

COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, September 15, 2015
10:00 a.m.
Jackson County Board of Supervisors Board Room
2915 Canty Street
Pascagoula, Mississippi 39568

Commission Members:

- Richard Gollott, Chairman
Shelby Drummond, Vice Chairman
Steve Bosarge
Ron Harmon

Also Present:

- Jamie M. Miller, Executive Director DMR
Sandy Chestnut, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

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COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Good morning everyone. I would like to welcome y'all to our September meeting.

At this time, I would like to call the meeting to order and ask Jamie Miller to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: we need an approval of the last meeting's minutes, or any adjustments thereto.

Do I have a motion?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So seconded.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

Next, we have approval of the agenda.

Do we have any modifications?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: With no modifications, do we have a motion to accept?

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COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Seconded.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

Next is the Executive Director's report.

JAMIE MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I have no report.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: At this time, I would like to recognize Senator Brice Wiggins. Thank you very much for coming today, sir.

BRICEE WIGGINS: Thank you, and I just wanted to say I appreciate your road show. I know this is something that you have been doing. I think it is a great thing for the Coast and for the citizens down here, and I appreciate you coming here and I welcome you to Pascagoula and the Supervisor's room here. I appreciate everything that is going on.

Actually, as I told, I think, Chief Davis, when I'm not getting a lot of calls, that means y'all are doing something right.

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I know we have put in a lot of transparency and other things like that.

Mr. Harmon, this is my first meeting, since you came before the senate and were confirmed.

In the legislative session, we all know that the BP money is coming down. Keep your eyes on that, and I'm open to working with y'all on any comments and anything because that is going to be an issue coming up in the legislative session in January.

I don't make every meeting, but I'm happy to answer any questions, if anybody has any.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Brice.

BRICE WIGGINS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Next we have Marine Patrol.

RUSTY PITTMAN: Good morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Director Miller and Ms. Chestnut.

You have in front of you the report for this past month.

If you will notice under crab violations, we've had some complaints coming in from the public on over-the-limit recreational crab pots in Back Bay. We did set up some officers back there and we did catch one running over the limit with recreational pots. Matter of fact, they let him go ahead and run them. When they stopped him, he

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1 had fourteen that he had run, by the time they stopped
2 him. The also had one without the recreational crab
3 license.

4 On page two, you will notice the number of
5 citations for fisheries broken down. One thing that is
6 not added in there is that we started the courtesy
7 citations in June, and, from June until now, we have
8 written two hundred and twenty-nine courtesy citations.
9 If you were to add those in there, that would bring that
10 total way up.

11 We also had a hundred and forty-six verbal
12 warnings, during that time period, too, for the year to
13 date.

14 Boating accident with fatality, we have one.
15 This individual fell off his boat north of I-10 behind the
16 Shed. We assisted the Department of Wildlife and Jackson
17 County on the recovery of him, our dive team did.

18 We did have five boating accidents without
19 injuries.

20 On our JEA report, we had a total of seven
21 patrols, ninety-five man hours, fifty-one contacts. We
22 also had one outreach event and five hours of outreach man
23 hours.

24 That's it.

25 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Rusty, "Disregard of

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1 Traffic Device", under "Miscellaneous Violations", was
2 that running a red light?

3 RUSTY PITTMAN: Running a red light.

4 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: It seems to me that the
5 enforcement division is getting a lot more traffic
6 violations than normal.

7 Are they?

8 RUSTY PITTMAN: It did pick up a little bit this
9 past month. what you are going to have, especially at
10 nighttime, when these officers are going from boat ramp to
11 boat ramp, or harbor to harbor, they run across these, and
12 they will make a stop and enforce the law.

13 Of course, there are a couple at the bottom
14 that, too, if you notice, Marijuana arrests. Those were
15 incidents at boat ramps and fishing piers where the people
16 were fishing and, when they approached them to check their
17 license, they had the Marijuana with them.

18 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Thank you, Rusty.

19 RUSTY PITTMAN: Yes, sir.

20 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Anyone else?

21 (No response.)

22 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Rusty.

23 RUSTY PITTMAN: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Next up is Marine

25 Fisheries, Joe Jewell.

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1 JOE JEWELL: Good morning Commissioners,
2 Director Miller and Counselor Chestnut.

3 Also, we would like to welcome Senator Wiggins.
4 We always appreciate our elected officials, when they are
5 able to attend our meetings.

6 I would like to update the Commission on some of
7 the things that Marine Fisheries has been involved in here
8 recently.

9 Marine Fisheries, from January to date, has
10 successfully completed just over four hundred and fifty
11 dives without incident, or accidents, with the vast
12 majority of those dives occurring in shellfish, as you
13 will later learn in our presentation.

14 Artificial Reefs has assisted in two juvenile
15 red snapper releases. Just over three thousand individual
16 red snapper were released.

17 To date, we have deployed just over six thousand
18 tons of concrete culverts on our fish havens.

19 Seafood Technology has, now, certified sixty-
20 seven facilities, and that's up from our high just before
21 Katrina of eighty-five.

22 The Shrimp and Crab Bureau has removed just
23 under a hundred derelict crab traps. In the history of
24 our program of derelict crab trap removal, we have removed
25 just over nineteen thousand traps out of the environment.

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1 The Finfish Program is currently actively
2 monitoring the red snapper season. As you are aware, the
3 Federal red snapper season opened on June 1st and, for
4 private recs, ran through June 10th. It was a ten-day
5 season. For the charter-for-hire industry, it ran from
6 June 1st through July 15th.

7 The State of Mississippi has a season. The
8 state season ran from July 16th and continued to run
9 through October the 31st.

10 We are still actively monitoring the program
11 through our mandatory red snapper program. As you are
12 well aware, it has three portals that the fishermen can
13 access the mandatory requirements. They can call in on
14 our app, they can call in on a phone line, or they access
15 it via our web page.

16 Commissioner Bosarge, as you pointed out, we
17 have made some adjustments to the program along the way.
18 We have taken an additional step, through our PR office.
19 We have put out the big feather banners at a lot of our
20 ramps.

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I've seen them. They
22 look nice.

23 JOE JEWELL: We have five in Jackson County, we
24 have three in Harrison County, and two in Hancock County.
25 We are going to make some adjustments as necessary.

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1 will present the presentation on the Scientific Collection
2 Permit.

3 JASON SAUCIER: Good morning Commissioners,
4 Director Miller, Ms. Chestnut.

5 As Joe mentioned, I'm presenting to you for
6 final adoption amendments to Title 22 Part 18. Those are
7 the Rules and Regulations pertaining to Special Collection
8 Permits in the State of Mississippi.

9 CMR passed the Notice of Intent, on August 18th.
10 Public notice was issued via the MDMR website, on the 20th
11 of August. Legal notice was also submitted and issued in
12 the Sun Herald, beginning on August 22nd.

13 Public comment period was from August 19th
14 through September 14th, and, to date, we have no public
15 comments.

16 I will, now, read into the public record all
17 proposed amendments. These are the same amendments that
18 we went over last month, with the Notice of Intent. So
19 please bear with me. Sections 106 and 107 are new
20 paragraphs.

21 Chapter 2 Section 106:

22 "It is the public policy of this state to favor
23 the preservation of the natural state of the coastal
24 wetlands and their ecosystems and to prevent the
25 despoliation and destruction of them, pursuant to

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1 That is just an update with the correct phone
2 number.

3 We are changing the title of Chapter 4 to read:
4 "Chapter 4 MDMR Scientific Research Permit."
5 Section 100:

6 "For the purpose of this permit, scientific
7 research is defined as any research, monitoring,
8 restoration, or collection, activity having potential
9 direct, or indirect, impact to state-managed natural
10 resources. When making the initial request in writing for
11 a MDMR Scientific Research Permit, the applicant must
12 include the following information on a form provided by
13 the MDMR."

14 Moving down to Section 100.02:

15 "Names of all persons that will be conducting
16 field research activities."

17 Section 100.03:

18 "Registration and/or documentation numbers of
19 all vehicles, or vessels, that will be involved in
20 research activities and name of vessels if applicable."

21 Section 100.04:

22 "A general description of all activities which
23 will be conducted, including a schedule of activities,
24 research methods, number and size of all gear to be used,
25 and frequency of activity by gear type."

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1 Mississippi Code 49-27-3."

2 Chapter 2 Section 107:

3 "The MDMR is vested with authority to adopt,
4 modify, or repeal rules, or regulations, to utilize,
5 manage, conserve, preserve and protect the flora, fauna,
6 tidelands, coastal wetlands, coastal preserves, marine
7 waters and any other matter pertaining to the marine
8 resources under its jurisdiction, pursuant to Mississippi
9 Code 49-15-304."

10 Chapter 3 Section 106, I will just focus on the
11 areas where we having changes in marine waters and we are
12 adding state managed areas. It shall read:

13 "All MDMR Special Permits are valid only in the
14 marine waters and state managed areas under the
15 territorial jurisdiction of the MDMR."

16 We are precluding the word "highway" from
17 Interstate 10. So it shall read, "South of Interstate
18 10."

19 The sentence, "All state managed areas include
20 those parcels acquired and managed by the MDMR's Coastal
21 Preserves Program" will be added.

22 Chapter 3 Section 107:

23 "The MDMR Marine Patrol Office, area code 228-
24 523-4134, must be notified twenty-four hours in advance of
25 the start of any research activity."

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1 Section 100.05:

2 "A map showing the geographical location of the
3 research activities, with each location identified by
4 coordinates."

5 Section 101:

6 "A complete written report of all research
7 activities must be submitted to the MDMR within thirty
8 days following the expiration date of the permit."

9 Section 102:

10 "None of the samples collected under the
11 authority of a MDMR Scientific Research Permit are to be
12 sold, bartered, traded, or consumed. Only applicants who
13 can demonstrate a specific need for retaining samples as
14 an integral part of the project will be authorized to
15 retain samples."

16 Moving on to Chapter 5 Section 101:

17 "Applicants must be tax-exempt organizations
18 under Section 501(C) of the United States Internal Revenue
19 Code and have on file with the State Tax Commission a tax-
20 exempt letter issued by the United States Internal Revenue
21 Service. Each Application received will be reviewed by
22 Office of Marine Fisheries personnel and a recommendation
23 will be made to the Executive Direct, or his designee."

24 Moving on to Section 104:

25 "The Executive Director will determine the total

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1 number of oysters the permittee will be allowed to harvest
2 under the conditions of the permit."

3 Moving on to Chapter 6 Section 100:
4 "When making the initial request in writing for
5 a Marine Brook Stock Collection Permit."

6 That change is just to correct the language.

7 Moving on to Section 101:

8 "The MDMR Office of Marine Fisheries, within
9 thirty days following the expiration date of the permit."

10 Section 102:

11 "None of the finfish, or shellfish, collected
12 under the authority of a Marine Brood Stock Collection
13 Permit are to be sold, bartered, traded, or consumed."

14 Chapter 7 Section 101:

15 "A complete written report of all harvest
16 activities must be submitted to the MDMR Office of Marine
17 Fisheries within thirty days."

18 What is required is a motion from you to proceed
19 with final adoption of Title 22 Part 18 amendments.

20 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.

21 Do we have a motion on this item, or questions?

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: It all looks good to me.

23 I'll make a motion to proceed with final

24 adoption of Title 22 Part 18 amendments.

25 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion.

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1 September the 14th, and, to date, no public comments have
2 been received.

3 For the convenience of the Commission, I will
4 read into the record the changes. You will remember that
5 anything underlined is added to the regulation and
6 anything struck through will be removed from the
7 regulation, and I will start reading where the changes are
8 made.

9 Chapter 4 Closure Areas Section 101:

10 "For the purpose of this section only, the
11 portion of the Intracoastal Waterway that extends from a
12 point south of Long Beach to a point south of Point Clear
13 is described as follows:

14 "Begin at Marianne Channel Lighted Buoy 1
15 located approximately three miles north of West Point on
16 Cat Island, thence extending southwesterly to Light 4P,
17 thence southwesterly to Pass Marianne Wreck Light WR8A,
18 thence southwesterly to Light 15P at the northernmost
19 point of Merrill Coquille, thence southwesterly to Light
20 17P, thence southwesterly to St. Joseph Island Light 22,
21 then westerly to Lighthouse Point and continuing westward
22 following the meandering of the shoreline to the boundary
23 line of the state."

24 What will be required by the Commission is a
25 motion to proceed with final adoption of Title 22 Part 2.

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1 Do we have a second?

2 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I second the motion, Mr.
3 Chairman.

4 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a
5 second.

6 All those in favor say aye.

7 (All in favor.)

8 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

9 (None opposed.)

10 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

11 JASON SAUCIER: Thank you.

12 JOE JEWELL: Next on the agenda is final
13 adoption of recommendation, by Mr. Rick Burris, for
14 changes to shrimping in Mississippi.

15 RICK BURRIS: Good morning Commissioners,
16 Director Miller, Ms. Chestnut.

17 As Joe said, this will be final adoption for the
18 amendment to Title 22 Part 2, Rules and Regulations for
19 Shrimping in the State of Mississippi.

20 On August the 18th, CMR passed the Notice of
21 Intent. We filed that with the Secretary of State on the
22 same day. It was published on our website, a public
23 notice, on August the 20th, and in the Sun Herald locals,
24 on August the 22nd.

25 Public comment period was August the 19th through

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1 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have any
2 discussion, or any questions, on it?

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I will make the motion to
4 proceed with final adoption of Title 22 Part 2 amendment
5 of ICW boundary.

6 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion.

7 Do we have a second?

8 COMMISSIONER HARMON: I'll second that motion,
9 Mr. Chairman.

10 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a
11 second.

12 All those in favor say aye.

13 (All in favor.)

14 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

15 (None opposed.)

16 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

17 RICK BURRIS: Thank you.

18 JOE JEWELL: As I mentioned earlier in my
19 comments, Mr. Scott Gordon is going to give an oyster
20 sampling update. This will be the first segment, in our
21 three-part segment for the oyster season.

22 SCOTT GORDON: Good morning Chairman Gollott,
23 Commissioners, Director Miller, Ms. Chestnut and Senator
24 Wiggins.

25 They had asked that I do a shellfish sampling

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1 update, and what I wanted to cover here are some of the
2 methodologies that we use:

3 One minute dredge tows. Square meter dives.
4 Shell Budget. Fecal coliform water sampling, being a
5 portion of our sanitary surveys, in addition to our
6 shoreline surveys. HAB monitoring. Our vibrio management
7 plan, and some special projects.

8 These maps that we have right here show our
9 sampling locations for our one minute dredge tows and our
10 square meter samples.

11 All of the light blue dots, those are our square
12 meter water sample stations, and the blue dots are also
13 square meter sample stations, in addition to being one
14 minute dredge tow sampling stations (indicating map).

15 We have two hundred and twenty-two stations this
16 year. Sixty-four one minute dredge tow locations and two
17 hundred and twenty-two dive sample locations.

18 We do replicate square meter samples at each
19 location. That's where the four hundred and forty-four
20 square meter dive samples came from. That's a total of
21 five hundred and eight total samples collected.

22 To put this in a little bit of perspective, the
23 State of Louisiana, they have about one hundred sites.
24 They do five replicas at each site. So they are getting
25 us for the number of samples, but that is for the entire

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1 the water.

2 wind speed and direction, depth, tidal stage,
3 sea conditions, and bottom type.

4 We are also routinely collecting the length
5 frequency of live oysters, mortality, and cluster data.

6 We are making notes and counting predators and
7 competitors such as oyster drills, hooked mussels and
8 stone crabs.

9 On the bottom right side of the slide it shows
10 the time period. There are the dates that we went out and
11 did the one minute dredge tows. That was a total of ten
12 boat trips, collecting the sixty-four one minute dredge
13 tows.

14 On this next slide are some representative
15 photographs of some of our one minute dredge tows. We use
16 a small sample dredge. It is pulled at these locations
17 for a one minute period of time, and, then, we measure
18 everything that is in there, and they are collecting some
19 of the water data.

20 Some of you may recall, in the past, we did this
21 map that kind of quantified what we were seeing in our one
22 minute dredge tows and overlaid it on the maps.

23 This is the sample that we did in 2010. If it's
24 clear, we had no data. If it was red, we found nothing at
25 that site. The pinkish color, one to twenty. The next

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1 State of Louisiana.

2 Mississippi, in the past, we've had seventy-five
3 stations. So it has typically taken about one hundred and
4 fifty samples. As you can see, we have really kicked it
5 up.

6 One of the things that we've done to figure out
7 the number of samples that we should have in each area was
8 based on our previous sampling data, and we looked at the
9 variability between samples. That's why some of these
10 areas are going to be at a higher density than others.

11 The box at the lower left, that's kind of an
12 overview map showing the Henderson Point, the Pass
13 Christian complex, the Pass Marianne, the Telegraph, and,
14 then, at the lower left is going to be the St. Joe Reef
15 area.

16 A total of sixty-four one minute dredge tow
17 samples were collected, on a total of ten boat trips. The
18 physical parameters that we are collecting are the
19 salinity, oxygen, the air and water temperature, and the
20 Secchi depth.

21 The Secchi, for those of you who aren't
22 familiar, is a little small black-and-white shaped disk
23 that we lower in the water until it disappears out of
24 sight, and, then, pull it back up until it reappears. It
25 is letting you know how far the light can penetrate into

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1 color, light blue, twenty-one to forty. Darker blue,
2 forty-one to fifty. The green was fifty-one and over.
3 You can see, in 2010, this is what we had (indicating
4 map).

5 The next time we did this was in 2013, and, as
6 you can see, we are not having the oyster densities in
7 these areas like we had in the previous sample (indicating
8 map).

9 The next slide shows 2014, and, again, some
10 areas have a few oysters in them, but the areas are
11 getting larger where we have low numbers, or none.

12 This is what we had in our samples this year.
13 As you can note on there, there is no light blue, or dark
14 blue, or green, in any of our samples. This is not,
15 initially, very encouraging for us.

16 Square meter dive sampling. As I said, a total
17 of four hundred and forty-four square meter dive samples
18 were collected over eighteen boat trips.

19 Now, we received a lot of help from the other
20 bureaus. We have divers in the other bureaus and this
21 counts towards their time in diving, and we are happy to
22 be able to put them to work where they can stay brushed up
23 on their diving techniques.

24 Physical parameters. Again, it the same as we
25 are collecting with the one minute dredge tows, the length

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1 frequency of the live oysters, mortality and cluster data,
2 and the predators, too, but we also use the square meter
3 sampling as part of our Shell Budget modeling.

4 This is the boat that we use primarily for the
5 dive samples. It was purchased after Hurricane Katrina,
6 and it's a twin diesel jet drive boat. So it's very safe
7 for driving and a good stable platform for us to use
8 (indicating photograph).

9 Here are some additional samples of them
10 preparing to dive, or diving in the water, and also the
11 people working up the samples. Sometimes we can work up
12 small samples inside the lab. If it's a larger sample
13 amount, we will do that outside and, sometimes, even on
14 the boat (indicating photographs).

15 Again, these are some photographs of the
16 sampling. In the top middle, you see that hitting the
17 water. That's one of our quad rafts. That's actually
18 half of a square meter. When they put that down, the
19 diver will collect everything that is within there, and,
20 then, they will flip it over to the next side and collect
21 that. It makes it a little easier for them to handle the
22 sample.

23 Everything that they collect is put in these
24 mesh bags, and we have a float that helps bring that up to
25 the surface (indicating photograph).

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1 In this photograph, you can see a pretty good
2 view just before the square meter has hit the surface.

3 These locations are random to begin with, but,
4 when they get there on the boat, they throw it off in a
5 random location. So that's where it falls.

6 These photographs are more of the dive sampling
7 where he is handing off the sample collected in the bag to
8 one of the people onboard the boat.

9 Next is a video of them sampling on one of the
10 square meters, and I thought it was pretty interesting for
11 you to see. This is under less than optimum conditions,
12 but not as bad as what it could be. I believe this was
13 off the Henderson Point area.

14 What he is doing is feeling around within that
15 grid and picking up every oyster that he finds in there,
16 and, then, if it's the Shell Budget sampling, they are
17 also taking all available culture material out of that
18 area, and, if there are any predators, oyster drills, or
19 anything like that, he is collecting them, as well, he or
20 she.

21 There are a lot of folks that don't like to do
22 this type of diving, especially if you get on the St. Joe
23 area where it's black. You can't see your hands in front
24 of your face. It takes some special people to do that.

25 With the number of dives that we have done, I am

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1 very appreciative for the hard work that they do.

2 This is the Standard Oyster Resource Management
3 Protocol. I showed this to the Commission last year. The
4 State of Florida is using something similar. We are
5 looking at adapting this for Mississippi's use. I have
6 taken some of the categories off of there, but it shows
7 you the breakdown.

8 Whenever you can look at the number of market-
9 size oysters that you get average per square meter, how
10 does that relate?

11 If you can look at the left column, it shows the
12 number of oysters that you would find per square meter.
13 On the very first one, zero point one legal size oysters
14 per square meter, that equates to, if you look on the
15 right-hand side, about one-and-a-half sacks per acre
16 (indicating slide).

17 If you get down to the green category where we
18 have the two legal size oysters per square meter, that
19 would translate into twenty-nine point four sacks per
20 acre, approximately (indicating slide).

21 It's just a good gauge to be able to have some
22 kind of relative feel on what does this mean, these
23 numbers.

24 For Henderson Point, we have shown, from the
25 square meter sample, an average of zero point seven market

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1 oysters per square meter.

2 Pass Christian, two point two.

3 Pass Christian Tonging, zero point one.

4 Pass Marianne, zero.

5 Telegraph, zero.

6 St. Joe, zero point eight.

7 Like we did with the one minute dredge tow
8 mapping, we wanted to look at our reef areas using the
9 square meter sample data, the number of market oysters per
10 square meter, and these are the results that we came out
11 with. It runs the full gamut, and, as you can see, the
12 majority of our reef areas are in that lowest category.

13 Here is a typical oyster that was picked up in
14 one of our samples off of Henderson Point. This really
15 shows some oyster drill damage where the conch, or the
16 oyster drill, will actually drill through the shell of the
17 oyster and consume the oyster inside ((indicating
18 photograph).

19 The one on the right-hand side, I've got arrows
20 showing three of the drill locations that would have
21 killed all three of those oysters, and those oysters are
22 either spat size, or seed size.

23 The whole overall oyster that all of these small
24 oysters are set to, is one of the valves of the oyster
25 that is serving as cultch material for all of these

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1 others. I haven't really gone through and counted all of
2 these, but we have them from probably just a few days, or
3 a week, old spat all the way up to maybe a month, or so,
4 of seed size oysters.

5 The big white section in the very center, that
6 is an oyster that is gapping over what we call a box on a
7 small size. We have seen a lot of mortality on this.

8 The oyster that is on the right-hand side, the
9 three arrows, the left most arrow, just below that there
10 is a small little animal attached to that, that a lot of
11 folks would look at and think, well, that's another spat,
12 but it's not a spat. It's a slipper shell, or capitula.
13 Sometimes folks will look at that and they can mistake it
14 for a spat.

15 The spats have a little black line going through
16 them. I like to call it a razor stripe because they are
17 growing very fast, at this size.

18 The Shell Budget. This is the first year we are
19 working with a Shell Budget. It's a sustainability model
20 that was used for the last three years in select Louisiana
21 shellfish areas, by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife
22 and Fisheries, in conjunction with Dr. Thomas Soniat of
23 the University of New Orleans and Dr. Eric Powell of the
24 University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research
25 Laboratory.

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1 The model is to help us predict the amount of
2 cultch material, such as shell, limestone, crushed
3 concrete, et cetera, anything that oysters can attach to
4 that can be removed, or harvested, from the reef to
5 achieve management goals for the area.

6 We are trying to figure out how much material
7 can come out of the water, while still maintaining our
8 management objectives.

9 Again, the Shell Budget sampling is based on our
10 square meter samples that we are collecting. We get a lot
11 of the same information that we do with the others, but we
12 are also looking at the amount of live shell and available
13 cultch, the brown shell, and the amount of dead shell and
14 unavailable cultch, the black shell. We are looking at
15 the amount of live and dead oysters. Also, we are getting
16 length frequency of live and dead oysters, and, again, the
17 predators and the physical parameters and, also, the
18 historical population data for each reef.

19 This is a pretty detailed model. It's another
20 tool that we want to be able to use to be able to provide
21 the Commission with the information that is necessary for
22 y'all to make the right decision.

23 These are some of the sort of things that we
24 would be collecting. It's very similar to our regular
25 square meter sampling (indicating slide).

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1 The top center picture for those of you that
2 aren't aware, that is an oyster driller, or conch.

3 I was kind of encouraged by one of the fishermen
4 I spoke to yesterday that said, "What's this with these
5 conchs that have the crabs in them?"

6 I said, "What do you mean with the crabs in
7 them?"

8 He said, "There's a crab living in the shell."

9 I said, "That's a good thing. That's a hermit
10 crab. I prefer to see these shells occupied by a hermit
11 crabs which means oyster drills aren't in them and eating
12 the oysters."

13 We've got the computer screen up here. A lot of
14 this information is now being entered directly on the
15 laptop computers on the boat on the water.

16 This is our fecal coliform water sampling,
17 sanitary survey and shoreline surveys. Again, I've got a
18 time line at the bottom. This is one of the things that
19 we are constantly doing year round.

20 We have had five hundred and sixty-one fecal
21 coliform water samples collected, between May 1st and
22 September 10th, as well as one oyster tissue sample. A
23 total of forty-seven boat trips were required to collect
24 these samples.

25 An updated sanitary survey is being completed

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1 for the oyster growing waters of Area 4 Cat Island.

2 No new pollution sources, or potential pollution
3 sources, were identified, after an infield investigation
4 of Areas one, two and six.

5 Also, an infield marina dilution analysis of
6 Areas one and two was conducted, mapping any new actual,
7 or potential, pollution sources to the surrounding oyster
8 growing areas.

9 This is required by the Interstate Shellfish
10 Sanitation Conference, that we conduct these sanitary and
11 shoreline surveys.

12 Of course, the thing that most people think
13 about is our fecal coliform sampling, but we do some
14 ground proofing, driving around these areas and seeing if
15 we have any new houses, or do we have any new industry,
16 that may potentially adversely affect the growing areas,
17 and we have to do an annual update of that.

18 When they are doing the fecal coliform water
19 sampling, typically, they are going to start early in the
20 morning before the sun gets up, before the weather
21 conditions deteriorate. Even if it is going to be bad
22 weather throughout the day, usually, if they can get out
23 there early enough in the morning, they are able to
24 collect the water samples.

25 Also, sometimes, when they are sampling some of

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1 these areas, they are pretty long trips. If they leave
2 out of Long Beach Harbor and they are sampling areas one,
3 two and three which goes all the way over to the Gulfport
4 ship channel and all the way over to the mouth of the
5 Pearl River, that's about an eighty-one, or an eighty-two,
6 mile round trip. Oftentimes, they will do that maybe two
7 times, or more, per week.

8 I haven't checked with Marine Patrol, or anybody
9 else, to see if they have put that many miles on a boat,
10 but I would venture a bet that we probably put more miles
11 on this boat than any other one that we have.

12 This a current map of our harvest zones,
13 basically, going state line to state line, and it shows
14 the different conditions, or the classifications, of the
15 growing waters.

16 If you notice around Cat Island and also Ship
17 Island to Deer Island, we've got that colored as a
18 proposed classification that is under review. I'm very
19 hopeful that we are going to be able to upwardly classify
20 these areas.

21 Mr. Chairman, if you would pay attention to the
22 Deer Island area, that is inside Biloxi Bay.

23 When was the last time inside Biloxi Bay was
24 open for direct harvest?

25 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: It's been a number of

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1 our efforts to the north and to the west, but, with this
2 Biloxi Bay area that I'm hoping we can get, in the near
3 future, reclassified as conditionally approved, we can do
4 some work in there.

5 I've been here over thirty years, and that area
6 has not been open for direct harvest in that length of
7 time.

8 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I understand the channel
9 has been dredged into Graveline.

10 Would it be possible to relay some of those
11 oysters out of Graveline and out of Pascagoula and put on
12 this area and let them deperate?

13 SCOTT GORDON: Well, that is certainly one
14 possibility we could consider.

15 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Scott, are you still
16 sampling eastern Jackson County?

17 SCOTT GORDON: Yes, sir. We are sampling all of
18 the areas, now. We are getting them at least twice a
19 month.

20 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Just water samples.
21 Right?

22 SCOTT GORDON: Yes, sir.

23 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: So you're not looking at
24 the oysters over here?

25 JOE JEWELL: Like I mentioned earlier in the

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1 years, and I know where you are going with this.

2 Let me say that I'm very disappointed. We have
3 been putting a lot effort, for the last three years, in
4 the west end of the Sound. It looks like, to me, we need
5 to change directions.

6 Let me say this. One of the things that I was
7 pushing for, when I was in the oyster business -- that's
8 been a long time ago, and it's becoming very clear to me
9 that that was the right direction then -- is to open an
10 onshore depuration plant, say, in Pascagoula where we
11 could open the Pascagoula Reef and Graveline and harvest
12 directly, and go to a depuration plant on the river. Our
13 fishermen could do this. Oysters can be depurated in two
14 weeks, approved and sold.

15 It looks like to me we need to put our efforts
16 in an area that has a lot more fresh water, that kills
17 drills and get rid of some of that stuff. Either that, or
18 around St. Joe, or somewhere, put more effort into where
19 we are getting a lot more fresh water, or try to introduce
20 more fresh water to these reefs. We've got to do
21 something.

22 SCOTT GORDON: I agree with you. With some of
23 the salinity changes that we have seen, I'm hoping that it
24 is not going to be a long-term issue, but I try to be a
25 realist, as well. I think we probably will focus more of

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1 presentation, we are actively sampling the major reef
2 areas for that decision matrix that we will present next
3 month.

4 We are moving, now, off the major reef areas
5 into the areas, like, St. Stanislaus, and this week we are
6 going to start moving over into the Pascagoula-Graveline
7 area.

8 We are going to present that information next
9 month at the October Commission meeting.

10 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: You are going to take me
11 with you, Scott, when you come over here?

12 SCOTT GORDON: Yes, sir. You can see pelicans
13 soaking their toes, again.

14 Our harmful algal bloom monitoring, that is
15 required by the Model Ordinance of the National Shellfish
16 Sanitation Program, and that is to monitor productive
17 oyster reefs for harmful algal species. Most commonly,
18 people think of Red Tide.

19 No harmful algal blooms have been detected on
20 our reefs.

21 Sampling is conducted at two stations twice a
22 month. Those station locations are in the lower left-hand
23 corner of the screen. We have one of them near shore and
24 one offshore.

25 Six to ten samples are collected for reported

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1 fish kills, or even jubilees, and upon reports of unusual
2 water discoloration. The data is shared with the NOAA
3 Phytoplankton Monitoring Network.

4 Also, if we were to receive reports of adjacent
5 states having any red tide activity, or harmful algal
6 bloom activity, we would step up our sampling.

7 We have a close relationship with the Finfish
8 Bureau and, if they notice any discolorations of water in
9 their aerial surveys, we can ID those locations and go out
10 and get a water sample and have it analyzed to see what is
11 causing that.

12 Our Vibrio Management Plan. Mississippi's
13 Vibrio Management Plan has been updated in accordance with
14 the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference, National
15 Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance. That is
16 something we have to do every year.

17 Special projects that we have worked on are the
18 basket dredge-bag dredge comparison, the cable versus
19 chain comparison, and dermo sampling with Dr. Thomas
20 Soniat with the University of New Orleans, He has come
21 over and done three sampling trips, since May. Then,
22 additional weather station installations.

23 The weather stations. This is a map of where we
24 have weather stations installed, or where they are being
25 installed, right now. We have one in Pearl River County

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1 that is right off the Pearl River. We've got one at the
2 Waveland Wastewater plant. We've got one up at the
3 Mississippi State Forestry Commission on County Farm Road
4 in Harrison County.

5 We are trying to get up an operational weather
6 station at Red Creek Wildlife Management Area headquarters
7 in Stone County, and, then, at the Hancock County
8 Emergency Operations Center near the Kiln.

9 Once we get these things up and operational, we
10 want to have them online so the public will have access to
11 the weather data that is involved with that. I think much
12 more importantly, we hope this to be part of the weather
13 station coverage throughout the entire state of
14 Mississippi. Emergency operations, FEMA and MEMA, they
15 would like to be able to tap into this information.

16 I believe all of our bureaus would be able to
17 use this information to monitor rainfall information,
18 sunlight, and things like that so we can do some long-term
19 population trends with it.

20 The picture in the lower left corner is of a
21 trip we took to a few of the reef areas. Commissioner
22 Zimmerman went out with us, but there were also some
23 congressional staffers that had been looking at all of the
24 Gulf States.

25 We are continuing our sampling and, as Joe

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1 Jewell said, we will be investigating some other areas for
2 any possibilities.

3 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Do you get a lot of
4 stone crabs?

5 SCOTT GORDON: We don't get a lot of those, but
6 we do and we keep up with those, if we collect those in
7 the samples.

8 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: And they are oyster
9 predators?

10 SCOTT GORDON: Yes, they are.

11 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I didn't know that.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Scott, I have one
13 question, or comment. I appreciate all the effort that
14 you are going through to provide us with more information
15 because we've got some tough decisions to make.

16 Maybe this is Dr. Lucas' presentation, but, at
17 one point, we had talked about mapping the entire Sound to
18 determine where we have oysters and where we don't.

19 Is that still at ongoing, or upcoming, project?

20 SCOTT GORDON: Yes, but there are some areas
21 that I think just intuitively you don't need to look at.
22 If they are far away from any other water source, I think
23 it would be kind of futile to look at those because the
24 salinity is going to be so high that there is no way
25 oysters will be able to survive in that.

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1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I guess maybe I was
2 looking more at the eastern part of the State where it has
3 been years since we have done any cultivating, or
4 commercial harvesting, to determine what is there and
5 where it is.

6 SCOTT GORDON: I think Dr. Lucas, in her
7 presentation, she has some maps showing some locations of
8 the historic reef areas.

9 We have gone back to some things way back,
10 showing some islands and reefs and keys that we had no
11 idea of. This was the State of West Florida, back at that
12 time, or the territory of West Florida.

13 We are trying to get this information, as much
14 as we can, to be complete to be able to reach our million
15 sacks by 2025.

16 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We've got some tough
17 decisions. Thank you.

18 SCOTT GORDON: Thank you.

19 JOE JEWELL: You heard Scott talk about sort of
20 our methodology and what we do and a little bit on how we
21 do.

22 Dr. Lucas is going to talk a little bit as to
23 our rationale, why we do what we do.

24 KELLY LUCAS: Before I get started, Commissioner
25 Bosarge, I will address your questions.

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1 Through several of the restore-related things,
2 benefit habitat mapping has been suggested over and over
3 again, whether it's hard substrate, whether it's mud,
4 whether it's sand. That has been suggested. It has also
5 been recommended by the Governor's Oyster Council. There
6 are many people looking at ways to get that funded.

7 Good morning Commissioners, Director Miller, Ms.
8 Chestnut.

9 Thank you, Senator Wiggins for being here today.

10 To begin with, I think this was a late agenda
11 item. So y'all don't have a presentation in your
12 booklets, but you do have one on the screen in front of
13 you.

14 If you would like a hard copy of the
15 presentation, once we're done, Crystal Matta, if y'all
16 will let her know, she will be glad to send you a copy of
17 it.

18 To begin with, like Joe said, I'm going to
19 provide our rationale for the oyster-management approach.
20 To go through that, I'm going to walk us through how we
21 currently manage oysters. I'm going to talk about where
22 we're going and I'm going to talk about our plans to get
23 there.

24 What you are looking at here on your screen is
25 the eastern Mississippi Sound and it's a map of the

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1 to help solve this problem.

2 Through the Governor's Oyster Council, all the
3 group, each committee mentioned several of the threats
4 there are to oysters. If oysters don't grow in that area,
5 there is a reason they don't grow in that area, either the
6 environmental conditions have changed, such as water
7 quality, or sedimentation, water quantity, not enough
8 fresh water, substrate removal, harvesting, predation,
9 disease and, even in the case of just pure habitat loss
10 from a hurricane, or extreme episodic event, where the
11 whole reef gets buried, or it gets completely scoured up.

12 We know this, and the mandate of the Governor's
13 Oyster Council was to provide a report that provided us
14 some actions, some management goals to work with the
15 oyster industry, to give us some recommendations, some
16 things to move forward to where we think we are moving in
17 a positive direction and getting to that one million sacks
18 by 2025.

19 The Governor's report was published in June of
20 this year. The quotes that you see pulled out to the
21 right-hand side of your screen are eleven, or twelve,
22 quotes throughout the book with the page numbers, and each
23 of these quotes is telling us that we need to focus on
24 developing a sustainable management program for oysters.

25 Some of them are making suggestions about

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1 eastern Mississippi Sound. You have the legend there that
2 shows pink being current oysters and the hatch marks are
3 historic oyster reefs.

4 For the purpose of this map, the definition of
5 historic oyster reef is going to be oyster reefs that have
6 not been harvested in five years, or greater. It doesn't
7 mean that there is no resource available. Certainly there
8 are probably limited resources and we plan to go out and
9 investigate it, but those areas have not been open to
10 harvest, and they are listed as historic on these maps.

11 This, of course, is the western Mississippi
12 Sound, again, with the same scheme. You have the pink
13 being your current reefs that we harvest from and the
14 hatched marks being historic oyster reefs where we haven't
15 harvested oysters in five years, or greater.

16 This is nothing new. We have discussed this, at
17 least the past couple of years I've been here and
18 beforehand. You heard Commissioner Drummond mention the
19 eastern Mississippi Sound and Commissioner Bosarge
20 mentioned it. You have heard Commissioner Gollott mention
21 Graveline Bay. So we know this.

22 We also know that the oyster resource is in
23 decline, and this is part of what prompted the Governor to
24 issue an executive order to create the Governor's Oyster
25 Council because we know this and we need all hands on deck

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1 setting hard quotas. Some of them are saying things about
2 stock assessments, assessing the health. Some of them
3 look directly at the Shell Budget model, or at another no
4 net change model. They all indicate that they want us to
5 find a way to help manage these reefs sustainably into the
6 future.

7 What is our current management?

8 How do we currently manage?

9 What have we been looking at?

10 Well, we go out each year and we provide this
11 annual estimate of abundance. We do all these samples,
12 whether they are dive samples, or dredge tows, and we get
13 an estimate of what we feel are on the reefs we are going
14 to harvest from.

15 We take that number and we say, okay, there is X
16 amount on the reef, and, if we leave so much of a percent,
17 then, we should have a healthy population on that reef,
18 and, then, we go back and we look at historical harvest
19 and some of the same similarities that have happened over
20 time, some professional judgment, and we recommend these
21 sack limits, in order to prolong harvest, or to see how
22 long harvest can go.

23 Then, what we do is we monitor the catch per
24 unit effort through the season. What we are looking at
25 there is we are waiting for a point when you start to see

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1 that dip and you think you've captured what you can
2 capture because it is slowing down, and you recommend
3 closing the season.

4 The problem with this method is there is no
5 biological reference point. We have no way to measure
6 sustainability because we do not have a biological
7 reference point, when we use this method.

8 What is a biological reference point?

9 It's a management goal. What you are looking at
10 is just a value that represents the status of the stock,
11 or the population of the stock that is out there.

12 Typically, how you see it given to you and the
13 value you see are two types; either it's abundance, or a
14 bottom mass level, or it's a fishing mortality, or the
15 level of fishing mortality.

16 If somebody was going to say I'm going to
17 harvest sustainably under this method, they would say
18 something like, we're going to harvest at this level so
19 that we leave this much abundance, in order for that to
20 continue to reproduce, and that would be how they told you
21 that was measuring sustainability. That's what your
22 management goal would be.

23 The problem with that is oysters don't lend
24 themselves to easy reference. They have a lot of inner
25 annual variability, in terms of their abundance. They

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1 where they use abundance and they do set a hard target
2 rate. They have so many oyster fishermen. There is a
3 catch-share program. They open the season. Those oyster
4 fishermen go out, until their quota is reached. That's
5 how they do it.

6 They have another extreme down in Virginia where
7 they decided they just can't really control effort. They
8 will open an area and they will say, we're going to close
9 it down, when you've reached X, and, then, we're going to
10 close that reef down, and we're not going to open it again
11 for three to five years. We are just going to move on to
12 the next reef because we can't control the effort on those
13 reefs. It's kind of a crop rotation scheme.

14 Throughout the Gulf, all of us manage pretty
15 much in similar fashions, in terms of looking at the
16 abundance and trying to monitor catch per unit effort.
17 That's typically what most of the fisheries experts said.

18 Louisiana, however, was different. Several
19 years ago, they started testing the Shell Budget model.
20 They found it to be useful, and they have continued to
21 roll it over to additional reefs.

22 There are a lot of things, as fishery managers,
23 we cannot control. We cannot control mother nature, and
24 we cannot control some of the upstream things that happen
25 to produce water flow, and those are important things.

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1 can't swim out of the way. Environmental conditions
2 affect them greatly. They aren't long-lived species, by
3 any means.

4 What they do have is they also produce their own
5 habitat. They produce shell. They produce the habitat in
6 which they grow.

7 When the Governor's Oyster Council started
8 talking, some of these recommendations were already
9 floating around about sustainability.

10 Our team, all the employees, Shellfish Bureau,
11 all hands on deck, we got together and we started
12 discussing this, with people up the eastern coast and
13 throughout the Gulf. We discussed it with fisheries
14 managers. We talked to academics. We talked to
15 practitioners. We talked to people who manage their own
16 reefs. We talked to everybody.

17 We talked about two reference points that kind
18 of came out in common. One of them was abundance where
19 the goal here would be the harvest and the natural
20 mortality can't exceed the recruitment into the market
21 size oyster fishery, and we talked about substrate where
22 shell loss cannot exceed natural plus replaced shell.

23 When we talked to fisheries managers, we were
24 trying to see how they managed and how it worked for them.

25 Up in Delaware Bay, they ended up with something

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1 The two things we can control are fishing
2 mortality and the substrate removal.

3 We ask ourselves how much stock can we remove,
4 without impacting sustainability?

5 We do this by going out and doing these samples
6 to measure this annual abundance and to get an estimate of
7 the stock that is out there.

8 We also want to know how much shell can we
9 remove, with no net loss of reef shell?

10 This has required a little bit of additional
11 sampling that you heard Scott mention to you, in terms of
12 calculating the amount of shell that was on the reef, or
13 the amount of cultch that was on the reef, and kind of
14 assessing the quality of that cultch, as well.

15 We calculated something for you and we actually
16 did this for the Governor's Oyster Council.

17 A Mississippi sack of oysters, when they come
18 off the reef, has roughly cost you about four dollars and
19 forty cents to put that amount of shell back on the reef.
20 That's not the cost of just buying the shell. That's the
21 cost throughout the entire process and, of course, that
22 changes as the market changes.

23 We all know how hard shell is to come by. Every
24 time we've done a cultch plant, we put a preference on
25 shell, and most times don't even receive a small amount of

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1 shell. The shell kind of leaves the system here.
 2 In the Shell Budget model, a sustainable harvest
 3 looks like no net loss of reef shell. In other words, the
 4 loss of shell from removing your live oysters and your
 5 cultch by harvesting, in combination with the loss of the
 6 natural shell that occurs on the reef in general, must
 7 equal any gains from shell growth. That would be what
 8 sustainable harvest looks like, under the Shell Budget
 9 model.

10 The model is housed at UNO. Dr. Thomas Soniat
 11 has allowed us to access the robust version of this model,
 12 and there is also another model on line that you can kind
 13 of walk through and it shows you how it works. It's kind
 14 of a simplistic model, but there is a robust model on the
 15 back end that we can enter this information into, all the
 16 information that Scott mentioned you.

17 What happens, after you enter this information,
 18 is it gives you a number, or an amount that you can
 19 remove, without affecting the sustainability of that reef,
 20 or causing that reef to shrink any.

21 The harvest estimates are generated by reefs, or
 22 aggregates of reefs. It does provide a biological
 23 reference point so that you can measure sustainability,
 24 and it aids to stop harvest when that target is reached.
 25 It also helps us to conserve shell and conserve habitat.

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1 The plan is to work these numbers through the
 2 system and use the information that the Shellfish Bureau
 3 has been given and put it into this model to help us
 4 manage in the future.

5 Doing this because sustainability and harvest,
 6 it's the benchmark. It's the way you should go. It helps
 7 you sell your product, as well.

8 The Governor's Oyster Council, all these people
 9 that got together, this was their recommendation for us to
 10 try to manage this resource as sustainably as possible, in
 11 order to help with the restoration and the resiliency of
 12 the oyster industry.

13 If you have any questions, I will be happy to
 14 address them.

15 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: What was the four
 16 dollars and forty cents?

17 KELLY LUCAS: If you take a sack of oysters off
 18 the reef, that is the amount that it would cost you to put
 19 the same amount of reef shell back on the reef.

20 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: It's expensive.

21 KELLY LUCAS: It is expensive.

22 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: In the last three years,
 23 haven't we put a lot of shell material out, a lot more
 24 than what we have harvested off of these reefs in the west
 25 end?

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1 KELLY LUCAS: We haven't put shell. Now, we
 2 have put cultch material into the reef, yes, but not
 3 shell. There is a value in having shell and having the
 4 ability of the oysters to grow vertically as well and
 5 create that habitat that they need to get above the
 6 sedimentation levels (indicating).

7 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Are you finding that
 8 sedimentation on the Pass Marianne and Telegraph and those
 9 reefs?

10 KELLY LUCAS: If I got to look at some of the
 11 video data and talk to some of the divers that are down
 12 there, but, typically, anytime a boat, or wave, or
 13 whatever, is going to kick up sediment, and, when you have
 14 those thin layers, like a mono kind of thin layer where
 15 there is not really a lot of vertical relief, the
 16 sedimentation can just sit.

17 If you're an oyster spat, if you're a teeny tiny
 18 little thing, one little speck of sand is like a mountain
 19 to you. I mean, it's in your way, and you are not going
 20 to settle there (indicating).

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Can you back up one
 22 slide?

23 KELLY LUCAS: Yes, he can. I can't.

24 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I didn't quite take in
 25 everything, when you said sustainable harvest. I was

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1 wanting to read that, again.

2 KELLY LUCAS: It's a no net loss of shell is how
 3 you measure the sustainability.

4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That is going to be
 5 tough.

6 KELLY LUCAS: It is, but they produce their own
 7 shell. Essentially, you've got a replacement rate going
 8 on. As long as you are equal to what you have put out
 9 there, or what you plan on putting out there, and what is
 10 being removed, that shell growth would be equal. That's
 11 going to be your equation.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: In any of the sampling we
 13 have done, are we seeing any of the cultch material we
 14 have been putting out?

15 Is that coming up in the samples?

16 KELLY LUCAS: When we went out with the group
 17 that Scott Gordon mentioned, we did. You would see it on
 18 the limestone, anything that is down there, but, yes, you
 19 can see it coming up with the limestone.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good.

21 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Kelly, this management
 22 scheme, is it a proven scheme?

23 Has it been tried before?

24 KELLY LUCAS: It has been tried in Louisiana.
 25 Like I said, they tested it and they continue to roll it

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1 out to additional reefs just because it is intensive kind
2 of sampling.

3 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Has it been tried on the
4 east coast, Chesapeake Bay?

5 KELLY LUCAS: No. On the east coast, they tend
6 to try to use the abundance, in terms of recruitment, and
7 a lot of that comes down to the fact that, in some of
8 their areas, they are more recruitment limited, than we
9 are, typically, in the Gulf of Mexico, especially the fact
10 that we typically have two spat sets a year, and that is
11 not something that occurs on the eastern coast.

12 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Sounds good.

13 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Are you saying they
14 depend on relaying more?

15 KELLY LUCAS: In some areas. In Delaware, they
16 have a relay scheme where they know upriver they have some
17 slower growth of oysters and they will set a target to
18 relay from, but they don't relay more than that reef can
19 replace. In that case, they do it like a Shell Budget
20 model type situation where they only take off the amount
21 which that reef can replace. That's where your no net
22 loss comes in, on the east coast.

23 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Kelly, what about oyster
24 aquaculture?

25 KELLY LUCAS: We are looking at oyster

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1 aquaculture. That was one of the recommendations, in the
2 Governor's Oyster Council, and we are looking at that.

3 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: It was quite impressive,
4 that scheme they've got over in Alabama.

5 KELLY LUCAS: It is. It's a great way and it's
6 an additional way. If you're doing off-bottom aquaculture
7 in the Sound, you can do it in areas where there is higher
8 salinity because it's off the bottom and you don't have
9 the predation.

10 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: They were really clean.

11 KELLY LUCAS: I know, and the half shell market
12 is a growing market. If you've ever been to these raw
13 bars, you may pay three dollars an oyster.

14 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: It's just probably too
15 expensive to do it, right now.

16 KELLY LUCAS: We're looking into it. We are
17 taking three areas. We are running the samples for those
18 areas to make sure the water quality and the bottom is
19 good, and, then, we are working the permits. It is really
20 the permits that take the longest time.

21 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Kelly, have we thought
22 about onshore depuration?

23 Do you have an opinion on that?

24 KELLY LUCAS: That was one of the suggestions,
25 in the Oyster Council book. I think that is one of the

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1 methods that could be valuable. Like you said, if it's a
2 water quality issue and there is a way to depurate these
3 oysters and improve that condition, it's great.

4 I also noticed, when we took the trip to
5 Maryland, one of the companies had a patent. They put the
6 oysters in a salinity bath and they market them to
7 different markets.

8 They may put one of the oysters in a salinity
9 of, like, twenty-three to twenty-five parts, and they
10 leave them there for a couple of days to soak up that
11 salinity, and, then, they market those oysters as being
12 one thing, and they take another batch of oysters from the
13 same reef and they put it in a bath of, like, thirty parts
14 per thousand, and, then, they market those oysters under a
15 different name. It certainly can affect the quality of
16 the oyster, by doing different mechanisms that you are
17 speaking of.

18 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Thank you, Kelly.

20 JOE JEWELL: I know there are a lot of questions
21 and we presented a lot of materials here today. I
22 encourage y'all to look through the presentations and if,
23 between here and the next Commission meeting, y'all have
24 any questions, contact Director Miller, myself, Dr. Lucas,
25 or the staff, and we would be glad to answer any questions

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1 that you have.

2 I think, at our October meeting, we will have
3 the presentation that y'all are more familiar with. We
4 will have all the complete data, and you will be able to
5 make a better and a more informed decision, at that time.

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Is this information going
7 to be entered into the model, and, then, that will be
8 presented at the next meeting?

9 JOE JEWELL: We hope to have most of that. Like
10 I said, we had the scaled-down model where we have been
11 manipulating the data. We now have access to the robust
12 model, like Dr. Lucas explained, and we are currently
13 entering that data. It's a complex process by which we do
14 that, but we hope to have that data available at the
15 October meeting.

16 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: If we, as a Commission,
17 should decide to have a little workshop before the next
18 meeting, is that a possibility?

19 JOE JEWELL: I think so. I think we absolutely
20 could. We do have some data entered into the model, and
21 we could provide that data to the Commission and update
22 the Commission on how the model works, the inputs and the
23 outputs. We would be glad to do that.

24 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right.

25 JOE JEWELL: Thank you.

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1 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Next we have Mr. Jan
 2 Boyd.
 3 JAN BOYD: Good morning Mr. Chairman,
 4 Commissioners, Director Miller, Ms. Chestnut.
 5 Coastal Resources Management has two action
 6 items for your consideration this morning. Willa Brantley
 7 will be presenting both of those.
 8 WILLA BRANTLEY: Good morning. We have two
 9 requests for modifications to permits issued recently.
 10 The first one is a modification request by the
 11 Jackson County Board of Supervisors. This is located on
 12 Simmons Bayou in Ocean Springs. It's in the General Use
 13 District, and Seymour Engineering is their agent.
 14 They will be maintenance dredging within an
 15 existing navigation channel, two thousand two hundred and
 16 seventy-five feet in length by thirty feet in width.
 17 The existing depth ranges from zero feet
 18 currently to five feet, and they are going to a proposed
 19 depth of five feet.
 20 They are removing approximately fifty-six
 21 hundred cubic yards of material, and they are requesting a
 22 ten-year maintenance dredging permit so that if any storms
 23 come in, they can go back to that five foot depth.
 24 The material will be taken to a beneficial use
 25 site.

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1 It does require a waterfront location, and the
 2 project will not change the location of the navigation
 3 channels and should not affect any of the natural scenic
 4 qualities.
 5 It was put on public notice in the Sun Herald
 6 and the Mississippi Press, as required, and no public
 7 comments were received.
 8 DEQ is reviewing the project.
 9 Archives and History submitted no comments on
 10 this project.
 11 Secretary of State has stated that the project
 12 will require a tidelands lease.
 13 wildlife, Fisheries and Parks asks that best
 14 management practices be utilized.
 15 Our recommendation is that the Commission
 16 approve the permit to be valid for ten years, with the
 17 following conditions:
 18 Anytime the county needs to come in and do any
 19 maintenance dredging back to those permitted dimensions,
 20 they would notify DMR when they are going to do the
 21 dredging and how many cubic yards would be removed.
 22 They also need to have the beneficial use site
 23 approved by DMR, prior to commencement of dredging
 24 operations.
 25 We are waiting on clearance by DEQ.

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1 This is the area showing Simmons Bayou. It will
 2 come up that main channel and go around the curve and go
 3 that main channel that is to the south of that little
 4 oxbow area (indicating map).
 5 This is just showing the neighborhood. I-10 is
 6 to the north, Government Street runs along there, and
 7 Beachview is over to the east (indicating aerial view).
 8 There is the exact path that the dredging will
 9 take (indicating map).
 10 Decision factors. The project will serve a
 11 higher public purpose. It will restore safe navigational
 12 depths and provide public access to and use of the
 13 waterway.
 14 It is an allowable use within the General Use
 15 District.
 16 We don't expect any precedent setting effects.
 17 There are similar projects that have been approved.
 18 There will be a temporary increase in turbidity,
 19 during dredging, and a loss of benthic organisms, as
 20 usual, with our dredging projects.
 21 Best management practices will be used, during
 22 all stages of the dredging, to reduce any adverse impacts.
 23 No alternative sites were considered. Since
 24 this is maintenance dredging, they are following the path
 25 of the existing channel and no new areas will be dredged.

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1 Are there any questions?
 2 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I'll make a motion, Mr.
 3 Chairman.
 4 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: To approve it?
 5 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: To approve Jackson
 6 County's dredging project.
 7 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a second?
 8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second it.
 9 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a
 10 second.
 11 Any discussion?
 12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes. I have a question.
 13 About how long do they think it is going to take
 14 to do this project?
 15 WILLA BRANTLEY: I really don't know. They
 16 didn't say. I think they are dredging, right now, in the
 17 area, and they expect to just keep on going with this new
 18 area.
 19 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a
 20 second.
 21 All those in favor say aye.
 22 (All in favor.)
 23 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?
 24 (None opposed.)
 25 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

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1 WILLA BRANTLEY: Our next modification request
2 comes from the Hancock County Board of Supervisors.

3 It's located waterward of the existing seawall
4 from just north of Lakeshore Drive to the existing sand
5 beach, and it's on Beach Boulevard in Bay St. Louis.

6 It's in the General Use District, and their
7 agent is Compton Engineering.

8 Here's a map. The two blue boxes point to the
9 end points of where the sidewalk will be put in
10 (indicating).

11 They will be filling a total of zero point five
12 five acres for the pedestrian pathway, and they have
13 requested a variance to Chapter VIII, Section 2, Part
14 111.0.1 of the Mississippi Coastal Program which states
15 that filling of coastal wetlands is discouraged.

16 You will remember that even though this is sand
17 beach, it qualifies, by the statute, as coastal wetlands,
18 and that's why we have to do a permit.

19 This is a diagram showing where the sidewalk
20 will be, in relation to the seawall (indicating).

21 Next is a photo of the area. There is a
22 sidewalk in place. This will be widening that sidewalk.

23 The project does serve a higher public purpose,
24 by providing a safe place for pedestrians and cyclists to
25 travel along Beach Boulevard and by improving traffic

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1 flow.

2 It is allowable within the General Use District.

3 Again, they have requested a variance to the
4 Coastal Program. They have justified it under Chapter
5 VIII, Section 2, Part 1.E.2.c.iii, by stating that no
6 feasible alternative sites are available. There is a
7 significant public benefit in the activity and a public
8 hearing was held on August 27, 2015.

9 Similar projects have been approved. We don't
10 expect any precedent setting effects with this project.

11 The area where the proposed pathway will be
12 constructed has already been filled with sand for the
13 purpose of beach nourishment and creation. We are not
14 filling any water bottoms. However, we are going from
15 sand which is permeable to an impermeable concrete
16 surface.

17 The full extent of the project. There are no
18 plans for development beyond the already described
19 regulated activities.

20 They did consider one alternative design and the
21 no-action alternative. They looked at going north of
22 Beach Boulevard, but this would require them to obtain
23 some property that is held by private parties. It also
24 would involve working around utility lines, and there were
25 some vegetated wetlands on the north side of the road that

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1 they wanted to avoid.

2 They will be using best management practices to
3 avoid adverse impacts.

4 They did not look at any alternative sites
5 because it is very site specific to provide a walkway in
6 that location.

7 It does not require a waterfront location for a
8 pedestrian pathway, in general. However, since the
9 purpose of this walkway is to provide safe access to a
10 heavily traveled area of the beach, in this instance, it
11 does require a waterfront location.

12 We don't expect this to affect the coastal
13 wetlands viewshed, and it will actually improve public
14 access to the shore.

15 Public notice was published in the Sun Herald
16 and the Sea Coast Echo as required. We received no public
17 comments from that.

18 DEQ and Archives and History are reviewing the
19 project. We don't have any comments from them so far.

20 The Secretary of State has stated that the
21 project will require a tidelands lease.

22 wildlife, Fisheries and Parks recommended that
23 best management practices be utilized.

24 We held a public hearing, on August 27th, at the
25 Hancock County Board of Supervisors Board Room and no one

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1 attended and no comments were submitted.

2 Based upon department review and evaluation, we
3 recommend that the Commission approve the applicant's
4 request, with the following conditions:

5 That they execute a tidelands lease with the
6 Secretary of State's office.

7 That we receive clearance from DEQ for the
8 project.

9 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: It does require a
10 tidelands lease?

11 WILLA BRANTLEY: Secretary of State said it
12 does. I believe it will be exempt. So they won't owe any
13 fee on it.

14 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: who pays for it, Bay St.
15 Louis?

16 WILLA BRANTLEY: No. I think it doesn't have a
17 fee. It's just the paperwork.

18 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a motion?

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll make a motion to
21 accept the staff's recommendations.

22 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I'll second the motion,
23 Mr. Chairman.

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

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1 Any more discussion?
 2 (No response.)
 3 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: All those in favor say
 4 aye.
 5 (All in favor.)
 6 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?
 7 (None opposed.)
 8 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.
 9 WILLA BRANTLEY: Thank you. That's all we have.
 10 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.
 11 Next we have Finance, Joe Spraggins.
 12 JOE SPRAGGINS: Good morning Commissioners,
 13 Director Miller, Ms. Chestnut.
 14 If you look at that slide, you can see that we
 15 have received about five million dollars, a little over
 16 five million dollars so far in the budget and, in that,
 17 two million and something has come from the State.
 18 We have about three point three million left in
 19 the budget, as we speak, right now, that has come in this
 20 year.
 21 Any questions on that slide?
 22 (No response.)
 23 JOE SPRAGGINS: On the next slide, looking
 24 across, ninety-one point nine percent left in Operating
 25 Budget and ninety-seven point five in Tidelands. Ninety-

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1 three point six percent total.
 2 We have only spent a little over two million
 3 dollars out of the thirty-two million allocated.
 4 Any questions?
 5 (No response.)
 6 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Mr. Spraggins.
 7 Next we have Office of Restoration, George
 8 Ramseur.
 9 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Good morning Commissioners,
 10 Director Miller, Counselor Chestnut.
 11 I guess this is the second presentation from
 12 this office, since we were assembled a couple of years
 13 ago. Our primary duties are the growing and coordination
 14 of recreation activities, within DMR and within our
 15 partner agencies like DEQ and the Corps, as well as with
 16 outside funding opportunities like BP. We also manage the
 17 CIAP and Heritage Programs which we reported on, on a cold
 18 day last winter in Bay St. Louis.
 19 Today we are going to focus primarily on
 20 restoration.
 21 Why are we talking about that?
 22 This is actually an older map from Kyle Schmidt
 23 at DEQ in the nineties, basically showing land loss along
 24 the Sound and the Mississippi Coast in red and some gains
 25 in green.

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1 One thing I want to point out is most of the
 2 green is manmade gain, and most of the red represents
 3 habitat loss, marshes and other features that help support
 4 our fisheries and recreation.
 5 One of the more dramatic examples of this kind
 6 of Coastal change is the land loss over near Point St. Joe
 7 and, here, we see that twenty-three feet per year was an
 8 average between the fifties and the late sixties. The
 9 average up through about 2010 was thirty-one feet per
 10 year, but we are pretty sure the rate is exceeding that in
 11 many places in Hancock County, at this point.
 12 More to the point, since we are in Jackson
 13 County today, once again, this map indicates conditions up
 14 to about 1990, although we realize that since that period
 15 of time, we probably lost a couple thousand more acres in
 16 Coastal Mississippi.
 17 This shows, once again, the shoreline losses and
 18 habitat losses in red and some gains.
 19 You can see that Singing River Island is a gain
 20 and, of course, a lot of that is manmade, although the
 21 Corps has recently started a four hundred and twenty-five
 22 acre beneficial use project surrounding that.
 23 One of the most powerful tools for addressing
 24 land loss, in a situation like this, is beneficial use of
 25 dredge materials and you-all have no doubt heard something

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1 about this program, such as through Willa's presentation,
 2 in reference to dredge materials going to beneficial use,
 3 and there have been other references in Commission
 4 meetings in the past.
 5 What I want to sort of re-present is that this
 6 is actually the second version of the master plan for
 7 beneficial use, and the slogan out to the side, in my
 8 interpretation, basically says that when you've got the
 9 ground washing out from under you, you need to step up
 10 with what tools you have and try to address it.
 11 Now, I'm going to give a broad and sort of
 12 historical overview of the Beneficial Use Program.
 13 The Beneficial Use Program is actually in the
 14 Office of Coastal Resources Management, and it is now
 15 being managed by Jared Harris.
 16 Jared has been running the program for about six
 17 months. I handed it off to him, having worked with it
 18 from Katrina up until Jared picked it up, and he is doing
 19 a great job with administrating the program and giving a
 20 lot of detailed attention to it that it really needed,
 21 after functioning for about four, or five, years.
 22 This is a list of program fundamentals. I'm not
 23 going to read through every one of them, but it basically
 24 centers around the fact that this is an ongoing trend.
 25 Every morning, when we wake up, we've got more

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1 water and less land than we had when we went to sleep.
 2 The total losses are somewhere around ten
 3 thousand acres for Coastal Mississippi, since the fifties.
 4 We see no reason to expect that trend to reduce. It's
 5 worse in Hancock County because we have subsidence, or
 6 what I like to say is Hancock County is being dragged down
 7 with Louisiana.

8 We dredge quite a bit in Mississippi, enough to
 9 fill the Superdome once, or twice, a year usually, and
 10 that's enough to build back more than we are losing
 11 annually, by most calculations. We figure two hundred
 12 acres a year kind of average loss. We could easily build
 13 back a thousand acres a year, in some cases. It depends
 14 on the location.

15 Sort of the last item I added on there is that
 16 we are finding out on a lot of these projects the
 17 beneficial use, rather than being an expense, can actually
 18 be done for less money than hauling dredge material out in
 19 the ocean and throwing it away. That's another reason BU
 20 is a very economic tool.

21 This is a time line and I'm not going to be able
 22 to read that very well off the screen, but I just want to
 23 give you sort of the history of the program, as it exists
 24 up to this point.

25 Essentially, it came together in February of

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1 for a while after Katrina.

2 We really had the reconstitution of the program,
 3 in June of 2007, with the first meeting of what we call
 4 the BUG, or the Beneficial Use Group.

5 One of the first major accomplishments of the
 6 BUG was to advise the legislation and, actually, in July
 7 of 2010, when that became effective, beneficial use is
 8 required in most circumstances for quantities over twenty-
 9 five hundred cubic yards.

10 Also, about July of 2010, the original Deer
 11 Island BU site that was started back in 2002 was
 12 transferred to MDMR control which means that we could then
 13 put material into it.

14 The next major step in program was in March of
 15 2011. The Greenwood project was transferred over to MDMR
 16 so we could also use that site in our BU program.

17 In September of 2011, the first expansion of the
 18 Deer Island BU series was permitted. We call that DIMR2.

19 In October 2012, we revised the Master Plan, and
 20 that was the cover I showed you on the earlier slide. It
 21 still is a pretty good comprehensive view of this program,
 22 where it's going.

23 We no longer have printed copies of that plan,
 24 but it can be emailed, or I can print copies. If you-all
 25 are interested in seeing that, please let me know and I

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1 2002. DMR and the Mobile Corps have been co-chairs of the
 2 effort, since that time.

3 Now, in September of 2002, there was a
 4 cooperative agreement put together to do the Deer Island
 5 Beneficial Use Site, between the Port of Biloxi, DMR and
 6 the Corps. and, then, they also produced the original
 7 Beneficial Use Master Plan, in September of 2002.

8 Construction was started on the Deer Island
 9 Project, the first BU site, October of 2002, and a sand
 10 dike was put out there and completed, in March of 2003.
 11 Material, at that point, could be placed behind the dike,
 12 but that fill was not complete until right before Katrina.

13 Right after the Deer Island dike was completed,
 14 the next major step in the program was the permitting of a
 15 smaller twenty-eight acre site at Greenwood Island.

16 We will have pictures of all these sites in just
 17 a minute.

18 The original Beneficial Use legislation was
 19 passed in June of 2005, and, then, as I mentioned, in
 20 August of 2005 right before Katrina, the Deer Island fill,
 21 in other words, the pumping of dredge material into the
 22 site was completed. Then, we had Katrina, August 29th of
 23 2005.

24 Now, along with many other aspects of the
 25 agency, the BU program kind of got washed into the weeds

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1 will get one to you.

2 The next major step was in February of 2013.
 3 The permit to do the initial restoration project north of
 4 Round Island was issued.

5 I don't have any points on the time line since
 6 then, and I'm probably going to let Jared help with a lot
 7 of that stuff, when we get to that point.

8 The main thing is we have been implementing the
 9 second Deer Island project, doing some work on the first
 10 one that the Corps built, as well as filling out Greenwood
 11 Island and working on Round Island.

12 You have probably seen this picture before and I
 13 won't spend a lot of time on it, but the BU sites are on
 14 the east end on the top. The first site is sort of
 15 triangular shaped and the newer site is just up a little
 16 bit and is a bit more irregular. The Corps project on the
 17 west tip and also on the south shore are clearly visible,
 18 but the main thing is Deer Island has been built back to
 19 its roughly 1850 extent, at this point.

20 This is an example of how we can do a lot of
 21 manipulation of coastal lands, habitats and marshes, and,
 22 through that, we can have some chance of affecting
 23 salinities, water qualities and other issues which are
 24 obviously important for other matters, like, fisheries
 25 (indicating photograph).

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1 Here is a closeup showing the first site built
2 by the Corps, shaped like a triangle on the right, and,
3 then, the newer site just to its northwest. We are still
4 pumping material into that, as we speak. It is coming out
5 of Davis and Simmons bayous. Other material went in there
6 earlier out of Ocean Springs Harbor and some other
7 locations (indicating photograph).

8 So you can see what this looks like at ground
9 level, this is the first site, DIMR1. It was filled out
10 by us, in 2013, and this just shows some white pelicans
11 taking off from one of the interior ponds. It is a nice-
12 looking site. We are still working to get some of the
13 hydrology right on it, but it is going to be a big benefit
14 to fisheries and other ecological concerns in the future
15 (indicating photograph).

16 This is Greenwood Island. It's a smaller site.
17 It's right to the west of Bayou Casotte. It is partially
18 filled, at this point. Over on the east side are some
19 mounds that were pumped in and are vegetating very well.
20 You probably can't tell that, in this shot, but we are now
21 working on filling in the west end. This has been a good
22 place to experiment with the placement of small dredge
23 portions (indicating photograph).

24 Here is a closeup of the east end of Greenwood.
25 This is all vegetated in naturally. The idea was to pump

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1 material into mounds so you have tidal flow throughout the
2 project (indicating photograph).

3 This is the Round Island Project. Round Island
4 is washing away rapidly. The natural island, in the lower
5 part of the picture, has probably got another fifteen
6 years left in it, based on the rates we have calculated.
7 We are soaring up on the north shoal which was probably an
8 island maybe three hundred years ago, and this is the
9 result of placement of material that came out of VETERANS
10 Halter in the last couple of years (indicating
11 photograph).

12 Right now, it's just a seventeen acre sand
13 island, that round feature, but it was the largest
14 shorebird rookery in Mississippi this year and it is still
15 housing thousands of pelicans and other species
16 (indicating photograph).

17 This is a closeup showing what was really just a
18 pumped sand pile with developing vegetation, pools and
19 other features, and, then, you can see some dikes that
20 were extended, when the amount of material coming out of
21 Halter was calculated to be originally about three times
22 what ultimately came out. In part, the way this project
23 is, now, is the result of some adaptation to delays and a
24 reduced amount of sediment coming out of the dredge
25 project (indicating photograph).

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1 This slide really gets to the main purpose of
2 this presentation which is that we would really like to
3 get all you Commissioners out to one, or all, of these
4 sites, at some point in the near future.

5 I spoke with Commissioner Bosarge earlier, and
6 he was good enough to get us out in July. Here is Ali
7 Leggett in the front with one of the residents of the
8 island, at the time (indicating photograph).

9 We will be contacting you, in the near future,
10 to see if you can get out and have a visit on one of these
11 sites.

12 Round Island is due to expand probably in about
13 a year, and we would really like everybody to have both a
14 ground view, and, then, looks as the project expands into
15 the future.

16 Any questions?

17 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Yes, George.

18 I've had numerous people ask me why don't we put
19 rocks on the east end of Deer Island where we built that
20 end to keep it from eroding again.

21 Do you have an answer for that?

22 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Yes, I do. In general, we are
23 trying to use sand as containment, or protection, for all
24 of these projects.

25 Coming from an ecological standpoint, we don't

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1 really have any native rock shorelines in Mississippi,
2 but, also, you get a variety of habitat benefits out of
3 the sand and you, also, get some human benefits, including
4 recreation. If somebody is not watching when they are
5 doing in a boat, it's a lot better for them to come up on
6 sand than it is for them to come up on a hard structure.

7 Rock is easier in a way. I mean, it gives you a
8 defined bit of protection, but it is also more expensive.
9 You can rebuild a sand dike a bunch of times, before you
10 get to the price point on a rock dike.

11 It's been a judgment call. Most of our permits
12 have a provision that we can use rock, or hard structure,
13 if we need to, but, at this point, we are really working
14 on using sand where possible.

15 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: George, what is going on
17 with Round Island, now?

18 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Well, at this point, both DEQ
19 and the Corps have become very interested in helping us
20 finish the existing permit on that project.

21 The round section you saw on the photograph is
22 just about seventeen acres, but we actually have a permit
23 to build about two hundred acres out there.

24 Now, there is proposed expansion dredging in the
25 Pascagoula channel which could generate about a million

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1 yards of new cut material which is especially valuable.
2 It's not the stuff that washed into the channel. This is
3 brand new dirt being dug to deepen and widen the channel,
4 and the Corps, DEQ, us, nobody wants to take that material
5 out and throw it away.

6 Round Island is really the only permitted site
7 big enough to accommodate that much material. At the same
8 time, it gets it all built out, and we can start
9 developing the habitat, mostly marsh, on the inside.

10 we would build the dike must bigger than the
11 sort of washed over one you saw in the picture, and, then,
12 pump the material into the inside. It should give us
13 maybe a hundred and fifty acres of marsh in the interior,
14 with little bayous and pools in there.

15 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: One more question.

17 I had heard that when they dredge the Gulfport
18 channel, they are going to pipe it over to the Louisiana
19 marsh.

20 Wouldn't we be better off keeping that material
21 in Mississippi and using it?

22 GEORGE RAMSEUR: I'm glad you asked that
23 question. I decided that is probably going to be a full
24 discussion maybe in the next Commission meeting, but we
25 will be glad to go into it.

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1 we talk about these projects and, until you have
2 the opportunity to go out and actually see it, that's when
3 it really rings home. I appreciate the opportunity to get
4 to go out and to look and see what is going on, on Round
5 Island, and what we can do. To see the habitat, that was
6 unreal, and I encourage any of the other Commissioners, if
7 you have a chance, go because the hands on really shows
8 you what we are doing.

9 With the proposed deepening and widening of the
10 Pascagoula Ship Channel, do you think all of that material
11 will be able to be used, in other words, it will be
12 suitable?

13 GEORGE RAMSEUR: It should be. Of course, we
14 have a suitability testing program for beneficial use, and
15 some material from up in Casotte in certain areas has been
16 marginally over limits on some things, but, of course,
17 this will all be tested and assessed, but we are not
18 expecting material from out in the channel to have an
19 issue.

20 More importantly, most of this, being newly cut
21 material, new cut material is generally clean. There is
22 not really any compounds we know of that float through the
23 water, and, then, are able to get into the substrate. It
24 is the best kind of material we could possibly get for a
25 project.

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1 The Biloxi marsh is basically what we are
2 looking at there. Canvassing all our guys in Fisheries
3 and looking at the dynamics, Biloxi marsh, it is in
4 Louisiana, but it is one of the biggest bangs for the buck
5 for us because apparently what I understand is happening
6 is that as the Biloxi marsh breaks up, it is allowing
7 fresh water out of Lake Borgne to shunt into the
8 Chandelier Sound, rather than keeping it on course and
9 into our area.

10 I'm just looking at some of the oyster drill
11 stuff that Scott had. I don't know that there is a direct
12 relation, but we've got things like that, that we know, on
13 a large scale, are affecting the balance of fresh water
14 and salinity in the western sound.

15 Gulfport, I think before, pumped material down
16 to Chandelier in water that was basically too deep to help
17 that situation much.

18 The plan is to try barging it down and pumping
19 it into an area of marsh that settled out, similar to what
20 they do in Texas and western Louisiana, and see if we can
21 build a couple thousand acres of marsh back, in the middle
22 of that complex.

23 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you. I appreciate
24 it.

25 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I have a comment.

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1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That will be great
2 because, like you say, Round Island is deteriorating at an
3 alarming rate.

4 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Right. If we don't build it,
5 it is not going to be there.

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: George, we look forward
8 to the next meeting, when you give your presentation.

9 GEORGE RAMSEUR: We will talk about Biloxi Marsh
10 and have some maps, in your packet.

11 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Anyone else?

12 (No response.)

13 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, sir.

14 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Next we have Melissa,
16 Public Affairs.

17 MELISSA SCALLAN: Good morning Commissioners,
18 Director Miller, Ms. Chestnut.

19 The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
20 was mentioned seventy-seven times in local, state and
21 national media, since the last Commission meeting.

22 Some of the items we got the most attention for
23 was the ground breaking of the Marine Education Center at
24 GCRL, the opening of the Charnley-Norwood House for tours
25 and Marine Patrol's involvement last week in helping to

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1 put the fire out at Cat Island.
2 I want to take a moment to introduce you to the
3 new member of our Public Affairs team, Charmaine
4 Schmermund.
5 Charmaine joined us last week. She is going to
6 be our Events Coordinator. She spent eight years at USM
7 in Long Beach, in the Public Relations office there. She
8 is going to be a great asset to us, we believe. Say hello
9 to her, whenever you get a moment.
10 Jill Zednick, a Biologist in the Office of
11 Marine Fisheries, set a bowfishing record for a flounder.
12 You may have seen this on the news. She caught a flounder
13 that weighed six point four four pounds, while she was on
14 a bowfishing charter in Jackson County. She only began
15 bowfishing in April. We were impressed with Jill.
16 I mentioned the ground breaking of the Marine
17 Education Center. Director Miller participated in that,
18 along with Governor Phil Bryant and USM President Rodney
19 Bennett. The center is scheduled to open in about
20 eighteen months, we hope.
21 Our Chief of Marine Patrol, Keith Davis, has
22 been selected to be a member of the 2015-2016 class of
23 Leadership Gulf Coast. He was one of thirty-eight people
24 selected for this class which represents local businesses
25 and community leaders. This is the twenty-sixth year for

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1 Leadership Gulf Coast.
2 Several agency employees participated in the
3 luncheon honoring first responders at Jones Park in
4 Gulfport, on August 28th. They had about two thousand
5 people who attended and, of course, the speaker was Former
6 President George W. Bush. Governor Phil Bryant spoke,
7 also, as well as Former Governor Haley Barbour.
8 Marine Patrol conducted three boat-and-water
9 safety classes in August and had sixty-four students. So
10 far, in fiscal year 2016, they have had seven classes with
11 a hundred and thirty-two students which is about double
12 what they did during the same time period last year.
13 Marine Patrol officers participated in several
14 outreach events, including the CCA Kids Fishing Rodeo and
15 the Excel By Five Kids Safety Day.
16 Any questions?
17 (No response.)
18 MELISSA SCALLAN: Thank you.
19 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Melissa.
20 Do we have any other business to come before
21 this Commission?
22 (No response.)
23 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Public comments?
24 (No response.)
25 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: With no public comments,

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1 do we have a motion to adjourn?
2 COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I make a motion we
3 adjourn, Mr. Chairman.
4 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion.
5 Do we have a second?
6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second it.
7 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a
8 second.
9 All those in favor say aye.
10 (All in favor.)
11 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries. We are
12 adjourned.
13 (Whereupon, at 12:01 o'clock, p.m., the
14 September 15, 2015, meeting of the Commission on Marine
15 Resources was concluded.)
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1 C E R T I F I C A T E
2
3 I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter, do
4 hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and
5 correct transcript of the September 15, 2015, meeting of
6 the Commission on Marine Resources, as taken by me at the
7 time and place heretofore stated in the aforementioned
8 matter in shorthand, with electronic verification, and
9 later reduced to typewritten form to the best of my skill
10 and ability; and, further, that I am not a relative,
11 employee, or agent, of any of the parties thereto, nor
12 financially interested in the cause.

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