

Compressed Transcript



COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

March 19, 2013

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TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING OF COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES AT BOLTON STATE BUILDING, PUBLIC MEETING ROOM, 1141 BAYVIEW AVENUE, BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI, ON THE 19TH DAY OF MARCH 2013 COMMENCING AT 9:00 A.M. AND REPORTED BY NORMA JEAN LADNER SOROE, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

- DR. VERNON ASPER, Chairman
RICHARD GOLLOTT
SHELBY DRUMMOND
STEVE BOSARGE
JIMMY TAYLOR

ALSO PRESENT:

- DANNY GUICE, Interim Director DMR
JOSEPH R. RUNNELS, ESQ., Asst. Attorney General
SANDY CHESNUT, ESQ., Asst. Attorney General

DR. ASPER: Any further changes or corrections?

Those in favor say aye.

Just to let you know what that closed session is going to be for, we have one personnel item that we've got to deal with, but we also would like to announce that we did interview five candidates for the position of executive director yesterday. And of those five, we have made our comments and we will discuss that in closed session, and we will in that session decide on which three names of those five will be sent up to the governor.

So those names should be to the governor sometime this week. That's our plan, just to let you know that that's what the closed session is going to be about. We're not going to announce the names, any of them. So the only name that we intend for anybody ever to hear will be the one that the governor selects. And that will be announced by his office.

D. Public Comments

DR. ASPER: Okay. We have a period of public comments. I don't have any sheets from anybody wanting to talk. If anybody would like to make some comments? Okay. I don't want to shut anybody out.

E. Executive Director's Report

DR. ASPER: Executive director's report. Do you have anything today for us?

A. Call to Order

DR. ASPER: Good morning. I'd like to welcome everybody to the regular March meeting of the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources. Always great to have everybody here.

B. Approval of Minutes

DR. ASPER: Were going to start today with the approval of the minutes. I believe we have minutes for two meetings, a regular meeting and a special meeting. Are there any changes or corrections to the minutes? Or is there a motion to approve them as distributed?

MR. DRUMMOND: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GOLLOTT: Second, Mr. Chairman.

DR. ASPER: Those in favor say aye.

C. Approval of Agenda

DR. ASPER: There is an agenda before us. I believe we have one change. Item H-3(c) is going to be removed.

And I'm not sure where it would show up on this session, but we plan to have a closed session for the purpose of considering the need to go into executive session at the very end of our meeting.

MR. GOLLOTT: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

DR. ASPER: Is there a second?

MR. DRUMMOND: Second, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GUICE: Not at this time.

F. Marine Patrol

DR. ASPER: Okay. Moving on to marine patrol.

2. Marine Patrol Report

MR. CHATAGNIER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman commissioners, Acting Director Guice, legal.

Not a lot of stuff on our agenda here as far as violations of marine patrol.

There is one I'd like to point out that was pretty significant, and that was Herman W. Rieux, better known as Rosamo. He was caught with 11 nondegradable gill nets. And I think there was roughly about 300 pounds of flounder. I've been here 26 or 27 years now, and I started chasing him when I got here. This man is 81 years old. And he only has one leg. And he can still outrun the best of them. I'm telling you, he's hard to catch. But the officers did a real good job of getting him. And that's 11 gill nets that we don't have to worry about laying across bayous all night long, taking our speckled trout and redfish and letting them go to waste.

MR. DRUMMOND: Chief, what was his nickname?

MR. CHATAGNIER: Rosamo.

MR. DRUMMOND: Where is he from?

MR. CHATAGNIER: Hancock County. He fishes a lot in Louisiana. He'll slip over there and violate the law and come back to Mississippi with the fish and vice versa.

1 We had two two fishing license citations, but
2 they're still way down from where they are. I guess people
3 finally getting the word. And only one nonresident fishing
4 license.

5 Couple of cases of undersized redfish.

6 Boat and water safety is down.

7 One marine litter.

8 To be honest with you, it says hazard material
9 under there. I'm not quite sure exactly what that was.

10 Had one fatality. Actually, there's two
11 fatalities since we went ahead and made the recovery.

12 The outreach presentation, gave a presentation
13 to 1600 kids at the Pascagoula High School safety day.

14 We didn't have any dive activity in February.

15 Our JEA patrols, they did 29, total of 454 for
16 man hours, one federal action report, and two state citations
17 were issued.

18 Any questions?

19 MR. TAYLOR: Tiny, the two kayakers that died,
20 were they wearing life jackets?

21 MR. CHATAGNIER: Neither one were.

22 MR. TAYLOR: Okay. Do you know if -- they were
23 out in the kayak, were they wading, or could you tell?

24 MR. CHATAGNIER: Nobody really knows what
25 happened in this situation. They had life jackets. One of

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1 MR. CHATAGNIER: That's the only thing they're
2 required to have. You don't have to have a fire extinguisher.
3 There's no source of fire on there. And if there was, as long
4 as you have a portable fuel tank, you're not required to have a
5 fire extinguisher. If you can pick up the -- if you can pick
6 the tank out of the boat and throw it overboard, you're not
7 required to have a fire extinguisher.

8 MR. TAYLOR: Is there something that we could
9 change to require -- Joe or Sandy -- to -- kayaker to wear a
10 life jacket when he's in the thing? Is that something we can
11 address?

12 MR. CHATAGNIER: The legislation gave the
13 commission the authority to enforce and adopt rules and
14 regulations below I-10 for boat and water safety. If you were
15 to come up with a rule that required them like they did with
16 jet skis that the whole time you're in the kayak you have to
17 wear a life jacket. On a jet ski, you have have to wear the
18 life jacket, but also the lanyard, kill switch, has to be
19 attached to that life jacket or you so if you do fall off, the
20 machine will stop and won't come back in a big circle and hit
21 you in the head.

22 So, I mean, I think y'all have the authority to
23 require somebody in that kayak has to have a life jacket on
24 them the whole time they're paddling it.

25 MR. TAYLOR: Sandy, what do we have to do to do

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1 them was strapped to the kayak.

2 We see this more and more every day that we
3 check. There's more and more kayakers on this coast than there
4 has been in years. And for some reason, these kayakers think
5 they don't have to have a life jacket. And we've issued
6 tickets. Matter of fact, this one particular boy, I warned him
7 one time and made him go back to his truck and get his life
8 jacket. He said he had one, but he had it in the truck.

9 MR. TAYLOR: Aren't they supposed to be wearing
10 them when they're in a kayak? I mean, doesn't the law say they
11 have to wear them when they're in a kayak?

12 MR. CHATAGNIER: They don't have to wear them.
13 But it's still considered a vessel, and they have to have some
14 type of wearable device. And you'll see a lot of people will
15 wear them.

16 But we check people going out there in little
17 rubber boats because they think it's a little-bitty small boat
18 and they're only going to Deer Island, they're crossing a busy
19 channel, that they don't have to have a life jacket. And a lot
20 of them will be out at nighttime, they'll come in with no
21 lights on. They're required to at least have a flashlight to
22 let somebody see them when they're coming back.

23 MR. BOSARGE: What all are they required to
24 have? I'm just curious. I mean, besides a life jacket and a
25 flashlight, is there...

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1 that? Do we have to publish it and everything like we normally
2 do?

3 MS. CHESNUT: Yes. It would have to go through
4 the rules procedure.

5 MR. TAYLOR: Who would do that? Would y'all or
6 would someone else in the department?

7 MS. CHESNUT: We can work with marine patrol on
8 it.

9 MR. TAYLOR: Would you, please?

10 MS. CHESNUT: Yes.

11 MR. TAYLOR: Thank you.

12 DR. ASPER: What do the other states do?

13 MR. CHATAGNIER: Excuse me?

14 DR. ASPER: What do other coastal states do?

15 MR. CHATAGNIER: I'm not really sure. But just
16 about every state adopts the federal rules and regulations when
17 it comes to boat and water safety. So there are situations on
18 certain size vessels, you got to have life jackets or wearable,
19 you have to have a throwable device, the lights, sound
20 producing device.

21 But most of the kayaks around here, they're
22 under the length where you're required to have all that extra
23 equipment.

24 But regardless what the other states do, I mean,
25 it only make sense if you're out there, you flip over, the

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1 thing gets away from you, and you're not that good of a
2 swimmer, you're stuck. At least you got a life jacket on, you
3 can bob up and down for a while.

4 MR. TAYLOR: Today, the life jackets, you've got
5 these self-inflatable ones. I have one that when I get in my
6 kayak I wear or when I'm wade fishing I wear it, you know. So
7 they're not cumbersome and they're very inexpensive, too.
8 They're not cumbersome like the old orange ones you see, you
9 know, that commercial vessels use.

10 MR. CHATAGNIER: They've got vests that to wear
11 if you watch any of these kayak things on TV, Wide World of
12 Sports or the Olympics or any of it, they're all wearing
13 helmets and vests when they're doing white water kayaking. I
14 don't see the need to wear helmets down here. The roughest
15 water we're going to get is when the wind picks up. But it's a
16 whole lot different thing because they're going to -- and those
17 rivers up there, they're going through rock jetties and stuff
18 like that.

19 But kayak only makes sense to wear that life
20 jacket when you're in it.

21 MR. DRUMMOND: Most kayaks are used in fresh
22 water, huh, Chief?

23 MR. CHATAGNIER: Well, I guess you could have
24 said that at one time, but now they've got clubs out here that
25 they paddle out to Horn Island and Dauphin Island and Ship

1 artificial reefs. We had approximately 40 people in attendance
2 at that meeting. It was held here in the Bolton Building. We
3 had several items on the agenda. And we have an overview of
4 the Mississippi artificial reef program, invasive species, red
5 snapper aquaculture, and fishing Mississippi artificial reefs.
6 It's pretty successful program. It's been a really good public
7 outreach program on behalf of the agency and those entities
8 that we coordinate with.

9 So that being said, we'll move right on to the
10 agenda items.

11 Bill is out also attending a meeting
12 representing our agency, so Rick Burris is going to give the
13 derelict crab trap cleanup presentation.

14 3. Derelict Crab Trap Cleanup

15 MR. BURRIS: Good morning, commissioners, Mr.
16 Guice, Ms. Chesnut.

17 Today, we want to give you an update on the 2013
18 Mississippi derelict crab trap roundup that was held last
19 month.

20 The first slide is the state statute which
21 grants the commission authority to establish a closed season on
22 blue crabs, thus allowing the cleanup to take place.

23 Authority is also found in our Title 22
24 regulations, Part 4, Chapter 8 closed season.

25 A derelict crab trap is defined as a lost trap,

1 Island. So you're liable to see them anywhere now.

2 MR. DRUMMOND: ...Fish & Wildlife policy on it
3 that you could work with them on.

4 MR. CHATAGNIER: Well, they're like us. I don't
5 think they have anything that requires them. They're with us
6 on the jet skis and the other federal rules. I'm sure that
7 they wouldn't have a problem going along with it.

8 DR. ASPER: Okay. Anything else? Thank you
9 very much.

10 On to fisheries. Joe.

11 G. Marine Fisheries

12 MR. JEWELL: Good morning, commissioners, Mr.
13 Guice, Sandy. Dale sends his regards. He's out representing
14 the agency at a Gulf States meeting in Florida.

15 I want to mention a couple things before we get
16 started on the agenda item.

17 First, the office of marine fisheries will be
18 working closely with the administrative services office. We're
19 going to establish a pilot program for the sale of commercial
20 license at the Pass Christian check station this year. It will
21 be between April 15 and May 31, sort of a public outreach
22 program for our commercial fisheries. We want to make y'all
23 aware of that.

24 And second, in our science seminar series last
25 week, Tuesday, March 12, we had a seminar on Mississippi

1 lost traps, which are typically unbuoyed or unmarked and not
2 actively fished. These traps can become lost through a variety
3 of different avenues. High tides, storms, especially
4 hurricanes are a big problem, entanglement with boats or
5 fishing gear, such as shrimp trawls or oyster dredges,
6 negligence in proper assembly, and theft is also a major
7 problem. These guys that are stealing traps will pick them up
8 where they were placed, and they'll run a long ways, take the
9 crabs out, and then dump them over somewhere else, and the
10 owner can't find them.

11 We pick them up first off because they are
12 navigational hazards. If anybody has ever had a crab trap
13 wrapped around your prop on your boat, you know how much of a
14 pain that can be. But the main reason our major concern is
15 ghost fishing. Once these traps are left alone, they continue
16 to fish whether or not they have bait in them. And they'll
17 catch crabs and finfish and even birds and mammals and
18 diamondback terrapins. And once these animals get in there,
19 they can't get out, and they become bait so they continue to
20 fish, and so in order to protect our resources we like to get
21 them out of the water.

22 And also, to prevent user group conflicts, these
23 things are a major eyesore. They're marine debris, and nobody
24 likes to look at them.

25 Here is a timeline of our 2013 crab trap

1 cleanup. Our last cleanup was held in January 2010. In
 2 October of 2012, we had a meeting with the Mississippi Crab Task
 3 Force to decide the dates for this year's cleanup. Early
 4 January 2013, we notified all commercial and recreational
 5 crabbers by mail. We also solicited all our past volunteers by
 6 mail. We issued a press release and posted information on our
 7 website which I'll show you in a second. In February, we
 8 coordinated with Pascagoula, Ocean Springs, and Waveland in
 9 order to use their harbors. We also got with Sims Metal
 10 Management Systems, and they agreed to donate dumpsters at all
 11 our sites, as well as recycle all our crab traps that we picked
 12 up.

13 The cleanup started the 14th of February. And
 14 the crabbers had seven days to pick up all their traps. After
 15 those seven days, those traps were considered derelict and our
 16 volunteers could pick them up.

17 On the 18th and 19th, we held volunteer training
 18 sessions, basically just safety sessions for anybody who was
 19 willing to participate and if they had any questions they could
 20 ask us then. And it's cut off at the bottom, but the 21st
 21 through the 23rd of February was the three days that the
 22 volunteers could go pick up all the traps that they found in
 23 the water or on land. And on the 23rd, the last day, was the
 24 day they could bring them to us at those three sites.

25 This was on our website. It's pretty simple.

1 It just basically tells the dates of the cleanup, where they
 2 can bring them to, the times. And then the training session is
 3 right here. And also has a ways of contacting us. And it's
 4 also cut off at the bottom, but you can see our collaborators
 5 are Gulf Coast Research Lab. They've been instrumental in
 6 helping us over the years. And then Sims Metal Management
 7 Systems which I mentioned earlier.

8 This chart shows our Gulfwide cleanup effort
 9 through 2012. You will notice one of the most important things
 10 here that it started in 1999, and we were the first state in
 11 the Gulf to implement this program. And then other states
 12 picked up the pace in 2002.

13 And since 2012, we have removed -- you can't see
 14 it again, I'm sorry -- we've removed 78,000 traps Gulfwide.

15 This slide shows the Mississippi effort. Like I
 16 said, it started in 1999. You'll notice here in 2007, the most
 17 traps we've picked up in a single year was in that year, and
 18 coincidentally that was the first cleanup we had post-Katrina.

19 Also, we haven't had cleanups every year,
 20 certified cleanup. But us as a staff, fisheries staff, we
 21 continually go out looking for these traps year round.
 22 Sometimes we actually have efforts to just basically go out and
 23 look for these traps when we have good tides.

24 This year we picked up 281 traps making our
 25 total for Mississippi almost 19,000 traps.

1 By site, Ocean Springs had 145 traps brought in.
 2 Pascagoula had 105 traps, and Bayou Cadet had 37 traps. And we
 3 also gave out a prize to the individual who brought in the most
 4 traps at each site. In Ocean Springs, it was Mark Kopszywa.
 5 He had 60 traps. In Pascagoula, Wayne Rogers had 37 traps. And
 6 both those guys are commercial crabbers. And in Bayou Cadet,
 7 Ernie Zimmerman brought in eight traps.

8 This slide here shows a data card that we like
 9 for when people pick up traps, we like them to fill out for
 10 each trap they get. They can put ten different traps on there
 11 and put their name, where they're from, and the location they
 12 found the trap. They tell us whether it was on shore, in the
 13 water, if it had a float attached, it was usable or not,
 14 important information such as bycatch, whether it had crabs in
 15 it, diamondback terrapin, fish, or other animals, and whether
 16 they were dead or alive.

17 And all these cards go to GCRL, and they're
 18 compiling all this data for us as we speak.

19 We are very pleased with the outcome of this
 20 event. Even though we didn't remove as many traps as we have
 21 in earlier cleanups, we attribute that to the fact that there
 22 are actually less traps out there available to pick up thanks
 23 to earlier cleanups.

24 It was a very successful event, and we would
 25 like to thank all of our partners, Gulf Coast Research Lab,

1 Sims Metal Management, especially all our commercial and
 2 recreational crabbers and all our volunteers that signed up.

3 If y'all have any questions, I'm free to answer
 4 them.

5 MR. BOSARGE: It's a great effort. Really and
 6 truly, you can see the numbers going down. I know that there's
 7 not that many traps out there, and me myself when I'm out, I
 8 see very few. So good job.

9 MR. BURRIS: Thank you.

10 MR. DRUMMOND: I agree with that.

11 Stone crabs. Do you get that many stone crabs?

12 MR. BURRIS: They like to get in these derelict
 13 traps when they start getting oysters on it. Stone crabs
 14 around here hang around oyster beds a lot, and they like to get
 15 in those traps when the oysters start picking up on them.

16 MR. DRUMMOND: I didn't realize that many stone
 17 crabs were around in this area.

18 MR. BURRIS: I wouldn't say there's that many,
 19 but we've got a pretty good population.

20 MR. DRUMMOND: Thank you.

21 MR. BOSARGE: And I know Shelby is thinking
 22 about eating stone crabs. They're kind of small, Shelby, a lot
 23 of them.

24 MR. DRUMMOND: I wasn't talking to you, Steve.
 25 I was talking to Bill (sic).

1 DR. ASPER: Okay. Thanks a lot.
 2 MR. JEWELL: If there are no more questions,
 3 that concludes marine fisheries.
 4 DR. ASPER: Thanks, Joe.
 5 H. Coastal Ecology
 6 MR. BOYD: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
 7 commissioners, Mr. Guice, Ms. Chesnut.
 8 Coastal ecology has two action items for your
 9 consideration this morning. And Jennifer Wittmann will be our
 10 first presenter.
 11 3. Bureau of Wetlands Permitting
 12 a. Jackson County Board of Supervisors
 13 MS. WITTMANN: Good morning. As Jan said, my
 14 name is Jennifer Wittmann. I'll be presenting coastal
 15 ecology's first action item on the agenda today.
 16 It's a request for permit by the Jackson County
 17 Board of Supervisors located on the Lake Yazoo canal in
 18 Pascagoula. It's in the general use district, and Compton
 19 Engineering is the agent.
 20 Project location is located by the yellow thumb
 21 tack. You can see Highway 90 and Market Street.
 22 And this is a better zoomed-in picture showing
 23 the project area. There's public boat launch.
 24 Few pictures from the site.
 25 The applicant is seeking authorization to

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1 maintenance dredge the Lake Yazoo canal. It's 2,200 feet in
 2 length and average of 60 feet in width. They'll be dredging to
 3 a depth of ten feet below mean low water. Approximately 40,000
 4 cubic yards of material will be dredged and will be utilized at
 5 a beneficial use site.
 6 This is a diagram showing the dredging area.
 7 You can see that this red line here and the red line here are
 8 the match lines. So this is headed out into the Mississippi
 9 Sound, and then this is the canal. This is back further past
 10 the boat launch.
 11 The project serves a higher public purpose by
 12 restoring safe navigational depths and providing public access
 13 to the use of the waterways.
 14 The project is allowable within the general use
 15 district.
 16 Similar projects have been approved, and no
 17 precedent setting effects are anticipated.
 18 There will be a temporary increase in turbidity
 19 and sedimentation during dredging operations, as well as a loss
 20 of benthic organisms. However, the conditions will not exceed
 21 DEQ's water quality guidelines.
 22 The project should not have any adverse impact
 23 other than the loss of benthic organisms.
 24 The activity will remain well away from the
 25 shoreline and will not affect the natural supply of sediments,

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1 nutrients, temperature, salinity, water flow, or circulation.
 2 Best management practices will be utilized
 3 during all phases of the dredging.
 4 The applicant did explore the option of more
 5 extensive dredging impacts which would total approximately
 6 60,000 cubic yards of material but reduced that to
 7 approximately 40,000 cubic yards in order to reduce the impacts
 8 to the system.
 9 No offsite alternatives have been considered.
 10 This is a maintenance dredging project, and the same channel
 11 path will be followed. No new dredging areas.
 12 Maintenance dredging does require a waterfront
 13 location.
 14 The project will not change the location of the
 15 navigation channel and should not affect the natural scenic
 16 qualities.
 17 Notification of the project appeared in the Sun
 18 Herald as required. No public comments were received.
 19 DEQ is reviewing the project. Department of
 20 Archives & History has no reservations. Secretary of State's
 21 Office has stated that the project will not require a tidelands
 22 lease. And the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks has
 23 recommended best management practices and the dredging occur
 24 between May and September when Gulf sturgeon are least likely
 25 to be in the area.

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1 Based on departmental review and evaluation, it
 2 has been determined that the project is consistent with the
 3 Mississippi Coastal Program and serves a higher public purpose
 4 by restoring safe navigational depths and providing public
 5 access to and use of the waterways.
 6 Therefore, staff recommends approval of the
 7 project with the condition that dredging occur between May and
 8 September.
 9 And I'd be happy to answer any questions. Also,
 10 Lisa Morrison with Compton Engineering is here if you have any
 11 questions for her.
 12 MR. BOSARGE: I just have one.
 13 Do you know where you're going to put the dredge
 14 spoils?
 15 MS. WITTMANN: I've spoken with George Ramseur
 16 with the beneficial use group and MDMR. He said that Greenwood
 17 Island will be able to take all the material.
 18 MR. BOSARGE: Good. Thank you.
 19 MR. DRUMMOND: Jennifer, does the length of that
 20 dredging go all the way up into the lake up there?
 21 MS. WITTMANN: It doesn't go all the way to the
 22 lake.
 23 MR. DRUMMOND: I'm not sure how far it goes. I
 24 guess it's...
 25 MS. WITTMANN: Basically going to start out in

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1 the Sound and go up into the canal. And it will end
2 approximately here.

3 MR. DRUMMOND: Okay. Thank you.

4 MS. WITTMANN: You're welcome.

5 DR. ASPER: Is there a motion?

6 MR. BOSARGE: I make a motion we accept staff's
7 recommendations.

8 MR. DRUMMOND: I second the motion, Mr.
9 Chairman.

10 DR. ASPER: Any further discussion? Those in
11 favor say aye. Caries unanimously.

12 MS. WITTMANN: Thank you.

13 b. Jackson County Board of Supervisors

14 MR. CHRISTODOULOU: My name is Greg
15 Christodoulou, and I have the final item for coastal ecology
16 today.

17 It's a permit modification request by the
18 Jackson County Board of Supervisors located in the Mississippi
19 Sound adjacent to Lake Mars Road, Jackson County, general use
20 district, and Seymour Engineering is the agent for the project.

21 Project location is here where the yellow thumb
22 tack is marked. Just for reference, this is Highway 90
23 east-west, Highway 57 running north-south. Roughly right here
24 is the dividing line between Ocean Springs on this side,
25 Gautier on this side. The area in question is down here on the

1 either side.

2 And this is a picture from the eastern jetty.
3 So the new alignment would be roughly at a 45 degree angle to
4 the end of the east jetty here.

5 The benefit of the project would include
6 increased accessibility to the waters of the Sound for the
7 public and restoration of navigable depths to the launch area.

8 The project is allowable in the G district.

9 Similar projects have been approved by the
10 commission, and the proposed project is not expected to set a
11 negative precedent.

12 Dredging would result in a temporary increase in
13 turbidity and a temporary decrease in benthic organisms. Best
14 management practices will be used to minimize these impacts.

15 The project will likely continue to cause
16 accretion on the eastern side of the facility and erosion to
17 the western side of the facility. These effects should not be
18 increased by the additional jetty. And the applicant is in the
19 process of developing a beneficial use plan to keep the
20 sediment from accumulating on the eastern side and moving it to
21 the west side to keep the sediment basically in the cycle that
22 it normally goes to. The sediment cycle we have here is
23 usually what they call longshore transport, and it runs from
24 east to west.

25 The sediment does move from east to west. And

1 Sound. It's in an unincorporated portion of Jackson County
2 known as Gulf Park Estates.

3 Here is a closeup aerial of the area with the
4 jetties, existing pier, and the boat launch.

5 The county is requesting to extend and reorient
6 the existing east jetty and also perform dredging. The
7 structures in question that they're asking for approval for are
8 an extension of the eastern section of jetty approximately 265
9 feet in length, 30 feet in width, and it's going to be oriented
10 at a 45 degree angle with the existing jetty.

11 Also, they are asking for six new single pile
12 channel markers to mark the navigation channel.

13 Dredging for the new navigation channel
14 realignment is 420 feet by 50 feet to a depth of five feet
15 below mean low water. And that will be approximately 610 cubic
16 yards of material. And while it doesn't meet the minimum
17 amounts for the beneficial use, the county is planning on
18 taking it to the Deer Island site.

19 Here is a diagram of the proposed project. In
20 red, this is the new orientation of the jetty going in a 45
21 degree angle to the existing section. The area in purple will
22 be the dredge area. And the yellow marked areas are where the
23 locations of the new channel markers will be.

24 Some pictures at the site. This is looking
25 south from the boat ramp area. You can see the jetties on

1 then the 45 degree leg that will be added on should reduce any
2 onshore movement since most of the year round we have a
3 southeasterly flow. That 45 degree dog leg should keep some of
4 that material that would come up from the south and southeast
5 from getting into the navigation channel.

6 No alternative sites were considered as this is
7 an existing public access boat launch.

8 The site already has existing jetties, and the
9 addition of another section to the eastern side should not
10 affect the scenic qualities of the area.

11 Notification was placed in both the Sun Herald
12 and the Mississippi Press as required. We did receive a
13 comment from the adjacent property owner to the west with
14 concerns about erosion his property has experienced since the
15 jetties were constructed in '09.

16 The adjacent owner is not opposed to the
17 project; however, he would like to make note that his land loss
18 be documented by the department and that monitoring of his land
19 continue to take place to ensure that additional erosion is
20 documented if it occurs and that the property be designated a
21 shoreline restoration site.

22 Other comments: DEQ is currently reviewing the
23 project. Archives & History has no objections. Wildlife,
24 Fisheries & Parks has recommended best management practices be
25 implemented and that dredging operations be conducted between

1 May and September when Gulf sturgeon are less likely to be in
2 the area. And the Secretary of State has said that the project
3 will require a tidelands lease.

4 Staff's recommendation for the project is that
5 the project should reduce the need for continued maintenance
6 dredging and frequent maintenance dredging. It also provides
7 safe navigational depths to the boating public. Therefore,
8 staff recommends approval of the requested permit modification
9 with the condition that the applicant establish a monitoring
10 plan for the shoreline owned by the western adjacent property
11 owner.

12 And in my talks with the applicant, with the
13 agent for the county, that they don't have any problems doing
14 any kind of monitoring for the adjacent property owner.

15 DR. ASPER: Are there any questions for Greg?

16 MR. CHRISTODOULOU: Also, we would like to add
17 in the recommendation that the dredging does take place in
18 those months that were listed by Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks,
19 between May and September.

20 MR. GOLLOTT: Greg, is it possible that they
21 could use some of the spoil material if it's of the grade that
22 they could fill in this guy's property for him?

23 MR. CHRISTODOULOU: What the county has been in
24 talks with us, we've had pre-application meetings about it,
25 about taking any material that accumulates on the eastern side

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1 of the jetty and side-casting it to the west.

2 And so there also may be a way that it can be
3 done as a beneficial use site that DMR has, as well.

4 So that's something that's kind of in the works.
5 If we were to do anything like that, we would have to come by
6 y'all to get approval to do that, if there was an application
7 that was put in for that.

8 MR. GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a
9 motion that we accept the staff's recommendation on this
10 project.

11 DR. ASPER: Is there a second?

12 MR. BOSARGE: I'll second the motion.

13 DR. ASPER: Any further discussion? Those in
14 favor say aye. Carries unanimously.

15 Greg, it may be my imagination, but it seems
16 like quite a few years ago there was a project similar to this.
17 This longshore transport sand is a real common problem, and it
18 always seems like it's on the upstream side -- the downstream
19 side.

20 Wasn't there a project that actually had a
21 mechanical system for pumping sand from one place to the other
22 on the inland basis? Maybe not here, but in a similar
23 situation? I just have this vague recollection of that. And I
24 remember I was thinking that will never work.

25 I was just curious if you have any knowledge on

26

1 that.

2 MR. CHRISTODOULOU: I've only been here since
3 '06, and I don't recall any projects like that. There may be
4 someone who was here prior to me that may have knowledge of a
5 project like that.

6 DR. ASPER: It looked like a totally engineered
7 solution to something which is not that complicated. But
8 anyway, I'll see if I can find it.

9 Thanks.

10 I guess that's the end of coastal ecology.

11 MR. BOYD: Yes, sir.

12 DR. ASPER: Now we've got a financial report,
13 couple other agenda items, financial report is next.

14 J. Administrative Services

15 MR. DOSTER: Good morning, commissioners, Mr.
16 Guice, Ms. Chesnut.

17 Administrative services just has two no action
18 items this morning. First on the agenda will be Kara Vesa with
19 the financial report.

20 2. Financial Report

21 MS. VESA: Good morning. My name is Kara Vesa.

22 The budget report this morning is as of February
23 28, 2013, our budget of \$6,152,176 remained the same from the
24 previous month. We had spent \$4,917,407 of our state budget,
25 which left a remaining balance of \$1,234,769 on February 28.

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1 Tidelands budget for this year is obligated.

2 And I wanted to remind y'all that I have
3 submitted that extra sheet in your packets for your review, and
4 I'm available for questions if you have any.

5 DR. ASPER: Kara, the only comment I was going
6 to make, just to let the public know that we do have these two
7 sheets, and there's like a page and a quarter of projects
8 listed. And what she's provided us with are total award
9 amounts, the amount remaining as of the February meeting and
10 the amount remaining in each one of these grants contracts as
11 of right now.

12 And in case you're wondering what those balances
13 are, these are mostly multi-year grants, so don't think that
14 this is all received in one year. But out of all of these
15 grants contracts right now, this is a wide variety of things,
16 everything from habitat restoration to tidelands funds, you
17 name it, there's \$68 million remaining as of right now in these
18 grants.

19 And that number goes up and down depending on
20 when the money comes in and money goes out. So this is in a
21 constant state of flux.

22 But we are being provided with a list of the
23 contracts grants that the agency is working on. So if anything
24 catches our attention, we will be sure to ask you about it.

25 I do appreciate receiving that.

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1 MS. VESA: Thank you.
 2 DR. ASPER: Anything else for Kara? Thank you.
 3 3. MDMR Website Presentation
 4 MS. DENZ: Good morning, commissioners and Mr.
 5 Guice and Ms. Chesnut. My name is Kimberly Denz, and I am with
 6 administrative services with the IT department here this
 7 morning to present an overview of a website analytics report
 8 that was sent to management team last month.
 9 And each of you have a copy, so I'm not going to
 10 read it.
 11 This is more for your information on how we can
 12 use that information that's in that report and how it can be --
 13 how and why I did the report.
 14 So in January 2012, we redesigned the website,
 15 and the majority of that redesign was based on analytics. The
 16 design decisions that were made, the navigation decisions that
 17 were made. We used Google analytics to collect information
 18 about the way our visitors interact with our website, and that
 19 information includes their location, whether they're new or
 20 returning, browser that they used, if they're on a mobile
 21 device, the content they like, how often they view a page,
 22 whether they use our site search, where they're coming from,
 23 and where they go to when they leave our site.
 24 And it looks like this. We can see visitors.
 25 We can see traffic type, whether it's direct or referred,

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1 mobile visits, pages, whether they're popular, how long people
 2 stay on the website and such.
 3 So why do we do this? It's basically to
 4 understand how visitors navigate our site, whether they find
 5 the information useful, whether they don't, and how we can
 6 improve the service essentially.
 7 And these are performance indicators that are
 8 pretty common for content websites and for websites like ours.
 9 Whether visitors are able to find what they
 10 want, how long did it take them to find the information they
 11 want, does the right information exist on our site, and what's
 12 popular.
 13 So in that report, this is just real brief, in
 14 that report are listed some quick stats about the number of
 15 unique visits we get, total page use our website gets, whether
 16 they're on a mobile device. And you'll notice, I found this
 17 real interesting, that 67 percent of our new visitors were from
 18 a mobile device.
 19 And then what content is popular. As you might
 20 expect, people like the fishing information. They like to know
 21 where to fish, fishing licenses, that's recreational and
 22 commercial, and that looks like this. Marine fisheries
 23 received about 13 percent of page views, recreational fishing
 24 almost ten, commercial fishing four, information by agency
 25 about four percent, licensing three percent.

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1 When people come to our website, 56 percent of
 2 them come from a search, whether that's Bing or Google, 30
 3 percent directly, whether that's through a bookmark or an email
 4 or a link in an email, and 14 percent from referral sites.
 5 Of those referred, of those 14 percent referral
 6 sites, three percent are social or from a QR code that our
 7 public affairs department publishes in the newsletter and cards
 8 and such.
 9 And that looks like this.
 10 So like I said, in January 2012 we had a
 11 redesign, and that also meant that we switched servers which
 12 changed our address. So what happened in 2012 is a lot of
 13 people searched for us by name. Before the switch, it was
 14 mostly like BMR or DMR, so I'm not sure what those searchers
 15 are resulting that people feel the need to search our entire
 16 agency title.
 17 And then when they are on our website, this is
 18 what they're searching. Mississippi boat registration, jobs,
 19 employment, careers, jobs, shrimping, crabbing, shrimp season,
 20 crab season.
 21 So back to those questions in the beginning,
 22 basically our performance indicators.
 23 Are visitors able to find what they want? From
 24 what we can tell, they are. Typically when you have a high
 25 pages per visit or a high time on site, that means high

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1 engagement. They're reading the information, they're
 2 interested. Only four percent used the site search feature,
 3 which means the navigation seems to be working. They don't
 4 have to search for much. And only 40 percent came and then
 5 left.
 6 For government websites, for content websites
 7 like ours, that number, the baseline I guess, is 40 to 60
 8 percent. So we're just doing okay.
 9 How long does it take someone to find the
 10 information they want? After getting the search result, the
 11 average visitor viewed two more pages and stayed two more
 12 minutes. And only 17 percent used the search and then left.
 13 So that seems to mean that they're finding what they want
 14 fairly quickly and then looking at more information, staying on
 15 site.
 16 The number that's troublesome is the 29 percent
 17 of searches resulting in yet another search. So that just
 18 means that a deeper look into those specific instances and
 19 finding out, you know, maybe we can coordinate content a little
 20 better for our users.
 21 And does the right information exist on our
 22 website? And if not, what's missing? What this shows us is
 23 that what people are searching for, that's the most popular
 24 content. So the right information does exist. My question is:
 25 What about the rest of the stuff? You know, what about our

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1 research projects? And what about support for seafood
2 businesses and wetland permitting? And how can we more
3 effectively inform visitors of the other things that we have to
4 offer?

5 Finally, that last question: What's the most
6 popular content, and what can this tell us? Obviously,
7 visitors love to fish. Our visitors like viewing photos of our
8 work. Our photo galleries rank among the top 50 in popular
9 pages. And our publication pages rank among the top 100.

10 So ultimately, how can we use all of this to
11 improve the delivery of our services to our customers?

12 This website report that you have is available
13 on our website at dmr.ms.gov/stats, and visitors have the
14 ability to subscribe to our news releases and our public
15 notices, as well.

16 Do you have any questions?

17 MR. BOSARGE: I'm curious as to what's the
18 number of repeat visitors, in other words, people that visited
19 the website more than once?

20 MS. DENZ: I don't know what the number exactly
21 is. I want to say that it's 43 percent. So of 50,000, 43
22 percent of 50,000.

23 MR. BOSARGE: That's good. That means that
24 they're willing to come back and look some more.

25 MS. DENZ: Yeah. It actually is a pretty good

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1 find in the inshore and the offshore reefs.

2 But, no. I mean, like I said, people do like
3 the pictures.

4 MR. TAYLOR: Do you all have like a list of
5 maybe fishing tournaments for Mississippi on it?

6 MS. DENZ: No.

7 MR. TAYLOR: That would be another suggestion
8 that we could do some, you know, and I think it would spur
9 people there, and just general events like when we have this
10 thing in Pass Christian -- what is it? -- Share the Gulf, and I
11 can't remember the name, but I've been to it a couple of times.
12 But any stuff like that where you can -- people will go and
13 look, especially tourists before they go somewhere. You know,
14 they don't pick up magazines anywhere. They go to the net,
15 where do I go eat, can I do this, can I go fish, or play golf
16 or whatever.

17 So I think if you would add a couple of those
18 things to the website and with pictures on all of them, you
19 know, it would -- I think it would boost over time the use.

20 MS. DENZ: I think you're right. Thanks so
21 much.

22 Is there anything else?

23 DR. ASPER: Okay. Thank you very much. I have
24 actually visited the website quite a few times. And the new
25 look is really an improvement.

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1 number. They say anything that's better than 60-40 is good.
2 And ours runs, you know, close to that but above average.

3 MR. BOSARGE: Thank you.

4 MR. TAYLOR: One of the things that when I talk
5 to people, and I go on the web to fishing sites, is pictures.
6 And I haven't been on our website, so excuse me. But one of
7 the websites I go on is RodNReel.com which is a fishing site
8 out of Louisiana, and they have one in Mississippi, Texas, and
9 Florida. But photographs of people catching fish.

10 And I don't know if there's a link to the
11 charter industry or the something here to where you could maybe
12 do a brag board or pictures of something where the fish people
13 come in today and put the fish, you know, up on the website.
14 It might draw more people to the website once it gets out.

15 If you go to, I forget how many hits
16 RodNReel.com have, but people all over the United States and
17 all over the world know about it.

18 But just a thought.

19 MS. DENZ: That's actually -- that's one of the
20 things that we notice is a spike in whenever there's a fishing
21 rodeo, a spike in checking the records, just to see, you know,
22 like what, you know, oh, I need to get a fish that's this big
23 or whatever.

24 Also, our artificial reef program, I do get
25 pictures from them, pictures of the types of fish that you can

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1 I will make it a point to visit again and see if
2 I can come up with any other suggestions. That's something we
3 can all (inaudible). Thank you.

4 MS. DENZ: Thank you.

5 DR. ASPER: Now, there's an agenda item on the
6 commission handbooks. Is that intended to be on there?

7 MS. CHESNUT: I think that just wasn't taken off
8 from last time. That's a mistake.

9 DR. ASPER: Okay. I was wondering about that.

10 The only other thing that we have is the closed
11 session. And for those of you who may have come in a little
12 bit late, the purpose of this closed session will be to
13 determine the need to go into executive session. And the
14 purpose of that would be twofold. First, we have a personnel
15 item to discuss. And the other one is that the five candidates
16 that were selected during our special meeting last week, we
17 interviewed all five of those candidates yesterday, and we will
18 be meeting to discuss those interviews, discuss what we found,
19 and select the final three names that will be sent to the
20 governor. So we're hoping that those three names will be sent
21 to the governor this week. So that will be the purpose of the
22 closed session.

23 Is there a --

24 MR. GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a
25 motion to go into closed session to consider going into

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1 executive session to consider applicants for executive
2 director's position.

3 DR. ASPER: Is there a second to the motion?

4 MR. DRUMMOND: I second the motion, Mr.
5 Chairman.

6 DR. ASPER: Further discussion? Those in favor
7 say aye. We're now in closed session.

8 (Off the record 9:50 a.m.)

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1 COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

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6 I, Norma Jean Ladner Soroe, Certified Shorthand
7 Reporter, do hereby certify that to the best of my skill and
8 ability I have reported the meeting of the Commission on Marine
9 Resources and that the foregoing 37 pages constitute a true and
10 correct transcription of said meeting held on the 19th day of
11 March 2013.

12 I do further certify that my certificate annexed
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