

Commission on Marine Resources

COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES  
COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, February 20, 2018  
9:00 a.m.  
Bolton Building Auditorium  
1141 Bayview Avenue  
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Commission Members:

- Steve Bosarge, Chairman
- Ron Harmon, Vice Chairman
- Richard Gollott
- Mark Havard

Also Present:

- Joe Spraggins, Executive Director DMR
- Sandy Chestnut, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

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1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good morning everyone.  
 2 It looks like we've got a pretty lively crowd today. I  
 3 would like to welcome everybody to the February meeting of  
 4 the Commission on Marine Resources.  
 5 To start it all off, I would like to ask Ron  
 6 Harmon to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.  
 7 (Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)  
 8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Next on the agenda is a  
 9 moment of silence to do whatever you may want to do, thank  
 10 the good people that protect us in this country, or  
 11 whatever it may be.  
 12 (Moment of silence observed.)  
 13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Approval of the minutes.  
 14 Do we have a motion to approve the minutes, or  
 15 are there any changes to the minutes of the January  
 16 meeting?  
 17 COMMISSIONER HARMON: Mr. Chairman, I make a  
 18 motion that we approve the minutes.  
 19 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion.  
 20 Do we have a second?  
 21 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I'll second that motion.  
 22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion and a  
 23 second.  
 24 All those in favor say aye.  
 25 (All in favor.)

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1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed?  
 2 (None opposed.)  
 3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion carries.  
 4 Approval of the agenda.  
 5 Do we have any changes, or modifications, to the  
 6 agenda?  
 7 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, I would  
 8 like to make a modification to the agenda. I would like  
 9 to put Patrick Levine in other business.  
 10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion.  
 11 Do we have a second?  
 12 COMMISSIONER HARMON: So seconded, Mr. Chairman.  
 13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion and a  
 14 second.  
 15 All those in favor say aye.  
 16 (All in favor.)  
 17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed?  
 18 (None opposed.)  
 19 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion carries.  
 20 Next is the Executive Director's report.  
 21 JOE SPRAGGINS: Just a couple of things.  
 22 We had a great day at Capitol Day. I appreciate  
 23 everybody's support for that, and it worked out very good  
 24 for the agency.  
 25 The other thing is one of our bills, the Oyster

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1 Shell Retention Bill, died in the Senate and it also died  
 2 in the House, and we can go over that.  
 3 what has happened there is they want to have a  
 4 meeting. They want to call a workshop with the  
 5 legislators and sit down and go over this and try to work  
 6 it out some more, and they promised me that they would do  
 7 everything in their power to do it next year.  
 8 Sorry we didn't get that one through, but the  
 9 other one is still working.  
 10 That's all I have.  
 11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: which other one are you  
 12 referring to?  
 13 JOE SPRAGGINS: The other bill is one to be able  
 14 to allow the permitting to give government agencies ten  
 15 years, rather than five years, to be able to help, like,  
 16 the Ports. whenever we do a permit for a Port, they have  
 17 five years with a one-year extension, and we know it is  
 18 never going to be complete and they have to go through all  
 19 the paperwork.  
 20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Mr. Spraggins.  
 21 Next is the Office of Marine Patrol, Chief  
 22 Davis.  
 23 Chief, we are going to hate to see you go, my  
 24 friend. It seems like you just got here, but I've got to  
 25 say you kept us all in line and kept everybody straight.

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1 You have done a great job.

2 KEITH DAVIS: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you for your  
4 service, and I know where you're going you are going to  
5 have your hands full, but, if anybody can handle it, I  
6 know you can.

7 KEITH DAVIS: I certainly hope so, and I  
8 appreciate those words.

9 The report this month is pretty straight  
10 forward. There are a couple of things I do want to point  
11 out.

12 On page one, when Biloxi Bay was open, we did  
13 encounter one individual that was out of compliance by not  
14 having a MSD onboard. One sack of oysters had to be  
15 returned to sea.

16 On page three, some of you may wonder about the  
17 category of individuals caught. We were checking for  
18 wetlands violations and came upon an individual hunting  
19 for ducks. The individual did not have a hunting license  
20 and he did not have the proper stamps.

21 The last thing I want to mention is we did  
22 encounter one commercial fisherman in possession of eight  
23 spotted seatrout before the commercial season opened. The  
24 individual knew that he was wrong for having the fish  
25 onboard. When he noticed the officers, he had an

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1 Office of Marine Fisheries.

2 Of course, I'm the office Director. Traci Floyd  
3 and Mike Brainard are the Deputy Office Directors.

4 We have five bureaus. Artificial Reef is our  
5 first bureau. It is directed by Mr. Jimmy Sanders. One  
6 of their main functions is gillnet sampling. They sample  
7 all of our inshore reefs to do an assessment on viability  
8 and biological production. A total of thirty-six gillnet  
9 sets were done, and almost eight hundred fish were  
10 sampled, representing nineteen different species.

11 We did several deployment projects. One was in  
12 conjunction with the CCA at Cat Island. Two hundred and  
13 seven tons were deployed, creating four new sites. CCA  
14 provided twenty-five thousand dollars in matched funds.  
15 Artificial Reef Bureau provided seven thousand and the  
16 material deployed.

17 We also did some deployment projects on our fish  
18 havens. The first one was Lee Street Concrete Culvert  
19 Deployment. It occurred over three of our major reef fish  
20 havens, two, eight and thirteen, at eleven different  
21 sites, enhanced seven existing sites and created four new  
22 ones. About six hundred tons of material was used.

23 Donated material. Three companies donated  
24 material to the Artificial Reef Bureau, in 2017. Fifty-  
25 six loads were delivered; six hundred and sixty-three

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1 expletive that indicated that he knew he was out of  
2 compliance.

3 Any other questions on the report?  
4 (No response.)

5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Chief.

6 KEITH DAVIS: Thank you.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: Mr. Chairman, if I may?

8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, sir.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS: Chief Davis, thank you. We  
10 appreciate you, and we wish you the best of luck in the  
11 future.

12 KEITH DAVIS: Thank you, Director.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Next will be Office of  
14 Marine Fisheries, Mr. Joe Jewell.

15 JOE JEWELL: Thank you Commissioners.

16 I would like to wish Chief Davis the best of  
17 luck in his new position. We certainly appreciated the  
18 time that he was here.

19 We have a pretty aggressive agenda this morning  
20 both in Marine Fisheries and overall for the agency.

21 First up for Marine Fisheries, I want to give  
22 our annual Marine Fisheries Year in Review. I'm going to  
23 try and move through this presentation relatively quickly.  
24 This is our normal end-of-the-year presentation, but, as  
25 you know, we accomplish a lot during the year in the

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1 pieces of concrete material. This is a very nice use of  
2 concrete material that would otherwise be waste, disposed  
3 of, or broken up. They actually donate the time,  
4 equipment and personnel to bring the materials to our  
5 site, and, then, we are just obligated to deploy it  
6 afterwards.

7 These are some of the outreach programs that the  
8 Artificial Reef Bureau participates in:

9 Capitol Day, Jackson Wildlife Expo, Biloxi Boat  
10 Show.

11 As with all other offices, we are tasked with  
12 keeping up-to-date training and compliance. They  
13 participated in Captain License. All of our major bureaus  
14 were in this Captain License.

15 I do want to point out that at this point in our  
16 office we have just over twenty certified U.S. Coast Guard  
17 trained Captain License and, first for our agency, we have  
18 a female Coast Guard Captain. We are very proud of that  
19 accomplishment.

20 Our Finfish Bureau is directed by Mr. Matt Hill.  
21 Two of our big programs are IJ and FAM. That's  
22 Interjurisdictional and Fisheries Assessment Management.  
23 These are given to us by Gulf States.

24 We completed ninety-six gillnet sets. We took  
25 water quality parameters. Thirty-two species totaling

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1 three thousand fish were sampled. Approximately eight  
2 hundred otoliths were collected and processed from twelve  
3 different species.

4 Recreational and Commercial Harvest Programs.  
5 Of course, our main recreational one is the MRIP Program.  
6 There are three modes of survey; shore, party/charter and  
7 private/rental. A total of just over two thousand  
8 interviews were conducted through November of 2017.

9 Trip Ticket Program is primarily our commercial  
10 data collection. We processed over forty-eight hundred  
11 scannable trip tickets, and fifty-two hundred  
12 electronically submitted trip tickets. We set a new  
13 record of just over ten thousand trip tickets for 2017.  
14 We have five hundred and eighty-two active fishermen and  
15 dealers.

16 NFWF, our Reef Fish Project, is another one of  
17 our main primary programs. This program samples just over  
18 two thousand square miles of the Gulf of Mexico. We  
19 completed year two this year. We primarily focus on Red  
20 Snapper, but we do catch other species while out sampling.  
21 Survey focuses on artificial reefs, fish havens, oil and  
22 gas platforms, and rigs to reefs sites.

23 One hundred and sixty-one total sites were  
24 sampled, in 2017. Five hundred and fourteen fish were  
25 collected and are currently being processed.

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1 Another one of our main programs is Tails n'  
2 Scales Red Snapper. It's a recreational program. For  
3 2017, recreational had sixty days; for-hire forty-nine  
4 days.

5 Total harvest was one hundred fifty-four  
6 thousand one hundred pounds. Number of fish harvested was  
7 just over twenty-seven thousand. The average weight was  
8 just over six pounds. The average length was just about  
9 twenty-two inches. Just over four thousand trips total.  
10 Effort was just over four anglers per vessel per trip, and  
11 harvest was about one-and-a-half fish per angler per trip.

12 On our graph on the right-hand side of the  
13 slide, you will see that we do a comparison between the  
14 MRIP data and the Tails n' Scales data. We feel like the  
15 Tails n' Scales data is a lot more accurate representation  
16 of the recreational fisheries. I do want to point out  
17 waves 5 and 6 are not yet computed for MRIP.

18 Reef Fish Observer Program. We completed a  
19 total of nineteen trips. Ten vessels participated; six  
20 federal for-hire and four state for-hire. We interacted  
21 with a hundred and forty-two different anglers. Eight  
22 species were observed, and three hundred and fifty-five  
23 Red Snapper discards were observed.

24 Red Drum Project. This is an acoustic telemetry  
25 tagging program. We have this established here in Biloxi

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1 Bay and Back Bay Biloxi.

2 We completed the acoustic array in Biloxi, and  
3 deployed over eighteen acoustic receivers within the  
4 project area. We tagged twenty-seven Red Drum with  
5 acoustic transmitters and dart tags. The goal is to have  
6 fifty Red Drum tagged by the end of March 2018.

7 For our Red Drum Sampling Program, we collected  
8 a hundred and six supplementary samples of Red Drum.  
9 Biological data taken from these samples include length,  
10 weight, sex, otoliths and stomachs. Data will provide  
11 additional information on age and growth, age at maturity  
12 and feeding habits of Red Drum along the Mississippi  
13 Coast.

14 Three hundred and twenty-five Red Drum stomachs  
15 were analyzed for contents, and three hundred and forty-  
16 eight Red Drum stomachs are currently being processed.

17 Biological Sampling. Approximately six hundred  
18 and fifty otoliths were collected and processed for aging.  
19 Nine recreationally and commercially important species  
20 were collected.

21 This is a list of all the species that were  
22 collected (indicating slide).

23 In 2017, over forty-five trips were conducted to  
24 obtain biological samples.

25 Assessments and Research Projects. Of course,

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1 our main assessment is through out Stock Assessment Panel.  
2 We completed two assessments. We did the annual update  
3 for 2017 of Spotted Seatrout, and we are currently in  
4 progress for Sheepshead which is scheduled to be presented  
5 before the Commission next month, March.

6 We reviewed external stock assessments for the  
7 State of Louisiana for Striped Mullet.

8 Our future stock assessment needs include Black  
9 Drum and the annual update for Spotted Seatrout.  
10 Research Projects.

11 Trophic examination of Red Drum diets from  
12 different age classes.

13 Drought impacts on estuarine fish communities  
14 which is a manuscript that is done by a lot of our staff  
15 headed up by Dr. Mickle.

16 Menhaden Sampling Project.

17 Just over twenty-one thousand scales were  
18 mounted and submitted to the laboratory for analysis.

19 Additional Programs.

20 We have our State Fishing Record Certifications.  
21 Seven new State conventional tackle records were processed  
22 and certified by the Marine Commission for six different  
23 species.

24 We have our Monofilament Recycling Program.  
25 Currently Mississippi has forty-six recycling stations.

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1 Sixteen in Jackson County, twenty-four in Harrison County  
2 and six in Hancock County.

3 Just over a hundred pounds of line has been  
4 recycled. That's about two hundred and forty-two miles of  
5 fishing line. Enough to reach from Biloxi to Tallahassee,  
6 Florida.

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That's amazing.

8 JOE JEWELL: It is a lot of material we have  
9 moved out of the environment.

10 Our next bureau is the Seafood Technology Bureau  
11 headed up by Ms. Ruth Posadas. As y'all know, this is one  
12 of our most important programs. It ensures the safety of  
13 the seafood consumed by the public.

14 This is an overview of our regulatory  
15 responsibilities (indicating slide).

16 We had just over forty-seven hundred regulatory  
17 inspections and technical assistance with the industry.

18 We passed our FDA PEER evaluation review.

19 We passed our FDA Vibrio Risk Management Plan.

20 We completed a hundred and twenty-two water  
21 samples, in 2017.

22 This is an overview of all of our Mississippi  
23 seafood dealers and processors (indicating slide).

24 As you can see, it kind of fluctuates for  
25 different conditions in the market. We had Hurricane

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1 Katrina in 2005, the BP oil spill in 2010, and opening of  
2 the Bonnet Carre in 2011 (indicating slide).

3 For our oyster processors, we are nearing the  
4 levels that we were pre Katrina. The industry itself has  
5 evolved into one, or two, major processors with a lot of  
6 small mom and pop facilities.

7 Post Harvest Processing.

8 We have two main types that occur, individually  
9 quick freezing and irradiation. We have three facilities  
10 that have the capability of doing this.

11 Vibrio Risk Management Control.

12 This is our ability to keep under control and  
13 monitoring of potential risks for Vibrio.

14 This is just a list of all the types of  
15 inspections and responsibilities that this bureau has to  
16 comply with those (indicating slide).

17 Public outreach, again, is another bit part of  
18 ours. We have attended several major fairs and Celebrate  
19 the Gulf.

20 Shellfish Bureau is headed by Mr. Erik  
21 Broussard.

22 Licenses and harvest data.

23 If you will notice, the first two are  
24 Mississippi dredge and Mississippi tong. That's the  
25 darker blue and the red. They remained relatively stable

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1 until Katrina and the BP oil spill, and, then, our most  
2 significant drop in landings is when the opening of the  
3 Bonnet Carre occurred. We never really recovered from  
4 that. We remained around thirty-five, or forty, thousand  
5 sacks of oysters (indicating slide).

6 Bonnet Carre. The 2017 spring cultch plant.

7 We did a limestone cultch plant of just over  
8 thirty-three thousand cubic yards over five hundred acres.

9 We have updated our restoration permit to  
10 include about twenty-four thousand acres over a ten-year  
11 period of our major commercial oyster reefs.

12 We did oyster reef cultivating. We just did  
13 over five hundred acres; Pass Christian, Henderson Point  
14 and Pass Marianne Reefs.

15 Our oyster relay activities. We relayed just  
16 over three thousand sacks of oyster reef material from  
17 Pascagoula Bay to Biloxi Bay.

18 We are also in the process of staging both  
19 oyster shell and limestone at our artificial reef staging  
20 site in Gulfport to start the 2018 cultch plants in Biloxi  
21 Bay.

22 Growing Area Management.

23 We completed just over fifteen hundred fecal  
24 coliform samples from shellfish growing waters.

25 We completed annual shoreline and sanitary

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1 surveys.

2 We identified actual, or potential, pollution  
3 sources.

4 We maintain growing area classification.

5 We do Phytoplankton Monitoring. We did forty-  
6 eight samples at four stations; two in Biloxi Bay and two  
7 in Pass Christian.

8 Our HAB Program.

9 We did nineteen samples for the presence of a  
10 jubilee fish kill that occurred in late July in Gulfport  
11 harbor and extended westward into Long Beach.

12 Our Oyster Reef Assessment Program.

13 The MDMR completed just under five hundred  
14 dives, square meter dives, and eighty one-minute dredge  
15 tows, and this is a list of all the major reefs that were  
16 analyzed during this process (indicating slide).

17 NRDA/MDEQ Cultch Monitoring.

18 We did a hundred and ten square meter dives and  
19 thirty one-minute dredge tows across all of the western  
20 Mississippi Sound NRDA Cultch Plant Sites.

21 There is a list of all the NRDA cultch plant  
22 sites (indicating slide).

23 We had two major regulatory changes that  
24 occurred, in Title 22 Part 1.

25 The first change impacted Chapter 18. What that

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1 essentially did was we had to split Biloxi Bay into north  
2 and south zones so that we could maintain harvest in the  
3 area.

4 Our second major regulatory change occurred in  
5 Chapter 7, and what this did was it banned the use of  
6 basket dredges.

7 Our research vessel, the Conservationist, is  
8 back up in action and doing good service for our agency in  
9 Marine Resources. It was christened on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017,  
10 by Governor Phil Bryant. It has done several relay  
11 activities and cultivation, and spat-on-shell deployments.

12 Future uses include planting of materials stored  
13 at the artificial reef staging site. We have acquired the  
14 hopper and graded the banks. Most of these improvements  
15 have already occurred.

16 Here are some of the major workshops and  
17 certifications that the bureau has been through  
18 (indicating slide).

19 One of our bigger ones was Mississippi's turn to  
20 host the Gulf and South Atlantic States Shellfish  
21 Conference. We had well over a hundred attendees from  
22 almost all the Gulf states, our Federal and State  
23 partners. It was very successful on behalf of our agency.

24 This is just a list of other programs that the  
25 Shellfish Bureau engages in during the year (indicating

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1 slide).

2 Next is the Shrimp and Crab Bureau. Mr. Rick  
3 Burris is the director of this bureau.

4 The 2017 Shrimp Season.

5 January 1<sup>st</sup>, we closed North of the ICW. May 1<sup>st</sup>,  
6 all waters west of the Gulfport Ship Channel were closed.

7 As you may recognize, Chairman Bosarge, that  
8 leaves this area east and south open year round for  
9 shrimping (indicating slide).

10 June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the shrimp season opened.

11 Landings to date include just over ten million  
12 pounds, with a dockside value of almost seventeen million  
13 dollars.

14 If you notice from our landings chart that we  
15 have up here on the slide, you will see that we are  
16 slightly up over the last couple of years, and it is a  
17 slightly increasing trend upwards as far as landings, but  
18 the actual price of shrimp has remained relatively low.

19 Trawl Sampling is a program that supports a lot  
20 of the management decisions, including opening and closing  
21 of shrimp season.

22 Approximately three hundred and twenty trawl  
23 samples were collected; a hundred and seventy-six trawl  
24 samples for Mississippi's Shrimp Population Assessment and  
25 Monitoring Program and a hundred and forty-four trawl

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1 samples for the NOAA Project Monitoring and Assessment of  
2 Mississippi's Interjurisdictional Marine Resources.

3 2017 Crab Season.

4 The landings January through November -- the  
5 December data is still preliminary -- is just under a  
6 million pounds with a dockside value of one point three  
7 million dollars.

8 One hundred and thirty-three derelict crab traps  
9 were removed this year. We began utilizing side scan  
10 sonar to locate and remove submerged traps.

11 As you know, our previous chairman of the Marine  
12 Commission that was a big issue for him and how we would  
13 initiate the program for a lot of these traps that were  
14 abandoned and continue to fish being removed.

15 To date, the program has removed just over  
16 twenty-one thousand derelict crab traps, since 1999.

17 I do want to say, at the American Fisheries  
18 Society, their meeting this month, the Department of  
19 Marine Resources and the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory  
20 won the joint State award for their derelict crab trap  
21 removal. It is a big honor for both our agency and Gulf  
22 Coast Research Laboratory.

23 Again, if you notice, on our blue crab landings,  
24 the landing data is trending up, but, unlike shrimp, the  
25 value of crab meat is also trending very high (indicating

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1 slide).

2 Recreational Blue Crab CPUE, Catch Per Unit  
3 Effort, Study.

4 Assess the catch per unit effort and sex  
5 composition of the recreational blue crab fishery in our  
6 major bay areas; Bay St. Louis, Biloxi Back Bay and  
7 Pascagoula River.

8 Compare catch rates of different trap designs  
9 and bycatch reduction devices.

10 MDMR Crab Trap Bycatch Reduction Program.

11 Some of the main accomplishments this year; we  
12 distributed almost six thousand Terrapin Excluder Devices  
13 to two hundred and twelve Mississippi resident commercial  
14 and recreational crab fishermen. We distributed just over  
15 fifty-five thousand Crab Trap Escape Rings to five hundred  
16 and twenty-seven Mississippi resident commercial and  
17 recreational crab fishermen.

18 Diamondback Terrapin Reporting System.

19 This is a system that we developed at the Shrimp  
20 and Crab Bureau. We have so far to date twenty-nine  
21 registered commercial crab fishermen. Approximately three  
22 hundred and fifty-five surveys were submitted, from  
23 October to December, and forty-six Terrapins have been  
24 observed.

25 This map shows sort of the concentration of the

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1 Terrapin, as reported by the fishermen participating in  
2 this program.

3 Licensed Live Bait Shrimp Dealers.

4 There are sixteen licensed live bait shrimp  
5 camps, eleven licensed live bait catcher boats, just over  
6 a million live shrimp sold through November of 2017, and  
7 almost nineteen thousand pounds of dead shrimp sold  
8 through November of 2017.

9 Sport Fish Restoration Projects.

10 The Mississippi Artificial Reef Program,  
11 Assessment of Red Drum Stock in Mississippi Coastal  
12 Waters, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coordination and  
13 Administration grant.

14 We had two that were administered with the Gulf  
15 Coast Research Lab. One is a Sport Fish Tag and Release,  
16 and one is the Mississippi Coastal Sport Fish Studies.

17 Other Programs.

18 We monitor and maintain the hydrological  
19 monitoring stations. There are eleven of them. These are  
20 located on our website for people to use.

21 We have our Special Permits Program. Thirty-  
22 seven special research permits have been issued. These  
23 are mainly to universities and research organizations.  
24 Four experimental gear permits, and one brood stock  
25 collection permit have been issued.

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1 That completes the year in review for Marine  
2 Fisheries.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I tell you what, that is  
4 amazing. That's a lot of good work, a lot of valuable  
5 information coming out of your group. Some of it I have  
6 been involved in, especially with the Crab Task Force.

7 Traci, a lot of good work.

8 I give you a big hand and your group on what you  
9 do. You give us the information we need to make  
10 management decisions. Thank you, from me.

11 JOE JEWELL: I appreciate that. I mainly give  
12 most of the credit to our staff. We have a lot of  
13 dedicated hardworking employees that work with both the  
14 commercial and recreational fisheries and do a very good  
15 job every day.

16 Next on the agenda for the Commission's  
17 consideration, the next three items are an overview of the  
18 Bonnet Carre Disaster Grant.

19 As the Commission is aware, this grant was  
20 awarded for the opening of the Bonnet Carre Spillway in  
21 2011. There were two components of this. There was the  
22 disaster that occurred for the oyster industry and the  
23 disaster that occurred in the crab industry.

24 First up is Ms. Kristina Broussard. She is  
25 going to provide an overview of the disaster grant for

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1 oysters.

2 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I have one question  
3 before she starts. Mr. F. J. Eicke wanted to make a  
4 public comment.

5 F. J. EICKE: I will do it after all of the  
6 reviews.

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. Thank you.

8 KRISTINA BROUSSARD: Good morning. My name is  
9 Kristina Broussard. I'm with the Shellfish Bureau, and  
10 I'm going to present on the Bonnet Carre Fisheries  
11 Disaster Recovery Program for the Oyster and Blue Crab  
12 Fisheries.

13 For the Bonnet Carre Program, there are two jobs  
14 associated with this program. Job One is Oyster  
15 Restoration and Job Two is Crab Restoration.

16 I'm going to give you an update on the Oyster  
17 Restoration, Job One.

18 This job was funded at six million nine hundred  
19 and nineteen thousand dollars. Job One is thirty-nine  
20 percent complete. We have spent two million seven hundred  
21 and ten thousand dollars. We have sixty-one percent  
22 remaining at four million two hundred and eight thousand  
23 dollars.

24 Job One is divided into five categories, and I  
25 will go through each one of those.

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1 The first one is Job Title I.1, Mississippi  
2 Oyster Restoration and Resiliency Long Term Plan.

3 This job was funded at one hundred and fifty  
4 thousand dollars, and it is ninety-nine percent complete.  
5 We spent one hundred and forty-seven thousand dollars, and  
6 we have one percent remaining at two thousand dollars.

7 The goal of this project was to create the  
8 Governor's Oyster Restoration and Resiliency Council.  
9 They put together the final report, and the goal of this  
10 report was to prioritize and recommend actions that  
11 restore, enhance and sustain oyster resources in  
12 Mississippi.

13 The next one is Job Title I.2, Commercial  
14 Shellfish Reef Cultch Plants.

15 This job was funded at four million one hundred  
16 and ten thousand dollars, and we have currently spent  
17 thirty percent of that, at a total of one million two  
18 hundred and nineteen thousand dollars. We have seventy  
19 percent remaining at two million eight hundred and ninety-  
20 one thousand dollars.

21 The goal of this Job I.2 is to enhance existing  
22 Mississippi oyster reefs to provide increased fishing  
23 opportunities for local fishermen and small businesses,  
24 and also to replenish oyster habitat by depositing shell,  
25 or other suitable cultch material, providing clean

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1 substrate for oyster spat attachment.

2 Just a side note on this. We do have one

3 million dollars pending for two cultch plants for 2018.

4 Next is Job Title I.3, Oyster Stewardship

5 Program.

6 This job was funded at three hundred thousand

7 dollars, and we have currently spent seven percent of

8 that, twenty-two thousand dollars. We have ninety-three

9 percent remaining at two hundred and seventy-seven

10 thousand dollars.

11 The goal of this job is to create a program to

12 better educate and promote the active involvement of

13 oyster harvesters and the industry in harvest practices

14 and other techniques that can be used to assist resource

15 managers.

16 Also, some of these funds will be used to

17 provide replacement fishing gear to fishermen, with the

18 intended purpose of reducing negative impacts to marine

19 fisheries habitats.

20 Next is Job Title I.4, Commercial Oyster Reef

21 Substrate Mapping.

22 This job was funded for two hundred and four

23 thousand dollars, and it is one hundred percent complete.

24 The goal of this job was to survey reef areas

25 and potential cultivation and cultch plant sites to

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1 determine suitability for oyster reef restoration and/or

2 enhancement work.

3 Finally, we have Job Title I.5, Commercial

4 Oyster Reef Cultivation and Relay Program.

5 This job was funded for two million one hundred

6 and fifty-four thousand dollars. It is currently fifty-

7 two percent complete at one million one hundred and

8 sixteen thousand dollars, with forty-eight percent

9 remaining at one million thirty-seven thousand dollars.

10 The goal of this job was to cultivate reefs,

11 exposing covered shell and removing some of the encrusting

12 materials and, also, to relay oysters from areas of

13 greatest abundance to areas of greatest need.

14 A good portion of this money was spent on the

15 St. Joe relay, in January of 2016. We moved forty

16 thousand sacks from St. Joe and, of that, twenty-four

17 thousand eight hundred and sixty-five sacks were moved to

18 Pass Christian Tonging and Dredging Reefs, and fifteen

19 thousand one hundred and seventy-eight sacks were moved to

20 Shearwater Reef in Biloxi Bay.

21 Now, I would like to introduce Erik Broussard

22 who will give more details about this. This is a big job.

23 ERIK BROUSSARD: Good morning Commissioners,

24 Director Spraggins, Ms. Chestnut.

25 The Commission requested the staff look into a

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1 possible funding source for a potential work program back

2 at the November Commission meeting. We have identified

3 Job I.5 of the Mississippi Bonnet Carre Grant.

4 Job Title I.5, Commercial Oyster Reef

5 Cultivation and Relay Program.

6 As Ms. Broussard just spoke about, the job was

7 two point one million dollars. It is fifty-one percent

8 complete.

9 For the St. Joe relay, I spent about one point

10 one million, and there is about forty-eight percent left,

11 or a little over a million dollars. It would be a

12 potential funding source with enough to sustain our work

13 program.

14 Staff's recommendation would be to relay oysters

15 from the Pascagoula Causeway Reef and the West River Reef.

16 The Commission, again, has expressed interest in moving

17 oysters from a greater abundance to a lesser abundance, as

18 well as direct the staff to move oysters from these reefs.

19 It would accomplish the overall goals of the

20 grant, as well as some of the goals of the Commission.

21 We would use commercial oyster fishermen that

22 qualify for the Bonnet Carre Grant, which would be very

23 similar to what the St. Joe relay looked like, except for

24 the method of take would be tonging, instead of dredging.

25 We would use a contractor to transport relayed

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1 material on a barge to reefs in Biloxi Bay, or the Western

2 Sound.

3 The reason that we would recommend toning versus

4 dredging is -- here you have a map of these two reefs, the

5 Causeway Reef on the right and the West River Reef on the

6 left -- these areas are very shallow and they are also

7 small. If we had a large fleet -- there are over a

8 hundred qualified fishermen for the Bonnet Carre Grant --

9 it would really condense fishing effort. With that many

10 boats, if it were to get dredged, we would have a concern

11 about the condensed fishing effort having a negative

12 impact on these reefs.

13 These are some of the last healthy reefs that

14 are thriving currently in the State, and we feel like

15 tonging would minimize the impact, as well as accomplish

16 some of the overall goals.

17 A couple of hurdles. As you see on the Causeway

18 Reef, there is a thin black line that is currently the

19 line between prohibited to the east, or right, of the

20 line, and restricted to the left. We can move material

21 from the left of the line to the west.

22 We are actively in the process of upwardly

23 classifying this area and moving the line so we would have

24 access to the whole Pascagoula Causeway Reef. We have

25 just sent off samples and pending those results, we will

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1 know if we can move the line, or not.  
2 Also, contracting is a timely process. It's not  
3 something we could probably get together in the next  
4 month, or so, which would put us closer to the warmer  
5 months which can really have an impact on the oyster, if  
6 we get into June and some of those months, and we would  
7 increase mortality and be counterproductive.

8 This is something we envision probably next  
9 fall, or winter.

10 With that being said, if this is something the  
11 Commission would want to move forward with, we could start  
12 the process, now, so all these things would be addressed  
13 and things would be in place for next year.

14 Any questions?

15 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: As far as myself, I  
16 believe we need to move forward with it. I'm glad to see  
17 there are some funds available for it. It sounds like you  
18 are gearing up towards using some fishermen, and it is  
19 structured in a way that it benefits everybody.

20 Richard, have you got any questions, or anything  
21 you would like to say?

22 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I would like to see the  
23 price that you are proposing to pay the fishermen to do  
24 this and the time line.

25 September is the best month to do this. This is

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1 when they do it in Louisiana and have great success.

2 I would just like to see more of the details on  
3 this program that you are going to do.

4 One more question. That black line that you  
5 showed, what is the difference in two feet one way, or the  
6 other, on the prohibited and restricted?

7 If you can't answer that, now, we will wait  
8 until later, but I was just curious.

9 ERIK BROUSSARD: We are working on changing the  
10 line, and we can talk more about the area classification.

11 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: You are going to move the  
12 oysters to Biloxi Bay, with tonging?

13 ERIK BROUSSARD: This is just to give everybody  
14 some ideas, or some options. We can discuss the details  
15 of how many sacks, price, where they go, as this  
16 progresses.

17 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: That's the kind of stuff  
18 I would like to sit down and talk about. Thank you.

19 JOE JEWELL: Commissioners, if y'all want us to  
20 proceed with the program as we have it, now, we need a  
21 vote for us to at least start progress on the program that  
22 we presented to y'all here today.

23 You just need to vote and tell us to progress  
24 with the recommendation that we made today.

25 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, I would

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1 like to make a motion that we go forward with this program  
2 and explore the options that we would have for it.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion.

4 Do we have a second?

5 COMMISSIONER HARMON: So seconded, Mr. Chairman.

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion and a  
7 second.

8 All those in favor say aye.

9 (All in favor.)

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed?

11 (None opposed.)

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion carries.

13 We do have one public comment on this that I  
14 would like to get to, Mr. Ryan Bradley.

15 JOE JEWELL: I just want to say what that means  
16 is that we will develop a program and have a lot more  
17 detail and present it.

18 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: State your name, please.

19 RYAN BRADLEY: Good morning. My name is Ryan  
20 Bradley. I'm with the Mississippi Commercial Fisheries  
21 United.

22 I just want to say thank you for taking this  
23 vote today and advancing this forward. Commercial  
24 fishermen really need all the help they can get. Working  
25 with them on this relay would definitely give them a shot

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1 in the arm.

2 We would be happy to sit down in a workshop to  
3 discuss some of the details of this program, some of the  
4 procurement concerns. We've done some research into the  
5 requirements for that, and there may be some ways we can  
6 get around some of that stuff. We would be glad to look  
7 at it further.

8 Being that you already took the vote on this  
9 today, I'm not going to say much more, but, again, thank  
10 you for your vote. We appreciate it.

11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Mr. Bradley.

12 JOE JEWELL: I think we had one additional  
13 comment.

14 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I think so.

15 JOE JEWELL: Ms. Thao Vu, would you like to  
16 comment, now, or wait until later?

17 THAO VU: I have a number of comments. I'll  
18 wait until later.

19 JOE JEWELL: Ms. Vu says that she is going to  
20 wait until the presentation is finished.

21 Next for Marine Fisheries is the completion of  
22 the Bonnet Carre Job II, and Mr. Rick Burris will give  
23 that presentation.

24 RICK BURRIS: Good morning Mr. Chairman,  
25 Commissioners, Mr. Spraggins, Ms. Chestnut.

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The previous two presentations were on the oyster side of the Bonnet Carre Spillway Project. Now, we will focus on Job II, Crab Restoration.

Job II, the Crab Restoration Project, received one point five million dollars. Currently, we are fifty-seven percent complete, at eight hundred and fifty-nine thousand six hundred and forty-three dollars spent. The remaining is six hundred and forty-four thousand five hundred and sixty-six dollars.

There are five projects within this job.

The first one is Job II.1, Commercial and Recreational Blue Crab Catch-Per-Unit-Effort, or CPUE. It is contracted with the Gulf Coast Research Lab. They have been implementing this program in the commercial sector, since 2007.

Job II.1 was budgeted five hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. It is currently fifty-three percent complete, with two hundred and seventy-five thousand seven hundred and six dollars spent, and the remaining portion is two hundred and forty-nine thousand dollars.

What this job does is we are able to collect important catch-per-unit-effort data and size and sex characteristics of the commercial and the recreational blue crab fishery that we don't normally capture in our

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landings, so it is very helpful. It is used in stock assessments across the Gulf. Like I said, we don't normally capture this data.

The recreational data is basically one of a kind. We just started doing this. It was previously non-existent. It is very valuable information in managing the crab fishery.

Job II.2, Predation on Juvenile Blue Crabs by Red Drum has a budget of one hundred and forty thousand two hundred and nineteen dollars. It is currently thirty-five percent complete. We spent forty-eight thousand dollars, and the remaining portion is ninety-one thousand dollars.

What this job does is it collects Red Drum from our existing fishery independent sampling and supplemental fishery dependent sampling, and analyzes stomach contents to determine how much of an impact this resurgent species is having on our juvenile blue crabs. We have seen a lack of juvenile blue crabs in our sampling for a long time, now, and the commercial adult catch as well.

This could be very valuable information to manage the fishery, as we move forward.

Job II.3, Blue Crab Life History, Recruitment and Habitat Needs.

This is also contracted to the Gulf Coast

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Research Lab. It was budgeted at three hundred and twelve thousand seven hundred and thirty dollars. It is currently sixty-two percent complete, and there is one hundred and twenty thousand dollars remaining.

This project provides the needed information on blue crab recruitment dynamics and will supply information on habitat requirements through expanded current sampling.

Job II.4, Shorelines Initiative to Enhance Crab Habitat.

This job is complete. We spent two hundred and fifty-six thousand eight hundred dollars.

If you remember, our 2016 crab cleanup was funded by this particular Job II.4. It was back in April of 2016, and a total of twenty-five hundred traps were brought in and recycled.

Job II.5, Crab Trap Bycatch Reduction Voluntary Program.

It was budgeted two hundred and sixty-nine thousand two hundred and sixty dollars. We are currently thirty-two percent complete, with one hundred and eighty-three thousand dollars remaining.

The funds are for our Terrapin Excluder Device Distribution Program, of which we distributed six thousand Terrapin excluder devices to both our commercial and recreational crab fishermen.

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Through this particular funding project, overall we have distributed nineteen thousand five hundred TEDs.

Our Bycatch Reduction Device Distribution Program, or escape rings.

Since the Commission voted to make crab trap escape rings mandatory in all the traps, we started distributing these rings to our fishermen free of charge, and we have given out fifty-six thousand BRDs so far. It is very popular with the fishermen, especially since we enacted this regulation. They are very pleased that they are able to get that gear from us free of charge.

Also, this project funds a Diamondback Terrapin Reporting System. We presented it to the Commission last month.

With that, I will take any questions.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: On some of the research projects, how much longer do they have?

RICK BURRIS: 2020.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: There has been a bunch of work done with the crabs with escape rings.

The Diamondback terrapin, that app, that was amazing to me that that could come out of this group because I'm computer illiterate. I can't see how that happened, but it happened and that's good.

RICK BURRIS: We have some very capable people.

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1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I would say that.  
 2 Any further questions?  
 3 (No response.)  
 4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Rick.  
 5 JOE JEWELL: We do have some very talented  
 6 people on our staff, but we did work in conjunction with  
 7 our IT folks.  
 8 Next we have two regulatory changes that will be  
 9 presented by Mr. Travis Williams and Mr. Jonathan Barr.  
 10 These are Federal regulations that we are proposing  
 11 changes in our State regulations to be consistent.  
 12 First is Mr. Travis Williams with King Mackerel.  
 13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Mr. Eicke, you wanted to  
 14 speak, now?  
 15 F. J. EICKE: I do.  
 16 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Could you hold on to your  
 17 thoughts just for a minute?  
 18 TRAVIS WILLIAMS: Yes.  
 19 F. J. EICKE: Good morning Commissioners. My  
 20 name is F. J. Eicke. I'm with CCA and, on the first  
 21 point, I would indicate that there was a third partner in  
 22 the reef enhancement, and that was a group that spun off  
 23 from CCA called Building Conservation Trust and they are a  
 24 whole lot better at getting money than we are. That  
 25 showed in that particular artificial reef.

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1 What I'm making a statement about -- I'm here as  
 2 an individual, but representing some CCA members who have  
 3 expressed concerns about generally the oyster resource and  
 4 how it is being managed, and what we are doing is we are  
 5 talking in terms of the values that we have always had,  
 6 CCA members for conservation and environmental concerns.  
 7 The point I want to make is that Marine  
 8 Resources is really a larger thing than just oysters. It  
 9 includes oysters, obviously, as a major component, but  
 10 sometimes we lose site of the total marine environment.  
 11 In the statement that I presented to you, which  
 12 is similar to what I'm saying, there is a reference to an  
 13 article, actually three articles, in the  
 14 [PressRegister@aol.com](mailto:PressRegister@aol.com) that I would recommend that you  
 15 read.  
 16 I realize that Alabama and Mississippi are not  
 17 exactly the same situation, but I'm familiar with his  
 18 writings in that area and on environmental issues, and he  
 19 did a great job of analyzing them, and I wish we had a  
 20 similar article for Mississippi. It might be very  
 21 enlightening.  
 22 We all know that oysters are an important  
 23 component of the marine environment, when it functions as  
 24 it should. We are human, however, and that leads us to  
 25 tinker with this environment for commercial gain leading

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1 to, perhaps, reduction in biomass of oysters to a less  
 2 than critical level, but it does not sustain the resource  
 3 and benefit the total marine environment.  
 4 A major portion of the number of members who  
 5 have come to me are concerned about the eastern side of  
 6 the Coast, the Pascagoula watershed area and relay of  
 7 oysters and whether this is going to deplete the resource  
 8 to the point that it will not sustain what it has been and  
 9 what it can be in the future.  
 10 You can take that into consideration as you  
 11 will. You just did a vote to relay more. I don't know  
 12 how that fits, but some of my members would be concerned  
 13 about that.  
 14 We have spent tremendous funds on the oyster  
 15 resource. We all know that, but we haven't gotten to the  
 16 goal and we all know that the oyster population is  
 17 susceptible to many factors attested to by the Bonnet  
 18 Carre Spillway, but we all know about Katrina and what  
 19 happened after it and any number of other events that we  
 20 have had no control over and have had to react to.  
 21 Am I passed my time?  
 22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes.  
 23 F. J. EICKE: I'm almost finished. Give me  
 24 another few seconds.  
 25 What we do is we urge the Commission to think

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1 clearly about this. I know you attempt to do that, and we  
 2 put our faith in you to do that, but we have more  
 3 stakeholders than just the oyster harvesters and the  
 4 commercial oyster industry.  
 5 I would also ask you to read the article in the  
 6 Press Register. It is great, and I think it makes some  
 7 points that perhaps are applicable to Mississippi.  
 8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Mr. Eicke.  
 9 We've got a pretty good team working on oysters.  
 10 We are going to listen to them closely.  
 11 Ms. Thao Vu.  
 12 JOE JEWELL: I think Ms. Vu wants to wait until  
 13 after all of the Marine Fisheries presentations.  
 14 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right.  
 15 TRAVIS WILLIAMS: Good morning Chairman,  
 16 Commissioners, Director Spraggins, Ms. Chestnut.  
 17 This action item is a regulatory change to Title  
 18 22 Part 7 Chapter 8. It's a recreational bag limit change  
 19 for King Mackerel.  
 20 Recently, NOAA announced a final rule  
 21 implementing Amendment 26 to the Fishery Management Plan  
 22 for Coastal Migratory Pelagics in the Gulf of Mexico,  
 23 specifically for the western zone, the Gulf of Mexico  
 24 group.  
 25 This amendment increased the recreational bag

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1 limit from two fish to three fish per day. It also  
2 increased the commercial quota about a hundred and sixty  
3 thousand pounds.

4 We like to have our State and Federal  
5 regulations consistent for federally-managed species.  
6 This consistency reduces the concern recreational anglers  
7 may have regarding the different rules and regulations  
8 between State and Federal waters. It also removes any  
9 confusion that law enforcement may have as well.

10 For the record, the regulation will read as  
11 follows:

12 "Chapter 8 Section 100 Subsection 100.04,  
13 Recreational Bag, Possession and Size Limits.  
14 100.04 Three (3) King Mackerel (*Scomberomorus*  
15 *cavalla*)."

16 What is required from the Commission is a motion  
17 for a Notice of Intent to amend Title 22 Part 7 Chapter 8  
18 Section 100 Subsection 100.04, Recreational Bag Limit for  
19 King Mackerel.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I think King Mackerel is  
21 one of the few species that seems to be doing pretty well.

22 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a question.

23 What does our staff recommend?

24 Do you guys recommend following the Federal  
25 recommendations?

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1 TRAVIS WILLIAMS: Yes, we do.

2 As I mentioned, they are federally-managed  
3 species. Our Mississippi waters still govern out three  
4 nautical miles. We do recommend going with the Federal  
5 increase for management.

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Do we have a motion?

7 COMMISSIONER HARMON: Mr. Chairman, I make a  
8 motion for a Notice of Intent to amend Title 22 Part 7  
9 Chapter 8 Section 100 Subsection 100.04, recreational bag  
10 limit on King Mackerel.

11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion.

12 Do we have a second?

13 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll second that, Mr.  
14 Chairman.

15 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion and a  
16 second.

17 Any further discussion?

18 (No response.)

19 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All those in favor say  
20 aye.

21 (All in favor.)

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed?

23 (None opposed.)

24 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion carries.

25 JOE JEWELL: Our next presentation will be done

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1 by Mr. Jonathan Barr on the Gray Triggerfish.

2 JONATHAN BARR: Thank you, Joe.

3 Good morning Commissioners, Director Spraggins,  
4 Ms. Chestnut.

5 As Joe and Travis mentioned, we like to stay up  
6 to date with the Federal regulations. With your  
7 permission, we would like update Title 22 Part 7 Chapter  
8 8, Recreational Bag and Size Limit Change for Gray  
9 Triggerfish.

10 This is the Fishery Bulletin we were given by  
11 NOAA highlighting the recreational change:

12 "The recreational bag limit will be one Gray  
13 Triggerfish per angler per day within the twenty reef fish  
14 aggregate bag limit."

15 The recreational minimum size limit will go up  
16 to fifteen inches from fourteen inches.

17 Chapter 8 Section 100 Subsection 100.14.01,  
18 Recreational Bag, Possession and Size Limits.

19 We are adding the words "reef fish" to match the  
20 Federal wording to read:

21 "Twenty (20) reef fish aggregate".

22 Chapter 8 Section 100 Subsection 100.14.01, once  
23 again, we are not marking anything out. We are just  
24 adding words to read:

25 "Gray Triggerfish (*Balistes capricus*) - may

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1 possess one (1) within the twenty (20) reef fish  
2 aggregate".

3 Chapter 8 Section 102 Subsection 102.12. We are  
4 striking out fourteen and underlined is "fifteen (15)", to  
5 read:

6 "Gray Triggerfish fifteen (15) inches (fork  
7 length)".

8 Required is a motion for Notice of Intent to  
9 Amend Title 22 Part 7 Chapter 8 Section 100 Subsection  
10 100.14.01 and Section 102 Subsection 102.12 for  
11 recreational bag and size limit for Gray Triggerfish.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Any questions?

13 (No response.)

14 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Do we have a motion?

15 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Mr. Chairman, I'll make a  
16 motion for Notice of Intent to amend Title 22 Part 7  
17 Chapter 8 Section 100 Subsection 100.14.01 for  
18 recreational bag and size limit change for Gray  
19 Triggerfish.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion.

21 Do we have a second?

22 COMMISSIONER HARMON: Mr. Chairman, I will go  
23 ahead and second that.

24 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion and a  
25 second.

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1 All those in favor say aye.  
 2 (All in favor.)  
 3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed?  
 4 (None opposed.)  
 5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion carries.  
 6 JOE JEWELL: Thank you, Commissioners.  
 7 I think this is the point where Ms. Thao Vu  
 8 would like to make her comments.  
 9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Ms. Vu.  
 10 THAO VU: Good morning Director, Commissioners.  
 11 Thao Vu with the Mississippi Coalition for Vietnamese  
 12 American Fisher Folks and Families.  
 13 Thank you to Mr. Jewell and the staff of the  
 14 Marine Fisheries for giving an update, particularly for  
 15 the Bonnet Carre Spillway funds.  
 16 First of all, I need to reiterate how critically  
 17 important healthy oysters are. It's a keystone species.  
 18 Not all species in the ecosystem are considered critical  
 19 keystone species.  
 20 We do commend the Marine Fisheries Bureau,  
 21 particularly Mr. Broussard and the staff, for proposing  
 22 the oyster relay program. That has been a proven  
 23 longstanding method of restoring oysters, increasing  
 24 oyster population, longstanding with our fishermen.  
 25 Many of our fishermen couldn't make it, but a

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1 group of them are back there, and they have been involved.  
 2 Even for years following Hurricane Katrina, that was  
 3 highly successful and proven to work.  
 4 The concerns about relaying oysters from the  
 5 Eastern Sound to over here are not warranted because it is  
 6 a legitimate longstanding scientifically proven method of  
 7 working.  
 8 Further, reefs need some cultivation. A lot of  
 9 those reefs in the Eastern Sound have remained closed,  
 10 dormant. We know they are sampling. We know they are  
 11 monitoring activities, but it needs some occasional  
 12 cultivation.  
 13 I do want to remind the Commissioners, the staff  
 14 and the Director that most of the tongers in the State of  
 15 Mississippi licensed -- we have a list of all commercial  
 16 oyster fishermen, the dredgers and the tongers. Most of  
 17 the tongers are not in state. They are from Alabama.  
 18 We should be doing our best to help our local  
 19 fishermen. They are seriously financially struggling.  
 20 Last year was the worst year ever. Ten thousand sacks, or  
 21 less. We cannot reach our million sack goal that was  
 22 stated in the Governor's Oyster Council report. We can  
 23 never reach that, with ten thousand sacks, or less, or a  
 24 little bit more by 2025.  
 25 Our local fishermen, they have the experience.

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1 They know the waters. They are the ones who need the work  
 2 and they have the small boats, very small skiff boats that  
 3 are capable of doing some of the reef activities that are  
 4 being proposed. In fact, some of them are sitting back  
 5 there. They have these small boats.  
 6 We are willing to work with you, in terms of  
 7 making sure there is adequate outreach to inform everyone  
 8 who is qualified, any necessary training activities that  
 9 may need to be taken through a workshop, or whatever we  
 10 need to do, another public meeting. Thank you.  
 11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Ms. Vu.  
 12 Joe, do you have any comment?  
 13 JOE JEWELL: I was just going to say that  
 14 completes our report, but I do want to address one of the  
 15 concerns that Ms. Vu had.  
 16 As Mr. Broussard indicated in his presentation,  
 17 only those Mississippi resident applicants that were  
 18 licensed under a Bonnet Carre event would be eligible.  
 19 Tongers from other states are not eligible for  
 20 this proposed program. I just want to make that clear.  
 21 If there are no other questions, that completes  
 22 the Office of Marine Fisheries.  
 23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That has been quite a  
 24 presentation.  
 25 I would like to propose a ten-minute break. We

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1 will take just a short break.  
 2 (CMR meeting stands in recess.)  
 3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I would like to call the  
 4 meeting back to order.  
 5 Next on the agenda is Mr. Jan Boyd, Coastal  
 6 Resources Management.  
 7 JAN BOYD: Good morning Mr. Chairman,  
 8 Commissioners, Director Spraggins, Sandy.  
 9 We have a very short presentation. Willa is  
 10 going to give you an update of what we did last month.  
 11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. Thank you.  
 12 WILLA BRANTLEY: Good morning. Yes, very short,  
 13 one slide. I just wanted to take you over our numbers of  
 14 what we had come in.  
 15 We had seventy-two new actions received. Most  
 16 of those, over three-quarters of those are applications,  
 17 but some are just requests to review projects and some of  
 18 those are violations that got reported. We closed sixty  
 19 items out this month.  
 20 These are typical numbers for this time of year.  
 21 It's starts picking up, usually, after Mardi Gras, so we  
 22 will see more coming in than what we've gotten closed out  
 23 because we had fewer come in last month.  
 24 If you have any questions about anything in  
 25 particular we worked on, I will be glad to answer them.

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1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I don't have any  
 2 questions. As long as we don't see any here, you are  
 3 doing a great job.  
 4 WILLA BRANTLEY: We've got nothing this month  
 5 and, so far, nothing next month, but we'll see.  
 6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you.  
 7 WILLA BRANTLEY: Thank you.  
 8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Next will be Office of  
 9 Coastal Restoration and Resiliency, Mr. George Ramseur.  
 10 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Thank you. Good morning  
 11 Commissioners, Director Spraggins, Sandy.  
 12 I know we don't get in here very often, but we  
 13 have been working for a couple of months to get in to give  
 14 you an update on restoration activity. Quite a lot has  
 15 changed in the overall landscape of restoration in the  
 16 last year.  
 17 Dr. Mickle has been good enough to help me work  
 18 on some of the aspects, like, the financial sides and  
 19 other things, which he is going to get up and give you a  
 20 rundown on initially, and, then, I get to do the fun stuff  
 21 after that.  
 22 Dr. Mickle.  
 23 PAUL MICKLE: Thank you, George.  
 24 Good morning Commissioners, Director Spraggins,  
 25 Ms. Chestnut.

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1 I will let George take over shortly, but, first,  
 2 I requested this presentation to accomplish several goals  
 3 this morning; to provide a brief to some of the new  
 4 Commissioners on the BP Restoration Funding format, share  
 5 the need for restoration of the Mississippi Sound,  
 6 emphasize the importance of your role in this tremendous  
 7 opportunity we have, and introduce the many agencies,  
 8 organizations and people that are involved with this great  
 9 endeavor.  
 10 The MDMR and Mississippi DEQ are the main State  
 11 agencies most directly involved, and luckily we have a  
 12 wonderful relationship with Mississippi DEQ.  
 13 I would like to introduce Chris wells, Chief of  
 14 Staff and my counterpart at the agency, DEQ, who has shown  
 15 up here today, has driven down from Jackson to show his  
 16 support on the subject matter and this great endeavor we  
 17 are taking on.  
 18 Many of you already know a lot about this, but I  
 19 do want to just do a broad overspread of kind of the  
 20 funding streams that actually occurred, when the BP oil  
 21 spill settlements come to fruition.  
 22 All of the monies that have come to the  
 23 settlements have kind of come through three major streams  
 24 of funding.  
 25 NRDA is Natural Resource Damage Assessment which

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1 is contributed to making the environment and the public  
 2 whole by restoring, rehabilitating, replacing, or  
 3 acquiring, the equivalent of natural resources, or  
 4 services, injured by the oil spill.  
 5 NFWF, or National Fish Wildlife Foundation, is a  
 6 foundation which takes the value of restoring and  
 7 maintaining the ecological functions of landscape scale,  
 8 coastal habitats, including the barrier islands, beaches,  
 9 coastal marshes, and ensure the viability and resilience  
 10 against existing and future threats.  
 11 It kind of gets confusing, but NRDA is to  
 12 restore what has been damaged, and NFWF is to restore what  
 13 has been damaged, but, also, to take on at liberty  
 14 enhancing the viability and resilience against existing  
 15 and future threats. There is a little bit more ability to  
 16 do certain things with NFWF versus NRDA.  
 17 The last one is RESTORE that I'm sure you have  
 18 heard a lot about, and that literally stands for Resources  
 19 and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and  
 20 Revived Economies, which is a very long and interesting  
 21 acronym, but it actually gets very confusing.  
 22 When the funds came through the Clean Water Act  
 23 penalties, twenty percent of those total funds were  
 24 syphoned off in the Liability Trust Fund, and, then, the  
 25 remaining eighty percent goes into the buckets which I'm

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1 sure you have heard of, in the five buckets of direct  
 2 component, council selected restoration component, impact  
 3 component, Gulf Ecosystems Restoration Science Program  
 4 which goes pretty much directly to NOAA, and the Centers  
 5 of Excellence Program which is our academic institutions  
 6 in the State of Mississippi. Our universities get to do  
 7 research and provide the information that this Commission  
 8 needs to make the management decisions and to allow y'all  
 9 to do your jobs as well.  
 10 With that, I will turn it back over to George,  
 11 but, again, I just wanted to do a broad overview and  
 12 provide information to y'all as needed. This is a long  
 13 journey we are going to take, ten, fifteen, twenty years.  
 14 Snap decisions are definitely the thing we don't need to  
 15 do. We need to move forward with as much information and  
 16 science as we have to make these big impacts and to make  
 17 sure the Mississippi Sound ends up to where we can have  
 18 viable sustainable populations of our Marine resources.  
 19 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Thank you, Paul.  
 20 We prepared a pretty compact run through. It  
 21 looked like it was going to be a pretty long meeting  
 22 today, but I did want to emphasize that this is the start  
 23 of a conversation and by no means a comprehensive recap of  
 24 everything we see on the horizon.  
 25 The great question that I have had to answer a

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1 number of times, talking about the country, is why is  
2 Mississippi engaged in restoration.

3 Most people probably realize that we are losing  
4 a lot of land, but we are actually second in overall rate  
5 of land loss behind Louisiana, approximately, over two  
6 hundred acres a year for as far back as we can measure,  
7 essentially.

8 If you take the 1950's, for example, and bring  
9 it forward to current time, that means we have lost about  
10 twelve thousand acres of Coastal lands, a lot of it  
11 habitat that is critical for fisheries and that sort of  
12 thing, habitat reduction.

13 To put it in context, this red box out here in  
14 the Sound is what twelve thousand acres looks like, since  
15 1950.

16 I also used the point down here in Hancock  
17 County as an example. We now know lately that there are  
18 places on that shoreline that are cutting back over fifty  
19 feet a year. There are certain areas in Mississippi where  
20 the pacing is certainly a concern, in terms of overall  
21 land loss. Land loss is a primary driver of our  
22 restoration programs (indicating slide).

23 I would like to say we have had tremendous  
24 ongoing success, really, since 2002, working with the  
25 Corps of Engineers, and, then, more recently with DEQ on

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1 the Beneficial Use Dredge Material Program which is now  
2 managed by the Coastal Resource Management Office under  
3 Jan.

4 This program is nationally significant. We have  
5 done a fantastic job in figuring out how to use our dredge  
6 materials in a natural way to replace historic shorelines  
7 and footprints.

8 Round Island is probably the biggest success,  
9 the outgrowth of that program so far. It is two hundred  
10 and twenty acres. A lot of you are familiar with it. The  
11 monitoring of that site has proven the stability and  
12 efficiency of this kind of effort and use of dredge  
13 materials.

14 This is a before-and-after Hurricane Nate image  
15 right here. It shows that basically this type of  
16 construction is very stable, even where it was built with  
17 dredge material that was put in less than eight months  
18 before Hurricane Nate and has not been vegetated, or  
19 anything like that (indicating slide).

20 I say that because we get a lot of feedback,  
21 concern about projects like this that they are going to  
22 get hit by a storm right after we build them and material  
23 is going to move out somewhere and cover an oyster reef,  
24 or other resource.

25 This survey one week ahead and one week after

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1 Hurricane Nate which was just about the perfect storm to  
2 damage the Round Island project shows virtually no mass  
3 movement in that project. I just wanted to share some of  
4 the things we are learning, as we work with these larger  
5 projects (indicating slide).

6 This site has already shown a lot of success.  
7 It's the biggest shorebird nesting site probably in the  
8 northern Gulf this last year. Every monitoring trip we  
9 have made out there the inlet up here on the upper left  
10 side has been schooling with speckled trout, fish and  
11 shrimp up into that inlet heading to the southeast  
12 (indicating slide).

13 what is next?

14 with the scale of land loss we are seeing over  
15 time, we are realizing that we are going to have to start  
16 scaling up our planning and estimation of restoration  
17 needs in the future.

18 The Ship Island Camille Cut Project is the type  
19 of project we are likely to see. This is a situation  
20 where it requires both more material and different  
21 material, mainly sand, than we are likely to get out of  
22 the Beneficial Use Program. We are sort of thinking the  
23 next step beyond the great work we have done up to the  
24 present.

25 Camille Cut is currently underway. They are

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1 having some dredge issues. They started the first of the  
2 year. This is a four hundred and seventy million dollar  
3 project, two years in the running, if everything holds  
4 together with the dredge. They are going to move twenty-  
5 two million cubic yards which is over four super domes  
6 full of material, and one important thing to note about  
7 this project is the Corps estimates the benefits from this  
8 project, in terms of improving protection for the mainland  
9 shore, Biloxi, Gulfport and the other towns along our  
10 Coast, plus benefits to fisheries, will be about eighty  
11 million dollars a year.

12 Although this is a four hundred and seventy  
13 million dollar project, it has about a six-year payback.

14 As we look to the next step, how and who are we  
15 working with as we look down the road a little further.

16 Since 2015, since the Office of Coastal Restoration  
17 and Resiliency came into existence, we have worked with  
18 all sorts of folks. I'm not going to try to list  
19 everybody, but I put a lot of the logos up here to give  
20 you an idea of the variety of the State and Federal  
21 Governments, the institutions of higher learning,  
22 universities in all three states, Mississippi, Louisiana  
23 and Alabama.

24 Essentially, we have come to understand that we  
25 need to reassess the way we are looking at the estuary and

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1 basically expand what I call the planning area to include  
2 all three states, and the acronym that developed out of  
3 those discussions is it is the Louisiana Mississippi  
4 Alabama Coastal System, or LMACS for short.

5 This is basically what it looks like. The  
6 primary estuary we are describing runs from Lake Bourgne  
7 all the way to Mobile Bay (indicating slide).

8 One of the really most important things, from my  
9 sort of geological perspective in looking at this system,  
10 is the barrier that creates it in the first place.

11 Starting with Biloxi Marsh down in Louisiana and running  
12 through the Gulf Islands Seashore and over to Dauphin  
13 Island in Alabama, this is the barrier that regulates salt  
14 water mixing with the fresh water coming in from the  
15 Coastal rivers and Lake Pontchartrain and Mobile Bay.

16 A very important thing about this barrier is  
17 that it is falling apart. This is just an initial way to  
18 look at the health of this barrier. We have mapped out  
19 how much open water essentially is in the barrier.

20 In 1850, there were no significant breaches  
21 until you got all the way out to Cat Island, and, then,  
22 the total breaches, or passes in the barrier, totaled  
23 twenty-three miles.

24 In 2004, that was up to thirty miles.

25 Now, they have closed MRGO and they working on

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1 closing Camille Cut, but right now as it stands about  
2 thirty-three miles of open water in that barrier, in other  
3 words about fifty percent more than was in 1850, ten miles  
4 more open water.

5 This is bound to have an affect on the primary  
6 mixing of salt and fresh water in the estuary and, also,  
7 it has an affect on how much energy reaches our shoreline  
8 on a day-to-day basis.

9 The goals for looking at this. We are realizing  
10 essentially, in all this interaction, Mississippi really  
11 needs to do -- I hate to call it a master plan because  
12 people immediately think, well, look at all the challenges  
13 that Louisiana has had doing theirs, but it is going to be  
14 a master plan nonetheless that is focused on Mississippi's  
15 needs and what we see going on in our specific situation.

16 One thing about our estuary is the marshes,  
17 Biloxi Marsh and the islands that define it, since they  
18 are deteriorating. We need to look at our ability to  
19 manage that because closing MRGO and closing Camille Cut  
20 have been fairly straight forward actions. MRGO is  
21 already yielding positive results, in terms of salinity.

22 There are a lot things that can be done to this situation.

23 In the long run, if we engage in a comprehensive  
24 assessment and master planning effort, we can learn a lot  
25 more about this system and that will, among other things,

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1 give us the ability to interact with Louisiana more  
2 effectively on their projects, some of which will very  
3 definitely affect us.

4 First of all, there is an enormous amount of  
5 information out there existing that has never been focused  
6 on, in regard to this comprehensive look at restoration.  
7 We are going to have to get new data. We are going to  
8 have to do physical modeling to get a lot of this figured  
9 out.

10 Right now, just in the universities and  
11 institutions of higher learning, there is an enormous  
12 amount of data that we just need to get compiled and  
13 figure out if we can plug some of the gaps.

14 What is the Commission's role in all of this?

15 Well, we need strategic input from you, we need  
16 input from your constituent groups, and we need support  
17 and feedback for plan and for permits and implementation  
18 of projects, when that comes to pass.

19 It seems to me the Commission meetings are a  
20 great opportunity for constituents to give feedback that  
21 can be incorporated in advance of developing projects to  
22 the point where we want to turn in a permit application,  
23 or something like that. This is a good early way to vet  
24 some of these things.

25 Again, I want to say that we are not looking at

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1 a situation where we would restore the Coast and the  
2 barriers to look like it did back in the heyday when we  
3 were sort of the world power for seafood.

4 We have the ability. We have an opportunity to  
5 recover a lot of the functions that gave us that dynamic  
6 fisheries environment.

7 I think, once we do some more comprehensive  
8 assessment and get a better handle on how the system is  
9 working, we can answer some questions about what we need  
10 to do.

11 I'm sure Paul may have some gaps to fill in that  
12 I have left, but the main gaps are in the barrier out  
13 there, right now.

14 Any questions?

15 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I have a couple of  
16 questions.

17 Do you want to go ahead?

18 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: A quick question. You  
19 mentioned Bonnet Carre Spillway being opened in 2011  
20 adding to all the additional rainfall that we had and  
21 eventually killing all of the oysters.

22 Do we have too much rainfall, now?

23 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Well, fresh water events and  
24 oyster die offs are a part of history. The main thing  
25 about this situation is that, with the barrier opening up,

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1 the estuary is becoming too marine. We've got too much  
2 salt during critical times, especially during the summer.  
3 That interferes with the ability of the oyster population  
4 to deal with fresh water disasters like the Bonnet Carre,  
5 among other things.

6 Really, the only way to make something like the  
7 Bonnet Carre not have any affect in the estuary would be  
8 so open that you wouldn't have oysters in there to start  
9 with.

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Go back to that first  
11 slide just for a moment so I can clarify myself on one  
12 point.

13 When you were talking about the RESTORE and you  
14 broke down where the money was going, is this slide  
15 representative of all of the Gulf states, or is it  
16 representative of what is going to take place in  
17 Mississippi?

18 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Thank you for that. I should  
19 have clarified further.

20 This is just for Mississippi. This is the  
21 monies that filter down from the settlement for  
22 Mississippi, and it is split up this way. This is what we  
23 have to work with.

24 Now, there are regional NRDA's. There are open-  
25 ocean NRDA's. There are additional funds, but I want to

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1 take on what we can control, at some point.

2 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I just wanted to see if  
3 that was what was going to take place Gulf wide, or just  
4 in Mississippi.

5 I had another question. You were talking about  
6 Round Island.

7 Have we made any headway with acquiring the rest  
8 of Round Island?

9 GEORGE RAMSEUR: I don't know of anything  
10 specific on that recently. I do know that there,  
11 apparently, are a large number of heirs associated with  
12 that. I think there are about twenty acres left of  
13 private ownership.

14 It will be a complicated acquisition, a long-  
15 term type thing anyway, I think. Unless we get some sort  
16 of break that I don't foresee, it is probably a number of  
17 years down the road before that would come our way.

18 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: What we're doing at Round  
19 Island, if I remember correctly, can't really be tied to  
20 the original island, until something like that transpires?

21 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Right.

22 Now, there is probably some chance of building  
23 to the southwest of there. We would have to look at that,  
24 but it would be a lot better to be able to go ahead and  
25 deal with the unified project.

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1 Originally, it had sort of a boot-shaped  
2 footprint and, actually, we saw a map of 1717 that  
3 actually shows that boot shape, and, then, it kind of went  
4 to the more teardrop shape that is has after that.

5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Are you going to put any  
6 vegetation on what we've done, now?

7 Are there any plans for that?

8 GEORGE RAMSEUR: I was contacted the end of last  
9 week, and they've got some planting plans in gear, but  
10 there is an awful lot of vegetation, particularly up on  
11 the barrier, on the berm, right now.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I don't want to get too  
13 involved here with the loss of land for Mississippi.

14 Is the loss that we have in the barrier islands  
15 counted into that?

16 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Yes. That figure that I showed  
17 was actually just for Mississippi. We have really started  
18 looking at this three-state concept recently enough that  
19 trying to figure out how much has been lost out of the  
20 Biloxi Marsh is a really huge job.

21 This last slide, that's got a lot of stuff with  
22 just gaps in the barrier as a real thumbnail for looking  
23 at the health of this.

24 This is a 1778 map which is not that accurate  
25 laterally. I just put that up there to show kind of what

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1 sort of depth detail we had even back at that time.

2 The red here shows Biloxi Marsh extent in 1850,  
3 and the yellow is current. All that red that is showing  
4 essentially is land that has been lost in that system  
5 since 1850 (indicating slide).

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Some of this money that  
7 will come down over the years will be able to be used  
8 towards restoring some of these barrier islands?

9 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Well, hopefully some of it at  
10 some point, but essentially what we have to do at this  
11 point is get a better handle on what is going on. We've  
12 got real good data going back to 1850, so we can kind of  
13 look at how this barrier has performed, what kind of  
14 mixing has been going on, what the currents have been and,  
15 also, look at the changes, like, navigation channels, and  
16 see how that has affected the overall salinity and the  
17 patterns and the variability in the Sound.

18 The other thing I forgot to mention was that  
19 Mississippi is really leading this out of the three  
20 states, and I would say that's because we have the most to  
21 gain, but, at the same time, we have the most to lose.

22 Louisiana has several estuaries this size,  
23 Alabama can fall back on Mobile Bay to some extent, but  
24 our entire estuarine bank account is just right here  
25 behind some skinny little sand islands.

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1 Even though Biloxi Marsh is over the line, y'all  
2 have talked about Three Mile Pass in here before. The  
3 regulation it performs really controls a lot of our  
4 destiny.

5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That was my reason for  
6 asking.

7 Do you know if any of that money can be used for  
8 restoring the islands?

9 As most people know, if they have been there,  
10 they are still fairly long, but they are getting very  
11 thin. They are not nearly as wide as they used to be.

12 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Right.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Three Mile Island and  
14 Biloxi Marsh, Chandelier is the barrier island that  
15 protects that.

16 Is there any work being done over there that is  
17 not in our state?

18 Is Louisiana looking at anything on the east  
19 side of the river to work on Chandelier Island to try to  
20 help protect some of that?

21 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Well, the current master plan,  
22 the 2017 plan does not, as far as I know, have anything  
23 for Chandelier.

24 As a matter of fact, they had some barrier  
25 projects for Biloxi Marsh, in the 2012 plan, and those

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1 rolled off and, in my opinion, those would be very  
2 beneficial not just for the marsh, but the marsh provides  
3 a lot of basic day-to-day protection for Hancock County  
4 and St. Tammany Parish, as well as all the fishing  
5 resource.

6 That's the sort of thing where maybe with our  
7 own master plan tied with effort we can have a more robust  
8 conversation with Louisiana and say, why don't we look at  
9 putting these Biloxi Marsh barriers back in.

10 The way we drew this is just sort of the basic  
11 estuary, but Chandelier, if we go to modeling performance  
12 of this system, definitely has an affect on the overall  
13 system. We've got to have it on our radar.

14 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Louisiana has way more  
15 issues facing them than what we do, and it appears to be  
16 that the east side of the river is not a big concern to  
17 them, but it is to us on this side.

18 GEORGE RAMSEUR: I think we can have a positive  
19 affect on their trajectory, and, then, they have other  
20 projects, like, the Pontchartrain barrier that may well  
21 affect us in the negative way, according to their numbers.

22 We need to have our own numbers to work with.  
23 Politically and intellectually, we need to do our own  
24 homework on that, and, then, come back to the table with  
25 them and say, Pontchartrain barrier ends at the state

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1 line, right now. What would happen if you brought it all  
2 the way over to Bay St. Louis, just as a hypothetical,  
3 just to remind everybody that project is just a plus two  
4 feet. They looked at plus thirty feet at one point, but  
5 it is real interesting how that project is changing.

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, George.

7 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Very interesting. A lot  
9 to look forward to in the future.

10 Office of Finance and Administration, Ms. Kacey  
11 Williams.

12 KACEY WILLIAMS: Good morning Commissioners,  
13 Director Spraggins, Ms. Chestnut.

14 These are our financial results as of January  
15 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

16 Our State Revenue was four point five million  
17 dollars. Our Total Agency Revenue was fifteen point seven  
18 million dollars.

19 Our State Net Income is a hundred and eighty-  
20 five thousand. Our Agency Net Income is five point four  
21 million dollars.

22 After seven months of fiscal year 2018,  
23 Operating Funds have seventy-eight point six percent  
24 budget remaining, and our Tidelands Trust Fund has eighty-  
25 three point four percent budget remaining.

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1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you.

2 KACEY WILLIAMS: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Ms. Melissa.

4 MELISSA SCALLAN: Good morning Commissioners,  
5 Director Spraggins, Ms. Chestnut.

6 The agency was mentioned thirty-one times in  
7 local, state and national media, since the December  
8 meeting.

9 The item that got the most attention last week  
10 was Keith Davis leaving us and going to Moss Point. We do  
11 wish him well in that new endeavor. He certainly does  
12 have his hands full, but I'm sure he will be up to the  
13 task.

14 Another item that got a lot of mention literally  
15 from Seattle to DC was our oyster dredge exchange program.  
16 We were mentioned in U.S. News and World Report for that  
17 program and popular in states that have oysters that look  
18 at the same kind of things that we do. That was a good  
19 positive thing for us.

20 As Director Spraggins mentioned, we did have our  
21 Capitol Day event on Wednesday, February the 7<sup>th</sup>, in  
22 Jackson. We had representatives from each office and we  
23 spoke to legislators, state employees and other visitors  
24 about the things that we do here at the agency. Joe  
25 Jewell had several people from Marine Fisheries to talk

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1 about their programs. We had Oyster Aquaculture,  
2 Tidelands, Seafood Marketing and Public Affairs.

3 We did some local events. Jennifer Frey with  
4 Coastal Resources Management represented the agency at the  
5 Pascagoula School District Super Saturday Wetland Animals  
6 event. That is something they do once a month. When they  
7 have a marine theme, they invite us to take part in that.

8 We also had several employees that participated  
9 in career days. Sometimes it's science. Sometimes it's  
10 Marine Patrol.

11 As Joe mentioned earlier, the agency received  
12 the Fishery Conservation Award from the Mississippi  
13 Chapter of the American Fisheries Society for the Derelict  
14 Crab Trap Program, and Rick Burris accepted that award at  
15 the meeting in Oxford.

16 For Marine Patrol, so far they have held nine  
17 boat-and-water safety classes and certified a hundred and  
18 fifty-two students. Compared to last year at the same  
19 time, they had conducted ten classes and certified  
20 seventy-eight students. The numbers seem to be going up.

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you.

22 MELISSA SCALLAN: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have one other item  
24 under Other Business, and I think Mr. Joe is going to  
25 address that.

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1 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

2 As you remember, we had Hurricane Nate that hit  
3 here several months ago. In that, we had some damage and  
4 we had a lot of overtime that was paid.

5 What we are looking at is we have a public  
6 assistance program, now, through FEMA. FEMA is working  
7 with public assistance to give us back the funds that are  
8 authorized by the Federal Government to give back to the  
9 agency.

10 We had a lot of overtime, and they had advised  
11 us to use the overtime and pay it and not use it as comp  
12 time because FEMA is not allowed to pay back compensation  
13 time, but they are allowed to pay back overtime.

14 We did that. We kept very great detail of what  
15 we were doing.

16 We also had a couple of items that were damaged  
17 in the storm around the waterfronts that we had to repair.  
18 We repaired them, and FEMA said turn in the items and we  
19 will look at it and see if it is eligible to be repaid.

20 We have an application and in the application we  
21 need to put an agent as basically representing the agency  
22 here. I would like to recommend that Lieutenant Patrick  
23 Levine be our representative for this, and I would like  
24 for the Commission to look at this, as a governing body,  
25 to be able to sign off and say that they appoint Patrick.

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1 Patrick, come up to the podium, in case they  
2 have any questions for you, please.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I guess my first question  
4 would be, is this what you want to do?

5 PATRICK LEVINE: Yes, sir.

6 One thing the Director did not say is we started  
7 this process in December of 2017, and we are well on our  
8 way to receive those funds from FEMA. One of the last  
9 steps in the process is to seek approval from the  
10 Commission.

11 You would think it would be on the front end,  
12 but they do it on the back end. We have been working that  
13 grant. We have spent a lot of time on it.

14 One of the things I have shared with Director  
15 Spraggins and I want to make sure I make a public comment  
16 that this staff of the Department of Marine Resources has  
17 just been a fantastic team to compile all the information  
18 needed for this grant.

19 Commissioner Bosarge, I am willing to take that  
20 task. I thank you for the opportunity.

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We just wanted to have a  
22 conversation with you to figure out just exactly what this  
23 was all about.

24 If you are willing to take on the task, I think  
25 we, as the Commission, are willing to give you the

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1 opportunity.

2 Do we have any more questions?

3 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I would agree that Patrick  
4 is the right person for the job and is willing to take it  
5 on.

6 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I made a motion that we  
7 give this job to Patrick Levine.

8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion.

9 Do we have a second?

10 COMMISSIONER HARMON: So seconded, Mr. Chairman.

11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion and a  
12 second.

13 Any further discussion?

14 (No response.)

15 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All those in favor say  
16 aye.

17 (All in favor.)

18 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed?

19 (None opposed.)

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion carries.

21 PATRICK LEVINE: Thank you, Commissioners.

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Any further public  
23 comments?

24 (No response.)

25 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Do I have a motion to

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adjourn?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I make the motion that we

adjourn.

COMMISSIONER HARMON: So seconded, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All those in favor say

aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Meeting adjourned.

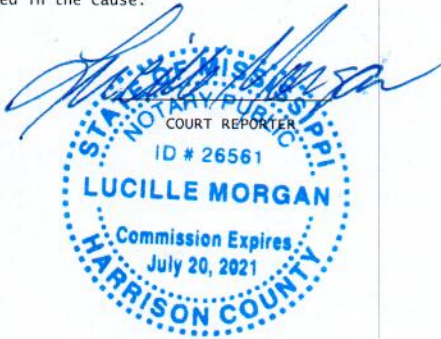
(Whereupon, at 10:55 o'clock, a.m., the February 20, 2018, meeting of the Commission on Marine Resources was concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the February 20, 2018, meeting of the Commission on Marine Resources, as taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated in the aforementioned matter in shorthand, with electronic verification, and later reduced to typewritten form to the best of my skill and ability; and, further, that I am not a relative, employee, or agent, of any of the parties thereto, nor financially interested in the cause.



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