's all said and done.

18 Before we get started, how about
19 employment contracts? Okay. And we've got a
20 new -- what is that -- Environmental and Natural
21 Resources. And I am not about to try to say the
22 name -- but anyway, y'all can see it on the board
23 there -- because I'll mess it up if I do. But
24 anyway, we welcome him, William -- we'll just call
25 him William. How about that -- on board with us.

1 Any contracts? Not any, right?

2 On agency updates, got a few things.

3 On-bottom oyster lease program is still on hold as
4 far as new leases. You know, the judge ruled that
5 we -- basically, it was unconstitutional to use it
6 as it was, so what -- I think that the Attorney
7 General's office has filed for a motion to -- what
8 is it, Sandy?

9 SANDY CHESNUT:

10 Reconsider.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 Reconsider. And haven't heard anything
13 on that. Have you?

14 SANDY CHESNUT:

15 Nothing.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 Okay. So we don't know where it's at.

18 In the meantime, what we will do is we
19 will just continue to operate as we did prior to
20 the 2024 -- '25 bill, House and Senate bill, so
21 we're going to operate under the circumstance that
22 everything -- the leases, the ones that are there
23 now and the ones that was there before then, those
24 leases are still there and there will be no new
25 leases until we have something understood by the

1 Legislature. We're going to work with them and
2 try to do something this year, and also it will be
3 up to the judge and what he decides and, you know,
4 what the courts decide.

5 So in the meantime, we'll just use the
6 whole Gulf -- you know, all of our oyster bottoms
7 and we'll continue to, you know, work them and
8 we'll continue to have an oyster season.

9 Any questions on that from the
10 Commissioners?

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 I've got to tell you, it's been nice
13 seeing those guys out there working. A lot of
14 boats out there every day and seeing them bringing
15 them in, that's been nice to see each day.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 Yeah. And just to give you an idea --
18 let's see. I think I've got a list here that
19 tells me a little bit about it -- we've had 2,432
20 sacks so far, and that's pretty good for two
21 weeks, you know. We're doing good. They're
22 averaging about 350 sacks a day, which is good.

23 The oysters are beautiful. The oysters
24 are absolutely beautiful, and they've got a good
25 taste to them. I think that -- I'm not sure what

1 the price on the market is, but I know what
2 they're getting per sack is about \$30 to \$35 a
3 sack as far as the wholesalers, but I'm not sure
4 what it costs on the open market right now.

5 But they're doing 15 sacks a day for
6 tonging and 20 sacks for the dredgers and
7 recreationally is three sacks per week, seven-day
8 period, that you can get.

9 So I think we're going to have -- you
10 know, depending on what the weather is -- you
11 couldn't ask for a more beautiful day than we have
12 right now. I tell you what, it is absolutely
13 beautiful out there, and this is what, you know,
14 makes it so much fun in October in Mississippi.

15 But I think that we will have a good
16 season from now to the end of November. December,
17 January, February, March there tends to be a lot
18 of rain during that time, so we'll just have to
19 see what happens. But I expect 90 days plus,
20 90 days of oyster season and that will be the
21 first time since 2010. Does that tell you
22 something? Fifteen years. It's been that long
23 since they have had that many days.

24 So thanks to Marine -- to the Fisheries
25 department, Shellfish and all for doing such a

1 great job. Eric and all y'all, appreciate you and
2 Jason and them and everyone helping. And I'll
3 miss somebody, but thank y'all for going out and
4 working hard every day to get this back.

5 I know I stayed on them hard. I was on
6 them hard. I was like, come on, guys. We're just
7 not getting there, you know. We're just not
8 getting there. We're just not getting there.
9 Well, it's there. And if the good Lord is willing
10 and we don't have to have any major, either
11 manmade or natural, disaster in the next couple of
12 years, I think we will be at that 200-plus
13 thousand sacks a year that we'll be harvesting and
14 so that will carry us all the way back to the 2008
15 time frame. And so that's something else. I tell
16 you what, we're getting there.

17 Any questions?

18 (No response.)

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 All right. 2019 Bonnet Carré and 2020
21 Bonnet Carré, what we're doing there is the '19,
22 92 percent of the funds have been distributed.
23 We -- to 23 of the 24 applicants that we're
24 waiting on, we had done. But we spent a little
25 over three point -- right at 3.7 million, the

1 grant program for new and emerging seafood
2 processing technologies that's going out, so I
3 think that you'll see that everything is good.

4 Now we have the 2020, and Tracy and them
5 are working hard on the 2020 right now. We have
6 about \$3 million in it. We're putting -- as it
7 stands right now, the shrimpers are getting like
8 \$7,500. And then the oysters are getting about
9 \$10,000, and the reason for that, oysters still
10 did not even have a season in 2020. Shrimpers did
11 have some form of a season in 2020 but not near as
12 good as it could have been.

13 But we're looking at that. There's a
14 couple of outliers out there that we're looking at
15 and we're trying get the answers on it and as soon
16 as we do, we'll finish it. But I have signed
17 quite a few of them, so most of them are getting
18 paid right now. And so I'm glad to see that and I
19 know they deserve -- they are -- and they deserve
20 it because, you know, they've waited ever since
21 2019 to even have an oyster season, basically,
22 because last year was such a minute one. But we
23 appreciate them and we want them to know that
24 we're working hard every day to be able to get
25 that money to them.

1 I want to re-emphasize one thing. The
2 only state in the Gulf that uses their disaster
3 money to pay the fishermen is Mississippi. No
4 other state uses it to pay their shrimpers and
5 oystermen and finfish and crabbers or anything
6 else for their loss. They only pay them for
7 reimbursement of some equipment they buy or
8 whatever, but Mississippi is the only one. So
9 we've got to be very proud of that and at least we
10 try to take care of our people.

11 Any questions?

12 (No response.)

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 All right. Mississippi Seafood Task
15 Force meeting, we've had two of them, on the 18th
16 of September and the 13th of October. We're
17 working hard. We've got a great team and working
18 to be able to come up with what we need to do to
19 be able -- for the labeling of seafood. And now,
20 we're talking about in your grocery stores. We're
21 talking about in your markets, and we're also
22 talking about our restaurants. How do we do it?
23 We don't want to put a burden on anybody, you
24 know, and say we're going to jump out and say do
25 this or do this or do this and have to turn around

1 and change it.

2 Hopefully, we're going to have some new
3 rules. And when we went into this, we knew this
4 was going to be a walk, not run. We had to walk a
5 little bit before we could run to be able to make
6 this done. So what we're doing is we're going in
7 and we're working and we're -- hopefully, we'll
8 have something to take to the House and Senate to
9 be able to modify Bill 602, House Bill 602 for
10 next year and modify it to a point to where it's
11 more claritive (ph) of how we're going to do this
12 and put it to a point of saying, this is what you
13 must do. And then that way, we're not restricting
14 people.

15 I mean, we get caught up in a lot of
16 things. One of the things is -- especially in
17 grocery stores because the federal law says that
18 all you have to do is put something on the bag or
19 whatever that says what the country of origin is.
20 Our law says you have to put in there -- it says
21 import or domestic in the same label as the size
22 of the item that you're selling.

23 Well, we've got to work on that. We
24 can't supercede federal law. We can make it more
25 restrictive, a little bit, but we cannot supercede

1 it in that way so we've got to do something to
2 make that work. And the whole intent is for
3 people to know, is it import or is it domestic.
4 That's the whole intent. The intent is not to
5 turn around and hurt anybody.

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 I was going to just mention real quick
8 and most of you probably know, but I noticed on
9 almost all the restaurants on the seafood menus,
10 domestic or import, so before you even order it,
11 you understand what you're getting at the
12 restaurants.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 They're trying. They're trying hard.
15 And, you know, none of our restaurants are bucking
16 it. None of our markets are bucking it. Nobody
17 is trying to do that. That's not the case, but
18 they just want to know -- you know, you take a
19 restaurant that's any size and all and think about
20 how much does it cost to print them menus. It's a
21 lot of money. You know, 4- or \$5,000 to print the
22 menus. You can't do that every other week. We've
23 got to find a way for them to be able to do it
24 that they don't have to reprint the menu every
25 time something changes. So we've got to find some

1 ways to do it, and that's what we're going to work
2 on. We're going to make it work for them.

3 And, you know, it's probably not hard
4 for Jonathan and them in their processing to be
5 able to do what they need to because you know what
6 you have when it comes in, but that person at that
7 restaurant may not know what they're going to get
8 this week or next week.

9 And just like speckled trout right now,
10 it's not even for sale because the limit is gone.
11 All right. So, you know, if they had it on the
12 menu and they didn't have any that was already
13 frozen or whatever, then they can't -- you know,
14 it's going to be tough. It's the same thing with
15 a lot of things like that.

16 When we reach our limit on what can be
17 bought and sold in the Gulf and other things, and
18 when they reach that, that affects the
19 restaurants. It affects the seafood market. It
20 affects other people. So we've got to be able to
21 find a way that they can do this and modify what
22 they have on their menus or what they have on
23 their market without having to cause them a whole
24 lot of heartache, and I think we can get there.

25 Any questions?

1 (No response.)

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 We had a Governor's cabinet meeting on
4 24th of September. Great meeting. You know, it's
5 getting -- the Governor has got two years and then
6 after these two years, he cannot run for governor
7 again. So we've got two years to get things done
8 and his emphasis is back on it still. We want to
9 be -- in January of 2027 or 2028, I guess it would
10 be, wouldn't it? 2027 is the election year, I
11 guess.

12 But anyway, we want to be at that point
13 to whenever he is handing over the reins as
14 governor to the next governor of the State of
15 Mississippi that we're just as wide open as we
16 were the day that he took over, and that's exactly
17 what he's talking about. He wants it to be --
18 this agency, he wants all of his agencies to never
19 back up. He wants them to be 100 percent going
20 forward every minute, and that's what we're trying
21 to do.

22 And I think that works great and his
23 idea is, you know, we're in this until the day
24 that we're relieved, and he is going to be
25 relieved in January 2027 or '28, somewhere along

1 in there, whatever that date is, because that's
2 whenever his term is up. We will be in this fight
3 all the way till the end, and it will be as if we
4 just started the race. Okay. So we're not
5 backing up.

6 Great meeting with him. He thanks
7 everything that y'all do and he appreciates
8 everything about the agency.

9 Man, I tell you what, Cruisin' the Coast
10 was a good one. It was beautiful. A little bit
11 of rain, but that's okay every now and then. That
12 knocked the dust down a little bit, but it was
13 beautiful. I don't know how many pounds of shrimp
14 we went through, but it was quite a few. And I
15 tell you what, we didn't have anybody that said,
16 man, that is not any good. They all wanted more
17 and they were lined up.

18 At Jones Park when we did the Monday and
19 Tuesday there, whenever they'd take the break from
20 11:00 to 12:00 -- to 1:00, because that's what
21 they had told them they would do for the other
22 vendors, they were standing there lined up waiting
23 on the dang -- at 1:00. When are they going to
24 come out? They wanted that shrimp. It was
25 fantastic.

1 Right here in downtown, right off of
2 Lameuse here, just south of where we're at right
3 now, we had a setup on the Town Green on
4 Wednesday. We ran out an hour before we were
5 supposed to close. That tells you how many. We
6 went through them that quick. The people were
7 there.

8 And I thank the team that did that and I
9 know Patrick was so large behind that and
10 Charmaine and Francesca and others and I thank
11 y'all for all the hard work. And all the hard
12 work that the cooking team -- we appreciate them
13 for everything they did.

14 But we had people come in and say, yeah,
15 last year we got -- we had this and we only had
16 smaller coolers and could only get five or
17 10 pounds of shrimp to take home. This year, they
18 brought large coolers to get 50 pounds or more to
19 take home.

20 I can tell you what, you could look out
21 there on Saturday night, which was a beautiful
22 Saturday night right before the end of Cruisin',
23 and look at how many shrimp boats was out there
24 working and every one of them already had it
25 pre-ordered. That's the idea. The idea for us

1 sponsoring Cruisin' the Coast is to sell
2 Mississippi seafood and it's working because
3 everybody -- they're talking it.

4 And I have had a lot of them tell me
5 that they would go into the restaurants and they
6 would say, is this Gulf of America shrimp or is
7 this from a -- foreign? If they said foreign,
8 they said, we don't want it. We'll go somewhere
9 else if you don't have it.

10 They're -- the word is getting there.
11 The word is getting out, and the people are doing
12 it and that's what we're going to do to make this
13 work.

14 Any questions on Cruisin'?

15 (No response.)

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 But thank all -- everybody. Thank
18 all -- my whole team for doing everything you did
19 for Cruisin'. We appreciate you.

20 All right. Jackson County Fair,
21 Pascagoula, is coming up on -- well, it's already
22 happening right now. It's this week, isn't it?

23 CRYSTAL MATTA:

24 Yep.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 So we have Jackson County Fair over
2 there. So if you want to stop by, I think Ayesha
3 and bunch of them are working and stuff over
4 there, so please go by and see them.

5 We have a GOAA, which is the Gulf of
6 America Alliance, meeting and it starts tomorrow
7 in Sandestin, but we're going to be talking about
8 the Gulf of America and where we're going and
9 things that are happening there, so I think it
10 will be a good deal. I don't know -- I don't have
11 an update for you as to what it will be.

12 SEAFWA is the 15 southern states, all
13 the 15 southern states and that's for the Fish and
14 Wildlife and they're coming here. The executive
15 directors and others are coming here and they will
16 be here next week and -- at the Beau Rivage.

17 We have a big thing on the Monday night
18 if it doesn't rain us out, but our team is cooking
19 and their team -- and the Wildlife and Fisheries
20 team is cooking, so we ought to have a good
21 cookoff there and see who's the best. I know who
22 wins, but -- I ain't got to ask. I know who's
23 going to win.

24 But we're going to do that. About 500
25 people, so it ought to be a lot of fun and we get

1 to tell our story again. Once again, get to talk
2 about South Mississippi. We get to talk about the
3 marine resources and what's going on.

4 All right. Gulf States, next week also.
5 I tell you, we're busy. And they're to be here at
6 the Golden Nugget, and so we'll have the Gulf
7 States. The five Gulf states will be here and
8 we'll talk about some stuff.

9 One of the biggest things out there
10 right now is what's going to happen with the
11 federal government. None of us know when they're
12 going to pass the budget. We know they will
13 eventually, but we don't know when and the
14 question is, are we going to continue to be able
15 to operate until they do. And that's what we're
16 working on.

17 Gulf States has the same thing.
18 Everybody, we're all working under the same
19 problem, but, luckily, we will be okay. And I
20 think that everything will work out and,
21 hopefully, we will get a bill passed this week, so
22 we can put our federal government back to work.

23 Any questions on that?

24 (No response.)

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 Thunder Over the Sound, man, I was
2 looking forward to it. They canceled it yesterday
3 and that's all because the government shutdown.
4 They cannot guarantee that they can have the
5 safety and the things that they need to be able to
6 do it. I was looking forward to having the
7 Thunderbirds again and letting them come and fly
8 across the Mississippi Sound, so that was so
9 beautiful out there and a lot of fun.

10 But maybe they'll reschedule.
11 Hopefully, they will. I'm sure that they're
12 trying to do that. They have a schedule that goes
13 year round, so I don't know that we'll get on it
14 any time in the next -- this year or the 2026 time
15 frame, but we'll see what happens. But anyway,
16 hate that happened.

17 Gulf Council Meeting is 3 through 6 at
18 the Golden Nugget here, so we've got -- all five
19 states will be here again. Once again, we're
20 talking about what -- we'll be looking at some
21 different things that are happening, some
22 different fisheries. A lot of it does not affect
23 us as much as it does some of the others.

24 But before we get too far into that, the
25 young man sitting right there in the very back,

1 Trevor Moncrief, Trevor has just been made the
2 chairman of the SSC, which is the biggest
3 committee in the Gulf Council. So Trevor, thank
4 you.

5 (Applause.)

6 JOE SPRAGGINS:

7 This means a lot. Now we not only have
8 a voice, we have a leader that's sitting there
9 talking about what's going to happen. And they
10 set all the fishery stuff. They do -- they look
11 at everything as far as the fisheries of what
12 we're doing and the stock assessments and
13 everything else. They look it all over.

14 And what better person to have than
15 Trevor Moncrief. And, Trevor, we thank you for
16 doing this and we know that -- now that we -- you
17 know, Trevor has been on it for a couple of years
18 and we had a voice, but now we've got a big voice.
19 Thank you very much.

20 All right. We will be closed on the
21 Tuesday, November 11th for Veterans Day, and I
22 hope y'all get a chance to honor the veterans of
23 the United States because they gave a lot.

24 Our next Commission meeting is scheduled
25 for Tuesday, November 18th at 10:00 a.m. in

1 Hancock County.

2 Is it 10:00 a.m. or 9:00 a.m.?

3 CRYSTAL MATTA:

4 10:00.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 10:00. Okay. Because Crystal couldn't
7 get there by then. That's what it was, not coming
8 across -- you know, she'd have to go all the way
9 from one side of the state to the other, you know.

10 But anyway, all right, 10:00 a.m.

11 Anybody got any questions on that?

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 Did you say Hancock County?

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Uh-huh. Yeah. You won't have to go as
16 far.

17 RONNIE DANIELS:

18 Yeah. I can leave late that morning,
19 real late. I won't get there at 8:45 like I did
20 today.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 I know. Some people got to read the
23 e-mails and texts and all.

24 All right. License department has
25 moved. We're at 1716 A.J. Holloway Drive. If you

1 don't know where it's at, if you know anything
2 about Biloxi, come down Cedar Lake Road all the
3 way till it dead ends, take the right on Brodie.
4 You take a right and you go down and at the first
5 stop sign that -- you take a left. That's where
6 the A.J. Holloway softball, baseball complex all
7 this, the soccer fields. You take a left there
8 and you go down and take a left right in front of
9 where you turn into the soccer fields and all and
10 you'll see our building on the left. But it's
11 1716 A.J. Holloway Drive, so license is there. No
12 longer at Pass Christian. So make sure that if
13 you need a license or anything that you come in,
14 and we will be operational.

15 All right. Let's see. Derelict
16 vessels, 216 have been reported; 191 have been
17 removed; 25 are pending and three received court
18 order of removal. So, Steven, we appreciate you
19 and Roy working on that. And I tell you what,
20 we're still Number 1. We're Number 1 in the Gulf.
21 We've probably done more than any of the other
22 four states combined, just our group, so that
23 tells you where we're at.

24 And there is another couple million
25 dollars out there that we're going to try to go

1 get our part of it to be able to continue, so we
2 appreciate it.

3 All right. So I think that's my update
4 as far as the Agency update. Now we need to be
5 able to do updates on prior meeting -- actions.

6 STEVEN ECKERT:

7 Good morning, Commissioners and
8 Director. Discussed at the September 2025, the
9 Commission recommended and the Executive Director
10 approved a recommendation to follow the Staff's
11 recommendation to open areas in the Western
12 Mississippi Sound for oyster season to open
13 October 13th, with daily sack limits to be set at
14 15 sacks per day per vessel for tongers and 20
15 sacks per day per vessel for dredgers, in addition
16 to an order issued by the Department to approve
17 the methods for harvesting and designated harvest
18 areas.

19 In addition, there was a motion to
20 approve some salt -- state saltwater finfish
21 records. First being a conventional tackle
22 belonging to Mr. Chris Barlow, for a 4.8-ounce
23 wenchman snapper. Then under the all tackle,
24 there was Holt Gammel's 44-pound, 9.6-ounce
25 yellowedge grouper, and finally, Cooper

1 Wrightson's two-pound, 8.8-ounce southern hake.

2 And that concludes the actions update.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 Okay. Any questions?

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 No, sir.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 All right. Commissioners, I think
9 that's my report.

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 All right. Thank you, sir.

12 Congratulations, Trevor. That's
13 impressive. I'm not surprised whatsoever, man.
14 Good job.

15 Moving on down to the Commissioners'
16 report, does any commissioners have anything they
17 want to report on?

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 I just want to -- just want to say thank
20 you to Marine Patrol. We did our Fishing with
21 Buddies event there out of Pass Harbor this month.
22 They came down and had a presence there and that
23 means a lot to them. This year was the biggest
24 we've ever had. We were able to take -- I believe
25 it was 52 people with disabilities fishing for an

1 afternoon on 39 different boats that volunteered
2 their time. And having Marine Patrol and the
3 County down there in case we needed any help, that
4 was a big help. Thank you, guys.

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 I saw some photos of the event. That
7 was impressive. There was a lot of folks, a lot
8 of people having a good time, for sure.

9 RONNIE DANIELS:

10 You know, a couple of the people told
11 me, they said, I didn't realize it, but I needed
12 that worse than they did. And that's really the
13 takeaway that you leave from that event with.
14 It's a great thing.

15 CAM ROBERDS:

16 All right. Any other Commissioner
17 reports?

18 (No response.)

19 CAM ROBERDS:

20 All right.

21 We'll move on to Office of Marine
22 Patrol, Chief Wilkerson, for report on citations.

23 KYLE WILKERSON:

24 Just say it any way you want.

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1 Been called worse, huh?

2 KYLE WILKERSON:

3 That's exactly right.

4 I would like to say thank you for the
5 kind words from Marine Patrol. I mean, we don't
6 do that for the kind words, but it always helps us
7 to continue on with our job. And Happy Birthday.

8 RONNIE DANIELS:

9 Thank you.

10 KYLE WILKERSON:

11 I would like to also congratulate
12 Trevor. You've got a top-notch guy right there.
13 I'm telling you what. You won't ask for no
14 better.

15 Okay. Let's get back -- let's get to
16 this ole paperwork. We had a few citations that
17 came to mind. We had -- one guy got a citation
18 for commercial activity north of the bridge. He
19 was a crabber. He was over the limit. Commercial
20 crabbing north of the bridge and everything,
21 that's not normally what we get. Maybe some
22 occasional netters like to do that, but, you know,
23 that's a big no-no.

24 Other than that, we look like we had
25 1,300 stops, 1,367 to be exact, 81 citations for

1 the month. It was pretty slow, which is good.

2 Everybody is being compliant.

3 I will field any questions if you need
4 them.

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 Any questions for Chief?

7 (No response.)

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 All right, sir. Appreciate the update.

10 KYLE WILKERSON:

11 Outstanding.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 All right. Moving down to the Resource
14 Management for Wetlands Permitting. It's going to
15 be Ms. Willa Brantley.

16 WILLA BRANTLEY:

17 Good morning. I have a presentation
18 about a re-authorization of a variance that was
19 approved five years ago in October of 2020. This
20 is for minor fill of Coastal wetlands that allows
21 for this alternative bulkhead design, also called
22 living shoreline projects.

23 It would give a variance to Mississippi
24 Admin. Code 22, Part 23. It's Rule 8.A now that
25 we've revised those rules in the numbering system.

1 It allows for minor fill in waters of the state
2 located with the Coastal Zone, and what this does
3 is it makes the living shoreline projects for like
4 residential homes on the same playing field as
5 bulkheads and riprap when it comes to permitting.
6 They used to have to go through the whole variance
7 process and maybe have a public hearing, put out a
8 public notice, and this would allow for us to do
9 that without all of those extra steps.

10 Like I said, it's been in place for five
11 years now. It's worked very well. We had a few
12 years at the beginning that we had to work some
13 things out with the Corps and the Secretary of
14 State, but we've issued probably 10 to 15 of them
15 in the last couple of years, so it's working
16 really well. We can issue them on behalf of the
17 Corps just like we can with riprap and bulkheads.

18 The project parameters, it has to be
19 less than 500 linear feet along the shoreline.
20 That's the same limitation that bulkheads have.
21 They have to be less than 35 feet or less than
22 25 percent of the width of waterway from the mean
23 high water line, and that is in line with the
24 Corps of Engineers nationwide permit limitations
25 and also in line -- the 25 percent is in line with

1 the general permits for how far our piers and
2 boathouses and other structures can extend out, so
3 these would be within the same limits across the
4 waterway that piers and other things would be.

5 They're required to use native plants
6 only and monitor for and remove invasive species
7 as they show up. They have to put proper signage
8 if it's required by the Coast Guard. Most of
9 these are not required to put signage because they
10 don't extend very far from the shoreline. But
11 sometimes they are putting like riprap breakwaters
12 out from the vegetation that's already there to
13 protect it, so those will have to sometimes be
14 marked with reflectors.

15 There is also a provision that shoreline
16 accretion does not result in a change in property
17 boundaries, so either the applicant or DMR has to
18 go out there and mark out what's the current
19 ordinary high water mark.

20 Right now, most of these are going
21 through Mississippi State University's Extension
22 Center. Eric Sparks and his program are doing
23 them and they are getting GPS points for the
24 current mean high water line and turning those in,
25 so we put those in the permit when we issue it.

1 And that way, we can go back later if that
2 boundary, between public water bottoms and private
3 land, needs to be found. We have that. We have
4 the numbers to go by that.

5 Notification for this appeared in the
6 *Sun Herald* as required. We notified all of the
7 City and County governments in the three Coastal
8 counties. None of those submitted comments.

9 We didn't have any public comments
10 either.

11 We notified all of the offices at DMR
12 and we included Coastal Preserves. None submitted
13 comments.

14 DEQ and Archives and History were also
15 notified and did not submit any comments.

16 And Secretary of State did not submit
17 any comments this year, but they did five years
18 ago when we issued it. So we will coordinate all
19 applications with them, as we do for all other
20 projects in the three Coastal counties. And,
21 again, that shoreline accretion that may happen
22 based on the living shoreline will not result in a
23 change in property boundaries.

24 So people can't use this just to reclaim
25 or claim for the first time property. They can't.

1 The projects have to have a biological component,
2 so they have to be either protecting vegetation
3 that's already there or the fill is just to bring
4 the elevation up to proper heights for marsh grass
5 to be planted and survive. So it's not for people
6 to make their yards bigger or anything like that.

7 So based on the benefits to the Coastal
8 Wetlands habitats that would continue to result
9 from living shorelines and alternative bulkhead
10 projects, we recommend re-issuance of the
11 pre-approved variance for projects that meet the
12 parameters and limitations of the waiver for
13 living shorelines.

14 I did want to show a couple of examples
15 that we've had go in. These are projects
16 Mississippi State has worked with. Typically,
17 they do a little bit of shoreline shaping and
18 planting along the existing shoreline. They then
19 put in continuous breakwater structures further
20 out to protect that vegetation from wave energy.

21 You can see one. This is the before
22 picture up in the corner and you can see the
23 concrete block breakwater that they built out from
24 where they planted the vegetation along the
25 shoreline. And the tide comes over it, and it's

1 open on each end so fish and other wildlife can
2 get in behind there and access that habitat that
3 they need.

4 This is one, that same project from the
5 previous slide. This is during construction, so
6 this is the minor fill and reshaping that this
7 would allow.

8 And I just wanted to go back to the
9 recommendation. And, again, we recommend
10 approval -- re-issuance of the pre-approved
11 variance.

12 If you have any questions, I'd be happy
13 to answer them.

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15 We're actually working on this with
16 Mississippi State in our neighborhood. And to me,
17 aesthetically and ecologically, I mean, I think
18 it's a much better application than just a
19 traditional bulkhead.

20 WILLA BRANTLEY:

21 Yeah. And not only that, but there are
22 studies -- I know of one in North Carolina that
23 showed -- a girl, she happened to be doing marsh
24 research. She wasn't even researching bulkheads
25 or living shoreline specifically, but a hurricane

1 came in and the bulkhead was completely wiped out
2 and gone, and the marsh looked the same as it did
3 before the hurricane hit. So it also provides
4 sometimes better protection than hardening a
5 shoreline.

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 I've got a quick question. Just curious
8 if this falls under this situation I've seen
9 several times, but there is places on the bayous
10 or really all over the coastline that when you
11 have a low tide, it sticks -- the mud sticks a
12 good bit out of the water, but the high tide like
13 barely covers it. It's not a -- dry enough to be
14 able to grow anything like out of the ground, so
15 it just turns into like a mudflat and it smells
16 bad.

17 Would those situations fall under this
18 for -- to be able to save somebody's shoreline?
19 It goes out -- would they be able to fill that in
20 to be able to create some type of vegetation
21 growth on that property or --

22 WILLA BRANTLEY:

23 They definitely could. That would be a
24 situation where we would want to look at the
25 habitat, though, because those mudflats do provide

1 shore birds and things habitat. And I'm sure some
2 of the shrimp and crabs as well use those.

3 So it would be just something that we
4 would look at, but, yeah, that's definitely a
5 place where we could do that. Sometimes you have
6 places where they used to be marsh and it's gotten
7 knocked out of the ground by the wave energy and
8 so now it's a mudflat where it used to be a
9 marsh. That would be a perfect area to do a marsh
10 restoration and put those breakwaters in there.

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 Yeah. I think the majority of them
13 probably had some kind of marsh at some point, but
14 I think -- I feel like they just need a little bit
15 of fill just to be able to get to them.

16 WILLA BRANTLEY:

17 Yeah, that's exactly what this is for.

18 So a lot of times we'll see where there
19 is a bluff so there is maybe marsh and then there
20 is a bluff where it starts sloughing off in chunks
21 into the water. This allows them to make that a
22 gradual slope and replant and restore that marsh
23 and then provide the bulkhead -- I mean, the
24 breakwater as protection to keep them -- the boat
25 wakes and storm winds from taking the marsh back

1 out.

2 CAM ROBERDS:

3 Understood. Okay.

4 Any other questions?

5 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

6 I'm good.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 I'll make a motion.

9 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

10 I'll second.

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 All those in favor?

13 (Unanimous vote.)

14 CAM ROBERDS:

15 All right. Thank you, Ms. Willa.

16 WILLA BRANTLEY:

17 Thank you.

18 CAM ROBERDS:

19 Office of Finance and Administration,

20 Ms. Leslie.

21 LESLIE BREWER:

22 Good morning, everyone. I'm presenting

23 the financials for the end of September 2025.

24 At September 30th, we had state net

25 revenue -- I'm sorry, state revenue of

1 3.4 million, agency revenue of 4.5 million, state
2 net income at 1.7 million, agency income of
3 negative 2.1 million.

4 After three months, we had 97.8 percent
5 of the budget remaining for operations and
6 Tidelands is at 84.4 percent.

7 Anybody have any questions?

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 All right. Do we have any questions on
10 the financials?

11 (No response.)

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 All right. Appreciate it.

14 All right. Moving down to Ms. Charmaine
15 for Public Affairs.

16 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND:

17 Good morning. The Mississippi
18 Department of Marine Resources has 27 media
19 mentions since the September MACMR meeting. News
20 items included DMR's office relocation, the
21 Mississippi Seafood Task Force and the opening of
22 oyster season.

23 The Office of Marine Patrol participated
24 in the Biloxi Police Department's Festival Against
25 Crime on September 20th, the Scout's fishing badge

1 event on September 20th, the Vancleave High School
2 College and Career Fair on September 30th and the
3 Cancer Awareness Parade in Bay St. Louis on
4 October 4th and Waveland's National Night Out
5 Against Crime on October 1st.

6 The Grand Bay NERR's Emmett Carstens
7 participated in phenology observer training at the
8 Walter Anderson Museum of Art on September 18th,
9 at the Pascagoula River Audubon Center on
10 September 19th and the MSU's Coastal Research and
11 Extension Center on September 26th. Emmett also
12 participated in the Butterflies in the Pass
13 Monarch Festival on October 4th. The NERR's
14 Brianna Andrews participated in the On the Road
15 Program at Harrison Central Elementary School on
16 October 1st and 2nd and at Crossroads Elementary
17 School on October 13th. Brianna and Jennifer
18 Cumbest are both currently participating in the
19 Mississippi Science Teaching Association's Annual
20 Conference in Meridian this week. Grand Bay NERR
21 staff are also heading up a booth at the Jackson
22 County Fair held this week in Pascagoula.

23 The Office of Marine Fisheries' Jason
24 Rider and Emily Satterfield both gave
25 presentations on oysters and artificial reefs at

1 the opening of the French Hermit Farm Store and
2 Trading Post on October 3rd.

3 The Office of Coastal Resources
4 Management's Allison Faggard gave a career talk to
5 students at East Central High School on
6 October 15th.

7 DMR staff participated in Mississippi
8 Science Fest at the Walter Anderson Museum of Art
9 on September 20th. Office of Marine Fisheries
10 staff Kristina Broussard, Jason Saucier, Dawn
11 Thompson and Emily Satterfield, Office of Coastal
12 Resources Management's Thomas Butera and the
13 NERR's Jennifer Cumbest and Brianna Andrews all
14 participated in the Science Saturday event.

15 The Agency's cooking team, as well as
16 volunteers from various offices throughout the
17 Agency, took part in the 29th annual Cruisin' the
18 Coast. The Mississippi Gulf-fresh Seafood Program
19 sponsored Cruisin' the Coast for the third year
20 and served as presenting sponsor. During the
21 week, the cooking team boiled 1,000 pounds of
22 shrimp and samples were handed out to event
23 attendees at Cruise Central located at Jones Park
24 in Gulfport. Samples were given out throughout
25 the day Monday and Tuesday at Cruise Central. On

1 Wednesday, shrimp samples and promotional items
2 were given out at the Biloxi Block Party. And to
3 further promote Mississippi Gulf-fresh seafood,
4 promotional booths were set up at each of the
5 cities' Cruisin' events. Visors, koozies, fans,
6 bags, coloring books and informational materials
7 were handed out to event attendees on Thursday in
8 Bay St. Louis and Pascagoula and on Friday in
9 Ocean Springs.

10 And on October 17th, the Agency's
11 cooking team cooked for the Collegiate
12 Invitational Golf Tournament at Fallen Oak. The
13 tournament is hosted by Mississippi State
14 University, Ole Miss and Southern Miss, and the
15 colleges from across the nation competed in the
16 four-day event. The cooking team also cooked for
17 the Grey Tails Reunion held at the Maritime and
18 Seafood Industry Museum last week.

19 CAM ROBERDS:

20 All right. Any questions for
21 Ms. Charmaine?

22 (No response.)

23 CAM ROBERDS:

24 Thank you. Appreciate it.

25 All right. Trevor, you're up with these

1 finfish records. And every time I look at this
2 list, I feel like I've only caught one out of the
3 four or five or seen them before. It's always
4 something new.

5 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

6 Yeah. We've got a crew deep dropping,
7 so that's -- it always brings new fish to the
8 table.

9 But first off, I wanted to, you know,
10 say thank you for the congratulations. I'm
11 looking forward to the challenge, the opportunity.
12 And I would be remiss if I didn't thank the
13 leadership I've got across the board in Marine
14 Fisheries, Marine Patrol and everybody else that
15 you know, has helped me through, and then the
16 staff, my staff, Marine Fisheries staff that have
17 helped get the data to make decisions, so I
18 appreciate all of that.

19 All right. So we've got some finfish
20 records. The first one, the epitome of a blind
21 hog finds an acorn every now and then is a gulf
22 flounder, two pounds, 1.6 ounce. I actually
23 caught this one a few weeks ago. Don't know where
24 they are, have no, you know, way to target them,
25 but I did catch it somehow. That's a picture of

1 the fish. That is myself with the fish.

2 A little bit more interesting ones here,
3 the anchor tilefish. It's a new record,
4 14.4 ounces. The angler is Marshall Slay. There
5 is a picture of the fish. There is a picture of
6 the angler with the fish. This is part of that
7 deep drop contingent that we've got going out.

8 Silk snapper, new record once again,
9 two pounds, 13.6 ounces, Scott Thibodeaux. There
10 is a picture of the fish. There is Mr. Thibodeaux
11 with the fish.

12 And then an all tackle record, Spanish
13 flag. This is one I've only seen like twice in my
14 time here. It's a pretty neat fish. It's a --
15 new record is 12.8 ounces. The angler is Cooper
16 Wrightson, but that's a picture of the fish. It's
17 in the grouper family. You can see the stripes
18 and everything, how it gets its name. And that is
19 Cooper with that fish.

20 And then all we need is a motion to
21 recommend the approval of those state records.

22 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

23 I make the motion.

24 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

25 I'll second.

1 CAM ROBERDS:

2 All those in favor?

3 (Unanimous vote.)

4 CAM ROBERDS:

5 Thank you, Trevor.

6 RONNIE DANIELS:

7 It looks like Cooper is giving a Rodie a
8 run for his money here.

9 CAM ROBERDS:

10 He is, yeah.

11 Did he catch that -- that Spanish flag,
12 was that in deep water or shallow water?

13 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

14 Yeah. Those typically occur right off
15 the edge of the shelf, like right on -- where
16 they're starting to deep dropping out.

17 CAM ROBERDS:

18 Okay. So he was out 2-, 3-, 400 foot
19 probably?

20 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

21 The last one I saw came out of -- I
22 think it was like 280 to 300. They might have
23 been a little bit beyond that, but that's kind of
24 where they are.

25 CAM ROBERDS:

1 He took a picture by some marsh grass
2 like in a bayou. I don't know if he was setting
3 that up.

4 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

5 That's just where it was weighed in. It
6 might be -- everybody to slip.

7 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

8 Trevor, if you keep winning this much,
9 they're going to put you on the cooking team.

10 JOE SPRAGGINS:

11 Yeah. I figured it out. If you catch
12 something that looks weird, bring it in.

13 CAM ROBERDS:

14 You never know, right?

15 Okay. It looks like we're moving down
16 to Ayesha Gray, update on Grand Bay.

17 AYESHA GRAY:

18 Good morning. Well, I just wanted to do
19 a quick update and let y'all know that we had
20 Natural Estuaries Day this past Saturday. And we
21 had some special guests, so Congressman Mike Ezell
22 and Director both joined us for National Estuaries
23 Day. So Ms. Suzette, Mr. Ezell's wife signed him
24 up and brought him out and they both came out and
25 it was a really nice day.

1 So we had close to 100 people that
2 participated. This is our Seaside with a
3 Scientist Event, and so we took them on a boat
4 ride and introduced them to our different
5 scientists as they were working in the field. And
6 so that was really nice.

7 I also got an opportunity to talk to the
8 Congressman and the Director did, and he expressed
9 a lot of support for the NERR and for estuary
10 conservation in general, and so we let him know
11 how valuable that was to us to have him
12 representing us in Washington, D.C.

13 And here's some of the other pictures.
14 We've got quite a lot of clapper rails. I have
15 been out several times but not when the clapper
16 rails actually come up to the boat. You can't
17 really see them. They're in the grass, but you
18 can hear them, so that was a lot of fun.

19 And then inside the building, we had
20 some different critters for folks to look at and
21 different activities for the public, so it was a
22 great event and I wanted to highlight it.

23 That's all I have. Do you have any
24 questions?

25 CAM ROBERDS:

1 Any questions?

2 (No response.)

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 Appreciate the update. Thank you very
5 much.

6 AYESHA GRAY:

7 You're welcome.

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 All right. Moving down to other
10 business or public comments.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 I do have one thing. Johnny Marquez is
13 here with us, and Johnny is our new -- he's on
14 our -- one of our state representatives for the
15 Gulf Council, and so thank you. And, you know,
16 he's there and -- him and Jason Osborne, and it's
17 good to have those two helping us as -- you know,
18 for the Gulf Council. And we appreciate you
19 coming to the meeting and we appreciate you being
20 a part of this.

21 CAM ROBERDS:

22 Yeah. Thanks, Johnny.

23 All right. Well, do we have a motion to
24 close?

25 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

1 I will make a motion to close.

2 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

3 Second.

4 CAM ROBERDS:

5 All those in favor?

6 (Unanimous vote.)

7 CAM ROBERDS:

8 Thank y'all.

9 (Meeting adjourned at 10:47 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 public meeting, as taken by me at the time and
9 place heretofore stated, to the best of my skill
10 and ability.

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

15 Witness my signature and seal, this the
16 6th day of November, 2025.

17
18 Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich

19
20 Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich
21 My Commission Expires 4/03/28

