

## STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES  
COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, April 21, 2026, 9:00 a.m.,

D'Iberville City Hall,

10383 Auto Mall Parkway

D'Iberville, Mississippi 39540

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**COMMISSION MEMBERS:**Ronnie Daniels  
Jonathan McLendon  
Matthew Mayfield  
Cammack "Cam" Roberds**ALSO PRESENT:**Joe Spraggins  
Sandy Chesnut, 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 April 21st.

5 I'd like to ask Commissioner McLendon to  
6 lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, please.

7 (Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 Thank you, Commissioner.

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

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 Yeah, I don't know if this thing's on or  
14 not.

15 All right. All right. Yeah. Let's go  
16 to the Lord, please.

17 (Moment of prayer.)

18 CAM ROBERDS:

19 And I believe -- is Commissioner Osborne  
20 not linked in?

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 No. Yeah. He's -- he's in Guam or  
23 somewhere.

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 Okay. All right. Well, we'll move on

1 down to the approval of the minutes.

2 Has everybody had an opportunity to  
3 review the minutes from March 17th? Do we have  
4 any questions? If not, do we have a motion?

5 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

6 I make a motion.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Second.

9 CAM ROBERDS:

10 All in favor?

11 (Unanimous vote.)

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 All right. Moving down to the approval  
14 of the agenda. Do we have any questions on the  
15 agenda for today? If not, do we have a motion to  
16 approve?

17 RONNIE DANIELS:

18 Motion.

19 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

20 Second.

21 CAM ROBERDS:

22 All in favor?

23 (Unanimous vote.)

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 Thank you. All right, Director.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 Okay. Am I on again? All right.

3 Let me figure out where I'm at here.

4 This thing -- first off -- let's see --  
5 we've got contracts and employment. Okay.

6 Elizabeth Kinnard, she was working with us as the  
7 assistant in licensing and has moved up to the  
8 takeover because Debbie is retiring and so great to  
9 have her there and she's doing a great job.

10 Is there anything else? I think that's  
11 it. Okay.

12 All right. Let's see. Legislative  
13 update. Well, we've got -- you know, our bills  
14 have passed. We -- the bill to be able to allow us  
15 to pay reserve officers in a time that we would  
16 need them, like holidays and stuff like that, that  
17 passed and that was great. That's a good thing for  
18 us to have.

19 We also have a bill that -- for the  
20 seafood labeling, and it has passed and the seafood  
21 labeling bill is good. We're -- we've met since  
22 that and we're putting out some information on it.

23 Basically, the seafood labeling just says  
24 that -- what we changed on it was a couple of  
25 things and instead of having to put everywhere --

1     like if you had speckled trout, then instead of  
2     putting speckled trout, imported or domestic, you  
3     could put it in the front on a caption in the front  
4     of your menu so people would be able to say that  
5     they could change that a little bit more easier and  
6     it could be done that way or -- and also there's  
7     another thing to be able to -- they could put the  
8     country of origin.

9             So if you had Argentine red and you  
10     wanted to put that on there, you could put  
11     Argentine red instead of putting imported, so  
12     that's something -- some of the delicacies that  
13     they are, there are some fish that are that very,  
14     very expensive and valuable as far as the menu and  
15     they want to put that on there, not just put import  
16     and they want to put something on it. So we're  
17     going to be able to do that also.

18             The other thing is the COOL Act and  
19     that's basically the labeling from -- origin and  
20     that's coming more for your grocery stores and all.  
21     And, you know, we can't tell them to -- and  
22     wherever they're shipping it from to put  
23     Mississippi, you know, put the label on there  
24     import or domestic and, you know, but they put the  
25     country of origin. And we'll follow those rules

1 and that helps the grocery stores and everything.

2 Now, if a grocery store has a fresh  
3 market, they still have to follow the same rules  
4 and label it as either import or domestic or  
5 something on it and they have to put it as the same  
6 size.

7 But there's a new law in Washington right  
8 now that Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith has put out to be  
9 able to take that COOL Act and change it to the  
10 point to where whenever they put the point of  
11 origin on it that it is the same size and font  
12 as -- the same thing as your advertising. The same  
13 thing that we do. So you can't just put, you know,  
14 big letters "shrimp" and little bitty letters  
15 "import." you've got to put it out there to where  
16 it makes it seen.

17 Any questions on that one?

18 (No response.)

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 The other one is the law that we have  
21 for the Marine Patrol. They have to have probable  
22 cause and I don't think we have to worry about  
23 that. I think our Marine Patrol officers work on  
24 probable cause anyway, and I don't think that  
25 that's going to change a whole lot with what we

1 do. I think our operation will continue to do the  
2 same as it's been doing. And, you know, I guess  
3 the only thing it would alleviate is if they just  
4 wanted to stop and do a safety check, but, you  
5 know, that's about the most of it, Chief. Is that  
6 pretty close? And so we're there.

7 I'm missing one other one. Which one is  
8 it, Patrick? Huh? All right. There's one other  
9 bill, but -- I'm missing, but I can't think of what  
10 it is because we had four.

11 Anyway, I'll figure it out, but it  
12 wasn't -- it was something administrative, I think.  
13 I'm more than sure.

14 Okay. Anything else on the Legislature?

15 All right. Our GOMESA this last year, we  
16 received \$10 million that we've put out in  
17 December -- November, December time frame, and then  
18 we received another \$59,313,205 in April that we  
19 were able to distribute and so that's \$69 million  
20 worth of GOMESA in the last year that we've been  
21 able to put out, and so that's pretty good.

22 That's all been approved by the Governor and  
23 approved by the Legislature, so that's a good deal.

24 And in our tidelands, we received a  
25 little over 12 million, 12.3 million to be able to

1 do that. That's up from last year because we  
2 didn't have a tidelands last year as far as any  
3 public access, so it was good there. So  
4 everything's working great.

5 Any questions on those?

6 (No response.)

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 You know, to be able to put \$70 million  
9 in the Gulf Coast in a year is pretty good, you  
10 know, and that's what we've been able to go out  
11 and be able to do and a lot of good work going on  
12 there.

13 All right. The Bolton Building, right  
14 now, the last I got from it was that they're going  
15 to be able to open up the -- the first floor is  
16 open now.

17 The second floor will be open  
18 hopefully -- their projection is the 1st of June,  
19 so we're shooting for that. And if that happens,  
20 then we're going to look at it. I've got TJ  
21 working on and Patrick and them working on a plan  
22 for me to be able to put us all back on the second  
23 floor, even though we're jammed up on the second  
24 floor. But we could be jammed up in the -- in  
25 there or either jammed up where we're at so what's

1 the difference? That's about \$18,000, isn't it,  
2 but -- that we'd have to pay every month and then I  
3 don't have to pay it, so that's what we're looking  
4 at.

5 And it looks like that the third floor  
6 will be finished before the second. Haven't  
7 figured that one out yet, but it's going to be  
8 about the middle of May. And then the fourth floor  
9 is something like end of June. Fifth floor, July,  
10 and sixth floor in August. So everything will be  
11 finished hopefully by August and -- sometime.

12 But anyway, we're going to work it out.  
13 We'll have a plan and we'll be able to get back in  
14 there. Hopefully, the agency will be out of the  
15 area there we're -- over by E-fitness by sometime  
16 in June. First part, the middle of June will be  
17 out of there, and we'll be back into the building,  
18 the Bolton building. And then we'll have our  
19 Commission meeting there and be able to do things.  
20 Any questions?

21 (No response.)

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 All right. Let's see. We've got the  
24 2026 World Championship -- Redfish World  
25 Championship this week. It's this week, right?

1 CAM ROBERDS:

2 Yes.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 Yeah. 23 through 25. And it's going to  
5 be held in -- basically going to be held out of  
6 Gulfport there, so got 60 teams, I think, that  
7 they're looking at. And so we have 60 teams that  
8 are going to be competing. It ought to be  
9 something different.

10 We became the title sponsor of this  
11 because redfish, the way I looked at it, was two  
12 things: Number 1, we have a lot of redfish.  
13 Number 2, we're the only state in the Gulf that has  
14 a redfish commercial season, so that's pretty good,  
15 too. And so, you know, why not promote redfish,  
16 you know? Why not promote it here? And that's a  
17 big, big thing for us, and so we'll see what  
18 happens with it.

19 It's 23 through 25 and we'll see how it  
20 turns out. I'm hoping it will be a big turnout.  
21 They're talking several hundred people being  
22 involved in it, so let's see what happens here.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS:

24 Any questions?

25 CAM ROBERDS:

1 I'll just say that, you know, this thing  
2 starts on really Wednesday, I think, and goes all  
3 the way through, so it's not just a day  
4 tournament. This is -- they have the banquet and  
5 I think you guys are doing the fresh Gulf seafood  
6 on Wednesday and it goes all the way through the  
7 week.

8 And when Commissioner Daniels first  
9 approached me about helping with it, that was a  
10 bucket list for me, is to have a redfish, you  
11 know, weigh-in, you know, at Chandeleur in  
12 Gulfport. And so I appreciate you bringing that  
13 to us and I think it's great that --

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Do you get a beer when you do --

16 CAM ROBERDS:

17 Absolutely. But anyways, it's an  
18 all-week economic impact to the Coast. I think  
19 it's a great, great deal. Man, I hope they come  
20 back again.

21 RONNIE DANIELS:

22 Well, and it's not just this week. I  
23 mean, a lot of these anglers have been here since  
24 last week. I met with a couple at the end of last  
25 week. They were already getting in town, so I

1 think it's a big financial draw for the Coast.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 Well, we hope it is. And, you know,  
4 we -- it was a way for us to sponsor it and  
5 Charmaine has worked on it and we've worked on  
6 that. And it was something to be able to sponsor  
7 this, and I think it's a good sponsorship. We  
8 like to sponsor fishing tournaments and things  
9 because that's part of our job.

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 Yeah. And they're all over the South  
12 here and Southeast, and then it's like \$120,000.  
13 I want to say first place is like \$40,000 and  
14 that's real money for a fishing tournament here  
15 locally, so --

16 RONNIE DANIELS:

17 Oh, yeah.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 Well, good deal. So we're glad to do  
20 that, so if you've got any issues or anything,  
21 please, you know, just touch base with us. But I  
22 think it will be great.

23 And the weigh-in's going to be Saturday?

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 Yes, sir, Saturday.

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 So that's going to be a good show too.  
3 They're going to have a -- and correct me if I'm  
4 not still right on this. It's going to be a parade  
5 of boats coming in front of Chandeleur Outfitters  
6 with a grandstand there. I -- you've all seen the  
7 Bassmaster Classic. This is the equivalent of that  
8 for the redfish world, is what we're going to have  
9 right there in Gulfport.

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 Televised and the whole deal.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 Oh, yeah.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Maybe we'll set a state record.

16 RONNIE DANIELS:

17 Well, they keep them under a certain  
18 length. I don't think we're going to get a gross  
19 state record, but it's going to be impressive to  
20 see what these guys bring in.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 Okay. Good deal.

23 All right. Our commercial online  
24 license sales is going out right now. I think we  
25 have -- we have went out and basically advertised,

1 got a contract, and I think -- I signed the  
2 paperwork, the best I remember of it, last week or  
3 so. So, hopefully, in the next few weeks to a  
4 month or something, we'll be able to get that  
5 commercial online. And so that way, you will be  
6 able to not only buy your private license, but  
7 your commercial license online.

8 And that will help a lot of these  
9 people. I've heard a lot of conversation out of  
10 the people in the past saying, man, we wish that  
11 we could get it online. Well, we've got it. And  
12 Rick and the team, they all worked hard on that.  
13 Thank y'all for that.

14 All right. 2019-2020 Bonnet Carré, we're  
15 still going pretty good with it. I don't think we  
16 have anything. I don't see a write-up.

17 No.

18 CRYSTAL MATTA:

19 It's right below it.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 Right below it. Oh, I've got it. Okay.  
22 It's got it out of -- it's in a different deal  
23 here.

24 All right. The Bonnet Carré fisheries,  
25 we've -- the commercial license purchase and it

1 cost us \$622,000 to get that done, but we was able  
2 to use that fund to do it. So that tells you  
3 where we at. Procurement's underway.

4 Our 2020 as far as the Bonnet Carré, we  
5 have assistance to Mississippi on-bottom oyster  
6 and shrimp fisheries and there's two -- a little  
7 over 2 million that we're working on with that.  
8 And we've got 255 shrimp and oyster fishermen have  
9 been issued direct payments for Round 1 for a  
10 total of 1.7 million. And an additional 44  
11 agreements have been executed for Round 2 and  
12 closed on April 27th is when it closed -- oh,  
13 that's something else. That's entirely different.  
14 I've got to get with Crystal here on my reading  
15 here.

16 But anyway, all right. So that covers  
17 it. Any questions on the Bonnet Carré?

18 CAM ROBERDS:

19 No, sir.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 All right. It says we're closed on  
22 April 27th for Confederate. That's right under  
23 that one, so I just went straight on through it.

24 All right. Update on -- so update on  
25 Gulf Council, we had a great Gulf Council last week

1 and it was -- you know what? Got a lot of good  
2 things. We're working on some stuff. The five  
3 state directors, we're going to be meeting sometime  
4 in the first part of next month, and one of the  
5 things that we're going to talk about is the red  
6 snapper allocation.

7 It -- you know, we have X amount of  
8 allocation and it's been -- over the last year --  
9 last two years, we have not caught anywhere close  
10 to the allocation in some states. And then states  
11 like Mississippi, who are being held back, have  
12 been able to catch theirs, and then Louisiana is  
13 going over and catching theirs. But what we're  
14 asking the five states to look at -- and we want to  
15 go back and we want to take the amount.

16 Right now, Mississippi gets 3.55 percent,  
17 and so what we -- we're going to go back and ask  
18 them to change Mississippi to about five percent.  
19 And if we get five percent or somewhere in that  
20 neighborhood, anywhere from five to six percent,  
21 then that will bring us up to 110- to 135- to  
22 -40,000 pounds that we can be able to do, which  
23 we'll get the numbers. We'll work it.

24 What we're looking at with that is when  
25 we did this in 2017, there was 3.8 percent that was

1 not used, and that 3.8 percent -- because of  
2 Florida being the one who had the most allocation  
3 at the time and everybody felt like they got what  
4 they needed. And those time frames, we was getting  
5 160,000 pounds, so we were fine.

6 And then when they recalibrated, things  
7 changed and moved different, and, hopefully, we'll  
8 change that too. We'll talk about it. Hopefully,  
9 we'll change some of that. The thing about it is  
10 that 3.8 percent was given to them. It's really  
11 not part of what should be theirs, and so we're  
12 looking at that 3.8 percent. And that's exactly  
13 what we're looking at. We're looking at the 3.8  
14 percent.

15 And Florida was under half a million  
16 pounds last year and almost a million pounds the  
17 year before, so, you know, why not -- and we're  
18 changing some rules to where it says that you  
19 basically -- you know, we can move things back and  
20 forth, that if one state goes over 10,000 pounds  
21 and that another state's under, that they can swap  
22 that between states and not make people have to pay  
23 back.

24 And we can work on some other issues  
25 because the Number 1 thing is we have X amount of a

1 million pounds that's allocated for the  
2 recreational and charter -- state charters for  
3 hire. And those are in the states, the five  
4 states, and, you know, we -- as long as we don't  
5 exceed those goals, that's what we're looking at.

6 And so we're trying to change that and,  
7 hopefully, we'll get something -- MS Creel is  
8 coming. It's going to be here shortly. I've got  
9 some good reports on it, and Trevor may want to  
10 talk about it later. I don't know if -- I don't  
11 even see Trevor out there. Is he -- oh, there he  
12 is.

13 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

14 Got a presentation on it later.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 But we can talk about it a little bit.  
17 Okay. But MS Creel is going pretty good, and I  
18 think that's going to make another indication to  
19 where we would be able to get some more fish,  
20 then, you know, be able to get us back to where we  
21 at, so I think we're getting somewhere.  
22 We're actually getting somewhere. And I can tell  
23 you at the Gulf Council, they actually -- the other  
24 states looked at it and said, you know, it's time  
25 to get -- for us to take care of Mississippi a

1 little bit, so, hopefully, we'll get there.

2 Any questions?

3 (No response.)

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 Seafood Task Force, like I said, we  
6 already met. We met on April 13th at -- we had a  
7 good meeting and everything's going forward on  
8 that. We are coming out with a new slogan.  
9 We're going to put together one. We're working  
10 with Visit Mississippi and also the Coastal  
11 Mississippi as the tourism, and we're working with  
12 a plan to come up with something and it's going to  
13 have a design and going to have a logo, something  
14 entirely about seafood and Mississippi and the  
15 seafood is going to be part of it, but Gulf seafood  
16 is going to be the major part of it.

17 And we're going to try to basically work  
18 this with restaurants and markets and grocery  
19 stores and other places to be able to put these  
20 signs up and say this is what we're selling. We  
21 sell this. We sell Gulf fresh. We sell  
22 Mississippi. We sell what -- we're going to -- you  
23 know, we're looking at two or three different  
24 things, and we're going to put some money into  
25 that. The State's going to put some money in it,

1 and there is several different places that are  
2 putting money into it. And we're going to be able  
3 to go out and try to do a big campaign to where we  
4 get as many as we can.

5 One of my goals is to take the -- like a  
6 restaurant, if you own a restaurant, that I go in  
7 there and tell you if you sell Mississippi seafood,  
8 if you sell American seafood, we're going to give  
9 you this amount of advertising. We're going to  
10 advertise for you. We're going to help you. We're  
11 not going to hurt you. We're going to help you.  
12 We're going to help you be able to do it. You may  
13 have to give a little bit more to be able to get  
14 the domestic seafood, but we're going to try to  
15 help you with advertising to be able to pay for  
16 that. I can't buy the seafood for you. I can help  
17 you with advertising. So that's something I'm  
18 talking about and what I want to do is I want to --  
19 I want -- we've got to do another thing -- I hate  
20 to keep rambling. I'm sorry.

21 We've got to do another thing too. We've  
22 got to get something out there and we've got to  
23 help our oystermen. We've got plenty of oysters.  
24 We've got a lot of oysters. Something unusual.  
25 Right? But they can't sell them, and we've got to

1 have a -- find a way to help them. We've got to  
2 find a way to help them sell these oysters.

3 And that's another thing I want to do. I  
4 want to work out something to where we could take  
5 like a restaurant and we give them X amount of  
6 oysters and let them do samples. And let the chefs  
7 go out and do some kind of sampling and everything  
8 else to say that we're going to make this dish with  
9 it. We're going to make this dish with it. We're  
10 going to do this, and maybe just, you know -- like  
11 we've got a seafood cook-off coming up, what, next  
12 week?

13 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND:

14 The 7th, May 7th.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 The 7th, May 7th. But maybe we do a  
17 cook-off, an oyster cook-off and we just do it  
18 here locally. We do a -- locally, oyster cook-off  
19 right here on the Gulf Coast and then we give --  
20 and we get oysters and let them have them and take  
21 them and cook them in different ways because we've  
22 got a lot of big oysters, and that's what the  
23 problem is. It's not the little oysters.  
24 It's the big ones that we're having trouble with,  
25 and so let's find a way to do it.

1           I was watching a video the other day of a  
2   guy in Louisiana. He had an oyster that big  
3   (indicating) and he was eating that oyster raw.  
4   And I was like, whoo, well, all right. You don't  
5   have to have but about two per dozen. Right? You  
6   know, that's a pretty good-sized oyster, but I  
7   thought that was neat, you know. Let's find a way  
8   to help them.

9           We've got oystermen coming back. We are  
10   averaging -- Jason, what are we averaging 30 or so  
11   a day out there now?

12   JASON RIDER:

13           Thirty boats?

14   JOE SPRAGGINS:

15           Yeah.

16   JASON RIDER:

17           Twenty-five to thirty boats a day.

18   JOE SPRAGGINS:

19           So we're getting something. I mean, you  
20   know, we're getting there. Let's don't -- now  
21   we've got to try to help them. Let's try to find  
22   a way to help them to be able to move forward.  
23   What can we do to do that? So if y'all got ideas,  
24   please help me, but I think having a cook-off or  
25   something like that one day, you know, and being

1 able to get the public to know that these oysters  
2 are good just because they're four and a half  
3 inches and not three-inch oysters and finding a  
4 way to do it. Any questions on that?

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 Nuh-uh.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 All right. We have another meeting on  
9 the 11th of May.

10 The next Commission meeting is scheduled  
11 for the 19th -- any questions on that -- of May?

12 (No response.)

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 Derelict vessels, we have 246 cases that  
15 have been reported since we started tracking; 211  
16 have been removed; 35 are in pending removal and  
17 one is in court order for removal.

18 Any questions?

19 (No response.)

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 Actions update?

22 SANDY CHESNUT:

23 Okay.

24 At the last meeting, the Commission  
25 recommended and the Director approved the requested

1 use plan change and certificate of waiver to CSX  
2 Transportation for their proposed expansion and  
3 maintenance of an existing railroad bridge in Grand  
4 Plains Bayou in Hancock County.

5 The Commission recommended and the  
6 Director approved MDEQ's requested variance use  
7 plan change and a permit for its project to include  
8 the filling of 17 acres of unvegetated coastal  
9 wetlands for the construction of a living shoreline  
10 breakwater, and this was located south of  
11 Diamondhead in the Bay of St. Louis. There were  
12 several conditions attached to that permit that you  
13 can review.

14 There was also a motion recommending  
15 approval of the requested variance and certificate  
16 of waiver to the City of Ocean Springs to remove  
17 derelict pilings and bulkhead and then replace the  
18 bulkhead and put riprap, filling 4,626 square feet  
19 of unvegetated coastal wetlands in the Mississippi  
20 Sound in Jackson County.

21 And then there was a proposal to changes  
22 to Title 22, Part 3, Chapter 5, and that was sent  
23 to the Secretary of State's office for notice of  
24 intent.

25 And that is it.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 Okay. And one other thing, you know,  
3 the Southern Shrimp Alliance, I think, has been  
4 doing some more testing of the shrimp on the Gulf  
5 Coast, and David Williams is the guy that does  
6 that with them. He called me the other day and I  
7 was trying to look for the numbers, but I don't  
8 have them. But it's been a lot better, you know.

9 The last time it was reported like two  
10 or three that -- out of the ones they tested, it  
11 were -- but this time, it was -- the numbers were  
12 a lot higher as for ones that we're testing that  
13 were serving what they said they were serving.

14 Okay.

15 So this is fantastic and we had a lot  
16 more people serving Gulf fresh shrimp. There's a  
17 lot more people serving Gulf fresh shrimp, so,  
18 hopefully, that's going to come out. I know he's  
19 got a report that's coming out, so if you see  
20 that -- but the good thing about it is that it's  
21 going in a positive way, not a negative way. And I  
22 think that our bill that we have that is asking you  
23 to say it's either imported or domestic is helping  
24 a whole lot and I think that we'll get there.

25 And that -- just remember, we've got to

1 put everything we can to put out there and not just  
2 shrimp, not just oysters, not just crab, but our  
3 finfish and everything else to sell as much as we  
4 can of Gulf of America seafood in Mississippi.

5 I appreciate it. That's all I have, sir.

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 Director, thank you. Sounds like  
8 everything's working as it was intended.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS:

10 We didn't need any motions on yours or  
11 anything, right?

12 SANDY CHESNUT:

13 No.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Okay.

16 CAM ROBERDS:

17 All right. Looks like moving on to  
18 office of Marine Patrol, Captain Strickland.

19 MICHAEL STRICKLAND:

20 Good morning. Hope everybody's doing  
21 real well.

22 I'm sure you had a chance to look over  
23 the report. You'll notice that -- I don't think  
24 anything really stands out there. Most of the  
25 violations that occurred were regulatory over boat

1 and water safety, and that's just due to the time  
2 of the year, us primarily working -- you'll notice  
3 that they're mostly oyster violations and it's  
4 mainly because the reef is open.

5 Another month in the books with zero  
6 boating fatalities, so we're looking at two out of  
7 the last three years that we haven't had a boating  
8 fatality on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, so we're  
9 excited about that. Hope you guys are too.

10 So I'll take any questions that you may  
11 have.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 That's great news to hear that.  
14 Appreciate everything you guys are doing.

15 Thank you, Captain.

16 MICHAEL STRICKLAND:

17 Thank you.

18 CAM ROBERDS:

19 All right. Looks like we're moving down  
20 to Coastal Resources Management, Ms. Alicia  
21 Carron.

22 ALICIA CARRON:

23 Good morning.

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 Morning.

1 ALICIA CARRON:

2 So we have a request for permit by the  
3 Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, DMR.  
4 That one's not right.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 Is that not the right one?

7 ALICIA CARRON:

8 No.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS:

10 All right, Brady. Help them out.  
11 Working on it. I thought they -- it's usually me  
12 that messes up something in the computer, but --  
13 hey, Mr. Chairman, while we're thinking about it,  
14 also, I just got -- I was on a call this last week  
15 and the Wildlife, Fisheries, Parks and Marine  
16 Foundation did get a \$1 million grant, and the  
17 \$1 million grant is going to them to -- for oyster  
18 restoration and they're going to sub grant that to  
19 us. And we're going to be able to start here in  
20 the next -- probably October doing another --  
21 something with oysters to be able to help with  
22 another million dollars.

23 And that's basically -- Jason, what it's  
24 going to be is cultch and putting cultch down and  
25 doing some things and we've got a monitor.

1       Wherever we put that, we're going to find a spot  
2       to monitor it and be able to do that and then send  
3       a report back to Congress to say how it worked.

4               So we're going to get another million  
5       dollars. We won't get the whole -- well, we'll  
6       get most of it. Majority of it will come to us.

7       ALICIA CARRON:

8               All right. Thank you, Brady.

9               All right. We have the request for  
10       permit by the Mississippi Department of Marine  
11       Resources, DMR 2674.

12               The location is Round Island,  
13       Mississippi Sound, offshore Pascagoula, Jackson  
14       County, Mississippi.

15               The use district is S6, special use for  
16       restoration and enhancement. The agent is  
17       Covington Civil and Environmental, LLC, which a  
18       representative is present.

19               The purpose of this project is to  
20       restore, expand and protect coastal and island  
21       habitat in the beneficial use site at the Round  
22       Island complex driven by ongoing erosion of Round  
23       Island, the continued regional loss of coastal  
24       wetlands, the importance of protecting recent  
25       restoration investments.

1 Project description. Filling of coastal  
2 wetlands for the protection restoration and  
3 expansion of Round Island. Fill of 277 acres of  
4 coastal wetlands for the expansion of the island  
5 for creation of beach habitat, vegetated dune and  
6 high dune habitat, creation of a maritime forest,  
7 three acres of submerged and emergent reef habitat,  
8 creation of a swale pond, 14 acres of rock  
9 breakwaters, plus four feet crest elevation NAVD  
10 88, placed no shallower than three and a half feet  
11 mean low low water, four borrow areas totaling 319  
12 acres with dredge depths of roughly 15 feet below  
13 the seafloor and two temporary access channels  
14 totaling up to 33 acres where the current depth is  
15 less than three and a half mean low low water.

16 Project location -- oh, I apologize. My  
17 picture ain't -- well, on that diagram, I don't  
18 know what happened there. Here's a cross-section  
19 of the breakwaters and the reef structures on the  
20 breakwaters.

21 Variance request. They previously have a  
22 variance for filling of coastal wetlands.

23 Therefore, one was not needed this go-round.

24 However, they did have to create a  
25 variance for Rule 8.18.D, the dredging excavation

1 process must avoid creating sinks or sumps.

2 The proposed borrow areas are located in  
3 offshore waters of the Mississippi Sound in  
4 proximity to the Round Island complex with existing  
5 elevations ranging from approximately minus five to  
6 minus ten feet NAVD88. The proposed maximum dredge  
7 depth of minus 15 feet NAVD88 exceeds the existing  
8 bottom elevation.

9 It was justified by Rule 8.19.C. No  
10 feasible alternative sites or construction  
11 techniques are available. There's significant  
12 public benefit in the activity, and a public  
13 hearing has been conducted.

14 The proximal offshore borrow areas  
15 proposed are the only practical means of obtaining  
16 fill material to accomplish the location-specific  
17 restoration objectives of the Round Island  
18 expansion project.

19 The proposed -- the project serves a  
20 significant public benefit through the restoration  
21 and long-term protection of the coastal habitat  
22 enhancement of fisheries and shorebird habitat and  
23 improved resilience of the Mississippi Sound's  
24 barrier island system.

25 Public notice. Notification of the

1 proposed project appeared in the *Sun Herald* on  
2 March 22nd and 29th and April 5th, 2026.

3 Notification of the proposed project appeared on  
4 the DMR website starting on March 20th, 2026.

5 No public comments were received.

6 A public hearing was held on April 7th,  
7 2026 and no public comments were received.

8 Agency comments continued. MDEQ, no  
9 comments. MDAH, no comments. MDWFP, no comments.

10 The Secretary of State stated that a rent exempt  
11 public trust tidelands lease will be required. DMR  
12 Fisheries, no comments. DMR Office of Marine  
13 Patrol, no comments. City of Pascagoula, DMR has  
14 an MOA with the City for the project.

15 The staff of the Department of Marine  
16 Resources has conducted a thorough evaluation of  
17 the project and has made findings on the decision  
18 factors in accordance with Title 22, Part 23 of the  
19 Mississippi Coastal Program.

20 The project would serve a higher public  
21 interest by reducing the erosion of Round Island,  
22 addressing the continued regional loss of wetlands,  
23 protecting recent restoration investments.

24 Therefore, staff requests a motion that  
25 the Commission recommend to the Executive Director

1 to approve the requested variance and approve the  
2 permit as requested.

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 That's a significant project.

5 ALICIA CARRON:

6 Yes.

7 CAM ROBERDS:

8 Yeah. What kind of timeline or duration  
9 would be anticipated for something of this  
10 magnitude? That's a long one.

11 ALICIA CARRON:

12 2027. '18.

13 HEATH HANSELL:

14 Yeah, we anticipate a construction --  
15 Heath Hansell, lead coastal engineer with  
16 Covington Civil and Environmental, the permit  
17 agent.

18 We anticipate a construction timeline of  
19 about a year. Likely starting in 2027 or 2028.

20 CAM ROBERDS:

21 Understood. And I think that there  
22 was -- I mean, it wasn't what -- it was less than  
23 eight years ago there was a major restoration for  
24 Round Island. Was that how long it was?

25 Yeah.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 And it's held up pretty good.

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 Yeah.

5 HEATH HANSELL:

6 The original sand berm project, Round  
7 Island project was constructed in 2016, 2017.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 Yeah. I think -- I think this is the  
10 area that was owned by the City or something and  
11 it had -- and there was some question as to  
12 whether or not we could get an MOU to do it and  
13 there was a way to do it. Jennifer, you may know  
14 more about it, but we just -- it was basically  
15 something we had to work through. Go ahead,  
16 Jennifer, if you've got something else to say  
17 about it.

18 JENNIFER WITTMANN:

19 There was a private inholding on the  
20 island and with DEQ. We were able to acquire that  
21 property to become part of the coastal preserve  
22 system. And then, additionally, the City of  
23 Pascagoula held the area where the Round Island  
24 Lighthouse used to be located, so the funding  
25 stream that the City used when they purchased that

1 property wouldn't allow transfer of the property,  
2 but we were able to enter into an MOA with them so  
3 that we can do maintenance on the island as a  
4 whole. And it allows for the restoration and the  
5 enhancement and additions to historic Round Island  
6 as well as the New Round Island property that was  
7 built in '16 or '17.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9           This is going to be something too.  
10 Anytime we rebuild a -- you know, these islands  
11 and do something with it, it's changing two or  
12 three things. Obviously, it changes some of the  
13 salinity where the water is, where they're -- you  
14 know, the way it's coming in and out. It also  
15 helps on the erosion for the -- you know, for  
16 the -- if you go to, you know, the mainland and  
17 the erosion there. This helps the erosion a whole  
18 lot. And, you know, anything that we can do there  
19 is going to help us and I think that, you know,  
20 keeps us from losing that 2- or 300 acres a year  
21 so --

22 CAM ROBERDS:

23           I like the reef habitat configuration.  
24 That's what it looks like and then --

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1                   It's always good there too.

2           CAM ROBERDS:

3                   Yeah, for sure.

4           RONNIE DANIELS:

5                   We all like that, yeah.

6           CAM ROBERDS:

7                   Yeah.

8           JONATHAN MCLENDON:

9                   And does the deeper borrow area on the  
10           east side over there, does that inhibit erosion  
11           itself with the water depth?

12           HEATH HANSELL:

13                   The borrow areas should have minimal  
14           impact on the erosion patterns. They're mainly  
15           outside of the protection structures, so any  
16           minimal changes to wave patterns are going to have  
17           an insignificant effect on the erosion.

18           JOE SPRAGGINS:

19                   I guess we need a motion.

20           RONNIE DANIELS:

21                   I'll make the motion.

22           JONATHAN MCLENDON:

23                   I'll second.

24           CAM ROBERDS:

25                   All right. All in favor?

1 (Unanimous vote.)

2 CAM ROBERDS:

3 Thank you.

4 ALICIA CARRON:

5 Thank you.

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 Next up, looks like Ms. Lauren.

8 LAUREN KEGLEY:

9 Good morning.

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 Morning.

12 LAUREN KEGLEY:

13 The City of Gulfport has requested a  
14 permit for a project on the Mississippi Sound near  
15 Courthouse Road in Gulfport, Mississippi.

16 The project is located in a general use  
17 district. Michael Baker, International are acting  
18 as the City's agents.

19 The project purpose and need. The  
20 project will reduce sediment accumulation in the  
21 nearby boat launch, improving navigation for  
22 boaters and reducing the frequency of dredging.

23 The project includes the fill of 0.59  
24 acres of unvegetated coastal wetlands, using  
25 approximately 8,000 cubic yards of fill material.

1 Approximately 100 feet of the existing jetty will  
2 be widened, and the jetty will be extended  
3 approximately 430 feet, with a maximum base width  
4 of approximately 51 feet, and five new channel  
5 markers will also be installed.

6 This is an overview of the project  
7 location. It's south of Highway 90 near the Ken  
8 Combs boat launch and fishing pier.

9 The project area diagram. The red is  
10 circling the part of the existing jetty that will  
11 have material added. Only 100 feet of that section  
12 will be widened. The rest is maintenance and  
13 there -- that will not result in additional fill.

14 The blue indicates the extension, and the  
15 yellow indicates the new channel marker locations.

16 The applicant has requested a variance to  
17 Rule 8.15.A which states: "Permanent filling of  
18 coastal wetlands below the ordinary high water mark  
19 is not authorized." They've justified the request  
20 using Rule 8.19.C. No feasible alternative sites  
21 or construction techniques are available.

22 There's a significant public benefit in  
23 the activity, and in -- there's a significant  
24 public benefit in the activity and a public hearing  
25 has been conducted.

1 Notification of the proposed project  
2 appeared in the *Sun Herald* on February 8th, 15th,  
3 and 22nd. It was posted to the MDMR website on  
4 February 6th through March 11th. No public  
5 comments were received from the public notice.

6 A public hearing was held as part of the  
7 variance justification. Four members of the public  
8 commented on the project. They were generally in  
9 favor of the project, but there were some questions  
10 and concerns.

11 There was some confusion about the  
12 impacts to coastal wetlands versus vegetated  
13 wetlands. The agent clarified that coastal  
14 wetlands refers to the publicly-owned water  
15 bottoms, and there are no proposed impacts to  
16 vegetated wetlands.

17 Commenters mentioned concerns about  
18 parking availability, especially for boat trailers.  
19 The agent stated that the City is aware of current  
20 issues with parking and while there are no plans to  
21 increase the parking lot size, they may consider  
22 other options such as better signage, repainting  
23 lines, and parking enforcement.

24 There were questions about the timing of  
25 construction and how it would affect use of the

1 boat launch. The agent responded that timing will  
2 depend on state and federal permits, funding, and  
3 water levels for barge access. Construction will  
4 take approximately 120 days, and there are no plans  
5 to close the boat ramp during construction.

6 Finally, there were questions about the  
7 increased usage of current facilities and if there  
8 were plans for further amenities such as bait shops  
9 for fishermen. The agent stated that they don't  
10 expect a significant increase in facility  
11 maintenance and there are no plans for city  
12 amenities, but there's a private gas station being  
13 constructed across the highway.

14 For agency comments. No comments were  
15 provided from MDEQ or MDAH. Secretary of State's  
16 office stated that a rent exempt tidelands lease  
17 would be required, and Harrison County Sand Beach  
18 Authority had no objections.

19 The staff of the Department of Marine  
20 Resources has conducted a thorough evaluation of  
21 the project and has made findings on the decision  
22 factors in accordance with Title 22, Part 23. The  
23 project would serve a higher public interest by  
24 ensuring safe navigational depths on the approach  
25 to the nearby boat launch, increasing public access

1 to coastal wetlands.

2 Therefore, staff requests a motion that  
3 the Commission recommend to the Executive Director  
4 to approve the requested variance and approve the  
5 permit as requested.

6 And if you have any questions, we have  
7 representatives from Michael Baker and the City  
8 here, I believe.

9 CAM ROBERDS:

10 Appears to me like it's -- adding the  
11 additional jetty just is going to give it some  
12 longevity for use and help with the consistent  
13 dredging and what have you, so, I mean it looks  
14 very cool. Yeah.

15 RONNIE DANIELS:

16 It's needed. That boat launch has been  
17 a problem for a long time, silting in, sanding in.  
18 That extra jetty hopefully will keep that  
19 navigable.

20 CAM ROBERDS:

21 Well, that being said, do we have a  
22 motion for -- to approve the variance and permit?

23 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

24 I'll make the motion.

25 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

1 Second.

2 CAM ROBERDS:

3 All in favor?

4 (Unanimous vote.)

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 Thank you. All right.

7 Ms. Leslie --

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 If I do -- I have something real --

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 Yes, sir.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 All right. I did -- David just sent me  
14 a message and that -- and the press release about  
15 the shrimp is coming up and they're coming out  
16 today, but 64 percent of the restaurants are now  
17 serving American wild caught. That's pretty good.  
18 That's up from 18 percent that it was last time it  
19 was tested, so --

20 CAM ROBERDS:

21 Success.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 Thank you.

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 Absolutely.

1 All right. Ms. Leslie.

2 LESLIE BREWER:

3 Good morning, everyone.

4 I'm presenting the financials for March  
5 31st, 2026. At the end of March, our state revenue  
6 was 5.5 million. Our agency revenue was 21.2  
7 million.

8 State net income is a negative 1 million,  
9 and agency net income is negative 20 million.  
10 We're still waiting for our GOMESA funds to come  
11 in, so, hopefully, that will be any day now.

12 After nine months of 2026, our operating  
13 funds have 86.2 percent of the budget remaining and  
14 our tidelands is at 55.3 percent.

15 Anyone have questions?

16 CAM ROBERDS:

17 Any questions? I don't think so. I  
18 appreciate it. Thank you for that update.

19 Ms. Charmaine, public affairs.

20 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND:

21 Good morning. The Mississippi  
22 Department of Marine Resources had 12 media  
23 mentions since the March MACMR meeting. News  
24 items included the Bolton building updates,  
25 Mississippi's oyster leasing law, and the GOMESA

1 and tidelands funds appropriated by the  
2 Mississippi legislature.

3 Marine Patrol participated in CASA's  
4 Touch-A-Truck in Hancock County on March 28th, as  
5 well as the Stone County Sheriff's Office Public  
6 Safety Cadet info training on April 3rd.

7 Marine Patrol Captain, Will Freeman and  
8 Chief Operating Officer, Patrick Levine, gave the  
9 keynote address with an agency overview and a  
10 presentation on investigations at the Mississippi  
11 Division of the International Association for  
12 Identification Annual Conference on April 13th in  
13 Pascagoula.

14 The Lyman Hatchery participated in a  
15 redfish release with St. Martin High School's  
16 aquaculture class on March 18th, as well as the  
17 redfish release with Ocean Springs High School's  
18 aquaculture class on March 29th.

19 Hatchery staff also assisted with the St.  
20 Jude Bass Tournament at the D'Iberville Civic  
21 Center on March 22nd, and the hatchery also hosted  
22 a tour of the Lyman aquaculture facilities with the  
23 St. Martin aquaculture class on April 14th.

24 Shrimp and Crab Bureau Director, Jason  
25 Saucier, gave a Mississippi shrimp fishery update

1 at the American Shrimp Processors Association  
2 annual meeting on March 20th in Biloxi.

3 Thomas Butera in the Office of Coastal  
4 Resources Management participated in Streamin' the  
5 Coast at Infinity Science Center on March 28th.

6 Coastal's Kaitlyn Payne and Allison  
7 Faggard participated in Nature Fest at the  
8 Mississippi Museum of Natural Science on April 11th  
9 in Jackson.

10 The Mississippi Gulf Coast National  
11 Heritage Area participated in the Arts Alive  
12 Festival in Hancock County Parade of Homes at the  
13 Bay St. Louis Historic Depot on March 21st.

14 Heritage Area staff and NERR staff both  
15 participated in Ocean Springs Earth Day 2026 at the  
16 Mary C. this past Saturday.

17 The NERR's Emmett Carstens provided  
18 observer training for students at the University of  
19 South Alabama on March 27th, participated in Flower  
20 Fest at the Walter Anderson Museum of Art on April  
21 11th, and also observer training for Dauphin Island  
22 SeaLab students and residents of Dauphin Island on  
23 April 12th.

24 Our agency also participated in the  
25 Celebrate the Gulf Marine Education Festival in

1 Pass Christian on April 11th, and Ayesha will talk  
2 about more on this later this morning.

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 All right. Any questions?

5 (No response.)

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 All right. Appreciate it. Thank you.

8 All right. Looks like we're moving down  
9 to Marine Fisheries, Trevor.

10 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

11 Yeah, you have Travis and Eric here in a  
12 minute, but I wanted to preview the presentations  
13 for you all, and then also to start the talk,  
14 mention the passing of Jim Franks.

15 Obviously, he meant a lot to our group.  
16 I'm sure he meant a lot to y'all. It's the passing  
17 of an icon and a literal giant, standing at 6'10"  
18 For everyone who knew him, positive impacts all  
19 around. I think there will be plenty of time for  
20 us to celebrate him in the coming weeks as we get  
21 more information about the time and everything else  
22 like that, and I'm sure we'll have a lot of efforts  
23 in the future to try to honor his legacy.

24 And I think as a testament to what he  
25 stood for and what he meant, all of those attempts

1 would likely shortfall given the breadth of what he  
2 was able to do here.

3 But just to highlight what you're about  
4 to hear, you're going to hear a program update from  
5 Travis and it's going to end with a pretty big  
6 announcement for the agency as a whole.

7 You're going to hear a MS Creel update  
8 from Eric. Just think through these in terms of  
9 one involves the process of permitting, working  
10 back and forth with the federal government, and the  
11 other one is a state-led initiative to try to  
12 create a positive impact on our side by doing it.

13 The one you're going to hear about from  
14 Travis involves essentially a decade-long attempt  
15 to create a new artificial reef zone.

16 It had one year of public comment and it sat in  
17 consultation on the federal side for up to four  
18 years. Every time the State was provided feedback  
19 for something to provide, we did it in a timely  
20 manner. We did everything we were supposed to do.

21 There was a leadership change in which we  
22 had to withdraw the permit programmatically and  
23 still -- and resubmit it for consideration. It sat  
24 in consultation for another two years. At that  
25 point, we were asked to come up with a whole new

1 survey, cultural resources survey to determine the  
2 impact, which lasted another year. And then we had  
3 another year after that before we actually got the  
4 permit.

5 So decades long, spanning across multiple  
6 employees, multiple directors and that's what it  
7 took to get this effort across, so I just want  
8 to -- as y'all go through this, just think about  
9 the amount of work it took from the fisheries  
10 staff, from the leadership to try to get this thing  
11 moving and create a positive impact and contrast  
12 that with the timeline you're going to hear from  
13 Eric when he talks about MS Creel.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Yeah. And Dr. Franks, we would love to  
16 do something, you know. I tell you what, he was  
17 such a great man and did a great job for us and,  
18 you know, used to do our surveys for us, a lot of  
19 different things that he did for us and give us  
20 different information and he was -- he was pretty  
21 big on the menhaden part, too, wasn't he? I think  
22 he was the one that was working with that some and  
23 did a lot of stuff to help us with things and all.

24 So yeah, whatever we can do and, you  
25 know, hopefully, we can help honor him because he

1 was a fantastic man.

2 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

3 All right. Good morning Chairman,  
4 Commissioners, Director, Ms. Sandy.

5 Yeah. I just want to echo some of those  
6 comments before I get started. We did -- we lost a  
7 pillar to the marine science community last week  
8 with the passing of Jim. Just a brilliant mind, a  
9 brilliant researcher, brilliant scientist, not only  
10 for Mississippi Gulf Coast but the Gulf and the  
11 Caribbean.

12 But more than all of the scientific  
13 articles, you know, the papers, the projects, the  
14 publications he put out, he was just a kind,  
15 humble, friendly human being. He had a way of  
16 talking to you where -- you know, he never made you  
17 feel beneath him. I mean, the conversations that  
18 you had with him as a young researcher, he was  
19 always interested in what you had and just an  
20 excellent way of communication.

21 So like I say, we were fortunate enough  
22 that he called Mississippi home and I think we're  
23 all going to miss him for sure.

24 So this morning, it's probably been, I  
25 guess, a year or so since we've given you all an

1 update on the artificial reef program. I just want  
2 to go through some of the things that we've been  
3 working on, some of the plans for the future and  
4 some exciting news at the end.

5 Last year, we were approached by the  
6 Secretary of State's office. They were kind of  
7 revamping the Broadwater Marina there in Biloxi.  
8 It's kind of been -- sat vacant since Katrina, so  
9 the Secretary of State's office has been doing some  
10 work out there. They have big plans for the  
11 future, but, anyway, we were approached about using  
12 some of the concrete pillars, some of the bulkhead  
13 and the actual roadway out there for artificial  
14 reef.

15 So it all actually worked. It took us a  
16 little while, several months to get the details and  
17 everything worked out, but we were able to take  
18 that material out to Katrina Key.

19 A few years back, we did a project on the  
20 west end of Katrina Key where we put some concrete  
21 culverts out. Over that time period, over the last  
22 few years, some of that material has settled a  
23 little bit. Well, with the coming of this  
24 Broadwater material, we were able to go back and  
25 cap that. So we actually were able to bring that

1 back up to elevation as specified by the permits,  
2 so, realistically, it was a good project for us.

3 It was -- kind of brought some nostalgia  
4 back for the Broadwater Marina to actually put it  
5 back out as an artificial reef, so we were very,  
6 very pleased with that and we were happy with the  
7 way that worked out. So you guys, like I say, look  
8 forward to that this summer.

9 But overall, just a -- I think it ended  
10 up being several barge loads of material that we  
11 brought out there, so it was nice. Good project  
12 and good protection for the island and like I say,  
13 artificial reef in general.

14 What we're currently working on and  
15 another project we've been working on over the past  
16 year is we were approached by Bollinger Shipyard  
17 about a project that they had out there that come  
18 to the end of its life. It was a pipe production  
19 line that they had out there. It had lots of --  
20 lots of concrete pillars and ballasts that they  
21 were looking to get rid of and wanted to donate it  
22 to the artificial reef program.

23 So it did -- it took us some time to get  
24 that through the procurement process, but  
25 everything -- I can say that that project started

1 last month. To date, we did -- actually did a  
2 deployment Friday on FH2, so we've done four  
3 deployments offshore with that material.

4 It's approximately 1,600 tons of  
5 concrete. These are large, large beams. Like I  
6 mentioned, I added a video to this presentation.  
7 I'm not technologically savvy, so I'm not sure if  
8 it's going to play and it may need a little bit of  
9 help from Brady.

10 But just to give you some scale, those  
11 beams are -- they're over 45,000 pounds a piece.  
12 They're approximately 45 feet long, four and a half  
13 feet tall. There were, I think, 60 of those that  
14 are available, so like I say, we've done close to  
15 half of that.

16 But it's fairly easy once you get it  
17 offshore to offload it. It's just the --  
18 obviously, the logistics of getting it out there is  
19 a little bit time-consuming, so that project will  
20 continue. The weather's kind of shut us down the  
21 beginning of this week and last few weeks with the  
22 wind, but as soon as we can get back out to  
23 finishing that up, we absolutely will.

24 So the future, this is another project  
25 that we and -- the staff and I have worked on for

1 the past year and a half. We've worked on NFWF  
2 projects for the last several years. As a matter  
3 of fact, we recently received the intent to award  
4 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation,  
5 \$12.35 million. This is Phase 1 -- or Phase 2 --  
6 I'm sorry, Phase 2 of the inshore and offshore  
7 artificial reef project. These are funded by the  
8 Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund. These are oil  
9 spill monies.

10 So there's actually three projects that  
11 are kind of built into this one large proposal.  
12 There's an inshore component where we have \$5.2  
13 million to restore our inshore artificial reefs,  
14 and what this means is, across 63 inshore  
15 artificial reefs, those funds will plant  
16 approximately two acres of limestone, three inches  
17 thick across all of South Mississippi. So every  
18 site will be basically enhanced, so we're excited  
19 about that. That's obviously going to take several  
20 months for us to do.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 Travis, explain to them why we can't put  
23 any structure on the inshore reefs.

24 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

25 Yeah. So the -- so the inshore reefs,

1 obviously, all of everything that we have is  
2 permitted by our office here and the Corps of  
3 Engineers. Our inshore reefs -- there are  
4 requirements built into these permits,  
5 navigational hazards, as most would say.

6 So our inshore reefs, they're limited to  
7 six inches. Can't have any more than six inches  
8 of relief off the bottom, so the materials that  
9 are suitable for that are limestone, crushed  
10 concrete and oyster shell.

11 So in our inshore reefs, they're low  
12 profile. Typically, they'll be made of oysters at  
13 some point and that's kind of our hope.  
14 And so that -- this project, like I say, it will  
15 fund the restoration and enhancement of all 63 that  
16 we currently have, so that's in the plans.

17 The second phase of this project is one  
18 at the barrier islands. It's at Petit Bois. It  
19 was presented last year as a permit to you all.  
20 That is still moving forward. There's another  
21 component to that.

22 Like Trevor just mentioned, the Corps is  
23 requiring us to do a maritime cultural resources  
24 survey before we can move forward with that, so  
25 part of that survey and the funding for that survey

1 is going to be provided with this project. So,  
2 we'll have to complete that survey, then finish the  
3 actual permitting process for that application.

4 So it's -- that project is still likely a  
5 couple years out, to be honest with you, because we  
6 do have to complete the survey before we can get  
7 the permit and that's also -- that's going to take  
8 some time. But that will -- that is \$600,000 to  
9 build approximately 200 artificial reef modules.

10 We don't have any particular design in  
11 mind right now. As we get closer, we'll kind of  
12 narrow it down, but that is a 15-acre site that's  
13 going to be on the north side of Petit Bois.

14 It's about two miles north of the island, so it  
15 kind of gives us, you know, that mid shore  
16 artificial reef on the east end of the state, so  
17 we're excited about that when it comes along.  
18 And we'll keep y'all updated as that gets closer.

19 And then the last remaining portion of  
20 those funds is approximately \$4.5 million for  
21 offshore artificial reef enhancement. Primarily,  
22 that is going to be used to clear off my staging  
23 site in Gulfport. I have a lot of material out  
24 there right now. It's -- we're pretty much 95  
25 percent capacity. This consists of concrete

1 culverts, manholes, box covers, power poles that  
2 have been donated by Mississippi Power, so just a  
3 lot of material out there. And that's going to be  
4 the -- I guess the soonest that we're going to --  
5 or the most -- the nearest project we're going to  
6 start working on is actually probably going to go  
7 out for public advertisement here in the next few  
8 weeks. So we're trying to get that started this  
9 fall. Several, several deployments. I expect  
10 probably 35 -- 35 different sites just on that  
11 material.

12 And then any funds that are remaining  
13 from that and those deployments, we'll look at some  
14 materials of design where we'll go out and look at  
15 actually building something to put out there with  
16 moneys that are left over.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 Travis, also tell -- you know, this --  
19 what he's talking about, we're using the majority  
20 of the money to be able to just deploy this stuff  
21 because we -- all the stuff you've got was given  
22 to you, wasn't it?

23 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

24 Yeah. Yeah. All the stuff that we've  
25 received at the staging site, we haven't -- we

1 haven't paid for one piece of that material. And  
2 oftentimes, you know, we're fortunate enough with  
3 these contractors that we work with, they'll even  
4 deliver the material to us, so that's another cost  
5 that we don't even pay for the transportation.  
6 When it comes to us, then we pay for the  
7 transportation offshore.

8 So we're very fortunate and we have a  
9 good -- you know, a good connection with a lot of  
10 local contractors that help make this possible.

11 And then lastly, to finish this off,  
12 probably as Trevor mentioned, this is one of the  
13 most exciting things for us. It's been a long time  
14 coming, but I'd like to formally introduce y'all to  
15 Mississippi Reef Complex 1 and 2. Mississippi Reef  
16 Complex 1 is located adjacent to FH13. It's to the  
17 west there. It's the largest block. It's  
18 approximately 11,500 acres.

19 Mississippi Reef Complex 2 is south side  
20 and adjacent to FH13. It's 5,075 acres, so,  
21 combined, you're looking at 16,575 acres, which is  
22 almost 26 square miles of newly-permitted  
23 artificial reef bottom for the State of  
24 Mississippi.

25 This newly permitted area, it doubles the

1 size of our fish havens, so we've essentially  
2 doubled the size of our offshore footprint. And,  
3 like I say, we're excited. When I just talked  
4 about the NFWF project and the offshore component  
5 of that, we're going to focus on these two new  
6 sites. These sites provide us with a good future  
7 that will outlast my career here for sure, so, like  
8 I say, a lot of big things coming.

9 Part of this is in state -- part of  
10 the -- the northern part of that is in state  
11 waters, and, obviously, the southern portion being  
12 federal waters, so we can accommodate a lot of the  
13 materials that we have in the past. We have room  
14 for larger vessels to continue to maintain that so  
15 we can capture the barges, vessels, things of that  
16 nature, fishing boats. And the permits allow us  
17 to, you know, continue to do anything from vessels,  
18 barges, metal structures, concrete, just a whole --  
19 whole sort of just approved materials. So good  
20 look for the future.

21 And like I say, we're excited. Staff  
22 worked hard and we'll continue, you know, pushing  
23 forward. And with that, I'll take any questions.  
24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 That is great news. Yeah, that's great.

1 Good job. I know there's a lot of -- it takes a  
2 minute to get there.

3 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

4 Years.

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 Lots of work, yeah. So that's great. I  
7 appreciate it. You wouldn't think that, you know,  
8 with like that FH4, it would get pressure, but it  
9 actually does. There's a lot of pre- -- I mean,  
10 just, you know, as a recreational fisherman, so,  
11 that's great to see it's expanding to that  
12 magnitude. That's great news.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 This also helps, you know --  
15 Commissioner Daniels, I'm sure you'll like this  
16 part because being the state -- charter, it will  
17 be able to help, especially being able to  
18 replenish some of these inshore reefs, and then a  
19 little bit of that -- what we're being able to put  
20 in state waters, and so that at least will be able  
21 to enhance that a little bit more and maybe help  
22 out with our state charters and be able to keep  
23 them moving a little bit.

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 Yeah. That was actually one question I

1 had. Do you have an idea of how much of it's  
2 actually in state waters?

3 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

4 So we've looked at the maps and not  
5 having a clear defined boundary, we're focusing  
6 right -- and I'll be honest with y'all.

7 We have done one deployment in the new site, and it  
8 is in state waters. We did that a couple weeks  
9 ago, so we have done our first official deployment  
10 in the Reef Complex 1.

11 So that one, like I say, I'm not exactly  
12 100 percent sure. We keep going back and forth  
13 kind of looking at that boundary, but I do know the  
14 northern portion of that is in state waters. So we  
15 are -- we are focusing, you know, some of the first  
16 deployments, these -- this first -- next couple  
17 months, we are doing on that north.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Well, you answered my second question,  
20 too.

21 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

22 Yeah. And those coordinates will be  
23 released before snapper season next year.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 Well, you know, and the other thing,

1 too, to the whole staff there, you know, they've  
2 worked hard for this. They've worked hard, and I  
3 mean, you know, every time -- as you heard Trevor  
4 say earlier, every time that they got one step  
5 forward, they took two steps back and -- you know,  
6 because of some kind of bureaucracy thing or  
7 whatever happened, and they never gave up. They  
8 never gave up, and they kept fighting.  
9 And I tell you what, I -- you know, hats off to  
10 them, and, you know, I think we got a Katrina Key  
11 Project 2 coming up.

12           Between those two and what you just  
13 talked about, we're talking \$20 million worth of  
14 artificial reef stuff is going to come into  
15 Mississippi. That's a lot.

16 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

17           A lot.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19           That's a whole lot, and that's a lot  
20 more than probably has been spent in Mississippi  
21 in the last 20 years.

22 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

23           Yeah.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25           But the point I'm getting at is, they're

1 all working hard and they're working extremely  
2 hard to bring up our fisheries to the point to  
3 where not just our recreational but our charters  
4 and others can be able to have something to go  
5 for. And very proud of the whole staff. Thank  
6 you.

7 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

8 Yeah. That's a good point. I mean,  
9 with it -- with that offshore, you know, Phase 2  
10 project, Katrina Key, that's -- those two projects  
11 total over \$20 million. We recently received some  
12 GOMESA funds, a little over a million dollars to  
13 work with the Gulf Fishing Banks, so there's a lot  
14 of -- a lot of good future projects over the next  
15 several years that will take place.

16 So, I mean -- and I get it. People jump  
17 on us all the time about we want reefs here, we  
18 want reefs now, we want reefs there. And we're  
19 working on it, and -- but it is a process.  
20 So nothing moves fast, but it is moving.

21 CAM ROBERDS:

22 What is that -- so when you deployed  
23 like the offshore reefs, I mean, that's about a  
24 year after deployment before you guys open?

25 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

1                   Yeah, yeah.

2           CAM ROBERDS:

3                   And inshore is immediate, right?

4           TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

5                   Yeah. Because they're already  
6 established in the sites and we have to, you know,  
7 deploy inside those permanent areas, so, they're  
8 already defined.

9                   But offshore, we -- typically, we'll  
10 hold them for a year. What I've started doing and  
11 in all honesty I'll release what we've had from  
12 the previous year before -- you know, before  
13 Memorial weekend, so --

14          CAM ROBERDS:

15                   Great news.. Any other questions?

16                   (No response.)

17          CAM ROBERDS:

18                   I appreciate the info, Travis.

19          TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

20                   All right. Thank y'all.

21          CAM ROBERDS:

22                   Thank you, sir.

23                   It looks like we've got the Mississippi  
24 Creel presentation, Eric.

25          ERIC GIGLI:

1           Good morning, Commissioners, Director  
2           Ms. Chesnut.

3           Before jumping into the presentation,  
4           I'll just quickly echo the sentiment from Trevor  
5           and Travis on Dr. Franks. Extremely impactful to  
6           my career. I met him shortly after starting at  
7           the research lab and instantly just an insanely  
8           kind human being and the most knowledgeable  
9           fisheries person I've ever met.

10          So we were really thrilled to be able to  
11          do some of the tripletail and cobia stuff and have  
12          him informed prior to his passing. Really put  
13          science to a lot of things that we've discussed  
14          over the years as possible things that could be  
15          happening and -- with those species. Held a warm  
16          part in his heart as well as mine.

17          So -- but moving on to MS Creel. So the  
18          purpose of this presentation is really to connect  
19          some of the dots of things that we've discussed  
20          over the years. Director mentioned Creel earlier,  
21          as well as its impacts to red snapper ACL and our  
22          future for state monitoring of the species, so  
23          we'll jump in.

24          Historically, you've heard of MRIP and  
25          the fisheries program for landings for the

1 recreational sector. It's been called various  
2 things over the years, and all those acronyms,  
3 really, just add up to some numbers that we don't  
4 have 100 percent certainty in. So over the years,  
5 we've adapted and implemented Tails and Scales for  
6 red snapper specifically.

7 MS Creel is intended to take the place of  
8 both the federal survey, as well as Tails and  
9 Scales, so it does all species. It began in 2024,  
10 and we did this alongside Alabama, who's going  
11 through some of the same issues we've been.

12 And we adapted the methodology straight  
13 from LA Creel. It's an established method. We  
14 know it works. They've proved it since 2015, and  
15 so this, we saw as the future of Mississippi's  
16 management, not just for federal species  
17 monitoring, but also for getting us real numbers at  
18 our state species.

19 So we'll touch on a couple of different  
20 points that all add up to the program as a whole.  
21 The first is the access point survey, and that's  
22 where most of the public, as well as some of our  
23 Commissioners, see us on a regular basis. So we'll  
24 go dockside and talk to the actual fishermen as  
25 they come in.

1           Before we can do that, we have to have  
2 local knowledge for what is happening in our area,  
3 county by county, dock by dock by each type of  
4 fishing that occurs, shore, charter, and private  
5 recreational, and develop weights to get us at the  
6 right places at the right times to capture all the  
7 different types of activity. And this pretty much  
8 guides the rest of the program for where we are,  
9 what estimates get developed, and leans heavily on  
10 what we observe but also what we know about our  
11 anglers and our fisheries.

12           So we develop a schedule based off of  
13 those weights and of all the information that we  
14 know, and you'll see us anywhere between 8:00 a.m.  
15 and 2:00 p.m. or 2:00 p.m. to sunset, depending on  
16 the time of the year. In the summer, we get to as  
17 late as 8:00 p.m. and in the winter, closer to 5:00  
18 p.m., but we're there until the sun goes down.  
19 We have surveys conducted, at least nine per week,  
20 with most of those being on the weekend because  
21 that's when most of the fishing activity occurs.

22           So our staff do a fair bit of weekend  
23 work outside of normal work hours, and even into  
24 the evenings during the week, but we do that  
25 because that's when the fishery is accessed.

1           Now, in snapper season, we jump those  
2 numbers up to 14 surveys per week because we want  
3 to get -- have the best possible chance to capture  
4 the red snapper as they're coming in, in addition  
5 to just peak activity through the summer. We know  
6 May through August is our peak season and we want  
7 to make sure that we're capturing that information  
8 correctly, so we get our largest sample sizes  
9 during that time.

10           Currently, we conduct the survey on  
11 paper, but we did just secure funding for  
12 development of a real-time app, web app that will  
13 allow our staff to update the data in the field, so  
14 it'll be nearly real-time for turnaround, where we  
15 can get the information available for developing  
16 estimates as short as a week or two compared to  
17 what we currently got -- or we used to get out of  
18 the federal program, which was in the range of two  
19 to six months, depending on staffing.

20           And the key thing that comes out of these  
21 dockside surveys is the type of trip that it was,  
22 the harvest rate per angler for each one of those  
23 species that we observe, as well as the area that  
24 those fish were harvested from.

25           All right. So then the next aspect of

1 this is recreational fishing licensing. It's more  
2 than that. It is our universe of anglers that we  
3 know are accessing and harvesting fish for the  
4 State of Mississippi. This differs from the  
5 federal survey, as this survey doesn't go to any  
6 random household in the state. It goes to those  
7 who we know are actually accessing the fisheries.

8 And so we take all types of licenses,  
9 basically everyone 65, plus saltwater are included.  
10 Lifetime sportsmen are included, as well as all of  
11 the variations of annual and short-term licenses,  
12 in state, out of state. Everybody's included.

13 Adding on to that, we have a separate  
14 group. Y'all have heard us talk -- multiple  
15 times talk about the recreational offshore landing  
16 permit. That withdraws any angler that accesses  
17 our federal fisheries into a unique group that we  
18 can access more readily, we have good contact  
19 information for, and we're able to get the most  
20 precise estimates out of the group that is  
21 accessing, honestly, fisheries more often for key  
22 species.

23 And so we've had this program in place,  
24 the permit for -- since 2024. As far as we're  
25 concerned, it is eligible for enforcement by Marine

1 Patrol in 2026. We've really gotten great  
2 compliance out of it. We see from our actual  
3 call-outs, we ask them, "Do you have an offshore  
4 landing permit?" And it lines up that the folks  
5 that need to have it have it, and the folks that  
6 don't need to have it, they don't.

7 So I believe that that's working really  
8 well, and probably stems from the historical  
9 support from anglers for Tails and Scales. We know  
10 that everyone who's in Tails and Scales is also an  
11 offshore angler for the permit, and we're able to  
12 get that information to them and really get the  
13 program up to speed quickly.

14 When an angler registers, we got a few  
15 comments. So the program is free, but it does have  
16 to be renewed every calendar year. That's one that  
17 comes up often. Even if you only have to get your  
18 lifetime license once, we still need you to get the  
19 offshore landing permit every single year, but it's  
20 free.

21 So it often takes seconds to renew.  
22 Even just the initial application takes a minute or  
23 two with basic information off your fishing  
24 license. And then we give you an instant digital  
25 copy, so you can go fishing immediately and feel

1 safe from a citation perspective, but you get a  
2 hard copy you can put in your wallet in about two  
3 to four weeks. We're getting those shipped out.  
4 As soon as we get approximately 200 registrants, we  
5 send out another batch. And it's only available at  
6 the DMR website, the specific link for offshore  
7 landing permits. It is not on the MDWFP license  
8 frame, and we do that so that we can keep it for  
9 free. If you put it on an access site for all  
10 recreational fishing licenses, it makes it where  
11 it's an add-on. Anybody who might think they might  
12 use it for a species throws it on there just  
13 because they can, and then our numbers get off, and  
14 we're elevating the number of folks that are  
15 snapper fishing when we know that that number is  
16 too high.

17           And right now, we're -- I think  
18 historically, we went from about 7,000 to 8,000 and  
19 9,000 from '24, '25, and what we're projecting for  
20 '26 and that's right in the right range of what we  
21 expected off of numbers we've had historically from  
22 Tails and Scales, so it seems to be working  
23 appropriately.

24           All right. Now, the effort survey, this  
25 is a key aspect of the program that really sets us

1     apart from the federal side, so we contact those  
2     license holders that we described, and we're  
3     calling 800 to 900 contacts per week. Expands to  
4     each type of license holder, so you have the  
5     offshore landing permit, anybody who's in the  
6     coastal six counties, anybody who is north of the  
7     coastal six counties in Mississippi, and then our  
8     out of state license holders, but it's an even  
9     distribution across all of those.

10           And we call, call, call until we hit 400  
11     responses from any range of the different groups,  
12     but we just want to make sure that we're getting at  
13     least half of those respondents as a yes, I fished,  
14     or a no, I did not fish.

15           We're calling on Tuesday through Friday  
16     for the week before, so, you are fresh in your mind  
17     about what you just did this past weekend and then  
18     also the previous week, and we're not having a  
19     whole lot of recall bias.

20           One thing that we've been able to  
21     implement is also the text and email version of the  
22     survey, which has been extremely successful. We're  
23     getting about 150 to 160 responses just by the  
24     angler catching a text and an email and filling out  
25     the information themselves. It takes approximately

1 15, 30 seconds to fill it out and has reduced the  
2 number of calls we have to make by somewhere in the  
3 range of 600, 700 calls.

4 So we had a external third party  
5 conducting the survey for us the previous two  
6 years. It was the same one that had done the  
7 Louisiana survey. They were making anywhere  
8 between 2,200 and 2,800 dials per week. We have  
9 that down to 1,100 dials per week, so we're  
10 operating at pretty much maximum efficiency,  
11 getting quality data, and it's our actual field  
12 staff and contractors that are conducting the  
13 calls.

14 All right. So this is kind of a key  
15 graphic of what we're capturing. You have the  
16 inshore area marked as zero. Barrier islands is  
17 15. 77 for Louisiana waters. 33 for Alabama  
18 waters and 99 for the offshore waters.

19 This is captured both on the effort survey for  
20 where those trips occurred, as well as at the  
21 dockside for where they harvested their fish and  
22 were able to match up that information to get  
23 different catch rates for, say, Louisiana fish  
24 versus for barrier island fish.

25 Now, this is the fun part, so we're not

1 going to touch this today. The key thing to see  
2 here is that there's a lot going on in the  
3 background to make all these numbers make sense.  
4 What y'all need to take away is MDMR calls times  
5 the catch rates that are coming into the dockside  
6 from DMR survey results in numbers that we believe  
7 there. We know that what is coming in is accurate.  
8 It's captured the right way. It's not  
9 overestimating anything. It's not underestimating  
10 anything, and we trust the data, which is nice to  
11 say because that's new for what we've seen in the  
12 last 30, 40 years.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 I'm glad you didn't ask me to explain  
15 that last slide, though.

16 ERIC GIGLI:

17 Don't ask me either. I don't need that.  
18 Now, huge thanks to Louisiana on that.  
19 They have some statistical geniuses on their staff,  
20 as well as some contractors they brought in to help  
21 them establish the program and it really made it to  
22 where we can adapt the code and adapt what we're  
23 estimating to fit Mississippi's needs, but we did  
24 not have to do the legwork on all of that.  
25 So much appreciation to Louisiana Parks and

1 Wildlife.

2 All right. So a couple of key things to  
3 show you. So we've got two years of data for the  
4 dockside portion -- or sorry, for the effort  
5 portion. And what you see here on the left in blue  
6 is the MS Creel program, on the right, MRIP.  
7 The pattern is pretty perfect for what we would  
8 expect out of Mississippi recreational fishing.  
9 Through the year, the dash line shifts into 2025.  
10 So you see the peak in the summer, goes down in the  
11 wintertime and then peaks back up in the summer.  
12 That's what we expect.

13 MRIP is on the right in the green. There  
14 is some pattern, but then you see a random drop off  
15 when effort should be at its highest, and then Wave  
16 6, that December -- November, December at the end  
17 of 2024, we have a peak when it should be about  
18 half of that, and so these are some of the issues  
19 that we've seen over the years. It's consistent.  
20 It's not any different than what we've had issues  
21 with and have brought up and tried to explain over  
22 many, many years.

23 The key thing to take away here is that  
24 number at the top of the bar that's circled in  
25 blue. For Mississippi, it's in the range of

1 150,000 -- I'm sorry, actually, 120,000 with our  
2 top bar being around 100,000 trips.

3 For MRIP, it's about five, six times  
4 that, peaking around 500,000, so it's a scale  
5 issue. We've known this for years, but now we have  
6 a direct comparison where we have another program  
7 that is showing that the number's not right.

8 Now, what's interesting to us, you take  
9 our existing program, Tails and Scales, in the tan.  
10 We trust those numbers because it's exactly what's  
11 being landed in Mississippi and then compare that  
12 to MS Creel. We saw that red snapper harvest in  
13 2025, we had 13,000 fish tracked in Tails and  
14 Scales and about 14,500 in Creel. Pretty close  
15 given completely different programs, completely  
16 different methodologies. Makes us feel good about  
17 MS Creel.

18 And then we get MRIP in the green with  
19 74,000 fish, so consistent across the board for  
20 what we see in effort being scaled up to our  
21 federal fisheries.

22 And then the bottom graph is the same  
23 thing. It just shows the red line with our state  
24 ACL that we've been monitoring in Tails and Scales.  
25 It was 82,000 pounds this past year. We harvested

1 79- in Tails and Scales. And according to MS  
2 Creel, we harvested in the territory of 87,000  
3 pounds, so not quite one to one but definitely in  
4 the same territory compared to what we saw out of  
5 MRIP.

6 Wrong button.

7 All right. So bringing it all  
8 together -- and some of the key aspects of what  
9 this does for the state, it does not get us  
10 immediately back to 151,000 pounds like we had from  
11 2018 to 2022, but it does remove the burden, not  
12 this year but in future years, of mandatory  
13 reporting of Tails and Scales.

14 From a legal perspective, we have been  
15 held up by the federal side too much to be legally  
16 allowed to use MS Creel as the in-season monitoring  
17 system for red snapper. We have to have a  
18 certified program. We have been certified -- I'm  
19 getting ahead of myself, but we've been certified  
20 according to the consultants, but it is still held  
21 up at the federal leadership level. So Tails and  
22 Scales functionally will be in place this year  
23 alongside our MS Creel program, but the federal  
24 program is not operating in Mississippi this year.

25 We can actually look at all the data for

1 all the species. We have spotted sea trout numbers  
2 that are believable. We don't have estimates of  
3 effort that are double what we saw in June and  
4 we're getting double that in November, December.  
5 The numbers are making sense. It's things that we  
6 can use for management and be able to feed into our  
7 state assessments moving forward, so we feel really  
8 good about it.

9 And we've really maximized the  
10 efficiency. We saw what Louisiana was doing and we  
11 took it as an opportunity to do things as well or  
12 better than what they were producing and we found a  
13 lot of ways to do that.

14 And the benefit across the region is  
15 Louisiana having this long-standing program,  
16 Mississippi and Alabama getting the same program  
17 online that we now have a program that is  
18 consistent across all three states for all species  
19 and presents some opportunities for regional  
20 management that gets away from Gulf-wide management  
21 or state-specific management that, I think, can  
22 benefit all three states.

23 So we submitted for certification for MS  
24 Creel. We actually submitted in October of this  
25 past year. We got held up by the federal shutdown

1 in the fall, as well as just the timely process of  
2 the federal side. But the MRIP consultants that  
3 have to certify the program to meet the design  
4 standards have said there's no reason why MS Creel  
5 should not be certified. The estimates are  
6 expected to be compatible with those of existing  
7 state surveys for the purpose of stock assessment  
8 and fisheries management. The program should  
9 facilitate the direct comparisons between state  
10 fisheries that are targeting similar stocks. And  
11 since most assumptions are similar to MRIP, we  
12 assume that the survey designs are equivalent, so  
13 it checks off all the boxes. Glowing reviews of  
14 this program will be successful. It is doing what  
15 it's supposed to do in a statistically rigorous  
16 way, and to us, it's producing estimates that are  
17 believable while meeting all those standards.

18 Right this moment, we are awaiting  
19 approval from NMFS and NOAA leadership.

20 We have no communication on that, but it's been  
21 with them for approximately a week or two.

22 There is also calibration discussions  
23 that are ongoing. We don't have a solid point at  
24 which we can agree on anything with the federal  
25 side. They want us to calibrate much the way that

1 we were forced into calibration with Tails and  
2 Scales. We are not allowing that. There is no  
3 benefit to the stakeholder for us to do that, and  
4 there are other options that we are going down. So  
5 we don't have their approval at this point in time.

6 For some aspects, we don't need their  
7 approval. There's many conversations that are  
8 going on at the SSC level at Gulf Council and with  
9 the other states to try to figure out where are we  
10 actually going to land with calibration, with ACL  
11 dispersal and a lot of question marks. A lot more  
12 question marks than we've had in the last 10 to 15  
13 years, which in general is a good thing. We're not  
14 locked in to an issue. We are exploring all the  
15 options of where we can go the best way for the  
16 state.

17 And I just want to kind of touch on a few  
18 things for our staff. It's not just me. There's  
19 been a ton of staff that have touched on this.  
20 Every single person in the Finfish Bureau conducts  
21 surveys, whether it's the call-outs or the dockside  
22 surveys.

23 We've had a few key staff that have been  
24 instrumental in developing the program, getting it  
25 off the ground. Jeremy Timbs with automation and

1 the statistical side has been a massive, massive  
2 undertaking and he's really just been all over it.  
3 James Klein and -- he no longer works for us. He  
4 works for the research lab now, but Matt Burns put  
5 a ton of time and effort into the statistical side  
6 for making sure that all of the things that we're  
7 estimating are actually estimating the right  
8 things. And that was a task that -- it was well  
9 suited for him. They did a fantastic job on it.

10 Megan Fleming runs our day-to-day. She  
11 coordinates both the programs for the dockside and  
12 the call-out effort.

13 And then all of our other staff, the  
14 local knowledge is us getting in a room and  
15 discussing every site, what happens at those sites,  
16 looking at the previous year's data from the last  
17 15 years to try to make sure that we have the best  
18 understanding from all of our technicians,  
19 scientists, program managers, making decisions on  
20 the program

21 So much appreciation to all of them for  
22 their effort over the last year, year and a half.  
23 And we did it in a time frame that was kind of not  
24 feasible to most. We got it off the ground in less  
25 than a year. Much of the program was developed on

1 a scale of months and the certification part  
2 getting pushed through. We were returning comments  
3 within a week when it was taking months to get the  
4 actual information to us.

5 So a lot of thanks to all those folks,  
6 Louisiana, Alabama going alongside it with us, the  
7 coordination from Gulf States. It's been a huge  
8 project with a lot of different players.

9 But with that, I'll take any questions  
10 and, I think, Trevor probably has a few comments on  
11 it as well.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 Great presentation.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 You know, I think this is going to make  
16 a big difference.

17 And two things. Number 1, you know, we  
18 had the best program in America, but for some  
19 reason, NOAA just didn't want to accept it, and we  
20 had to -- and it was noted by a lot of people that  
21 it was the best in America. It was one of the best  
22 programs that have ever been.

23 And -- but anyway, that's neither here or  
24 there. Right? Tails and Scales was a fantastic  
25 group, but then -- and did give us a lot of data to

1 be able to work with.

2 But this program aligns us, if it goes  
3 the way we look at it, and which I feel it will.  
4 Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama are all going to  
5 be on one program and that means two-thirds of the  
6 Gulf is on one program, so now only Texas and now  
7 Florida are on different programs.

8 So this will be a model and it'll be  
9 something that's hard for NOAA to turn back to say  
10 that this is not the way to do it because -- and  
11 I'm not sure that -- I think they're on board with  
12 us wanting to do it. Between what we do here and  
13 if we do change the allocation, we ought to be back  
14 to where we need to be.

15 And, you know, if allocation works and  
16 everything, we ought to be back close to where we  
17 need to be. And, you know, the team has worked  
18 hard on this. And I tell you what, it's proven  
19 itself.

20 Everybody I've talked to, when you talk  
21 to Andy Strelchek with NMFS, you know, he's like,  
22 hey, this is doing good. Everybody -- the SSC that  
23 Trevor's the head of is all on board with us, I  
24 think, with this and they see it as working great.  
25 I've heard nobody talk bad about this, of what it's

1 doing. I wish they'd have just told us this three  
2 years ago. It would have saved us a whole lot of  
3 problems and a lot of money, but appreciate y'all's  
4 work.

5 TRAVIS WILLIAMS:

6 Absolutely. Thank you.

7 CAM ROBERDS:

8 Thank you.

9 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

10 Thank you.

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 Trevor, what, are we implementing  
13 this in a month from now? Are we going to be  
14 Tails and Scales or --

15 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

16 Yeah. So we were rushing -- the  
17 timeline that he talked about, we were simply  
18 trying to get this on the ground as fast as  
19 possible so we could relieve the burden of  
20 reporting every single trip as fast as possible.

21 The setbacks and delays that he talked  
22 about, shutdowns, lack of response for a couple  
23 months, that kind of stuff kind of hindered it and  
24 put us into a timeline to essentially where we have  
25 to run Tails and Scales this year in order to be

1 compliant with Amendment 50. And at the same time,  
2 we'll begin the process of transitioning the  
3 documentation of Amendment 50 over to match MS  
4 Creel and everything else, and at that point, it  
5 will be what we monitor everything in, including  
6 red snapper.

7 But as y'all can tell, that's -- that's a  
8 lot longer than the presentations we typically  
9 give. The reason for that is that this is  
10 basically establishing a new foundation for how  
11 we're going to manage recreational fisheries in the  
12 State of Mississippi. Every time something comes  
13 up, you're going to see products from here. So  
14 having that understanding and knowing all the work  
15 that's gone into it from the staff and everything  
16 else is going to be important as we continue to  
17 move forward with all the decisions we're going to  
18 have to make.

19 All right. So these next two will be  
20 real quick. So this is just the final adoption  
21 portion of the fillet possession that we talked  
22 about.

23 So we submitted per the administrative  
24 requirements. It was on the administrative  
25 bulletin. It appeared on the website and it

1 appeared in the paper. We haven't received any  
2 public comments.

3 As a reminder, this is the language. It  
4 just adds in that "within or outside of Mississippi  
5 territorial waters" for fillet possession and then  
6 has all the float plan requirements listed there.

7 And then all we need is just a motion to  
8 recommend final adoption, and what we'll do is get  
9 the paperwork together, submit it, get it signed.

10 RONNIE DANIELS:

11 I'll make a motion.

12 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

13 Second.

14 CAM ROBERDS:

15 All in favor?

16 (Unanimous vote.)

17 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

18 All right. The last thing I've got for  
19 you, we've got some saltwater finfish records.

20 So I told you the snook was coming. So  
21 we've got another common snook. The old record was  
22 15.36 ounces. The new one is 5 pounds, 6.4 ounces  
23 by Mr. Matthew Mitchell. There's a picture of the  
24 fish. There's a picture of Mr. Mitchell with the  
25 fish. He actually had another one in the cooler

1 with him, so he caught two that day both around the  
2 same size. So if that's an indication of what  
3 we're seeing a little bit more of, seems to be a  
4 good thing.

5 Next one's yellowfin tuna. This one's  
6 been pretty longstanding. The old record was 236  
7 pounds, 9.6 ounces. The new record is 237 pounds,  
8 12.8 ounces. Angler is Mr. Josh Lord. There is a  
9 picture of the fish and Mr. Lord with the fish.  
10 And that's a good one.

11 Then we've got one youth conventional  
12 tackle. It's an African pompano. There is no  
13 youth record currently for African pompano, so it  
14 stands as a new record, 35 pounds, 10.4 ounces.  
15 Mr. George Bamban. And I'll tell you at 35 pounds  
16 that one is probably going to stand for a long  
17 time.

18 CAM ROBERDS:

19 Yeah.

20 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

21 All right. There's a picture of the  
22 fish. We see a few of these every year. There's  
23 George with that fish.

24 So with that, all we need is a motion to  
25 recommend the approval of the new state records.

1 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

2 I'll make the motion.

3 RONNIE DANIELS:

4 Second.

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 All in favor?

7 (Unanimous vote.)

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 All right, Trevor. Appreciate it.

10 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

11 All right.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 Thank you, sir.

14 Ms. Ayesha, Grand Bay NERR.

15 AYESHA GRAY:

16 Good morning.

17 CAM ROBERDS:

18 Morning.

19 AYESHA GRAY:

20 I just wanted to give y'all an update on  
21 our 2026 Celebrate the Gulf.

22 So we had our festival on April 11th.

23 It was with Art in the Pass at War Memorial Park  
24 in Pass Christian.

25 Our sponsoring partners were the DEQ and

1 Chevron. Two different offices out of DEQ and  
2 Chevron provided sponsor funds for it. We had 47  
3 exhibitors. This is the biggest Celebrate the  
4 Gulf in terms of exhibitors that we've ever had.

5 And on the north side of the park, we  
6 counted over 1,000 people. There were -- we  
7 haven't gotten the counts from Art in the Pass  
8 yet, but there were many more people in the park  
9 that day.

10 So we asked all exhibitors to have  
11 hands-on activities for kids that teaches them  
12 something about the marine environment and they all  
13 do this. And so it's a real fun, free event for  
14 families and kids to get to learn all kinds of  
15 things from fishing to how a coral polyp is put  
16 together to things about geology, and it's a really  
17 nice event. Had some art too.

18 So we have live animals, caricature  
19 artists, a photo booth, face painters.  
20 We do a poster contest every year and we give away  
21 our posters. And we have, lately in the last  
22 several years, been hosting the student science  
23 showcase, which is taking the winners from the  
24 regional science fair and having them present their  
25 project at Celebrate the Gulf on the main stage,

1 and then they have cash awards for the winners of  
2 that.

3 This year DEQ had a new addition. It was  
4 Washed Up to Wow, so this is a fashion show that  
5 DEQ is sponsoring where local high school students  
6 make fashion items out of marine debris collected  
7 on beaches. Val Alley was doing the presentations  
8 for that and said sustainability never goes out of  
9 style, so that was a fun addition that we had this  
10 year.

11 And then it also gave the NERR a chance  
12 to promote our art and nature workshops. We have  
13 an upcoming workshop in botanical watercolor with a  
14 guest artist, Penny Crawford. And so they were --  
15 she was there promoting the workshop, which we  
16 still have seats for if anyone is interested.

17 That's all I have.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Thank you.

20 CAM ROBERDS:

21 All right, I appreciate it.

22 Thank you for the update.

23 AYESHA GRAY:

24 Okay.

25 CAM ROBERDS:

1 Well, I don't think we have any public  
2 comments.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 I do have one other thing.

5 Commissioner Mayfield, I think your  
6 daughters just won a big award, didn't they?

7 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

8 They won a huge award.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS:

10 Would you explain that? We're going to  
11 have them here up one day, but would you explain?

12 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

13 I'd be happy to. I've gotten very  
14 familiar with telling the story. I've got eighth  
15 grade daughters in Ocean Springs, Bowen and Taylor  
16 Mayfield.

17 They had to do a science fair project  
18 this year for their class, and they chose oysters.  
19 The name of that project was "The Oyster, A  
20 Filtration Sensation," and they did really well at  
21 school. They did well enough to get to the next  
22 round of regionals in Long Beach. Not much  
23 expectation other than the fact that we were  
24 excited to move to the next level or they were.  
25 Well, we all were.

1 Well, they won at regionals. They got a  
2 silver medal. They got a NOAA nod, accomplishment,  
3 and they got a fancy foundation that gave them 100  
4 bucks saying they liked what they were doing.  
5 So they came away from regionals with -- you didn't  
6 know it was going to be that wordy, did you --  
7 three awards.

8 So they qualified for state science fair,  
9 which wasn't awesome this year because state  
10 science fair fell during their spring break, so for  
11 spring break, they got to go back to school if they  
12 chose. And we gave them that option. We said, if  
13 you want to take it to state and see what you can  
14 do, let's go for it, and they did. They chose to  
15 go up to Booneville, Mississippi, which was a  
16 absolute lovely place to visit. Super nice people  
17 up there.

18 And they put their project out there.  
19 They won gold medal, first place in their division.  
20 They gave the final awards. They won best in show,  
21 best in state, the State of Mississippi, coming out  
22 of Ocean Springs, Mississippi. And we are tickled  
23 to death. So, thank you, sir.

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 That's great.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 Well, I know you're proud of them. We  
3 want to have them here. Maybe -- I didn't --

4 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

5 In May.

6 JOE SPRAGGINS:

7 In May or either, you know, something  
8 and let them in and just -- you know, let  
9 everybody know what they've done.

10 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

11 They're excited.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 All right. Thank you.

14 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

15 Thank you.

16 CAM ROBERDS:

17 That's a memory they'll have forever.

18 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

19 That's it.

20 CAM ROBERDS:

21 Prior to closing, Commissioner Mayfield  
22 mentioned that we possibly do a moment of silence  
23 for Jim Franks, and I want to take him up on that.

24 So if everybody wanted to bow in a moment  
25 of silence, please, for Dr. Jim Franks.

1 (Moment of silence for Dr. Jim Franks.)

2 CAM ROBERDS:

3 All right. Thank you. Rest in peace,  
4 sir. All right. Do we have a motion to close?

5 RONNIE DANIELS:

6 Chairman, one question before we get out  
7 of here. I've started getting some text messages  
8 about the new reef out there. What is our plan,  
9 Trevor? Can you -- what is our plan on getting  
10 the information to the people on what is state and  
11 what isn't? The text I just got is, how do we --  
12 how do they know if we don't know?

13 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

14 Yeah. So what we'll likely do -- so,  
15 we've got an unofficial nine-mile line that was an  
16 expansion from the three-mile line that was  
17 previously there, and what we'll try to do is  
18 identify the areas within those new reef zones  
19 that are able to be accessed. Likely have  
20 something on the artificial reef site, I would  
21 imagine. I'm looking at Travis. So we'll make  
22 sure it's publicly available for those that are  
23 looking for it.

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 Okay. So we'll publish that once we get

1 ready to release that new location?

2 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

3 Yep.

4 RONNIE DANIELS:

5 All right. Thank you.

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 Thanks, Trevor.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 And one other thing, too, is the oyster  
10 season -- I think Jason has already walked out,  
11 but, Rick, maybe you can answer this, but oyster  
12 season right now is open until the end of this  
13 month and then we're going to meet with the task  
14 force and look at something in addition to that.  
15 Is that correct?

16 RICK BURRIS:

17 Yes, sir. We typically close down on  
18 April 30th, but we do have a meeting with the task  
19 force tomorrow just to kind of get the feel for if  
20 we're -- if they want to have a season in May or  
21 try it out. There's a lot of -- the  
22 time-temperature matrix gets really tight during  
23 that window, so we -- it's really difficult to  
24 manage that, but we're going to work with them and  
25 see what we can come up with.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 We're at about 40 --

3 RICK BURRIS:

4 46,000 sacks right now.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 46,000 sacks right now.

7 CAM ROBERDS:

8 Okay. Good deal. Anything else?

9 Gentlemen?

10 (No response.)

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 All right. Do we have a motion to  
13 close?

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15 Motion.

16 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

17 Second.

18 CAM ROBERDS:

19 All in favor.

20 (Unanimous vote.)

21 (Concluded at 10:44 a.m.)

22

23

24

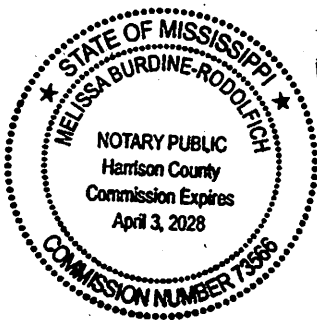
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**CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER**

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 witness, as taken by me at the time  
 9 and place heretofore stated, to the best of my  
 10 skill and ability.

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

15 Witness my signature and seal, this the  
 16 11<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026.



17  
 18 Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich

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