

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, January 18, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Bolton Building Auditorium
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, Mississippi

Commission Members:

Ronnie Daniels, Chairman
Natalie Guess, Vice Chairman
Cammack "Cam" Roberds

Also Present:

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

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I call the Tuesday,
2 January 18, 2022, Commission meeting to order.

3 We are going to start with the Pledge of
4 Allegiance. We are not going to ask Natalie to lead that,
5 but I will ask Ms. Sandy.

6 (Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Now, we will have a
8 prayer.

9 Director, do you want to lead us in that?

10 JOE SPRAGGINS: I will.

11 Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for the
12 opportunity to be able to serve. Lord, thank you for this
13 great agency. Thank you for everything that you have
14 given us. Lord, we appreciate this Commission and the job
15 that they do for us every day. We just ask you to give
16 them the wisdom and the knowledge to do the things that
17 they need to do to make the decisions you would have.

18 Lord, we ask that you just be with everyone that
19 is without power now in the United States because of the
20 storm and watch over them, lead and guide and direct them
21 and take care of the ones that are in the tsunami area and
22 lead and guide and direct them, too, Lord.

23 We ask this in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Joe.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: Are you with me, Natalie?

1 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I can hear you.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: In case everybody does not
3 know, Commissioner Guess is not here today, but she is
4 calling in over the phone. She will be present for the
5 meeting.

6 Minutes.

7 Do we have any discussion on our minutes from
8 December 14th?

9 (No response.)

10 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion to
11 approve those minutes?

12 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion to
13 approve the minutes.

14 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that motion.
15 All those in favor?

16 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

17 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

19 Any discussion on the November 12th minutes?

20 (No response.)

21 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion to
22 approve those minutes?

23 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.

25 All those in favor?

1 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

2 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

3 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

4 Approval of the agenda.

5 Do we have a motion to approve today's agenda as
6 it is written?

7 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion.

8 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second it.

9 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All those in favor?

10 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

11 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

12 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

13 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Mr. Joe, we will turn it
14 over to you.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: We've got a few things going on
16 this morning.

17 Employment opportunities.

18 Michael Jimerson is Marine Patrol Officer II.

19 Julie Kessen was with us working as a contract.

20 Now, she is an administrative assistant in Human
21 Resources.

22 Colleen Massengill is a Grants Administrator I.

23 She came with us. We got some help there in Grants.

24 Emmett Carstens is a NERR Resource Specialist I.

25 Traci Floyd, may I say, is our new Director of

1 Fisheries.

2 Let's give Traci a hand and all of the others.
3 (Applause.)

4 JOE SPRAGGINS: We appreciate each and every one
5 of you.

6 We will hear more from Traci here in a few
7 minutes.

8 Any questions on that?

9 (No response.)

10 JOE SPRAGGINS: As far as Procurement, we don't
11 have anything, but I want to talk to you about one. We
12 talk about things that are going on. We had a contract
13 that started the 30th of April of 2019 with Spat Tech and
14 it was a period of performance. It was supposed to be one
15 year performance and amendment was made because in 2019,
16 we had the Bonnet Carre issue and everything else.

17 There were a lot of issues and that is the
18 reason they could not provide any of the oysters that we
19 were looking at.

20 Amendment Two was amended to extend the period
21 for performance to 8-30-2020.

22 Amendment Three was to extend the period for
23 performance to 11-6-2020.

24 Even though everybody says we didn't have a big
25 problem in 2020. Why is that?

1 well, number one, we had a lot of rain and a lot
2 of issues that caused us to where we couldn't do it, and I
3 just want to give you an understanding of what is
4 happening there.

5 Now, we did Amendment Four to the period of 6-
6 30-2021. Obviously, it is still the same situation with
7 rain.

8 During this time, a million dollars was paid to
9 Spat Tech for the baskets and the concrete substrate only.
10 They have them in place. It's not like we have lost them.

11 As matter of fact, Walter has been just
12 fantastic about that and he said, I will give you your
13 money back, if you feel bad about this, but we want the
14 oysters. So we are waiting on him.

15 The second contract was issued because we had to
16 do it for the remaining two million dollars to be executed
17 on 8-11-2021, and that period is from 2021 to 2022.

18 Hopefully, we will be able to get this done.

19 what this is going to amount is about sixty
20 million oysters that we are going to be able to buy and
21 they are about the size of the end of your thumb, to put
22 them in the water at one time.

23 Nature has just not been good. You can't grow
24 those in a hatchery. You have to take them out and put
25 them in the water to actually grow and nature has just not

1 been great to us about that to allow it.

2 I just wanted you to know, in case anybody ever
3 asks you any questions about it, or anything comes up.

4 Walter Boasso with Spat Tech is doing a
5 fantastic job. He is trying as hard as he can. He is
6 doing everything he can do to get it done, and I promise
7 you he wants it done more than we do because he's got two
8 million dollars sitting out there waiting on him, if he
9 can get it done.

10 I just wanted to bring you an update on that.
11 Do y'all have any questions?

12 (No response.)

13 JOE SPRAGGINS: As far as the Agency update, we
14 were in Jackson. Will be back again this week. We are
15 doing budget hearings this week with the Senate, and,
16 then, also we are going to meet with some of the House
17 members for the budget.

18 The biggest thing about our budget this year is
19 a thing called SEC square, and SEC square is where they
20 went in a realigned all the personnel in the State of
21 Mississippi and they realigned everyone as to what they
22 have. It's called a Minimum Market, and, then, they have
23 zones, one, two, three and four.

24 What we did, there was a deal that came out
25 January the 1st. We had to agree to it and we were able to

1 come up with the money to give ninety-nine percent is what
2 it was because it wasn't a hundred percent of all of our
3 employees that were under market up to a three percent
4 raise. So we were able to do that in January.

5 Now, we are looking at trying to make it to
6 minimum and the minimum is what they are looking at which
7 is going to be some raises for some other personnel in the
8 agency, and, then, hopefully the goal is to shoot for
9 market one day and to be able to get the agency up to
10 market.

11 Our biggest thing is going to be trying to
12 convince the legislature to give us the money we need to
13 get, and I know they are onboard. I know they are trying
14 to help us.

15 I tell you something. If we get this, if we can
16 get it to that point to where we get to market, or better,
17 this agency is finally going to have some personnel to get
18 paid for what they are doing because they have been going
19 along so long, so long not being paid for what they are
20 worth, and this would be a great thing.

21 If you have any input with our legislators,
22 please tell them to help us because this will be a great
23 deal for these people to be able to finally get up to what
24 they are supposed to be paid.

25 Other than that, we got five bills in, mainly

1 just changing some things to deal with captain's license,
2 several of them, to be able to make that a little bit less
3 restrictive on people so that everybody on the boat does
4 not have to have a captain's license. We can just license
5 certain things. We are working on that. That is oysters
6 and shrimp mainly is what we are talking about.

7 Also, we are working on some other stuff with
8 off-bottom, and we are working on the derelict vessels.

9 with the derelict vessels, what we are trying
10 to do is get the legislature to put some money in the pot
11 for us to be able to get rid of some of these derelict
12 vessels.

13 The derelict vessels, the way it was written in
14 statute, it was basically a one liner as far as what we
15 can do as a definition. I think we have about five
16 different definitions in the new bill if it goes through,
17 and it will allow us to not only do derelict, abandoned
18 and we could look at other areas with it, and the other
19 thing is the way we are strapped right now, if it's not
20 impeding a waterway, or not leaking fuel, or doing
21 something else, we can't do anything about it, but this is
22 going to allow us to be able to do this.

23 Now, once again, we are always going to do
24 everything in the world to give the owner a chance to get
25 that boat and move it.

1 Hopefully, we will be able to get a couple of
2 the boat yards, one in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson
3 counties that we can move boats to, and, then, still have
4 a chance for the owner to come get it, if there is
5 something that happens with that.

6 We need to get them out of the waterways. We
7 need to get them off the banks. There are some eyesores
8 on front beach that are sitting there right now that have
9 been there for two years now that we can't touch because
10 they are on the beach and it's not hurting us.

11 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: There are some on the back
12 bays, too. That is a big problem.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS: There are a lot of them, and it's
14 not just vessels. I know Mississippi State has a contract
15 and we are working with them to be able to move a lot of
16 trash things, refrigerators and stuff like that. There
17 are different things that have broken loose and they are
18 out there. We are working on that. Hopefully that will
19 work out soon. That is one of the bills that they are
20 working on.

21 Mainly that is it as far as the update of the
22 agency.

23 Does anybody have any questions?

24 (No response.)

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: The CARES Act.

1 Traci, would you give us an update on it?

2 TRACI FLOYD: Thank you Director Spraggins.
3 Thank you Commission and I look forward to working with
4 you in this new way.

5 For CARES Act, as you know, we had the
6 application period October 20th through November 19th. We
7 had two hundred and fifty-two eligible applicants.

8 we did our appeals process. We did a thorough
9 review of all of the applications. We submitted to Gulf
10 States Marine Fisheries Commission on December 17th. They
11 completed their review on January 7th. So it has gone to
12 NOAA. They estimate about three to four weeks at least
13 for NOAA to process, and, then, our recipients will
14 receive their payment.

15 Any questions?

16 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That's great.

17 I was planning on congratulating you when you
18 come up in a little bit, but you snuck up on me here.
19 Congratulations on your promotion.

20 TRACI FLOYD: Thank you so much.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS: So we are looking at the end of
22 this month maybe?

23 TRACI FLOYD: Hopefully by the end of this month.
24 Probably February, if there is any delay up there.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: Now, we are ready to send the

1 stuff to Gulf states to write a check as soon as they give
2 us authority?

3 TRACI FLOYD: Yes, sir.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you.

5 Any questions on that?

6 (No response.)

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: Bonnet Carre update.

8 Rick, do you have anything?

9 RICK BURRIS: If you go back in the minutes, I
10 have provided an update it seems like for the past three
11 years, but I am going to summarize that and put it all
12 into one update.

13 If you remember, the spillway was open in
14 February of 2019. By about April we figured out that we
15 needed to put in a request for a disaster.

16 In May of 2019, Governor Bryant sent a request
17 to the Secretary of Commerce to declare a disaster
18 declaration.

19 After that for almost the next year we worked
20 with NOAA to provide all the data and information for the
21 Secretary to make that determination.

22 In May of 2020, the declaration was made
23 official and we were appropriated the funds for that
24 disaster. If you recall, it is somewhere around a little
25 over twenty-one million dollars.

1 We, then, started working on a spend plan. We
2 submitted that draft spend plan to NOAA November 2020.

3 We, then, went back and forth with comments.
4 They wanted us to change this and change that. Nothing
5 necessarily on the budget, but just the way the scope of
6 work was laid out.

7 We were, then, told that it was submitted to
8 OMB, I believe, in June. Since then, we have had a couple
9 conversations with NOAA. In November of this past year,
10 they had some minor comments. I told y'all about that.

11 Then, in January a couple of weeks ago, maybe
12 last week we got the official notice that it had been
13 uploaded to Grants.gov. So it is another step closer than
14 where we were.

15 I then found out that Hurricane Michael disaster
16 for Florida, the FWC applied for that.

17 Remember that storm was in 2018?

18 Well, they got awarded their funds late last
19 year in 2021.

20 We are on the same timeline. Hopefully we get
21 something in 2022, but I just wanted to let y'all know
22 kind of where we are, summarize everything and put it all
23 into one piece.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: Any questions on that?

1 (No response.)

2 JOE SPRAGGINS: If not, Ms. Sandy, can you do the
3 actions update from the prior meeting?

4 SANDY CHESNUT: Yes, sir.

5 From our December meeting, there was a motion to
6 recommend the establishment of two no wake zones. One was
7 north and south of the Popp's Ferry Causeway Park boat
8 launch, and, then, the other was east and west of the
9 Popp's Ferry Bridge to include Anatole Bay.

10 There was a motion to send the proposed changes
11 to Title 22, Part 19, to the Secretary of State's Office
12 for final adoption.

13 There was a motion to recommend approval of an
14 After-the-Fact General Permit for David Wheeler on the
15 Tchoutacabouffa River. No fine was recommended for the
16 property owner because he was advised that the contractor
17 had the permit and the contractor was no longer around to
18 be able to verify that.

19 There was motion to recommend After-the-Fact
20 General Permit and a Restoration Plan for Marty Sahuque
21 located in Bayou Caddy. There was no fine if the property
22 owner completed the work in a hundred and eighty days.
23 They did a contingency fine of a thousand dollars.

24 They recommended after-the-fact approval of the
25 pier supported pilings and requirement that the pier be

1 brought into compliance with General Permit guidelines.

2 They asked for approval of the additional
3 proposed piers and a wetland vegetation plan was to be
4 followed, and, then, there is a contingency plan if he
5 doesn't complete the work within a hundred and eighty
6 days.

7 If he doesn't pay the fine, all of that will be
8 sent to the Attorney General's Office for further
9 enforcement.

10 There was a motion to recommend the approval of
11 a Permit for Kevin Courville located on Sweet Bay Drive in
12 Pass Christian, to construct an additional one thousand
13 two hundred and fifty-four square foot of structures and
14 two mooring pilings.

15 There was a motion for Title 22, Part 6, to be
16 forwarded to the Secretary of State's Office for final
17 adoption and for Title 22, Parts 2 and 9, to be sent to
18 the Secretary of State's Office for Notice of Intent.

19 There were two Youth Records. A Ladyfish for
20 Rodie Armes and a Scamp for Blake Bosarge.

21 Conventional Tackle Record. Golden Tilefish for
22 Dustin Conway and Inshore Lizardfish for Jordan Matthews.

23 Director approved all the motions as
24 recommended.

25 There were no pending items for discussion from

1 previous meetings.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I appreciate it, Ms.
3 Sandy. Thank you.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS: That's all I have, sir.
5 Natalie, are you still with us?

6 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'm here.

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioners report.
8 Do either of the other Commissioners have
9 anything to report today?

10 (No response.)

11 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Joe, just a quick
12 question, then.

13 The actions report was talking about after-the-
14 fact permits.

15 Have we made any progress on what we had
16 discussed?

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: We have.

18 Jennifer, y'all are working on that now.

19 Do you mind addressing that?

20 We addressed that with them and they are working
21 on getting some information out, more education for the
22 people.

23 Go ahead and tell us.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Just to get it on the
25 record, Commissioner Guess and I had a meeting with the

1 Director about these after-the-fact permits. We are not
2 really excited about the number of those that we are
3 seeing. Jennifer is going to go over it.

4 JENNIFER WITTMAN: Willa has some numbers that
5 she is going to present, before we get started on the
6 permitting agenda, which show the number of violations
7 that we see, that we saw in the last year, and, then, the
8 number of those that were fined.

9 In order to address some of these after-the-fact
10 applications, we are working on writing some articles that
11 are going to go into a new agency publication that will
12 help better inform the public about what they need a
13 permit for. We really feel like education on the front
14 end is going to be our best help.

15 In the past, we had some training with
16 municipalities with the Code offices and things like that.
17 We would like to reinstate that and try to have those
18 things happen before we get into the late spring and early
19 summer, before we are really seeing a lot of waterfront
20 construction take place and, hopefully, we can speak to
21 either yacht clubs and civic organizations, or homeowner
22 organizations, to let people know on the front end things
23 that they do need a permit for so that we are not in this
24 situation.

25 We are also looking at getting with some realtor

1 associations. We have done that in the past as well where
2 we were able to offer CEU's through our realtor group so
3 that realtors know if you are showing a house, or a
4 property, on the water and your buyer wants to put in a
5 pier, or a bulkhead, how they can navigate that process
6 and purchasing their house while they get their pier and
7 their bulkhead permits all at the same time.

8 We are hopeful that education on the front end
9 will be more beneficial than just increasing fines. We do
10 have the statute that allows us to fine up to five hundred
11 dollars a day for residential projects and I think it is
12 ten thousand dollars a day for commercial projects.

13 We would rather take care of that before we even
14 get to the case of needing to fine someone.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: But we do have the
16 ability?

17 JENNIFER WITTMAN: We do have the ability. I
18 think most times it is not a conscious decision on a lot
19 of people's part. There is miscommunication.

20 Unfortunately in the State of Mississippi water
21 front contractors are not required to be a general
22 contractor in the state. So they don't have a
23 contractor's license.

24 If we can let people know when they come in to
25 get a permit if they don't already have an agent, be sure

1 that you have a really well written contract and know who
2 is expected to get what. I think that will be something,
3 also, that will help us not be in this situation as
4 frequently, but it is a lot less frequently than the
5 Commission realizes because the number of authorizations
6 that we issue and the number of violations that we are
7 able to take care of away from the Commission and people
8 voluntarily will bring things into compliance is far
9 greater than, I think, anybody realizes.

10 I don't want to state those numbers, plus I
11 don't know them off the top of my head, but willa is going
12 to go through those right before permitting gets started.

13 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you for the update.

14 JENNIFER WITTMANN: You're welcome.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Office of Marine Patrol
16 Chief.

17 KYLE WILKERSON: Good morning. Hope everyone is
18 well, Commissioners, Director, Ms. Sandy.

19 It is another year. So time does fly, doesn't
20 it?

21 well, what we have is Marine Patrol normally are
22 pretty active. We had an active December. We had several
23 really good citations.

24 One that just kind of stood out was hunting from
25 a roadway. That was individuals caught at the NERR

1 spotlighting with a loaded weapon in the vehicle. That
2 was a good citation.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: There is no such thing as a good
4 citation.

5 KYLE WILKERSON: Well, it was a proper citation.

6 There are several others that are active
7 investigations that I really can't go into any detail
8 about.

9 If you want to talk after this meeting, then, I
10 can give you some details. I can't really go into any
11 specifics, but, if you have any questions about anything
12 else, please feel free to ask.

13 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I don't have anything.
14 Y'all keep up the good work and try to stay warm out there
15 on the water. I know it gets cold out there this time of
16 the year.

17 KYLE WILKERSON: Especially in March and April,
18 I'm sure we will get a snow. Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Coastal Resources
20 Management.

21 we've got willa up first.

22 WILLA BRANTLEY: Good morning.

23 Like Jennifer said, I do have some numbers to
24 show you for the last year and I have comparisons with
25 back to 2019, but, first, I wanted to let you know about a

1 workshop we are going to be holding on the 26th. That is
2 Wednesday, January 26th, from nine to noon. It is an
3 Alternative Bulkhead Design Workshop and that is kind of
4 another term we use for living shorelines. It seems to
5 make people more comfortable than living shorelines.

6 It is targeted toward our marine contractors who
7 get permits for and build bulkheads the most often. We
8 want to share with them how to plan and construct and sell
9 to their customers more environmentally friendly methods
10 of shoreline stabilization so that we can protect our
11 habitats and maybe provide some more in places where there
12 have been bulkheads that have failing that need to be
13 replaced. You can always build these shorelines in front
14 of those areas and provide some habitat for our fisheries
15 species.

16 That is going to be Wednesday, January 26th. Any
17 of you are welcome to attend, if you would like to. We
18 will be recording this one. We hope to get it edited,
19 and, then, put on our website at a later date. So that is
20 a possibility as well, if you can't attend.

21 Then, to get into our numbers, for 2021, our
22 total actions for the bureau were eight hundred and
23 thirty-six.

24 As you can see, seven hundred and fifty-three of
25 those were either activities that we regulate at the State

1 level, or activities that required a Federal permit and
2 required us to review for Coastal Zone Consistency which
3 is making sure it is consistent with our State Coastal
4 Zone Management Program. Those are the things that take
5 the most amount of time for the permitters to work on.

6 we also have reviews and pre-application
7 meetings where we look at projects to see if they need a
8 permit, what level of permitting is needed, if we can help
9 them design their project, minimize impacts, things like
10 that.

11 Then, violations. We had nineteen total that
12 were investigated. We actually had seven that were actual
13 violations, once we got out to the field and looked at
14 those, and three from this year were presented to the
15 Commission, but I do have details on those on a later
16 slide.

17 This is the comparison with the past two years.
18 As you can see, our numbers are going up. They took a
19 little dip in 2020 potentially because of COVID. We are
20 not sure, but they did bounce right back up and go above
21 our 2019 numbers.

22 we had eight hundred and thirty-six for the
23 total this year, and the past two years were seven hundred
24 and thirty-five and six hundred and seventy-two, and,
25 then, you can see all the numbers down at the bottom.

1 we had a few more violations in 2019, but
2 basically the same number.

3 I'm missing a slide.

4 our violation details. For 2019, again, we have
5 the twenty-one. Actually, when we got out to the field
6 there were fifteen and three of those were presented to
7 the Commission with five hundred dollars in fines
8 assessed.

9 2020 we have fifteen total either reported, or
10 found. There was only an actual of four that were found
11 to be actual violations. Two of those were presented to
12 the Commission. However, those were the two that carried
13 over until we started having in-person meetings again. So
14 they were actually presented in April of 2021. Even
15 though they were violations that we did all the work on
16 them in 2020, they weren't presented until 2021, and one
17 of those had a fine of five hundred dollars that was paid
18 by the property owner.

19 In 2021, as you can see, we had nineteen. Only
20 seven of those were actual violations, once they were
21 investigated. Three of those were presented to the
22 Commission. So that makes a total of five within the
23 calendar year of 2021 that were presented.

24 As Sandy went over earlier, we had a one
25 thousand dollar fine that was assessed, but deferred if

1 restoration was completed as ordered.

2 Those are our numbers and I can go over those
3 again, since my slide apparently didn't get updated. If
4 you wanted to get any more details on those violations, I
5 can.

6 I did want to go over on our total numbers that
7 I forgot to look at for the year of 2021. Our average
8 time to get those issued for everything was twenty-seven
9 days, and some of those have a thirty-day comment period.
10 So there is no way we can issue them in less than thirty
11 days, but even total we averaged out to less than thirty
12 days.

13 That was with the numbers figured in for the two
14 that carried over, the two violations, which put them up
15 to I think one was seven hundred and twenty-two days and
16 one was five hundred and something. So if you throw those
17 out as being outside of the norm, our average for getting
18 things issued was twenty-three days.

19 Seventy-two percent of those were issued within
20 thirty days, of our total were issued within thirty days
21 and fifty-one percent of our total were issued within
22 fifteen days.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS: Just say in 2021, if you use that
24 one if you have it -- you may have said it and I missed
25 it, but how many were after-the-fact?

1 How many did y'all have that came in that were
2 after-the-fact and they had to come in and get a permit,
3 whether they were legal to do what they were doing, or
4 not?

5 Do you have that number?

6 WILLA BRANTLEY: We had three.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: You had three?

8 WILLA BRANTLEY: Yes.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS: Out of eight hundred?

10 WILLA BRANTLEY: Right.

11 Nineteen violations were either reported, or
12 found in the field. Seven of those were actually
13 violations. A lot of things that we get called in by
14 neighbors aren't really violations. They think that a
15 house is being built out too far to the waterway, or too
16 tall. Sometimes they will see machinery working and it
17 looks like it is working in the marsh because they are
18 seeing it from a distance, but, when we get out there, it
19 won't really be in the marsh.

20 Only seven were actual violations. Four of
21 those were fixed by the property owner voluntarily.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS: Can you give an example of what
23 you are talking about there?

24 WILLA BRANTLEY: Of them fixing it voluntarily?

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes.

1 In other words, if you walked out there and you
2 said seven out of the nineteen were violations, but you
3 only brought three to the Commission.

4 It that correct?

5 WILLA BRANTLEY: Yes, sir.

6 JOE SPRAGGINS: So the other four, how were they
7 fixed, the reason they didn't have to come to the
8 Commission?

9 WILLA BRANTLEY: Sometimes they will have some
10 fill that they have put in on the property that has been
11 allowed to run into the edge of the marsh because they
12 didn't put up silt fencing, or other erosion control
13 measures. So they will have to pull back that fill a
14 little bit. It may have run out into the water. If there
15 is no marsh there, they have to pull it out and we make
16 them install silt fencing and go out and check and make
17 sure it is installed properly.

18 Sometimes they have just started work early so
19 they have maybe a few pilings driven not knowing they
20 needed a permit. So we make them stop work, apply for the
21 permit, get a proper approval, make sure what they have
22 done is within guidelines, and, then, let them continue
23 and finish.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS: what you are saying is to do an
25 after-the-fact of what you call a violation that you would

1 bring to the Commission, it had to be a completed project?

2 WILLA BRANTLEY: Usually, yes, sir.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: If the project has not been
4 completed, you don't consider that an after-the-fact?

5 WILLA BRANTLEY: Not if they work with us to get
6 it permitted and make sure that it meets the guidelines.

7 Now, sometimes they just won't turn in an
8 application, or don't respond to us, and we may have to
9 present those, or if we tell them you've got fill going
10 out in the waterway, or in the marsh, you need to pull
11 that back and put up some silt fencing. If they didn't do
12 that, we would end up bringing it to Commission to order
13 them to under legal conditions where we can, then, pursue
14 it, if they don't do it.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: Tell me if I'm wrong,
16 Commissioners. I think the one thing that y'all are
17 looking at is people that just start a project without
18 asking to get a permit and not getting the proper
19 paperwork and everything completed.

20 Is that correct?

21 I mean, you are looking at everything from start
22 to finish, not just the ones that have finished a project,
23 but it also the ones that have started a project and
24 didn't have the proper paperwork.

25 If that is the case, it would have been seven

1 possibly.

2 Right?

3 WILLA BRANTLEY: Yes, sir.

4 I think several of those though were the fill
5 running off that they just had to fix and get their silt
6 fencing put up.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: That wasn't because they didn't
8 have paperwork?

9 WILLA BRANTLEY: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Either that, or the ones
11 that we have seen. I know there have been a couple that
12 they just blatantly did something different other than
13 what they were permitted for, a different footprint, or
14 pilings in a place that they weren't supposed to be.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: You would bring those to the
16 Commission?

17 WILLA BRANTLEY: Yes, sir.

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Those are the ones that I
19 think we feel we need to be imposing some type of fine
20 for, instead of just letting them slide.

21 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Yes, I agree, Ronnie.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS: Did that help you any?

23 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Absolutely. It is very
24 promising to see the total actions versus the violations.
25 we just keep hearing after-the-fact, but we knew that we

1 weren't seeing everything.

2 WILLA BRANTLEY: We only bring just the really
3 big projects that need variances to the guidelines that
4 don't fit the normal rules and regulations, need a use
5 plan change, things like that, or the violations. So you
6 see just a very small percentage of what we do every day.

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Y'all are doing a ton of
8 work and we want to support you in any way that we can.
9 If we've got people that are going completely against what
10 y'all ask them to do, we want to help you there.

11 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: You guys are flipping
12 those permits quick, too, within thirty days. That is
13 amazing.

14 WILLA BRANTLEY: I just want to give a little bit
15 of praise to the permittees themselves because most of
16 this year we have been working with less than our number
17 that we like to have as permittees. We have been either
18 one, or two, down from that. So they have really stepped
19 up and kept the permits getting out the door.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: Natalie, do you have anything?

21 COMMISSIONER GUESS: No. I agree with what
22 Ronnie said and I appreciate the update. That is great.

23 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Willa.

24 WILLA BRANTLEY: Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Up next we've got Matt, or

1 Greg, or both?

2 WILLA BRANTLEY: Matt.

3 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Your mike.

4 MATT MURPHY: Good morning. My name is Matt
5 Murphy and I have a request for two permits for the
6 Department of Marine Resources.

7 They are in two different locations. One is in
8 the Pascagoula Bay in Pascagoula and the other one is in
9 the Mississippi Sound in Pass Christian.

10 They are in the General Use District, and the
11 purpose of these projects is to conduct research into the
12 efficacy of common oyster reef restoration methods. The
13 agent is Anchor QEA.

14 The overall project is the construction of
15 thirty-two artificial oyster reefs. Each of these reefs
16 will be one acre in size and they will be divided into the
17 two zones. There will be sixteen in the western zone in
18 Pass Christian and sixteen in the eastern zone in
19 Pascagoula.

20 It is kind of hard to see. Here is the western
21 zone in Pass Christian. It is also divided into a
22 northern project area and a southern project area, and
23 each of these project areas will have eight of these one-
24 acre oyster reefs (indicating slide).

25 Here is the eastern zone in Pascagoula, with the

1 western project area and eastern project area, again, each
2 with eight (indicating slide).

3 This is just what a typical project area would
4 look like with each of these eight oyster reefs being one
5 acre in size (indicating slide).

6 This is just a typical reef detail from the side
7 of what it would look like with the substrate and the reef
8 material, as well as the clearance from mean lower low
9 water (indicating slide).

10 The applicant has requested a variance from the
11 Mississippi Coastal Program and they justified this
12 variance by stating that the impacts to Coastal Wetlands
13 would be no worse than if the requirements were followed.

14 The applicant has also requested a Coastal
15 Wetlands Use Plan change from a General Use classification
16 to an S-3. S-3 is Special Use, leased wetlands by the
17 State for other purposes. In this case, those other
18 purposes are for research activities.

19 Notification of these projects appeared in The
20 Sun Herald and in The Mississippi Press as required.

21 To date, no public comments were received,
22 although we did get one request to get a paper copy of the
23 applications.

24 DEQ has had no comments.

25 Archives and History has no objection.

1 Secretary of State has stated that it doesn't
2 present any Public Trust Tidelands issues.

3 wildlife, Fisheries and Parks has no comments.

4 The staff of the Department of Marine Resources
5 has conducted an evaluation of the projects and made
6 findings on the decision factors in accordance with the
7 Mississippi Coastal Program. Based on these findings, it
8 has been determined that the projects are consistent with
9 the Coastal Program as the projects serve a higher public
10 service.

11 Staff requests a motion that the Commission
12 recommend to the Executive Director approval of their
13 requested variances, of their requested use plan changes
14 and of the two requested permits.

15 Are there any questions?

16 JOE SPRAGGINS: One thing I might add, too, these
17 are non-harvestable reefs and they are doing them for
18 tests.

19 We are doing different levels and we are doing
20 different types of cultch?

21 RICK BURRIS: Yes. USM working with the Army
22 Corps of Engineers on research over in Vicksburg is
23 looking at different restoration types, different types of
24 cultch, different methods of laying cultch. That is why
25 they are one-acre plots and they are going to see not only

1 which one responds better, but looking at the cost
2 effectiveness of doing some of these different designs.

3 It is one thing to go out there and say you can
4 have these high relief areas and add this much cultch,
5 this much limestone and this much concrete, but when you
6 extrapolate that from one acre out to a hundred acres to a
7 thousand acres, the cost may be more than it is actually
8 worth.

9 They are actually looking into all the variables
10 involved in these reefs to include the potential affects
11 on Gulf Sturgeon of these large scale restoration
12 activities which we assume has a positive affect because
13 they feed around the fringe of it.

14 It is a multi-faceted project. The reefs, like
15 Director Spraggins said, they are small. They are in non-
16 harvestable areas so they can monitor them long term so
17 you are not just putting something down and looking at it
18 for three years, and, then, turning is over. The plan is
19 to monitor it for five to ten years. It is a really good
20 project. It could have some beneficial outcomes to it.

21 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'm looking at this
22 location on this map. This will be totally new oysters.

23 They are not putting these over an existing reef,
24 or anything like that?

25 RICK BURRIS: Correct. They have to establish a

1 bottom, and, then, build on top of that.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: They will get their cultch
3 down in the one square mile, and, then, they will
4 introduce oysters to that, or they are trying to see if it
5 will do it naturally?

6 RICK BURRIS: Naturally.

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Okay.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS: These are one acre.
9 Right?

10 RICK BURRIS: Correct.

11 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: They are all one-acre
12 plots?

13 RICK BURRIS: Yes, and they are all different
14 types of layouts, and, then, they have a baseline.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: The idea, like Rick said, is so
16 that we can get some tests.

17 Everybody says limestone works. Everybody says
18 oyster shells work, or crushed concrete works. Somebody
19 even said Christmas trees work.

20 The point I'm getting at is they are able to
21 look at it, and, then, the depth of the oyster reef
22 itself, to try to figure out what best can we use to go
23 into the Gulf out here and say this is where we can get
24 the most bang for our buck.

25 RICH BURRIS: And the bang for the buck is the

1 important thing.

2 Is it cost effective?

3 Can we use this methodology in a larger scale?

4 It may not be feasible, but that is what they
5 are looking into.

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: We have got to do
7 something. That's for sure.

8 Any other questions?

9 (No response.)

10 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion to
11 approve?

12 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion to
13 approve the variances, plan changes and permits. I think
14 it is fantastic.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that motion.

16 All those in favor?

17 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

18 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

19 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

20 Motion passes.

21 MATT MURPHY: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

23 JENNIFER WILDER: Good morning. I'm Jennifer
24 wilder and I am going to be presenting a permit request by
25 the City of Biloxi.

1 The location is the Biloxi Beach between the
2 Biloxi Small Craft Harbor and Oak Street. The area that
3 they are asking for the permit is in the General Use
4 District with a small portion being in Commercial Fishing
5 and Recreational Marinas District. The agent is Covington
6 Engineering.

7 Here is a picture of the beach showing the
8 location boundary.

9 The dimensions of the fill area are going to be
10 what Biloxi has told us is the historic district of the
11 Corps of Engineers sand template. It is four thousand
12 five hundred and fifty feet in length and two hundred and
13 thirty feet in width.

14 The amount of fill is nineteen thousand eight
15 hundred cubic yards of sand below mean higher high water
16 and twenty-four thousand seven hundred cubic yards of sand
17 above mean higher high water.

18 They are requesting a ten-year permit for beach
19 maintenance.

20 They are requesting a variance and have
21 justified it by saying the impacts to coastal wetlands
22 will be no worse than if the requirements were followed.

23 Notification of the project appeared in The Sun
24 Herald, as required by law. There were no public comments
25 received.

1 DEQ had no comments.

2 Archives and History had no objections.

3 Secretary of State said that it does not present
4 any Public Trust Tidelands Lease issues.

5 wildlife, Fisheries and Parks had no comments.

6 The staff of the Department of Marine Resources
7 has conducted a thorough evaluation of the project and has
8 made findings on the decision factors in accordance with
9 the Mississippi Coastal Program.

10 Based on these results, we have determined the
11 project is consistent with the Coastal Program because it
12 serves a higher public purpose.

13 Staff requests a motion that the Commission
14 recommend to the Executive Director to approve the
15 requested variance and to approve the permit as requested.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS: If I can, this is that area, if
17 you are looking at it, down on the beach in Biloxi where
18 they are expanding the boardwalk.

19 JENNIFER WILDER: Yes, sir.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: This is a GOMESA project, what we
21 have worked on and one of the things was they are raising
22 the lift on that wall eighteen inches. That is one thing
23 and hopefully that will help. They are building a curve
24 under it a little bit, too. We are hoping that will help,
25 also, but the other thing that we are looking at is a test

1 program to be able to bring in river sand and this is
2 river sand, I think, coming out of Pearl River.

3 JENNIFER WILDER: Pearl River, Louisiana.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS: It is Pearl River river sand that
5 is going to be put out in that area to see. Because of
6 the way the sand is maybe it will stay on the beach longer
7 and not blow up on Highway 90 and cost a bunch of money
8 for the State of Mississippi and DOT taking it off.

9 This is a test pilot program for that. If it
10 works, this could be a great thing for the whole future of
11 the State of Mississippi as far as our beach areas and it
12 could tell us if we can basically help do a lot and DOT
13 would jump onboard to help us in a heartbeat. It is a
14 great test program.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have any other
16 questions on this one?

17 (No response.)

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion to
19 approve the staff's recommendation?

20 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll make the motion.

21 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll second it.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All those in favor?

23 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

25 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Motion passes.

2 Thank you.

3 JENNIFER WILDER: Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Ms. Leslie Brewer.

5 LESLIE BREWER: Good morning Director,
6 Commissioners, legal. I'm Leslie Brewer, CFO. I will be
7 presenting the financials for the month of December 31st,
8 2021.

9 At the end of December, our State Revenue was
10 four point two million. Our Agency Revenue was seventeen
11 point seven million.

12 Our State Net Income was one million and our
13 Total Agency Net Revenue was five point nine million.

14 After six months of fiscal year 2022, we have
15 ninety point three percent of the Operating Budget
16 remaining and seventy-nine point six percent of Tidelands.

17 Does anyone have any questions?

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: A lot of numbers you look
19 at. I'm glad you do it and not me.

20 Thank you.

21 LESLIE BREWER: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Tidelands Application
23 Update.

24 Sonja.

25 SONJA SLATER: Good morning Commissioners,

1 Direct, legal. I'm Sonja Slater. I'm the Tidelands
2 coordinator. I'm not sure if I have met everybody here
3 today.

4 Each year I do a presentation to let you know
5 how the application cycle went for that year and this
6 year's application cycle was for the fiscal year FY2023.

7 Before I get into how that went, I will let you
8 know what the schedule will be in 2024.

9 We will start accepting applications May 31st of
10 this year and stop accepting applications July 1st of this
11 year.

12 Everything else about the cycle is basically
13 exactly the same every year.

14 In 2023, we received a hundred and four
15 applications for a total of forty-three million dollars
16 requested and, as you can see in FY2022, we were awarded
17 eleven point two million in funding.

18 I broke the requests out by public access and
19 managed projects by cities and counties.

20 For FY2022, our public access award was six
21 point eight million. One point one million of that went
22 to miscellaneous projects. That's projects outside of
23 cities and counties.

24 Six hundred thousand of it went to Board of
25 Supervisor projects. Five million went to cities, with a

1 total of six point eight awarded for public access in
2 FY2022.

3 For our managed projects, we had a total award
4 of three point two million. We have not yet awarded four
5 hundred and seventy-two thousand of it. We have awarded
6 three hundred thousand to miscellaneous projects. One
7 point two went towards our bond payment and two point four
8 went towards MDMR projects.

9 That is all I have.

10 If y'all have any other questions?

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: If I could real quick on that,
12 just to give you an idea, number one, when you get to the
13 managed projects, the two point four million, that is what
14 it takes to operate the agency as far as the Tidelands
15 part of it and that pays the match funds for the NERR, the
16 match funds for the Heritage, it pays for Lyman, it also
17 pays for some people that work in that part of the field.
18 That is just to give you an idea of where we are and it
19 pays for other stuff that we do.

20 We are the only agency in the State of
21 Mississippi that pays back the bond. Everybody else is
22 paid back by general funds. We pay our own bonds back.
23 We are very good with that.

24 I just wanted to let you know and I would love
25 to, if I can, thank the Secretary of State for being so

1 gracious with us on what he has done with this and they
2 were very good to give us the funds that we need and they
3 are trying to help us every way in the world. We
4 appreciate that and we also appreciate our legislature in
5 giving us the opportunity to be able to do this.

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

7 SONJA SLATER: Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Ms. Charmaine.

9 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Good morning
10 Commissioners, Director Spraggins, Ms. Chesnut.

11 The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
12 was mentioned thirty-four times in local, state and
13 national media since the December MACMR meeting.

14 News items included fish records, the opening
15 and closing of seasons for fishing and shrimping, and the
16 Shellfish Bureau's oyster setting facility project from
17 this past year.

18 Avery Beck and Jennifer Cumbest at the Grand Bay
19 NERR organized community cards for senior veterans in
20 residence at the Community Living Center at the Biloxi VA.
21 The cards feature a professional picture taken at the
22 Grand Bay NERR of wildlife, or scenery, and inside is a
23 handwritten note from staff talking about the Reserve and
24 the image on the card. Grand Bay NERR staff wrote sixty-
25 nine personalized cards for the senior veterans, which

1 were delivered on January 11th.

2 The MDMR 2022 Marine Information Calendars are
3 now available. This year's calendar features the offices
4 and programs that MDMR administers to protect those
5 coastal resources.

6 The calendar also contains information such as
7 tide data, sunrise and sunset times, moon phases,
8 artificial reef coordinates, size and possession limits of
9 fish, boating safety requirements and Mississippi
10 saltwater fish records.

11 The calendar features beautiful photos submitted
12 from people all along the Coast and the winner of the
13 cover photo is Joan McCool.

14 The calendars are free and available here at the
15 Bolton Building, at coast bait shops and other various
16 locations across the coast.

17 We also have calendars available in the back of
18 the room, if anybody wants to grab any on their way out.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS: Also, Capitol Day is when?

20 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: February 3rd. It's a
21 Thursday in Jackson.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS: Our plan is to be there on
23 February the 3rd, to have our personnel there. We will
24 probably not do anything the night before on that one
25 because of the way things are going, but we may do

1 something at a later date.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

3 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Marine Fisheries.

5 Jason Saucier.

6 JASON SAUCIER: Good morning Commissioners.

7 I'm presenting to you this morning for final
8 adoption changes to Title 22, Part 2.

9 A Notice of Intent was issued on December 14th.
10 The Commission recommended that that go out for Title 22,
11 Part 2.

12 The Executive Director approved the
13 recommendation and the proposed regulation was filed with
14 the Secretary of State's Office on December 20th.

15 Notice of the proposed regulation was published
16 in The Sun Herald on December 23rd. The notice of the
17 proposed regulation was also posted on the MDMR website on
18 December 22nd. That notice did include a link to the
19 proposed language with strikethroughs and underlines.

20 There is the Secretary of State's Notice of
21 Intent with the filed date, our posting on the website and
22 there is the affidavit of publication in The Sun Herald
23 (indicating slide).

24 No public comments were received. We did check
25 our email portal this morning just to confirm that. We

1 did not receive any in writing, or by phone.

2 All we are asking for at this point is a motion
3 to recommend to the Executive Director that the proposed
4 changes to Title 22, Part 2, be forwarded to the Secretary
5 of State's Office for final adoption.

6 I will take any questions.

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Sounds good.

8 Do we have the motion to approve?

9 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion.

10 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.

11 All those in favor?

12 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

13 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

14 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

15 Thank you.

16 JASON SAUCIER: Thank y'all.

17 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Matt. Haven't seen you in
18 a while.

19 MATT HILL: Sorry. You get me today. Trevor is
20 at home with a sick baby. I will step in real quick.

21 This is the final adoption for Title 22, Part 9,
22 Statistical Reporting and Confidentiality of Statistical
23 Data for Marine Fisheries.

24 Similar to Jason's, the Notice of Intent was on
25 December 14th, 2021. The Commission recommended to the

1 Executive Director that the new format and changes to
2 Title 22, Part 9, be sent to the Secretary of State's
3 Office for Notice of Intent.

4 The Executive Director did approve the
5 recommendation and the proposed regulation was filed with
6 the Secretary of State's Office on December 20th, 2021.

7 Publication of the proposed regulation. The
8 notice of the proposed regulation was published in The Sun
9 Herald on December 23rd. Notice of the proposed regulation
10 was also posted on our website on December 22nd.

11 Here are copies of everything. On the far left
12 is the Secretary of State's Notice of Intent notice, the
13 center is our website notice and on the far right is the
14 affidavit of publication in The Sun Herald (indicating
15 slide).

16 To date no public comments were received. We
17 did check the portal this morning and there were no
18 comments.

19 What we are requesting now is a motion to
20 recommend to the Executive Director that the proposed
21 changes to Title 22, Part 9, be forwarded to the Secretary
22 of State's Office for final adoption.

23 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Any questions?

24 (No response.)

25 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion?

1 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second it.

3 All those in favor?

4 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

5 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Matt.

7 MATT HILL: You're welcome.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I guess we should have
9 talked about this whenever we approved the agenda earlier.
10 Section L says no presentation, but we are going
11 to have an update from Ayesha this morning.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS: Have you got anything else?

13 MATT HILL: I thought you wanted something else.

14 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: All right.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: Was that something I was supposed
16 to talk to him about?

17 RICK BURRIS: You want him to give an update on
18 the snapper season?

19 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Snapper update sounds
20 great.

21 MATT HILL: You are supposed to ask for that.
22 Don't look at him.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS: Y'all caught me off guard here
24 because it's not on the agenda.

25 MATT HILL: Just a quick update on where we

1 ended up in 2021. Director requested, said he would call
2 on us.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: But I didn't see it get on the
4 agenda.

5 MATT HILL: We will let you slide this time.

6 Our quota for the 2021 fishing season was one
7 hundred fifty-one thousand five hundred and fifty-one
8 pounds.

9 We ended up harvesting one hundred and forty-
10 three thousand and forty-three pounds of that quota which
11 represents ninety-four point four percent.

12 We were open for a total of one hundred and
13 nineteen days for the recreational fishery which is more
14 than sufficient.

15 The Federal for hire was open eighty-six days.
16 They did have an extension.

17 As a side note, the State for hire harvested
18 five thousand three hundred and ninety-eight pounds out of
19 the total one hundred and forty-three thousand forty-three
20 pounds which represents three point eight percent of the
21 total estimated harvest for the private recreational
22 sector.

23 Any questions?

24 JOE SPRAGGINS: The longest season we have had in
25 a long time, isn't it?

1 MATT HILL: Very long, yes, sir. I can't
2 remember one, to be honest with you, being that long.

3 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Nice for people to be able
4 to get that much time to fish.

5 MATT HILL: And we will begin working on the
6 upcoming season and have something for you soon I'm sure.

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Great. Thank you.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS: Now, for Ayesha. I'm sorry.

9 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: We are not kidding this
10 time. You can come up.

11 AYESHA GRAY: That's all right.

12 Good morning. I just wanted to hit some of the
13 highlights of things that have been happening at the NERR.

14 We have been having ongoing habitat restoration
15 in the Wet Pine Savanna, part of the NRDA project that is
16 going on there and that is over three thousand acres that
17 is getting restored through mastication, invasive control
18 and prescribed burning.

19 We have all kinds of ongoing research and
20 monitoring. Our water quality continues. We have a
21 variety of research projects.

22 We are rebuilding our weather station which was
23 destroyed by Hurricane Zeta. That is in process right
24 now. We will be having our weather data online in the
25 next month, or so.

1 Then, we have lots of collaborations with
2 researchers. They come for tours, they use our dorms and
3 they do a variety of projects with our researchers.

4 We have increased the amount of publications
5 that are coming from the NERR in the last couple of years
6 and we are publishing at one of the highest rates since
7 I've been there.

8 We were awarded a new grant from EPA. It is
9 called stormwater system resilience through green
10 infrastructure and we will be working with the community
11 of Moss Point to assess their stormwater system and to
12 install green infrastructure to alleviate some of those
13 problems. That is a partnership with the MSU Coastal
14 Design Studio.

15 Then, we have lots of education events. Our
16 upcoming Sparrow sweep is going to be on February 5th and
17 we usually have between seventy-five and a hundred people
18 that come out there to sweep the Pine Savanna for the rare
19 Henslow's sparrow. That is a great event to bring your
20 families.

21 We are also doing a Paddle The Gulf partnership
22 kayak tour in February. We get out on the water even when
23 it is cold.

24 We have lots of on-the-road programming going
25 on. That is where we send our educators into local

1 schools to present about different aspects of the
2 watershed, and, then, those students visit the NERR to get
3 some hands-on experiences on our trails and in the water.

4 I also wanted to highlight the Star Party. We
5 haven't had the Star Party for the last couple of years.
6 This is our open house event that occurs in December and
7 we restarted that this year. We had a hundred and fifty-
8 eight people come. We had eleven volunteers, in addition
9 to our fourteen staff members. We logged over fifty
10 volunteer hours on that event.

11 It was really a great event. We moved a lot of
12 stuff outside so that people would feel more comfortable.
13 We always have hot soup. We have Santa Clause. We have
14 hay rides to go look at the stars. We are focusing on the
15 Geminid meteor shower.

16 One of the really nice things that we did was,
17 in our report out for it, we looked at family photos for
18 every year that we had for different families. We can see
19 our families grow over time and it is really nice to know
20 that this event has become a family tradition in our area.
21 That is something we are really proud of.

22 Finally, I wanted to bring your attention to we
23 completed our draft management plan and it is available on
24 our website. In February, we will be having a public
25 meeting to solicit comments from the public on our

1 management plan. It is mostly just an update, but there
2 are a few changes.

3 After we look at public comments, we will be
4 finalizing that for NOAA.

5 Do you have any questions?

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That's great. Sounds like
7 y'all are doing a lot of good things over there.

8 AYESHA GRAY: We try to stay busy.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS: One thing. If you haven't been
10 there, you ought to take the time to go, especially if you
11 have younger children and even teenagers that would like
12 to do it and college students. It is amazing what they
13 can see out there and there are a lot of great things
14 going on. It is kind of hidden back right on the Alabama
15 line, but it is a beautiful place.

16 Thank you.

17 AYESHA GRAY: Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

19 Other business.

20 Joe, I should have brought this up in
21 Commissioners Report, but if you will indulge me for just
22 a second here, I know you and I have touched on this a
23 couple of times over the past year.

24 would it be possible?

25 Could we ask the staff to look at this speckled

1 trout endorsement?

2 It seems like we are way behind our catch on
3 that and maybe we tightened those restrictions up a little
4 too much. Maybe we can come up with a way to provide a
5 little more access for some of these guys that want to
6 commercially catch Speckled Trout and try to fill some
7 more of this quota.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS: Rick, or Matt, who would need to
9 do that?

10 I think we talked about this a little bit.
11 Y'all can join in, if you want to.

12 MATT HILL: Part of the regulatory things that we
13 have been doing is next month we are going to combine part
14 three, part five and part seven, and the Spotted Seatrout
15 Endorsement is part of part seven. So we will be talking
16 about them and probably bringing some changes to that
17 endorsement before y'all and the Director to consider.

18 We will have a presentation next month with
19 those three regulations.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: We talked about ways of changing
21 it back.

22 What is that?

23 Do you have the numbers by any chance, what we
24 caught?

25 MATT HILL: We are right around twenty thousand

1 pounds.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS: It was less than half.

3 MATT HILL: It is less than half.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS: Than our quota for the year that
5 we caught.

6 MATT HILL: We are definitely looking at doing
7 something and we proposed some things a few times. I
8 think we are going to go back and look at things.

9 It also makes it a little less cumbersome on
10 staff, some of the ways that we propose. It doesn't
11 necessarily open it completely up, but it does give the
12 opportunity for us to potentially come closer to catching
13 the quota. We are going to bring some things forward next
14 month.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That sounds great. Thank
16 you, Matt.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: The Secretary of State just
18 walked in the door. I don't know if he is coming in, or
19 not.

20 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: You spot him, don't you?

21 JOE SPRAGGINS: He isn't getting by. He's the
22 money man.

23 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have any other
24 business?

25 (No response.)

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: If we don't, we do have
2 one public comment.

3 Is Mr. Gilbert Ramsey here?

4 GILBERT RAMSEY: Good morning.

5 I'm here to introduce Tchoutacabouffa Blueways-
6 Greenways (phonetic) Plan. It is a public use program.

7 what we are doing is we need accessibility,
8 navigational access for Desoto National Forest. It is a
9 Standard Form 299 we are introducing for Federal lands and
10 property initiative to initiate opportunity to come from
11 upstream to downstream to the park, meaning they have
12 difficult opportunities for patrons.

13 When they come out on the river, the river takes
14 them on downstream. We want to take them upstream, and,
15 then, bring them down to the park.

16 I'm just a concerned citizen. D'Iberville is
17 the lead in this program and I'm just coming to you to
18 make sure it is implemented appropriately for new
19 amendment opportunity for D'Iberville.

20 I will be at the City Council meeting this
21 evening to initiate it with the City of D'Iberville, and I
22 came here to make sure it is implemented appropriately for
23 our capabilities.

24 what it initiates is, they have been doing this
25 and the original man that designed this retired, and, now,

1 what I'm doing is making sure it is handled because they
2 did not further initiate the program.

3 what I'm doing I'm a concerned veteran and I'm a
4 concerned citizen in general to make sure that we come to
5 this opportunity for tourism and workforce development
6 with Mississippi Development Rehabilitation Services.

7 They all offer me their assistance and direction
8 to make sure it is implemented appropriately and I have
9 come here to make sure that we have this understanding of
10 what I'm initiating.

11 Any questions, I am more than honored to discuss
12 it with you at y'all's leisure and discretion.

13 I'm just making sure that we have this
14 understanding because of this form. I reached out to the
15 permit office and they told me that -- Ms. Rhonda Price,
16 I spoke with her as well and she is onboard as well to
17 make sure that we come together. I want to make sure that
18 y'all understand this because it is very well
19 understanding that MDEQ restore funds. I have a BP
20 contract. I'm coming after those funds to initiate
21 another thing on Blueways-Greenways on the Back Bay.

22 I have this all together to make sure that we
23 come together with this opportunity for our loved ones and
24 caretakers.

25 Thank you very much for your assistance and

1 guidance. Y'all have a blessed day.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Mr. Ramsey.
3 Any more?

4 JOE SPRAGGINS: That's all I have.

5 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Do we have a motion to
6 adjourn?

7 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: I'll make a motion.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.
9 All those in favor?

10 COMMISSIONER ROBERDS: Aye.

11 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye.

12 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

13 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you for coming out
14 everyone. Meeting adjourned.

15 (Whereupon, at 10:20 o'clock, a.m., the January
16 18, 2022, meeting of the Mississippi Advisory Commission
17 on Marine Resources was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the above fifty-seven pages, including this page, is a true and correct transcript of the January 18, 2022, meeting of the Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine Resources, as taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated in the aforementioned matter in shorthand, with electronic verification, and later reduced to typewritten form to the best of my skill and ability; and, further, that I am not a relative, employee, or agent, of any of the parties thereto, nor financially interested in the cause.

s/ _____
LUCILLE MORGAN, CSR 1251
COURT REPORTER