

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES
COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, April 16, 2024, 9:00 a.m.,

Bolton Building Auditorium

1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

COMMISSION MEMBERS:Ronnie Daniels
Jonathan McLendon
Jason Osborne
Cammack "Cam" Roberds**ALSO PRESENT:**Joe Spraggins
Sandy Chesnut, Esquire
Steven Eckert, Esquire**REPORTED BY:**Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich
mburdine@sbmreporting.com

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

3 Welcome to the April 16th MACMR meeting. I'm
4 going to ask Commissioner McLendon to lead us in
5 the Pledge of Allegiance today.

6 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Thank you, Jonathan.

9 Director, you want to lead us in prayer
10 this morning?

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 Yes. And first off, you know, I would
13 like to say that I hope that everybody in South
14 Mississippi and all are praying for our friends in
15 Israel and what's going on over there, so
16 hopefully we will be able to work out something.
17 And I'm glad that the good Lord let our military
18 step in the other day and do the things that they
19 needed to do to stop what was happening, so
20 hopefully it will work out.

21 If we could, let's go to the Lord in
22 prayer.

23 (Moment of prayer.)

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 Thank you, Joe.

1 All right. Any discussion on the
2 minutes from the March 19th meeting? No
3 discussion.

4 Do we have a motion to approve?

5 JASON OSBORNE:

6 Motion.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Second.

9 All in favor?

10 (Unanimous vote.)

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 Any discussion on today's agenda?

13 (No response.)

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15 Motion to approve?

16 CAM ROBERDS:

17 I'll make a motion to approve the
18 agenda.

19 JASON OSBORNE:

20 And I'll second.

21 RONNIE DANIELS:

22 All in favor?

23 (Unanimous vote.)

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 All right. Director, it's all yours.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 All right. Well, we've got a few things
3 going on. Obviously, the legislative session has
4 been hot and ready and going. Hopefully, it will
5 end up in the next couple of weeks. I know
6 they're working hard trying to do that.

7 But before we get started on that --
8 let's see. If I can find my agenda here, let's
9 get started with our employments. Do we have
10 anything on the employment contracts? All right.
11 You see the names of the new people that have been
12 employed or either -- that's all new employments.
13 Okay. So we've got several new people that have
14 come with us in Marine Patrol, and then we've got
15 some scientists that have moved -- came in with
16 Coastal Resources in that office or both of those.

17 Any questions on them?

18 (No response.)

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 We're always good to have any of them,
21 and we appreciate the ones that apply and we hope
22 that one day we get to hire them all.

23 All right. Let's see. As far as agency
24 updates, all right, we have got the legislative
25 session. What we have, we have House Bill 1006.

1 It's a recreational crab license to individuals,
2 not household, and that's been sent and signed and
3 sent to the Governor, so hopefully, we will have
4 it signed by the Governor before long.

5 Oh, I missed something. On J.W. Marine,
6 we have got a contract with J.W. Marine for 1.59.
7 That's to put cultch out, so we're putting cultch
8 out on the property that -- and what this will be,
9 we're still looking at trying to do the on-bottom
10 leases, and we won't be -- this cultch will be
11 going in the areas that we were going to keep
12 anyway, so it will be in the state waters, what
13 we're going to do.

14 Sorry about that. Y'all have got to
15 tell me. I didn't see it.

16 All right. Moving along, anything else
17 on that? I think we're done.

18 All right. We have also got House Bill
19 1007 to authorize printing oyster tags. This is
20 where the oystermen can have their own tags and
21 print them. We're giving them the process to do
22 it. That's gone to the Governor also.

23 House Bill 1279, shrimp trawling, and
24 basically what this means is we would -- you could
25 throw cast nets and stuff off the piers. Before,

1 the way it was written, you couldn't. And we
2 wanted to make sure that people are legal to be
3 able to throw, that kids could learn how to cast
4 and other people throw cast nets and different
5 things, but you cannot trawl within that area.
6 And so -- within a half a mile, like we always
7 have, so that's gone to the Governor also.

8 Our House Bill 1782, appropriations,
9 they're working on that as we speak. I talked
10 with the head of the -- Leigh Ann this morning,
11 and so they're working on it and, hopefully, we'll
12 get something soon on it. It looks like it's
13 going to be very similar to what we had last year.

14 Senate Bill 2648, authorize oyster
15 lease, that is in the conference and when I say
16 that, that means that the House and the Senate,
17 they are sitting down, talking about it and they
18 will come together with a plan. I think they have
19 one. We have all worked on the bill, and I think
20 it will be easy to go by. They've just got to get
21 it to conference.

22 Other bills of interest is the House
23 Bill 1439, riparian rights in Hancock County, and
24 that's that area over there that -- where -- other
25 than private property, just state property, we'll

1 be lowering back from about 750 yards to around
2 300 yards to be able to -- for people to be able
3 to put oysters and so we're working on something
4 with that, and that's gone to the Governor.

5 Senate Bill 2848, variable compensation
6 plan, that is in a motion to reconsider. That is
7 a way to be able to get that -- get it where
8 personnel for the State of Mississippi can let us
9 decide when and when not we can give raises and
10 how we'll be able to do it and not have to go to
11 the legislature with it, so I think that's a good
12 deal.

13 And Senate Bill 2780 is authorization to
14 the Secretary of State to approve leases. That's
15 in conference, and they named the conferees, so on
16 the Senate side, it's Blount, Thompson and
17 Younger. I'm not sure about who's on the House
18 side, but I'm sure it's going to be Brent Anderson
19 and who else.

20 But it's basically about the -- leasing
21 the property and having to have a lease that --
22 the main reason for that bill is that if you have
23 a casino, that you must have a lease with the
24 State of Mississippi to do a Tidelands lease and
25 to be able to pay the State of Mississippi.

1 That's the majority of what that's all about.

2 There was -- I know when they had to --
3 it all came out when the Supreme Court made a
4 ruling on the area off of Veterans in Biloxi and
5 that was where it came from, and that --
6 basically, they're trying to make sure that they
7 keep it the way it was supposed to be -- have
8 been.

9 All right. And then Senate Bill 2647 is
10 the Comprehensive Coastal Conservation and
11 Restoration Act, and it died in the Senate -- I
12 mean, in the House.

13 Any questions on the legislature?

14 (No response.)

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 All right. Had Gulf Council last week.
17 I'll tell you what, we was there from -- for a
18 week in Gulf Council talking to them about what's
19 going on and where we're at. We're still fighting
20 our battle on the snapper. We're fighting very
21 hard for it. Several things did come up that I
22 was proud of and we did have some good out of it,
23 but we're still trying to fight them to give us
24 the right where the -- you know, last year, we
25 were only allotted 62,000 pounds.

1 The SSC, which is the stock assessment,
2 they basically went in and looked at it and the
3 scientists had said that, well, we think that
4 Mississippi should get another 20,000 pounds for
5 sure right now and they passed it through them
6 and said best available size. And then they also
7 passed it through the Gulf Council and said that
8 they wanted to go forward.

9 Well, that did not get signed by the
10 Secretary of Commerce. We gambled. We used 18-
11 of that 20-. All right? So we gambled with it,
12 and the reason for it is because it's there.
13 There was nothing wrong with it.

14 So I was talking to the head of NMFS,
15 Andy Strelcheck, about it and we were explaining
16 to him that the Gulf of Mexico itself was about
17 70,000 pounds under. So we went over about 17,000
18 pounds. Alabama went over about 4,000, and our
19 idea is there should not be any payback if you --
20 if the Gulf was not exceeded. If we didn't exceed
21 the Gulf, then there shouldn't be a payback.

22 And matter of fact, Texas even stood up
23 and said, we have got 18,000-something pounds that
24 we left on the table. We will give them to
25 Mississippi, you know, and they were very gracious

1 about it and a lot of others are. So I think
2 we'll get something worked out of it.

3 And we're doing the Mississippi Creel,
4 the MS Creel, and I think that's going to bring a
5 lot back to the table about what we're doing, so
6 we're working with them. We're not throwing
7 hatchets at them. We're working with them and
8 trying to get it done and we'll see where we're
9 at.

10 Any questions on that?

11 (No response.)

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 That was the meat of the Gulf Council as
14 far as us and the other things that was happening.

15 All right. Capitol Day is tomorrow, so
16 we will be at the Capitol in the morning and we
17 will be set up there. And, hopefully, we'll be
18 able to talk -- show some of the legislators
19 what's going on and what we're doing there
20 tomorrow, and, hopefully, everything will work
21 out. They're kind of busy right now. We've got
22 in between times of when we could do it, and so --
23 but with the session going along, we chose this
24 time.

25 Any questions there? Y'all are welcome

1 to come up.

2 (No response.)

3 The Department of Interior visit is on
4 May 21st, and they are going to come and visit
5 with us and look at some of the things that we're
6 doing, as far as our properties and everything
7 else, and that shouldn't be a problem. I think
8 we'll be fine with it. I was on a conference call
9 with them the other day and they was pretty good
10 and no problem with them.

11 The next, the Commission meeting -- oh,
12 I think this is -- is this the one right here?
13 Yes. That's the May 21st when they're talking
14 about it. But anyway, they're looking at the
15 Round Island, Wolf River Coastal Preserves and
16 Jourdan River Coastal Preserves.

17 Jennifer, is there anything on that that
18 we need to talk any more about? It's just a
19 standard that they look at what we're doing?

20 JENNIFER WITTMANN:

21 Yes, sir.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 I think we'll be able to show them a lot
24 of things of how we've done some great things and
25 they're going to be happy with us -- so I didn't

1 think there was anything.

2 All right. Next Commission meeting is
3 for scheduled Tuesday, May 21st at 9:00 a.m. I'm
4 going to be out of town, I guess. What is going
5 on? Why is that on there? Anybody know why the
6 next Commission -- is that a holiday? Is there
7 anything in there? Obviously, we don't know why
8 it's there.

9 All right. The Bonnet Carré update --
10 gosh, I had her sheet. I don't have it anymore.
11 Where is she at? Traci, come on up real quick and
12 give it for me because you sent me the sheet and I
13 don't have it right here.

14 TRACI FLOYD:

15 Good morning. So we are working our way
16 through the Commercial Vessel Safety Equipment
17 program. We received 145 applications.
18 Thirty-four of those have been paid.

19 And then we are very close to opening
20 the processors' new technology grant. We are
21 waiting on NOAA. We've reached out to them a
22 number of times to be able to go back to 2019, so
23 just waiting on their decision.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 So we're getting there. And the second

1 phase of the shrimp and oysters -- the commercial
2 fishermen, the second phase of it is in action
3 right now.

4 TRACI FLOYD:

5 Yes, sir. Sixty of 83 plus payments,
6 those agreements have been signed and they're
7 working their way out to the fishermen.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 And then the processor group, the
10 processors are working right now. We're hoping to
11 get that out.

12 TRACI FLOYD:

13 Yes, sir.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 All right. Any questions?

16 RONNIE DANIELS:

17 No, sir.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 Thank you, Traci.

20 TRACI FLOYD:

21 Thank you.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 Snapper update. Snapper season, we're
24 scheduled to open up -- is it the 24th -- 24th of
25 May, which is Memorial Day weekend, as we have

1 always done. Our goal is to open up the 24th of
2 May to the week after the -- that following Sunday
3 after the Fourth of July. And we'll open up and
4 be able to do our snapper season during that time
5 as long as we don't over -- exceed our allocation
6 and then we will re-assess and see where we're at
7 at that point. And right now, we're planning on
8 staying with the same, two snapper per person and
9 the same length, 16 inches -- is that right -- and
10 everything else is the same.

11 Any other questions on that?

12 (No questions.)

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 One of the things we did, too, talk
15 about Gulf Council the other day was the
16 possibility of opening up charter-for-hire, as far
17 as federal and all, earlier, and I don't know that
18 we'll get it through this year. But we're trying
19 to get something to where -- that we can change
20 that and be able to open up, you know, at least
21 the same time we open up our regular snapper
22 season, because that way, if people are, you know,
23 basically charter boating -- chartering for, you
24 know, people to come down, they can be able to use
25 it. And that's a big weekend and so why not be

1 able to try to do that. So that's something we're
2 looking at.

3 And any questions on that?

4 (No response.)

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 All right. FDA certification we have
7 for the DMR Dry Lab is in process, so pretty much
8 the certifications are there. They're doing the
9 testing right now. They're growing area water and
10 meat samples to be able to do some tests on it so
11 what this is going to amount to, if we ever have a
12 situation like we had in 2019, we will be able to
13 do all the tests right here. We'll do them right
14 here at DMR and we won't have to send them off and
15 wait two weeks to find out where we're at.

16 Christina and them, y'all are doing a
17 great job. Thank y'all. We appreciate it, and we
18 should have all that going wide open shortly, so
19 we'll have two labs now, and so that's up to date.
20 Any questions on that?

21 JASON OSBORNE:

22 No, sir.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS:

24 Auction, we have got an auction that
25 we're going to be doing. We've got a bunch of

1 equipment and stuff and vehicles that we're going
2 to auction off, and I think we're going to --
3 we're trying to go live on the 1st of May and
4 then close by the 22nd, so it will be accessible
5 through the DMR website, www.dmr.ms.gov. So if
6 you have any -- anybody that's interested in it,
7 there will be some information out there on it and
8 it should be on the website.

9 Derelict vessels, we have 144 derelict
10 vessels cases. Ninety-two of them have been
11 removed. Fifty-two are pending, and we have six
12 that we're waiting on court orders for, so we
13 are -- and we do have a federal grant. We have a
14 federal grant to help us with that now, and what
15 is it? 1.5, I think. I can't think of it right
16 here, but I think it's 1.5 million, 1.6 million
17 that we've got to be able to do that.

18 And so what we're able to do now is we
19 can go out and we just have to do the
20 environmental part of it and all to make sure, but
21 especially during the time of a storm or something
22 like that when we have one -- God forbid if we
23 have one this year. I hope we don't. Lord,
24 please help us and -- but if we have one, then we
25 will be able to get some of these derelict vessels

1 out quicker.

2 All right. Any questions on that?

3 (No response.)

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 If you have public comments -- T.J.,
6 where are you at? T.J. is in the back back there.
7 And happy birthday, T.J.

8 T.J. MORAN:

9 Thank you.

10 JOE SPRAGGINS:

11 Today is T.J.'s birthday, but he has --
12 if you see him, you need to -- you have something?

13 CRYSTAL MATTA:

14 Yes. Derelict vessels is on the
15 backside.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 Huh?

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Your derelict vessels is on the backside
20 of your paper. Flip it over. Flip it over.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 Oh, I did it. I just did derelict
23 vessels.

24 CRYSTAL MATTA:

25 Sorry. I was talking to Jennifer.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 All right. I just did derelict vessels,
3 I thought, didn't I?

4 CRYSTAL MATTA:

5 Sharmin, why didn't you say something?

6 JOE SPRAGGINS:

7 All right. Another one of those days.

8 Okay. So any other -- anything else
9 that y'all have that we need to talk about?
10 Anything that the Commissioners have?

11 JASON OSBORNE:

12 No, sir.

13 CAM ROBERDS:

14 No, sir.

15 RONNIE DANIELS:

16 No, sir.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 I'm going to turn it over to you.

19 RONNIE DANIELS:

20 Thank you. Thank you, Joe.

21 So nothing for the Commissioners to
22 report today, so we will move long to Marine
23 Patrol, Chief.

24 KYLE WILKERSON:

25 Good morning. How is everybody doing?

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 Good.

3 KYLE WILKERSON:

4 Good deal. I'm going to let Captain
5 Strickland do the report today. It should be
6 short.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Okay.

9 MICHAEL STRICKLAND:

10 Good morning, everyone. Glad you turned
11 the light on for me this time. I always leave it
12 off.

13 I hope everyone is having a good day.
14 You've had a chance to review the Commission
15 report here that we have uploaded, and I'm here to
16 answer any questions that you may have on behalf
17 of Marine Patrol.

18 If there is no questions, I will bring
19 your attention to the back. Even though it's --
20 we're coming out of our winter months, that -- for
21 the year, our proactive approach to patrolling
22 is -- our citation numbers are ahead of where we
23 were last year, and also boat stops ahead of where
24 they were this time last year, so we're still out
25 there on the water, educating and meeting with the

1 public.

2 RONNIE DANIELS:

3 That's good. I have seen more presence
4 over the past year, too, and it's good to see them
5 out there.

6 MICHAEL STRICKLAND:

7 Yep. Any questions?

8 (No response.)

9 MICHAEL STRICKLAND:

10 All right. Thank you.

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 Keep up the good work, guys.

13 KYLE WILKERSON:

14 Thank you, sir.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 They're just about getting ready to get
17 busy.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Yeah. Aren't we all?

20 All right. Next up is going to be
21 Ms. Leslie Brewer, Finance and Administration.

22 LESLIE BREWER:

23 Good morning, everyone. I'm presenting
24 the financials for the month ending March 31st.

25 At the end of the month, our state

1 revenue was 5.2 million. Our agency revenue was
2 28.6 million.

3 And our state net income was negative
4 415,000, and our agency net income was negative
5 2.5 million. We don't get our appropriations
6 until after the year end, so we usually go into
7 the negative about this time, so that's normal.

8 After nine months of Fiscal Year '24, we
9 have 82.2 percent of our budget remaining for
10 operations, and Tidelands is at 54.1.

11 Anybody have any questions?

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 Now, real quick, yeah, anytime you see a
14 negative under that, as she was trying to say, you
15 know, our -- the State doesn't give us the money
16 till probably August.

17 LESLIE BREWER:

18 September, usually.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 September, you know, before they give us
21 our money, but they still pay the bill.

22 LESLIE BREWER:

23 Yeah.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 You know, they just don't put it in our

1 account. They just put it in there and if we just
2 draw off of it, then they know where we're at.

3 LESLIE BREWER:

4 Right.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 And then a lot of the federal things are
7 paybacks and we have to wait till they come back,
8 and -- but they're good --

9 LESLIE BREWER:

10 Right. That's why that's -- or like
11 GOMESA, it's -- we received it a prior year, the
12 money.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 A lot for the projects, so it's not like
15 we're hurting. We've got -- we are okay with
16 funds.

17 LESLIE BREWER:

18 Yeah. It's just for cash basis.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 And the other thing is she was just
21 talking this morning -- would y'all have a problem
22 if we only gave the finance report once a quarter
23 because it really doesn't change a whole lot
24 unless there's something that we need to talk to
25 you about? Would that be okay with everybody?

1 JASON OSBORNE:

2 I mean, I kind of like seeing Leslie
3 every month. That's fine.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 Okay. Well, Leslie, you have to come
6 anyway and you have to come in front of Jason so
7 he can see you.

8 JASON OSBORNE:

9 That's fine.

10 JOE SPRAGGINS:

11 All right. Thank you.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 Public affairs, Ms. Charmaine.

14 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND:

15 Good morning. The Mississippi
16 Department of Marine Resources had 10 media
17 mentions since the March MACMR meeting.

18 News items included the Celebrate the
19 Gulf Marine Education Festival, the MDMR
20 Commercial Vessel Safety application period
21 closing and the ground breaking of the boardwalk
22 in Pass Christian. The office of Marine Patrol
23 took part in the Excel By 5 Health Fair at Hancock
24 High School on March 23rd, and CASA of Hancock
25 County's Touch-a-Truck on April 13th.

1 Shrimp and Crab Bureau Director, Jason
2 Saucier, gave a presentation to the Hancock County
3 Historical Society on March 21st. Finfish Bureau
4 Biological Program Coordinator Megan Fleming
5 presented at Vancleave Lower Elementary school's
6 Spring Day on March 28th. Megan, along with the
7 staff from the Seafood Technology Bureau and the
8 Office of Coastal Resources Management, also
9 participated in Nature Fest this past Saturday at
10 the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science in
11 Jackson.

12 The final class of the 2023-'24,
13 off-bottom oyster aquaculture training program was
14 held on Saturday, March 16th, in the Bolton
15 Building auditorium with 13 training program
16 participants in attendance. This class included
17 presentations from several guest speakers, and at
18 the conclusion of the class, Shellfish Bureau
19 staff conducted a gear exchange for program
20 participants to return and pick up off-bottom
21 agriculture gear.

22 The NERR, the Office of Marine
23 Fisheries, Coastal Resources Management, National
24 Heritage Area, Marine Patrol and Public Affairs
25 did a great job at this year's Celebrate the Gulf

1 Marine Education Festival on April 6th. Hundreds
2 of attendees took part in our agency's festival,
3 which was held at War Memorial Park in Pass
4 Christian. Participants learned all about our
5 Mississippi Gulf Coast through fun and educational
6 activities from a variety of agencies and
7 organizations who help us put on this wonderful
8 event.

9 RONNIE DANIELS:

10 Thank you Charmaine.

11 All right. We're going to do Marine
12 Fisheries next. Just to clarify, the headline of
13 this says "certain fish species," but we're going
14 to be talking about red snapper, I believe, right?

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 Pretty much.

17 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

18 Yeah. That was just the general title
19 of the title and part that we're going to be
20 addressing today.

21 RONNIE DANIELS:

22 You confused me, man. That happens
23 easy.

24 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

25 Yeah, yeah. We'll make sure we clarify

1 next time.

2 So we're doing regulatory changes to
3 Title 22, Part 3, red snapper bag and size limits,
4 and this was essentially prompted to be able to
5 have some added flexibility for the red snapper
6 fishery currently. This presentation is not --
7 does not have an NOI format at the end, as far as
8 a motion, so if the Commission has any questions
9 and discussion and feels comfortable moving
10 forward with it, we will have to make that motion
11 at the end.

12 So as y'all are well aware, the current
13 management regime for red snapper for Mississippi
14 is a 16-inch minimum size limit, two fish per
15 person bag limit. The primary goal of the
16 regulation that's proposed is to allow the
17 Executive Director the flexibility to be able to
18 alter that management regime on an annual basis
19 for this fishery, and we're given this authority
20 under Amendment 50. Essentially, that authority
21 to set those bag and size limits was delegated to
22 each one of the states, and I think y'all are well
23 aware that Louisiana has been using that
24 flexibility for the last little while.

25 So the language we proposed exists in

1 Title 22, Part 3, Chapter 7, so that's where all
2 recreational bag, possession and size limits are.
3 And it reads as: The recreational fishing season,
4 bag limit and size limit for red snapper shall be
5 set by the executive director annually. The
6 recreational opening order for red snapper shall
7 include language establishing the size limit, bag
8 limit and season structure for the corresponding
9 season. In the event that the size and bag limit
10 is not listed in the opening order, the
11 established limits listed above in Chapter 7 will
12 apply because currently they still exist in that
13 chapter in the list of all the species.

14 So essentially, what we're saying here
15 is that -- have the flexibility to be able to
16 change and if that determination is made, it will
17 exist in an opening order, and if it does not
18 exist in that opening order, it will default to
19 what the current size and bag limits are.

20 And with that, I will take any questions
21 on the subject.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 All right. One thing, is there a
24 possibility or should we look at something in
25 there -- because I'm just reading it and once

1 again, things pop out at you when you're sitting
2 here. One of things that we -- we was looking at
3 in case a situation happens and we had a lot of
4 bad weather or something to that effect and we
5 wanted to move that and change the order, can I
6 change the order during the year or is there only
7 one time annually?

8 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

9 I think in that instance what we would
10 do is be able to basically put out another opening
11 order or have a closing order and then a new
12 season with the opening order the way it's
13 established. I mean -- and a lot of this is
14 correspondence with Marine Patrol, as well, trying
15 to develop a regulation that's going to allow them
16 to be able to enforce whatever is in place --

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 Right.

19 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

20 -- and have a tangible document that
21 lists exactly what it is.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 The reason I say that is like Louisiana
24 was able to take theirs and they was able to this
25 year, you know, because of the way that they have

1 it written, that they could raise theirs to three
2 and then they could raise it toward the end of
3 four if they needed to because they -- to catch
4 their limit.

5 And if we needed to do that -- which I
6 don't see it happening in the short term by any
7 means, but if we needed to do that in Mississippi,
8 that would give that authority to be able to do it
9 that way and we could change it the middle of the
10 season or toward the end of the season?

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 I see what you're saying, Joe. If it
13 said "as necessary" or "as needed" as opposed to
14 "annually," because the annually implies a
15 once-a-year thing, right?

16 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

17 Yes.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 Is there a way maybe we can change the
20 wording on that and -- to where it's, you know --

21 RONNIE DANIELS:

22 I agree with you on that.

23 TRACI FLOYD:

24 We can.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 And I -- you know, I don't know if they
2 can type it in now or not.

3 RONNIE DANIELS:

4 Well, we can make the motion with that.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 Okay. But I guess we need to have the
7 exact wording.

8 SANDY CHESNUT:

9 Yeah, you do.

10 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

11 We could also just take that word out
12 completely.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 We can just take "annually" out?

15 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

16 Yeah.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 Does that work for all?

19 RONNIE DANIELS:

20 That works for me.

21 JASON OSBORNE:

22 Yep.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS:

24 Yes. Just -- that way, it just leaves
25 it wide open. Okay. Just take "annually" out, so

1 we will do that and -- all right.

2 RONNIE DANIELS:

3 Can I just read the motion in for the
4 record omitting "annually"?

5 SANDY CHESNUT:

6 Yes, you may.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 And yeah -- go ahead.

9 RONNIE DANIELS:

10 Before I do that, do any of our
11 Commissioners have anything else on this
12 particular issue?

13 JONTHAN MCLENDON:

14 No. I'm good. I think Trevor was
15 giving some examples on what Louisiana has done
16 with that flexibility here in the past.

17 RONNIE DANIELS:

18 All right.

19 So I would like to make a motion based
20 on staff's recommendation, the recreational
21 fishing season, bag limit and size limit for red
22 snapper shall be set by the executive director.
23 The recreational opening order for the red snapper
24 shall include language establishing the size
25 limit, bag limit and season structure for the

1 corresponding season. In the event that the size
2 and bag limit is not listed in the opening order,
3 the established limits listed above in Chapter 7
4 will apply.

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 I will second it.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Cam seconded.

9 All in favor?

10 (Unanimous vote.)

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 All right.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 All right. Good deal.

15 RONNIE DANIELS:

16 That was easy enough.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 That will help us in case we ever get to
19 that point.

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 All right. Anybody got any other
22 business today?

23 JOE SPRAGGINS:

24 We have some public comments.

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1 We do have some public comments. I
2 think this is the order that they came in, so we
3 will start out with Ron Sheldon. He will -- he's
4 got a comment about Round Island and speckled
5 trout limits.

6 Mr. Sheldon and everybody else, please
7 be aware there's going to be a timer on the screen
8 there, and we have got an allotted amount of time
9 to discuss this.

10 RON SHELDON:

11 Thank you. Good morning. I spoke to
12 y'all probably about a year ago about Round Island
13 and my concerns about the rapid -- thank you.

14 Good morning. We'll start all over
15 again. I was here about a year ago, and I was
16 speaking to the Council about the rapid erosion
17 that I'm seeing on Round Island. I grew up in
18 Pascagoula.

19 For the last 15 years since I have been
20 retired, summer months, I love my wade fishing out
21 there. I'm out there a lot. I love the birds. I
22 love the island, but Round Island is taking a
23 major hit. I know three, four years ago -- time
24 is getting away from me -- we built that new
25 island to the north and the northwest, but so far,

1 that has done nothing to help Round Island.

2 And what I have -- these are old
3 photographs that I have. This is about a
4 40-year-old photograph, the best I can remember,
5 when the lighthouse was still sitting there, and I
6 want y'all to notice those trees, those pine trees
7 to the right of the island.

8 Next photo, please.

9 That's where Round Island lighthouse
10 used to sit, and that's a current photograph.
11 These are only a couple of months old. And
12 remember where the lighthouse was at 40 years ago
13 and those trees, and look at the next photograph.
14 That's what's left. That has been accelerating
15 rapidly over the last five years. I can tell you,
16 used to where the old Round Island lighthouse
17 keeper's -- I will call it the trash pile, because
18 it showed up at the shoreline there, is now about
19 30 or 40 foot out there. And that's extreme low
20 tide, but still that's there. It is disappearing
21 rapidly on all corners of that island.

22 Next photograph, please.

23 Jennifer, I think I spoke to you a
24 couple of years ago about this -- or maybe last
25 year about this palm tree. Two years ago, this

1 palm tree -- and these are terrible photographs.
2 I'll admit it. I'm not a photographer. But this
3 palm tree was probably 25 to 30 foot from the
4 shoreline. That is -- you can see the foundation,
5 if you want to kind of get a reference of where
6 it's at. The foundation, the rock pile where the
7 lighthouse used to sit.

8 Next photograph, please.

9 This is the north, northwest side of the
10 island there. Once again, you can look at all the
11 erosion and the trees. Hurricane Zeta took a huge
12 toll -- it scoured the west side of that island,
13 completely covered it. But the west side,
14 especially on the northern tip, there is no beach
15 anymore. It's just caving in literally if you go
16 out there. There is a vertical dropoff of about
17 four or five foot where it's steadily chewing at
18 the island.

19 Next photograph.

20 Like I said, I go out there a lot. That
21 tree off in the distance you see laying in the
22 water is the largest live oak that used to be on
23 that island. It hasn't moved since it washed off
24 in the water right before Hurricane Zeta. It's
25 still staying in that same place, but, once again,

1 I will show you that photograph for the reference.

2 Next photo, please.

3 There it is, same photograph. And I
4 think that is the end of the photographs here.

5 When I spoke to you a year ago, I think
6 the City of Pascagoula had some problems with
7 turning over the property that they used to own or
8 it was granted to them. All that is behind us now
9 from what I understand, and so the State of
10 Mississippi, the residents of Mississippi own this
11 island fully.

12 There was some problems, I understand,
13 when it was privately owned, that we couldn't put
14 dredge spoils on the island because they -- the
15 owners objected and we can't improve private
16 property. I understand that, but my question is,
17 to the Commission today, where are we at? Are
18 there any plans to put dredge spoils
19 immediately -- something that will benefit that
20 island, not restore an island that was 3- or
21 400 years ago?

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 Mr. Sheldon, before I turn that question
24 over to the Director, I'm going to let you know,
25 we're going to give you a couple more minutes

1 since you had two subjects here. We could have
2 put these on two different pages, so if you need a
3 little bit more time for your second part of it --

4 RON SHELDON:

5 I appreciate it. Is that what the bell
6 was I heard? I was over my time?

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Yes, sir. The timer went off there.

9 RON SHELDON:

10 Oh, I didn't see the timer. I'm sorry.

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 But we're going to -- we're not going to
13 run you out of the building.

14 RON SHELDON:

15 But anyway, that's the question. I
16 don't expect an answer today, but what I'm trying
17 to do -- and I'm going to go before the City of
18 Pascagoula, Jackson County, Ocean Springs -- I
19 forget who else, but anyway, is -- they have
20 dredging projects. You know, the City of
21 Pascagoula and the County is getting ready to have
22 a dredging project there at the Inner Harbor and
23 stuff, but we need everyone to cooperate. I love
24 that island.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 We --

2 RON SHELDON:

3 Go ahead, Mr. Spraggins.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 I'll tell you, the DEQ has a project
6 that we worked on and have been working on for
7 quite a while and -- where they went in and
8 basically was trying to restore a lot of the
9 island and -- which they did restore a lot of the
10 island and -- but they're also working on the --
11 that's the one that the City of Pascagoula owned a
12 portion of it. Is that right, Jennifer? And they
13 owned a portion of that area.

14 RON SHELDON:

15 Yes.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 And I think we just got it to where we
18 could purchase that or do whatever we needed to
19 with DEQ; is that correct?

20 JENNIFER WITTMANN:

21 So the State was able to purchase the
22 privately-held portions of historic Round Island.
23 The portions of the island that the City of
24 Pascagoula held, they were not able to sell to the
25 State because there were some restrictions on the

1 property. But we've entered an agreement with the
2 City for management of the entire site and if
3 there are future restoration projects, that the
4 City is happy to work with the State to make sure
5 that those are successful projects.

6 JOE SPRAGGINS:

7 But we have built back how much of that
8 island?

9 JENNIFER WITTMANN:

10 Jared, what's the acreage?

11 JARED HARRIS:

12 220.

13 JENNIFER WITTMANN:

14 220 acres is the new beneficial use site
15 at Round Island.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 So we are working on it. We're aware of
18 it and we are working on it, and I know that
19 they're looking at all the portions of it.

20 Obviously, you know, getting it rebuilt as quick
21 as possible is not easy, and -- but we're trying
22 to do it and we do know that -- we see the need of
23 that island.

24 That's another thing. We see the need
25 of that island because a couple of things of what

1 it does. It protects. It's a barrier-type island
2 that protects, and it also -- it also helps us
3 with, you know, salinities and stuff with the
4 water and it protects that by bringing -- you
5 know, cutting back on the amount of salinity in
6 the summertime and all.

7 So we're looking at a lot of different
8 things with it, and I can assure you that the DEQ
9 is working with us on a lot of different things,
10 and we will -- if I can get a copy of those, we
11 will -- I will send that to DEQ and talk with them
12 and say, hey -- if you don't mind that, and I will
13 get them to look at it. Say, hey, these are some
14 more areas that we're looking.

15 RON SHELDON:

16 Thank you. And I do appreciate it, but
17 my purpose here is just to keep it in the
18 forefront. You know, out of sight, out of mind.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 We appreciate it. We got you.

21 RON SHELDON:

22 And y'all will probably get tired of me
23 every six months or a year and so will the other
24 entities as well, but that's my purpose, you know,
25 to keep in the forefront.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 We haven't forgotten about it. We know
3 it needs to be done.

4 I know you had a second part to yours,
5 if you'd like to address the speckled trout limit.

6 RON SHELDON:

7 Yes. Thank you. I will watch the timer
8 this time.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS:

10 Yeah. We're going to give you a couple
11 of minutes.

12 RON SHELDON:

13 Thank you.

14 All right. Talking about speckled
15 trout, and I had talked to Trevor several times
16 about this several months ago. The last couple of
17 weeks, speckled trout has picked up, but over the
18 last several years, it has not. I speckled trout
19 fish a lot in the wintertime and I'm strictly
20 recreational.

21 Never -- I never reach my limit, even
22 though I could do it. You know, I love catching
23 the trout. But the numbers have dwindled in the
24 summer. The numbers have dwindled during the
25 winter. The last couple of weeks it's picked back

1 up since we had that little bit of rain and it
2 pushed them out of the river.

3 My friends and I all agree, everyone I
4 talk to, that we are all in favor of reducing the
5 quota, limiting the number of fish that you can
6 keep over a given limit. I know the State of
7 Florida has got the quota down to two. I'm not
8 suggesting that. Alabama has dropped it to six
9 with only two fish over the limit of 22 inches.
10 I'm not sure. Louisiana raised the size limit,
11 but they also limited the number of fish.

12 I cannot understand the reason,
13 especially when speckled trout are spawning, why
14 people need to go out to the islands with live
15 bait and limit out day after day after day and get
16 four or five people in the boat. They are
17 hammering the future of the speckled trout here.
18 I would love to see -- Commissioner, as you
19 pointed out earlier, I would love to see it shut
20 down during the spawn. I'm not for -- I'm not
21 against commercial fishermen. I support
22 commercial fishermen, but it seems like the
23 numbers are there and they're dropping down. And
24 everybody else has done something about it, but
25 the State of Mississippi seems to be having a

1 sit-back and, you know, let's see where this goes.

2 I spoke to a friend of mine this morning
3 that also has some friends over in Alabama. They
4 were telling him because of the severe
5 restrictions that Alabama has put on speckled
6 trout, they have bought licenses in the State of
7 Mississippi, so they can come over here.

8 So anyway, my time, I'm going to give
9 you a minute of it back, if you have got any
10 questions. I'm through. You know where I stand.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 Yeah. Just in reference, what he was
13 saying -- I told him we had discussed this in the
14 past, and in the past, we have talked about a
15 possibility here several years ago of do we need
16 to look at the spawning time of the year and do we
17 need to look at some of the things -- what we're
18 doing? That's something that has been brought up
19 and I'm not sure whether -- I haven't heard from
20 the staff lately and I'm definitely not saying
21 that that's what they're looking at.

22 But I know we have looked at -- you
23 know, a lot of -- I get -- the west side of the
24 state wants me to lower it to 13 and 15. They
25 want me to lower it to 13 inches and 15 because

1 they want to have the same thing that Louisiana
2 has so they don't have to question themselves
3 when they're going across the border back and
4 forth.

5 So we're working. I'm working with
6 Marine Patrol on some way that we can work that
7 out and not have to do that in the State of
8 Mississippi because I don't think that's the
9 situation, but I know -- Trevor, any of y'all want
10 to talk about this real quick because they know
11 more about this than I can even think about.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 Well, one thing I can tell you, I was
14 actually having this exact same conversation with
15 a gentleman on the phone on the way here this
16 morning, and one of the things -- I spend a little
17 bit of time on the water, so I have got a little
18 firsthand knowledge.

19 First place I ever wade fished was Cat
20 Island, and I grew up fishing that island. And I
21 can tell you over the past three or four years,
22 the fishing at that island has been better than I
23 have ever seen in my entire life. We're
24 consistently catching quality fish out there,
25 plenty of numbers. Things are looking good on the

1 west side of the state. That's my input on it.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS:

3 Okay. Trevor.

4 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

5 Yeah. I appreciate the sentiments that
6 are echoed here in public comments. I mean, it's
7 always nice to have folks come in and provide what
8 they're seeing and everything else like that
9 outside of what we've talked to fishermen about
10 and all that.

11 So, I mean, really, this kind of matches
12 the conversations that we have been having for the
13 last little while when the subjects come up. The
14 Bonnet Carré 2019, record rainfall two years -- or
15 after that, definitely seemed to have a hit on
16 recruitment. It definitely kind of altered what
17 we were seeing as far as our index of abundance
18 goes.

19 But as we normally have tried to do,
20 we've tried to stay away from making rushed
21 decisions or move forward with anything that's
22 overly impactful until we get a better idea of
23 the -- of basically what the long-term recruitment
24 trends are going to look like.

25 And I will say, I mean, as far as the

1 other states, you know, I think Mississippi kind
2 of took the first step ahead of everybody else in
3 changing to 15, which was a large change,
4 considering two inches. I mean, a two-inch
5 increase is a fairly substantial regulation change
6 in our world.

7 And I will say what we have observed
8 this spring does give me a little bit of hope
9 because we've had our small trawl and seine crew
10 go out and they're starting to pick up
11 young-of-the-year spotted seatrout, and we haven't
12 seen those with those gears in the last three or
13 four years, and multiple stations, a lot of fish.

14 So that links in to what we talked about
15 last year when the subject came up where while the
16 salinity might have been impactful for some
17 species and really kind of caused some issues for
18 folks finding different ones, it could have had a
19 very helpful boost in recruitment in areas that
20 for the last four years have essentially been
21 inundated with fresh water.

22 And we're currently continuing the
23 monitoring, all that kind of stuff and really what
24 we're getting to is trying to finish up the
25 assessment by the end of this year and have

1 another look. From the technical perspective,
2 when it comes to evaluating these things on the
3 management side, the simplest way to put it is
4 that when you have a shift in your index of
5 abundance, which we observed because of the
6 rainfall and the fresh water, and you have
7 continually high removals or at least removals
8 that stay stagnant like we talked about with MRIP
9 and all the issues we've had as far as that goes,
10 that leads to a more negative outlook to the stock
11 than what you would imagine. Right? Because your
12 index of abundance is supposed to track relative
13 abundance of the population, but if you're having
14 to deal with the effects of fresh water and the
15 fact that fish can move, then that gives a
16 different outlook? Right?

17 A decline in your relative abundance due
18 to fresh water trends might simply be just that
19 the fish have moved. And then when you couple
20 that with continuous harvest that's kind of the
21 situation we're in now, so that's why we're trying
22 to move forward with the assessment this year.
23 See what it looks like, continue monitoring that
24 relative abundance and really see if we have a
25 recruitment spike this year because that will give

1 a little more inclination as to the trend that
2 we're moving in for the fishery as a whole.

3 RONNIE DANIELS:

4 Trevor, let me ask you a question. With
5 Louisiana's recent changes -- which I'm overjoyed
6 about, that they made those changes -- do y'all
7 think that's going to help us on the western end
8 over there on the Mississippi waters? I mean, I
9 would have to think them keeping less fish right
10 there on that border, those fish go back and forth
11 right there, I would think.

12 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

13 Yeah. Anytime you're talking about more
14 biomass in the water capable of spawning, you're
15 increasing the probability that you're going to
16 get some additional recruits, especially in that
17 western end. I mean, those fish aren't stagnant,
18 right? I mean, for the most part, they are.
19 They're kind of regional, but to a degree, they
20 still shift back and forth across some distance.
21 And even if they don't, the currents usually drag
22 recruits and everything else around, all over the
23 place, so anytime there is more fish in the water,
24 it's a better scenario.

25 And for them, they have been battling

1 that for years, trying to pass regulations and
2 everything to the point where they have been
3 single-digit SPR for a few years.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 And we did -- what was it -- last month
6 or something, maybe first part of this month --
7 turn loose about 4,000 six-inch speckled trout?

8 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

9 Yeah. We have been continuously doing
10 release of the spotted seatrout over the last few
11 years.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 And, you know, in the past, we used to
14 turn them loose as fingerlings and they'd, you
15 know, turn 100,000 or so of them. I think it
16 became a smorgasbord for a lot of fish at that
17 time, so we decided that we would work with USM
18 and grow them out a little bigger. And we're
19 working that out with our hatchery up here, and so
20 the idea was to try to get them around six inches
21 or something like that, which they have a better
22 chance of living. And so we're going to try to do
23 that.

24 Matter of fact, I was on a podcast last
25 night, the Brown Water podcast and they was

1 talking about -- somebody asked, said, hey, the
2 next time, can we turn them loose in Pascagoula?
3 You know, maybe we can. Maybe we can find a place
4 to turn some loose over there, too, and help out.

5 Any other questions?

6 (No response.)

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 I sure hope that answers your question
9 the best we could.

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 Trevor, the only question I have is
12 there's no real way of accountability to know if
13 somebody is coming from Alabama to Mississippi,
14 especially Round Island, is there? I mean, is
15 there any reporting? Recreational, I know there
16 isn't, but commercial, is there any reporting on
17 that at all or for-hire? Is there any way to know
18 who is coming over and utilizing our 15 fish?

19 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

20 The regulatory structure for commercial
21 fishery doesn't allow for them to be able to
22 harvest spotted seatrout in that way. But I will
23 say on the recreational side, which we all know
24 what we talked about for years at this point on
25 the MRIP side, you do have to provide when you

1 answer that survey, when we ask you dockside,
2 what's your state of residence, what's the county
3 of residence, which allows us to be able to get a
4 proportion of fish that are harvested out of state
5 or from a given area. And realistically, what
6 you're talking about with Mississippi, unlike
7 other states, I mean, we hover 10 percent or below
8 when it comes to out-of-state harvest.

9 And I think where we see the trends of
10 folks maybe starting to harvest more or folks
11 coming over would be right there on the Grand Bay
12 line. You've got two or three ramps right there
13 that are real close, in driving distance, in
14 proximity that allow folks to be able to fish with
15 us, but once again, that's a -- that's a common
16 occurrence for that area.

17 CAM ROBERDS:

18 I understand. And you said that you
19 think there will be a new stock assessment at the
20 end of the year or some numbers that we can all
21 look at?

22 TREVOR MONCRIEF:

23 Yes. We have been running summertime
24 index for the last little while which has allowed
25 us to be able to put in essentially up-to-date

1 data into assessments so, hopefully, We will be
2 able to run that one and have it completed by the
3 end of the year with this year's
4 fishery-independent information and likely some
5 interpolated catch data just so that we can have
6 it. Anything else?

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Thank you, Trevor.

9 Anything else?

10 (No response.)

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 All right. That was an informative one.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 Uh-huh. Sometimes we do those.

15 RONNIE DANIELS:

16 Yep.

17 All right. Next up, we've got
18 Mrs. Susan Snyder, Reynolds property, Ocean
19 Springs.

20 SUSAN SNYDER:

21 Can you see me?

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 Yes, ma'am.

24 SUSAN SNYDER:

25 Can you hear me?

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 Make sure the red button is on there.

3 SUSAN SNYDER:

4 Good morning, Director Spraggins and
5 Commissioners.

6 My name is Susan Snyder. I reside at
7 318 Jackson Avenue in Ocean Springs with my
8 husband, Chris. Our home was built in 1903 by my
9 great-great-grandfather, and we have lived in the
10 home for 40 years. Jackson Avenue is located in
11 the historic district of Ocean Springs.

12 I appear before you today with my
13 concerns regarding the Reynolds property at the
14 intersection of Front Beach Drive and Jackson
15 Avenue.

16 The Reynolds property lies a little over
17 200 feet from our home. The property was acquired
18 after Hurricane Katrina by the DMR under the
19 direction of the Executive Director, at the time,
20 Bill Walker, with federal funds.

21 The deed stipulates the following: The
22 property herein issued, conveyed shall be used for
23 the conservation and preservation of its natural
24 features in recognition of the public benefits and
25 protecting it as a coastal area and associated

1 ecosystems in the interest of present and future
2 generations.

3 The property shall be used and
4 maintained forever as a natural area for the
5 preservation, protection, restoration and
6 sustenance of its natural characteristics and
7 features and of its ecological integrity and
8 associated habitats for the compatible use
9 purposes.

10 In 2023, the DMR amended an agreement
11 with the City of Ocean Springs giving the City
12 control over the property. Without seeking public
13 input from the citizens of Ocean Springs,
14 especially from the residents in the Ward 2 where
15 the property sits, the City has decided that the
16 property will be converted from a green space to a
17 gravel parking lot. Meanwhile, the City already
18 has a parking lot less than 50 yards away from the
19 referenced property. A lack of parking in and
20 around front beach is simply not a problem.

21 We believe that the City's intent to
22 convert the space to a gravel parking lot is a
23 clear violation of the spirit of the deed and more
24 importantly, the legal terms of the deed. This
25 decision will essentially destroy and forever

1 alter the property in ways grossly inconsistent
2 with the terms of the conveyance.

3 In accordance with the deed, I quote
4 again: The grantor or any citizen of the State of
5 Mississippi may enforce these covenants and
6 conditions using all remedies available at law or
7 equity, including injunctive relief.

8 With all due respect, we request the DMR
9 amend its agreement with the City of Ocean Springs
10 and require the City to follow the guidelines in
11 the conveyance so that the property will retain
12 its natural character and remain green in
13 perpetuity. We are prepared to exercise our
14 rights under the terms of the deed and to seek
15 legal remedies should it become necessary.

16 Thank you for allowing me to address you
17 this morning.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Thank you, Ms. Snyder.

20 You want to --

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 I can just tell you I talked to you
23 earlier and, you know, we're looking at
24 everything. We're following -- we had let the
25 City of Ocean Springs use that as an overflow

1 parking for several years, and they have done
2 that. And when this was brought to our attention
3 about being able to put a parking area there
4 because they was going to build a harbor or a
5 port -- I guess it was a marina and -- so we
6 looked at it. And we did ask Fish and Wildlife,
7 and Fish and Wildlife did give us to permission to
8 say yes, this would be something that we could use
9 that for and it could be done under this.

10 And so we're still looking at it. And
11 we understand your concerns and we're still
12 looking at it very hard. And I can tell you that
13 we're talking back with legal and we will -- as
14 soon as we get -- as I've told several of the
15 people in the Ocean Springs area, before the DMR
16 makes 100 percent decision on what they're going
17 to allow and not allow, we will sit down with you.

18 SUSAN SNYDER:

19 Thank you.

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 Thank you.

22 All right. Our last public comment
23 today is going to be Patricia Creel, DMR property
24 in Ocean Springs.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1 Same property.

2 RONNIE DANIELS:

3 Same property.

4 PATRICIA CREEL:

5 Hi. My name is Patricia Joachim Creel.
6 I live at 517 Rayburn Avenue, but I own the
7 property directly next the DMR/Reynolds property.

8 I was not notified when the amendment
9 was done to change this to allow parking. Now, I
10 know that the Commissioner has received videos of
11 activities that have happened on this property,
12 usually on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday
13 nights by underage teenagers. Okay?

14 I'm sure they're underage because if you
15 were legal age, you probably wouldn't be doing
16 these acts out in public because you will be able
17 to go downtown and drink at a bar, but they're
18 doing things that are not good. They probably
19 don't want anyone to see, but there are cameras on
20 people's homes that you can see these items. If
21 you would like to get a copy of the videos, I will
22 surely send them to you, but it's inappropriate.
23 It's not welcomed. They are doing doughnuts.

24 There are little animals and birds who
25 have been nesting on this property and they can't

1 anymore because of what's happening on this
2 property.

3 The amount of trash, it's my husband
4 that picks it up usually and my daughter, when he
5 is cutting the grass, because we make sure our
6 grass is always green, always cut, always
7 maintained there, even though we haven't started
8 building our home because we want to maintain the
9 beauty of, next to a conservation property, having
10 green. Okay? Putting gravel down is never going
11 to be green. If they're doing doughnuts on the
12 dirt and throwing it all up and it's muddy, it's
13 not going to be any better with gravel.

14 I abhor -- please do not allow this to
15 go through. Thank you for letting me address you.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 And yes, ma'am. And I have advised the
18 Mayor -- because I did see the videos that you
19 sent me, and I have advised him on that, and I
20 told him that they was sent to me. So he does
21 have that and he was addressing that with his
22 people in the city on it.

23 RONNIE DANIELS:

24 All righty. We don't have any other
25 public comments.

1 Do I have a motion to adjourn?

2 CAM ROBERDS:

3 I will make the motion to adjourn.

4 RONNIE DANIELS:

5 I will second.

6 All in favor?

7 (Unanimous vote.)

8 RONNIE DANIELS:

9 Thank you, everyone, for coming out
10 today. Meeting adjourned.

11 (Adjourned at 10:02 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

1
2 I, MELISSA BURDINE-RODOLFICH, Court Reporter
3 and Notary Public, in and for the County of
4 Harrison, State of Mississippi, hereby certify that
5 the foregoing pages, and including this page,
6 contain a true and correct copy of my stenotype
7 notes and/or electronic tape recording of the
8 public meeting, as taken by me at the time and
9 place heretofore stated, to the best of my skill
10 and ability.

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

15 Witness my signature and seal, this the

16 _____ day of _____, 2024.

17
18 /s/ Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich

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20 Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich
21 My Commission Expires 4/03/28
22
23
24
25