COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, June 16, 2015
9:00 a.m.
Bolton State Building Auditorium
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Commission Members:

Richard Gollott, Chairman

Shelby Drummond, Vice Chairman

Steve Bosarge

Ron Harmon

Also Present:

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

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I would like to call this meeting to order, and I welcome everyone.

The first thing we are going to do is ask Shelby Drummond to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Please stand.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Next thing on the agenda is approval of the minutes.

Do I have a motion to approve the minutes, or any modifications?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion to approve the minutes.

Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So seconded.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

Next we have approval of the agenda.

Any modifications, or a motion to approve it?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So seconded.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

At this time, instead of the Executive Director's report, we are going to have Melissa give us a report.

MELISSA SCALLAN: Good morning Commissioners. We wanted to let you know that next Tuesday, June the 23rd, at 9:30, Governor Phil Bryant will be on the Coast. We will present, at that time, the final Oyster Council report. That will be at the Biloxi Visitors Center, and everyone is invited.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: When was that, Melissa?

MELISSA SCALLAN: Tuesday, June 23rd, at 9:30, at the Biloxi Visitors Center upstairs.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That's a week from today?

MELISSA SCALLAN: Right.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Next we have Marine Patrol.

RUSTY PITTMAN: Good morning Mr. Chairman,

Commissioners, Ms. Chestnut.

I'm going to make mine real short because I know we have a lengthy Fisheries coming up. You have the report in front of you. There are a couple of things that I would like to mention that are not on the report.

A couple of Saturdays ago one of our officers was around Cat Island and received a call over VHF where a man was calling for assistance. Our officer called to get permission to leave Cat Island and go into Louisiana waters which we did give him permission to do that. The man that called on VHF, his brother has passed out and had a heart attack. Officer Tommy Jennings responded and was on scene at Isle au Pitre within ten minutes, boarded the vessel and started doing CPR on the victim, waiting on the Coast Guard to arrive to give assistance. The Coast Guard showed up, but also left the area. They were in their helicopter.

Tommy, then, loaded the subject onboard his vessel with the brother and brought the man into the Pass. I'm sad to report that the man did pass away, but Officer Jennings did an excellent job, also with the help of Lieutenant Bryce Gex who met him at Pass Harbor and helped with CPR, and they did CPR for right at an hour.

Those are just some of the things that our officers do, beyond normal patrol, and I just wanted to

mention their names.

Also, a week from Friday, June 26th through the 28th, is our Operation Dry Water which is held all over the country. Different agencies join in on this. Right now, with Mississippi, we have the Department of Wildlife and Department of Marine Resources. Usually, D'Iberville Police Department also assists in Operation Dry Water. It's a step-up enhancement on boating under the influence.

That's all I have.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Rusty.

Do we have any questions for Rusty?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I have one question.

This felony assault on a law enforcement officer, did anybody get hurt?

RUSTY PITTMAN: Did anybody get...?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Did anybody get hurt?

RUSTY PITTMAN: No, sir. One of the officers got scratched a little bit, but the subject did go to jail. It was a DUI stop and this fellow was in the boat as a passenger and was also under the influence and was upset with the way the officers were talking to the driver of the boat. So he decided to interrupt them, and it didn't go well for him and he ended up in jail, too.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Rusty.

RUSTY PITTMAN: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Up next we have Joe Jewell.

JOE JEWELL: Good morning Commissioners.

First, I want to give you an update on the commercial quota.

Red drum, of course, the commercial quota limit is fifty thousand. We are at forty-two thousand five hundred and sixty-four, leaving seven thousand four hundred and thirty-six pounds.

Spotted seatrout, the quota is fifty thousand. We are at nine thousand four hundred and seven, leaving forty thousand five hundred and ninety-three.

Flounder, the commercial quota is seventy-four thousand. Landed so far has been twenty-two hundred and forty-six pounds, leaving seventy-one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four pounds.

I want to update the Commission on training. I have a long list here, but I want to point out a couple of training events that our staff participated in.

Carly Somerset and Jonathan Barr attended Otolith training sponsored by NOAA in St. Petersburg, Florida.

The entire dive team for the BMR which is primarily housed in the office of Marine Fisheries completed first day for professional divers which is a

great asset for safety in the field.

With that being said, I'm going to move into our agenda items. The Commission, last Commission meeting, directed the staff to come forward with an update on the status of the red drum. Mr. Matt Hill will make that presentation.

MATT HILL: Good morning Commissioners and Sandy.

I'm going to go through a brief presentation real quick on our commercial red drum status. Of course, you know our current regulation is eighteen-inch minimum size limit. You can only retain one red drum over thirty inches. We have a fifty thousand pound quota, and they must possess a harvester's license to commercially harvest.

We have a current quota of fifty thousand pounds. Previously, it was thirty-five thousand. We have met the quota, in twelve years, since the implementation.

Some of the options we can consider are status quo, we can split the season, we can increase the quota, we can replace it under the endorsement, or we can make a combination of all three of what I have listed. These decisions will be up to you.

I'm not going to read this whole thing, but we put an endorsement on spotted seatrout, I think, two years

ago which seems to be working. We could add the red drum in here and, basically, give some minimum qualifications to be able to harvest these fish. This program has been working in the past. We have a seen a dramatic decrease in the harvesters that are able to catch these spotted seatrout. So it's been able to allow us to keep the season open for a longer period of time (indicating slide).

We do have a few more charts that we can show, but, if there are any questions on this portion of it, we will take those, now, until we get into some of the historical data.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Matt, have the commercial people reached their quota, in the last couple of years, on the spotted seatrout?

MATT HILL: Yes. We met it pretty quickly the year before last, the last year we left some fish on the table, due to the endorsement. The commercial quota is closed September the 30th no matter what. I think we left close to eight thousand pounds on the table, with the spotted seatrout quota. If we could have extended that past September 30th, I believe we would have had no problems reaching that quota, but it is shut down, due to the regulation that was made, on September 30th.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I was talking to a market

here in town just before the meeting, and they are telling me that they are not getting the amount of fish that it would take to keep the fish on the menus.

I would like to ask the staff to look into helping the commercial fishermen increase their catch.

MATT HILL: There are some ways I think we can provide them a few more opportunities. A few more areas to fish in is what we had talked about. That is something that we can look into. Maybe look at taking some of the restrictions off of what they do.

It seems to work extremely well. Splitting the season for them has definitely helped. It is providing fish throughout the year, and I think that was our goal, in the beginning, not only for the fishermen, but for the seafood processors and dealers. That program worked.

I'm not sure if using the endorsement for red drum, right now, is currently the correct way to go, but I highly recommend that we possibly look into splitting the season into two two-month segments.

The reason I say the two-month segments is we do not start the spotted seatrout first season until February 1st. So there is really nothing in January for the fishermen to harvest. It's February 1st through June, and, then, we start again in July through September 30th.

That is something that we would really like to

see. I think the processors and retailers and the fishermen would like to see that. So we are recommending that we do some type of split season and that we also consider increasing the commercial red drum quota by a fair amount.

JOE JEWELL: Commissioners, a couple of things. We've got two issues, now; first is the presentation by Mr. Hill on red drum.

Commissioner Gollott, are you going to make a motion for staff to take under consideration potential regulatory change to help increase, or to help catch, spotted seatrout quota that is left on the table?

If you want the staff to consider that, if you will make a motion on that, we will bring that forward next meeting.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll make the motion to instruct staff to look at ways to change the commercial rules for spotted seatrout to enable them to be able to catch more fish, or, at least, fill the quota.

JOE JEWELL: As Mr. Hill mentioned, the way the current regulation reads the end of the season is September 30th. So, if there are any left on the table, we could move that date, or come up with language to modify that.

If the Commission so wishes and y'all vote on

that, we can do that.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: How long will it take to do this process?

JOE JEWELL: We could do an internal regulatory review of the rules and be prepared to have some information for y'all next Commission meeting.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Do we have to have some kind of legal motion?

JOE JEWELL: Well, I think, if we are going to do a regulatory change at that time next meeting, we would. We absolutely would have to for a regulatory change, but I think what I'm hearing the Commission ask this morning is to direct the staff to review the rules and regulations to get that flexibility.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: So we could do it fairly quickly, Joe?

JOE JEWELL: Yes, within sixty days, if there is no major public input, or discontinuity in the process.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Matt, did I understand you to say that you would like to increase the quota on red drum?

MATT HILL: I would like the Commission to consider increasing it by between ten and twelve thousand pounds. When the quota was set, in 1990, that will get us back to the historical ratio and the rationale that it was

set in 1990.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Biologically, would that be a correct process?

MATT HILL: Biologically, what we shoot for is a thirty percent escapement rate and, with the increase in the recreational catch being hundreds of thousands of pounds in certain years, we are talking about ten thousand pounds. So we feel that it would have little to no impact on the resource.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: It would surely give more fish to the retail markets and restaurants.

MATT HILL: If you combine that with splitting the season, we would also be able to provide them later in the year. The problem is, now, that they are running out of quota basically this month, June and July. So you have August, September, October, November and December that there are no red drum for the retail market.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That's what I would like to see happen, split the season and increase the quota by ten thousand pounds, but I think we've got a motion, now.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do you want to modify your motion?

MATT HILL: Let's do the speckled trout, first.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Okay.

Do I have a second the speckled trout motion?

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

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: The red drum increase won't affect the Fed's regulation, will it?

MATT HILL: No. We have been working consistently with them to open a limited fishery in the EEZ and we have continuously failed. So I think it's time that we move as a state to try to do something for these fishermen, instead of waiting around for the Feds. It's been a long arduous process and we still don't see that it's going anywhere.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: What about if the state increases their limits off shore nine miles?

Will that affect it?

MATT HILL: I do not think that would affect it. We still would not allow the purse seine gear. That is still in state statute. It would still be mostly conventional tackle. The fishermen we are talking to, the

commercial fishermen are not getting as much price per pound as they would for some of the smaller fish that they are catching inshore.

We were trying to push that more for the charter industry. They benefit from those fish more than the commercial industry would benefit from them.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Thank you, Matt.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I don't really see a need for the endorsement on red fish. The folks that are catching them seem to be the commercial guys.

MATT HILL: We did do an analysis on that, and the guys that are targeting the red drum, for the most part, they are what you would consider purely commercial fishermen. It was not like that with the speckled trout. That's why we recommended it. We just wanted to give that option, in case y'all so chose to do that, but we don't feel like, right now, that's the correct way to go. Splitting the season would definitely help.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: The endorsement was because most of us felt like most of the speckled trout that were being caught was not from the commercial segment.

MATT HILL: Correct.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Now that we have that somewhat under control, hopefully you guys can look at

what we can do to enable these commercial fishermen to be able to produce that quota every year.

MATT HILL: Correct.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: As far as the red drum, I will make a motion to increase the quota by ten thousand pounds and to split the season into two six-month seasons.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: How many pounds, Steve?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: By ten thousand, Shelby. I think it would make it sixty thousand instead of fifty thousand.

MATT HILL: That is correct and, with the split season, we would have two thirty-thousand pound six-month seasons.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Which we would have already met that.

MATT HILL: Correct, but we would also be able to open it again July the 1st for another thirty thousand pounds. We would treat it the same way as we do the spotted seatrout. If they go over, we will take it away from them in the second half. If they don't go over, we will add it to the second half.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion on that.

Do we have a second?

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

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion has been made and seconded.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

MATT HILL: Thank you.

(Jamie Miller enters meeting.)

SANDY CHESTNUT: For clarification on that last motion, that will be simply information to be included in what you bring back next month.

Okay?

Matt HILL: Correct.

JOE JEWELL: Thank you, Commissioners.

Next up on the agenda is item two, Title 22 Part 1, public hearing update, and Title 22 Part 1, prohibition of basket dredges and changing the maximum dredge weight.

The Commission passed a Notice of Intent, on April the 21st of 2015. The Notice of Intent was filed in the Secretary of State's office that same day, April the 21st. Public notice was provided via the DMR web page, on April the 23rd. Additionally, public notice was provided through the legal notice posted on April the 28th 2015, in the Sun Herald.

Public comments. The first public comment, once the Notice of Intent was passed, occurred between April the 22nd through May the 18th. As required by the Administrative Procedures Act, there has to be twenty-five days between those two processes. That first public notice provided twenty-seven days.

As the Commission should recall, last meeting the Commission directed the staff to do a couple of things. One was to extend the comment period and to conduct a public hearing on the issue.

That public comment period was extended an additional twenty-eight days, April the 22nd through June the 15th which was yesterday, for a total of fifty-five days.

We are going to talk a little bit about we analyzed the comments. Of the forty-seven comments that we received, forty-six were opposing the proposed changes and one was endorsing the proposed changes.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the public comments that were received. On May the 10th, I received an email from Mr. Jessie Shifalo. He opposed the changes. Mr. Shifalo also attended both meetings that we had, the one in January and the one in May, and expressed his opinions opposing.

On Monday, May the 18th, the day before the May

Commission meeting, Ms. Thao Vu and her representative Mr. John Jopling attended a meeting with me where she handed me a letter from the Mississippi Coalition of Vietnamese Fisherfolk organization that had forty-five names listed. At that time, she also handed me twelve individual letters from individual Vietnamese fishermen. All of these opposed the proposed changes.

I do want to point out to the Commission a couple of things, at this point. First, the twelve individual letters, those individuals that were named on the letters were also on the letter from the Vietnamese organization. They appeared twice, and, at that meeting, I advised Ms. Vu, under counsel, that traditionally the way our department handles form letters that are not signed is we count them as one. Even though there were forty-five names listed there, they are not signed. So there is no way that we can verify those people that are on that list actually oppose, or endorse, the proposed changes. The way we traditionally have handled that is, unless it's signed, we count that as one public input.

I'll go down the list and I'll explain a little more.

On Wednesday, May the 28th, which was the day of the public hearing, Ms. Vu also hand-delivered me six letters and they all opposed the proposed changes. In

reviewing the six letters, two of them were duplicates. One was copied twice, I think accidentally. Of those five remaining, they also appeared on the form letter by the Mississippi Coalition of Vietnamese Fisherfolk.

The final comment was received yesterday by Mr. Randy Lesso, in a hand-delivered letter, that he endorses the proposed changes.

The Commission has a couple of ways of looking at this, and this is totally the Commission's decision. They can accept the letter with forty-five names on it, or they can count that as one, and that would bring the total to fifteen total comments; fourteen opposed and one for the proposed changes.

It's sort of a mute point, if you look at it from either perspective, whether you endorse the form letter, or just the twelve individual candidates, it's still overwhelmingly the public comment we have received was opposed to the changes.

We conducted a public hearing, as required by the Commission, on May the 28th. The meeting was attended by seven members of the public. None of the attendees supported the proposed changes. Some of the comments the staff received were:

The changes need more scientific research.

Some of those opposed were unable to attend the

meeting because the shrimp season had opened in Louisiana and they felt that they would have more public attendance had the public hearing been on a different day.

It's difficult to fish because the dredges will be too light.

Many Vietnamese don't have sufficient upper body strength to operate a bag dredge.

Some felt the proposed rules should be mailed to all fishermen in their language and posted at harbors and docks where the fishermen are located.

Fishermen have suffered enough.

The proposed rule is an injustice.

Will make it more difficult to make a living and cause economic hardship on the fishermen.

I will put up here on the screen, for the Commission to consider, the proposed changes as they are currently. The proposed changes will affect Chapter 7 Section 100 and Section 101. I will read the changes into the public record as proposed.

"It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation, to take, or attempt to take, any oysters from the waters under the territorial jurisdiction of the State of Mississippi by the use of a dredge having a weight in excess of one hundred and forty pounds" -- the Commission has asked that we change that to one hundred and fifteen

pounds -- "and the tooth bar cannot have more than sixteen teeth and the teeth on the tooth bar cannot exceed five inches, unless otherwise permitted by the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources, or as hereby authorized the MDMR representative, its Executive Director, Director of Marine Fisheries, Bureau Director, Program Coordinator, or other MDMR designee."

And, then, proposed is to insert into the regulation, Section 102:

"It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation, to take, or attempt to take, any oysters from the waters under the territorial jurisdiction of the State of Mississippi by the use of a basket dredge. A basket dredge is a type of oyster dredge, also known as a 'self-dumping dredge', that utilizes a rigid framed basket, instead of a flexible bag made out of rope, or chain, to retain the harvested oysters."

With that being said, Commissioners, that is the update on the process of where we are, now, the regulatory process. We have extended the public comment period and we have conducted a public hearing. All the input that the staff has received is overwhelmingly opposed to the regulatory change.

I will take questions by the Commissioners.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: At this time, I would

like to make a statement. Our primary objective is to manage the oyster reefs and protect them. The State has spent a lot of money planting these oyster reefs. I think we need to err on conservation.

I understand oysters. I have dredged oysters. All of it is in the setting of the dredge. The heavier dredge makes it easier to plow the reefs up and, when you plow reefs up, you bury oysters and kill them.

For decades, we were at a hundred and fifteen pound dredge. I have looked at the minutes. They have no scientific, or any other, reason why, other than the fishermen wanted to change the weight. I think we need to go back to a hundred and fifteen pound dredge.

Whether we outlaw the basket dredge, we will open that up for discussion, but that's where I stand on this. The least we can do is go back to a hundred and fifteen pound dredge.

Do we have any more comments from the rest of the commissioners?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Their opposition, Joe, I guess is to not only the weight, but the teeth on the bar.

Right?

JOE JEWELL: I don't think we heard any specific comments about the teeth on the bar, but should the Commission move forward with changing the weight, that

clearly would be an option by the fishermen is to reduce the number of teeth, the width of the dredge.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: The opposition, I don't think, wants to decrease the weight of the dredge.

Is that correct?

JOE JEWELL: I think that's correct. Most of the comments that we heard, or have received, focused on the basket dredge.

I think the weight change has the potential to have a much larger impact on the oyster commercial fisheries, but we did not hear as many comments on the weight of the dredge, as we did the basket dredge.

I think I understand what you are trying to say. Clearly, the biggest impact will be by changing the weight of the dredge to the oyster community.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Probably, but I'm kind of like Richard. I think this type of dredge is detrimental to the oyster population, or the oyster fishery, in coastal Mississippi. So I would suggest we probably ought to do something about it.

I know there is opposition, but the opposition is not considering the biology of the oyster, I don't think, or the population of the oyster. Maybe that should be brought forth to the opposition and maybe we ought to vote on this at a later date.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Well, what I've heard, Shelby, is their objection is they don't want to learn how to fish with a lighter dredge. All of us have to make changes. I don't think we should have ever increased it to a hundred and forty pounds.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Probably not.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: The basket dredge, I think we ought to outlaw it, and, then, if somebody wants to prove that it's not hurting the reef, that's fine, but protect the reef first and foremost. That's just how I feel.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Did you do some testing, Joe, or have we done some testing?

JOE JEWELL: Well, we did.

First, I want to address Commissioner Gollott's comments. I think what I'm hearing him say is traditionally for a long period of time we had the hundred and fifteen pound weight for the dredge. We had that for a substantial amount of time. It wasn't until just a decade, or so, ago that we changed to the hundred and forty pound weight of the dredge. I think that's the point that Commissioner Gollott is trying to make.

I want to address that this way. Should the Commission move forward on the weight change, I think our agency should try and make a better effort to reach out to

the oyster community and make them aware of the change, or potential change.

Shelby, I think I hear your recommendation, and I agree with that because we heard more comments focused on the basket dredge than we did the potential change of the weight which is the issue that has much more dynamic amplitude into the industry. It's been, in fact, a larger group of fishermen than any potential change to the basket dredge.

I hear both of y'all's comments and I agree with those, and we will move forward as the Commission directs.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Correct me if I'm wrong, Joe, even though we change the weight from one forty to one fifteen, basically the narrower dredge would fish the same.

Correct?

JOE JEWELL: Correct.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: From this standpoint, we have to look at where is our industry, at this time, and what are the causes that have led to the industry being where it is, in other words, the resources.

We have had the Governor's Council down here, and there are a lot of changes coming forth, but there are also changes that need to be made on the ground.

I don't see us not making some changes to try to

help restore the reefs. I can understand the Vietnamese mostly wanting the basket dredges, but I do believe that reducing the weight back to an earlier time would be a good choice, in my opinion.

JOE JEWELL: I hear your concerns, and certainly the Commission has addressed the management and resource issues. They have directed the staff to look into those issues, and I think, as we stand here today, we understand that the resource availability to day is not what it used to be for a multitude of environmental and manmade reasons.

Commissioner Bosarge, I agree with you. The uniformity of the issue as basket dredge is not really on the shoulders of the Vietnamese community. It lies primarily on the Vietnamese community because, as they have quite vocally expressed, they are the ones that use primarily the basket dredge, but they are not the only community that uses the basket dredge. We have a lot of other fishermen that use the basket dredge. Although the displacement would be on those people that actually use the basket dredge, the potential impacts would be felt by everybody that has a basket dredge.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: If we totally do away with one type of equipment, then, you can't overcome that.

JOE JEWELL: When we made the adjustment from

one fifteen to one forty, most people were carrying heavier dredges. So they made the adjustment, then. They certainly have the potential to make that adjustment now, particularly in the face of the resources that we have available which are not at the levels they were back then, when we made that change.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: One of the things that I'm looking at, also, is that the people on their private leases in Louisiana went to those basket dredges one time and they have done away with them, now, because they damage the reef, and they are not pulling a hundred and forty pound dredge on their private leases, and this tells me that they have got to have some damage.

If someone can prove that the hundred and forty pound dredge does not damage reefs, for the average person -- now, there are people who can go out there with a two hundred pound dredge, and, then, offset the dredge, but we don't have that case. We are open to the public. Anybody can buy a license, and people who really don't know how to set a dredge correctly can go out there and plow it up.

For this reason, I would like to make the motion that we go back to a hundred and fifteen pound dredge.

The basket dredge, we can table that until we have some more discussion and more found out about it.

The next thing I would like to do, while we are

doing this, is look at making chain mandatory to pull a dredge, no cable. They are telling me that the cable lets them bog the dredge a lot quicker than the chain. The chain is heavier and it helps regulate the dredge. I would like the staff to go out with that.

I made that motion.

Can I get a second on it?

JOE JEWELL: Excuse me. Let me ask a quick clarification question.

Richard, did you make two motions?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Two motions.

JOE JEWELL: That's what I thought.

The first motion is directing the staff to move forward with the Notice of Intent only for the reduction of the weight for the dredge, and that we will wait until a later time for more input, scientific analysis for the potential change of the basket dredge.

Your second motion is to direct the staff to do an analysis and come forward to the Commission maybe next meeting, or the meeting after, on the differential pull types for a chain versus a cable on a dredge.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: That's correct.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: On that first motion, could I ask Richard that maybe you modify it just a little bit to tell the staff to contact every fisherman,

basically, in Vietnamese and English, in other words, all license owners and let them know that this change is going to take place where we don't get to the beginning of the season and all of a sudden everybody finds out that the dredges they are pulling are illegal?

JOE JEWELL: You want to modify the motion to include directing the staff to reach out to all the current commercial oyster license holders directly by whatever means, a mailout, or other mechanism, to ensure that the maximum amount of the commercial fishing population is aware of the proposed change.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That way, they can make the changes, and it will be a lot easier.

JOE JEWELL: They can do that. Sure.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Are you okay with that, Richard?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Sure.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second your first motion.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I've got a question, Richard.

You said use a chain to pull the dredges, as opposed to what?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Cable. It has to be a larger dredge. In other words, if somebody has a hand

dredge and they want to pull it with a rope, that's fine.

JOE JEWELL: There is a differential, Commissioner Drummond, between pulling a cable and a chain. A chain not only is heavier and holds the angle of the dredge, but it's more flexible, where a cable is a pretty much rigid pull mechanism that doesn't have that flexibility, and there are some people that feel that that rigidity of the cable allows for the dredge to dig in. We would have to look a little more into that.

What I think I'm hearing Commissioner Gollott say is his second motion is he wants the staff to evaluate those two pull mechanisms and come back before the Commission with a recommendation. Not a regulatory change. Just come forward with a recommendation.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: It looks like to me that would increase the weight of the dredge, if you've got chains in front of them.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Shelby, I've checked with a number of old time commercial fishermen, some of them retired now, oyster fishermen and people who really did a good job, and they said that is a problem because people with a cable will let out a mile of cable, but, when you have a chain, it helps hold the neck of that dredge down and makes it work right and it's a lot less digging and plowing with a chain, and that's the reason for that.

JAMIE MILLER: I'm sorry. I just need to ask one question of legal.

If we separate the motion not to include elimination of the basket dredge, will we then have to go back out for a Notice of Intent, if they make that motion in the future?

SANDY CHESTNUT: If they make that motion in the future, yes.

JAMIE MILLER: If they don't deal with the prohibition of the basket dredge today, it will reset the Notice of Intent to take care of that in the future?

SANDY CHESTNUT: Yes. They are denying that part of the motion today and accepting the weight change.

JAMIE MILLER: The reason I asked is to give full context to the discussion. The Governor did establish an Oyster Restoration Council. That council has been meeting for a couple of months, now, and a strong recommendation, in that report that we will receive just days from now, is the elimination of the basket dredge.

Although that comment didn't show up in the public notice that we received in our Notice of Intent, we had a lot of discussion in the industry, with scientists, and with citizens about gear types and weights, and the basket dredge. I won't say it was unanimous, but they have endorsed the idea at least to recommend that the

Commission eliminate the basket dredge. That will come out next week.

Although it didn't show up in the comments from our Notice, there is a strong opinion, at least within the industry, that the basket dredges need to be prohibited.

I just want to give that to the Commission for context.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Sandy, couldn't we table the basket dredge?

SANDY CHESTNUT: Yes, you could.

JOE JEWELL: Let me ask for clarification because I would like to make a point of order.

I think I hear Director Miller and what he is saying is, if the Commission tables, or does not include moving forward with the final adoption of the regulatory changes for the basket dredge, that the option is, pending the Governor's Council, we come forward with a second Notice of Intent that would take that on, if the Commission so desired to take that up at a separate time.

Moving forward on this current Notice of Intent, there are only a couple of options available. That's what I want clarification on.

If the Commission votes this morning to not include the regulatory changes to the basket dredge, to only include the weight changes, my understanding -- and

this is where I need some clarification, Sandy -- is that we would submit an amended final adoption that would exclude the basket dredge portion because that does not have a substantive change, or any meaningful change, on the regulatory process, and we could actually move forward today with final adoption, with a modified Amended Final Notice to the Secretary of State.

Is that correct?

SANDY CHESTNUT: That's correct. It's really a matter of semantics, or exactly what they are doing. If they are actually denying the basket dredge today, then, it would start the process over.

JOE JEWELL: Correct.

SANDY CHESTNUT: If they are tabling the basket dredge issue to get more information, they can move forward with the weight changes and revisit the basket dredge. If there is no substantive changes to the language, they can move forward. If there is some substantive changes included, they would have to go back out on Notice.

JOE JEWELL: Correct.

My understanding of the motion, as it is now, is to table the basket dredge issue for a later date, pending more input, and, then, move forward with the final adoption of the weight portions of the regulatory change.

Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: That was my intent.

Do we have a second on the motion?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So seconded.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion made and seconded.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

JOE JEWELL: Thank you, Commissioners.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Joe, won't you have to go back with hearings on the chain?

JOE JEWELL: As I heard the second motion from the Commission -- which I don't think has had a vote on.

SANDY CHESTNUT: It hasn't.

JOE JEWELL: I think the motion on the table is for the staff to evaluate those two gear types and to come forward with a recommendation, or a presentation, to the Commission at a later date, and, then, if the Commission, at that time, chooses to make some regulatory change, we would come forward with a Notice of Intent.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.

SANDY CHESTNUT: We need a vote on the second

motion.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I don't know if we had a second.

COURT REPORTER: You didn't have a second.

SANDY CHESTNUT: We didn't have a second?

COURT REPORTER: No, ma'am.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll make a motion that we table the basket dredges until a later date.

JOE JEWELL: I think the motion on the table is to have the DMR staff to evaluate the gear differences between a chain and a cable, and to come forward to the Commission at the next meeting, or the meeting thereafter, with a recommendation, or evaluation, presentation.

So you need a second for that.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Is there a motion already to make a study of the chain versus the cable?

JOE JEWELL: Yes, sir. It needs a second.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I'll second the motion.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: The motion carries.

Now, do we have to table the basket dredge?

JOE JEWELL: I think we have effectively done that, in the first motion.

SANDY CHESTNUT: I think that was included in the first motion.

JOE JEWELL: I think we are ready to proceed down the agenda to the next item which is F3.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'm ready.

JOE JEWELL: As the Commission should recall, at our last Commission meeting, Title 22 Part 9 was up for consideration of Notice of Intent. The Commission, at that time, postponed the issue until this Commission meeting, pending input from the industry.

As you should recall, at that time, we had four processors that were not part of the Trip Ticket Program that is sponsored by Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Commission directed the staff to move forward with evaluating those four processors and either getting the data, or inputting it into the system.

Today, of those four, three of them are actually on our Trip Ticket system, now, and the fourth processor has the ability to provide us the information in the format with all the fields that are required under the Trip Ticket Program. So we effectively have all the dealers and processors here under the Trip Ticket Program and in a manageable way.

My understanding from the Commission is, once that was achieved, for us to move forward with the regulatory change, making it mandatory for dealers and processors.

With that being said, I will move forward with the presentation.

As y'all recall, it's the exact same presentation as we did last Commission meeting, but I have to go through this for the public record.

The impact. It will affect primarily Chapter 6 Section 100, and we will strike the language that says, "Unless otherwise specified" because that evokes Section 102 which allows the exemption for certain dealers and processors. Now, that it's mandatory, we are going to delete that entire section and reword this section to read:

"Each seafood dealer/processor is hereby required to complete Mississippi trip tickets provided by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. Commercial fishermen who sell their catch to individuals other than a Mississippi dealer/processor are hereby required to complete Mississippi trip tickets provided by the MDMR and be in possession of a fresh product permit."

As y'all recall, at the last Commission meeting, one additional change was recommended and this statement,

I think, allows for that:

"A completed trip ticket shall only be required for the initial point of sale of the seafood product. Commercial fishermen who sell their catch to anyone other than a Mississippi licensed dealer/processor, or transport their catch out of state, are required to purchase and possess a Dealer/Processor License and are required to comply with all regulations governing Mississippi Dealers/Processors. All trip tickets shall be returned to the MDMR, or electronically submitted, on, or before the 10th of each month for actual transactions from every commercial fisherman during the preceding month. A trip ticket summary form that states the total trips taken in a given month shall be submitted by the 10th of each month by the seafood dealer/processor, or commercial fisherman. The fisherman is required to provide to the dealer complete and accurate information necessary for the completion of the fisherman portion of the trip ticket. This may include, but is not limited to, commercial fisherman's name, valid license number, date and area of harvest, trip and fishing time, proper vessel identification, gear, quantity, and size of gear used, and applicable mesh size, if any, of gear used, seafood dealer's name, date of purchase, dealer license number, port and county product was landed, species being

purchased, weight, or any other applicable standard, condition of product, count or market grade of purchased seafood product, and price paid per unit, pound or number, per species. The seafood dealer/processor, or fisherman, is required to verify the accuracy of the tickets, by signing each ticket."

Now, that being said, that is already in place, as we currently stand. The only modifications we are making are eliminating the very first sentence that gives the option to be mandatory, and, then, inserting the sentence that clarifies the requirements by the dealer/processor as the initial point of sales.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Joe, your last sentence, "The seafood dealer/processor, or fisherman, is required to verify the accuracy of the tickets by signing each ticket", suppose you supply electronically, how are you going to sign each ticket?

JOE JEWELL: They are submitted electronically through a verification system, by those that are using the actual trip ticket data base.

All trip tickets that we have, including the oyster trip ticket, the fishermen have to sign those verifying that they are the ones that are initiating the trip ticket and that this is the information that they are providing to us.

For instance, oystermen will have to say we have taken ten commercially-harvested sacks. All that is saying is that the information on there is what I'm telling you and providing you.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That's the way it is, in every state that I know of.

JOE JEWELL: Correct. It's no additional information.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Myself, when I pay a fishermen, I get them to sign their invoice and, on the invoice, it's got all this pertinent information.

Would that be acceptable?

JOE JEWELL: That covers it. Absolutely.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I have one question, Joe.

Where it says, "Commercial fishermen who sell their catch to anyone other than a Mississippi licensed dealer/processor, or transport the catch out of state, are required to purchase and possess a Dealer/Processor License and are required to comply with all regulations governing Mississippi dealers/processors", has that always been in here?

JOE JEWELL: Correct. We're not making any other changes.

We are doing two things. We are making it mandatory for the dealers and processors to participate in

the Trip Ticket Program, and we are adding that sentence that clarifies that trip tickets are only required for the initial point of sale. That's it. That's all we are changing.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: The guy selling to the public will now have to have the dealer/processor license?

JOE JEWELL: Fresh product permit.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good deal.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Joe, this is a Notice of Intent motion.

Right?

JOE JEWELL: That's correct.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Who gets to approve it?

JOE JEWELL: The Commission.

On the next slide, I'm going to show you. That's the section I talked about we eliminated, 102, which made it optional, and, then, the next regulatory action will have to occur by the Commission.

You can motion to move forward with the staff for the change, or you have other options.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a motion?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll make the motion that we move forward with the Notice of Intent to amend Title 22 Part 9.

COMMISSIONER HARMON: I'll second the motion.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

JOE JEWELL: Thank you, Commissioners.

Our final agenda item is the new state saltwater fishing records, and that will be done by Ms. Emily Satterfield.

EMILY SATTERFIELD: Good Morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Director Miller, Ms. Chestnut.

We have two records, applications to be considered for State record this month. Both of them are conventional tackle.

The first is a Lookdown, a Selene Vomer. The old record weighed in at three pounds zero ounces. This new record was three pounds four point eight three ounces and it was caught by angler Mark Allen Ross, Jr.

There's the fish and Mr. Ross holding his fish (indicating photographs).

The next fish we have for consideration is a Rock Hind, the Epinephelus adscensionis. The old record is three pounds four point eight ounces. The new record

weighed in at three pounds nine point six ounces, by Matthew Christopher Glenn.

There's the Rock Hind and Mr. Glenn holding the beautiful fish (indicating photographs).

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Mr. Chairman, I make a motion that we adopt these new records for the State of Mississippi.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second the motion.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

EMILY SATTERFIELD: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: At this time, I would like to call for a ten-minute recess.

(Whereupon, a short recess was taken.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We are back on the record.

I would like to recognize Mr. Pierce Moore from the Governor's staff.

PIERCE MOORE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Welcome sir.

PIERCE MOORE: Glad to be here.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Okay, Jan.

JAN BOYD: Good morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Director Miller, counsel.

We have one action item on the agenda for your consideration this morning, and Jennifer Wittmann will be presenting that.

JENNIFER WITTMANN: Good Morning.

We have a request for permit modification by the City of Gulfport Department of Leisure Services, located on the Mississippi Sound and the Harrison County sand beach at Courthouse Road and Highway 90. It's in the General Use District, and BMI Environmental Services is the agent.

The applicant is currently authorized to maintenance dredge the Courthouse Road boat ramp and channel as needed through July 21st, 2019, and to place the dredged material at the City's material storage yard on Hewes Avenue, or at DMR's Deer Island Beneficial Use Site.

With this modification, the applicant is proposing to add the previously permitted sand beach area to the west of the Courthouse Road boat ramp as an approved disposal site, if the material is suitable.

This is the Courthouse Road boat launch basin

and channel, the Harrison County sand beach. This is about three hundred feet from the drainage way over to the two hundred and sixty-five feet by one thousand foot area where they would be placing the dredged material (indicating slide).

This is a photograph of the boat launch and navigation channel, and, then, of the sand beach.

This is a diagram showing the area that they will be dredging, again, all throughout the basin and the channel, and, then, the dredged material disposal area which will be on the sand beach.

This is a cross section of the area. Right now, they plan to put in a berm that would be no more than two hundred and sixty-five feet from the existing seawall which is the outer limits, or the waterward limit, of the existing permitted footprint of the sand beach, and, then, after the material dewaters, they would smooth it out and, again, it would not extend past that two hundred and sixty-five feet that is currently permitted for the sand beach (indicating diagram).

The project will benefit the public by restoring the beach and improving critical habitat for the piping plover and other shorebirds, while restoring the navigational depths to the access channel and boat ramp.

The project is allowable within the General Use

District.

The proposed renourishment area is within the previously permitted Harrison County sand beach and no variances are required.

There are no precedent setting effects anticipated. Similar projects have been approved by the Commission.

The placement of the dredged material on the sand beach will cause a temporary impact to shore and wading birds and beach goers, during construction, but should return to normal, once the project is complete and, ultimately, the critical habitat for the shore birds and wading birds will be enhanced.

The full extent of the project consists of a ten-year maintenance dredging agreement to remove sand and silt from the Courthouse Road boat launch. The material is currently authorized to be disposed of at an approved beneficial use site, or an approved upland location.

Best management practices will be utilized, during all phases of construction, to minimize adverse impacts to coastal wetlands.

This is a modification to a previously authorized dredging project. No alternative sites were considered.

The dredging and beach renourishment do require

a waterfront location.

The proposed project will not impact the natural scenic qualities. The dredged material will be placed in the previously permitted beach footprint.

Notification of the project appeared in the Sun Herald as required. One public comment was received in support of the project.

DEQ is reviewing the project.

Archives and History has no objection.

Secretary of State's office says the project does not present any tidelands lease issues.

Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks recommended best management practices be utilized and that the placement of the dredged material on the sand beach take place between July and September to avoid shorebird nesting season and overwintering.

The Courthouse Road Boat Launch and Pier are identified as areas requiring access improvement for dredging and boat ramp access, in the Mississippi Coastal Program.

Based on departmental review and evaluation, staff recommends the Commission approve the applicant's modification request with the following condition:

The applicant survey the area for nesting shorebirds, prior to the placement of dredged material on

the sand beach.

The area to the west of the Courthouse Road Boat Launch is a very heavily utilized public recreation area and it is highly unlikely that there are shorebirds that actually nest there. Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks did recommend that the dredging and the placement of material only take place in the summer months, but that's when tourists will most likely be utilizing the area.

I have spoken with Larry Lewis and it's not going to be a problem, that before any material be put out there they will make sure there aren't any nesting birds in the area. If there are nesting birds, then, the project would have to work around that. We didn't want to limit it to where they could only place the material during the summer months so as to not have a negative impact on the use of the boat ramp by fishermen and the use of the sand beach.

We felt that just saying survey the area and make sure there are no nesting birds in that thousand feet because it's not for the entire sand beach area. It's just that one thousand feet by two hundred and sixty-five feet.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We are not going to hold them to the July to September?

JENNIFER WITTMANN: We're not recommending that we do. We're recommending that they be required to survey the area, prior to placing any material, because it is not the entire sand beach and, again, it's such a heavily utilized public area the likelihood that there is actually a nesting shorebird colony in that area is pretty low.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I can imagine they are going to have to shut that whole area down, when they do this.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Jennifer, municipalities don't pay a lease to the State, do they?

JENNIFER WITTMANN: The Secretary of State's office requires that they hold a lease, but it is a rent exempt lease.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a motion?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I make a motion that we accept the staff's recommendations.

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

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

JENNIFER WITTMANN: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Office of Finance and Administration.

KACEY WILLIAMS: Good morning Commissioners, Director Miller and Ms. Chestnut.

These are the financial results, as of May 31st, for the agency.

At the end of May, we have State revenue of five point seven million dollars. The total agency revenue was twenty-four point one million dollars. The State net income is negative three point two million, and this does not reflect the appropriations, interest, or a few other items yet to be received. This also reflects spending and cash on hand for Artificial Reef, GOMESA, and other obligated programs we have outstanding.

The total agency net income for this fiscal year is approximately two hundred and fourteen thousand dollars.

Any questions?

(No response.)

KACEY WILLIAMS: After eleven months of the fiscal year 2015, we are still in good shape from the budget standpoint. We have forty-two point one percent of the Operating Funds budget remaining, and thirty-six point

six percent of the Tidelands budget remaining.

Any questions?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, ma'am.

KACEY WILLIAMS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Office of Coastal Restoration.

GEORGE RAMSEUR: Good morning Chairman, Commissioners, Director Miller, Sandy.

As you may know, the Department of Marine Resources had it's inaugural State of the Coast conference last May 15th. We have since gotten pole results from that, and I want to thank Melissa's group at Public Affairs and my staff at Office of Coastal Restoration and Resiliency lead by Rhonda Price.

Rhonda has a report for you.

RHONDA PRICE: Good morning. I'm Rhonda Price. I'm with the Office of Coastal Restoration and Resiliency, and I want to take a little bit of time this morning to tell you about our first State of Our Coast meeting that was held May 13th at the Golden Nugget in Biloxi.

Director Miller kind of set the tone for the day where he talked about the needs and challenges that we face with our natural resources, and he made a very profound statement that if it was easy, it would have already been done. We would have already met those needs

and challenges. He really set the tone for the meeting that day, that through collaborative partnership we would be able to move forward together which was also the theme of our meeting.

Secretary of State, Delbert Hosemann, was our keynote address that morning, and he talked about if we could get visitors to stay one more day, how many millions of extra revenue that would generate yearly, and he used our Deer Island pier project as an example of something that could lure visitors to stay that extra day.

We also heard from Walker Foster and Jerry Boos talking about growing up in Hancock County and Jackson County and how the Coast has changed over the years, but one of the things that they talked about was how things have not changed and that was their love for the Coast.

Our very own Chief Science Officer Dr. Kelly Lucas reminded everyone that DMR is not only a regulatory agency, but we have some brilliant scientists who work very hard every day to protect and serve and enhance our natural resources.

Then, Malcolm White, Director of Tourism for the Mississippi Development Authority, talked about a new nature-based tourism program that includes our three national heritage areas and kind of using those heritage areas to pull this initiative forward.

Our three heritage areas, if you're not familiar with them, they are a National Park Service designation, and Mississippi has the hills, the delta and the Gulf Coast which is housed and managed through the DMR.

Our heritage areas make up fifty-seven percent of the State. I think that speaks a lot about how Mississippi feels about cultural heritage.

Then, at lunch, Dr. Rex Caffey talked about economics and ecology.

That afternoon we had several panel discussions on restoring our Gulf. We had members of the Restore Council, DEQ, Gulf of Mexico Alliance, and Gulf Coast Research Initiative, talking about some of the efforts that they are using to move forward in restoring our Gulf.

We also heard updates from our upcoming red snapper season and the Oyster Council.

Then, we had representatives from Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama talk about sediment management.

You can probably see we had a very robust agenda and a lot to cover in one day, but I want to sidebar a little bit and go back to Dr. Rex Caffey.

George sent him an email, just a very complimentary thank you for attending our meeting and speaking, and he replied back in very bold five words, "My pleasure. I am DMR", and he was referencing the five

videos that we played throughout the day. I'm sure you have all seen those "I am DMR" videos.

Everybody says, when you walk away from a meeting, you need to have a take-home message, and, when I saw those five words, or at least the last three, I realized there's our take-home message.

This meeting was very successful. It was very much needed by the attendees that we had. Just onsite registration, we had three-hundred-and-fifty registrants willing and encouraged to come and listen to what the DMR had to say, and I think really put that step forward in the opening comments that Director Miller made that morning in collaborative partnership and moving forward together.

We did a short survey, thanks to Amber Jones, who sent it out, and these are some of the collections that we received. We asked were some of the objectives met, expectations, and you can see that thirty percent, even before we sent it out a couple of weeks after the meeting, had already been talking about it and recommending it to colleagues, and that over eighty-five percent exceeded, or met, their expectations (indicating slide).

We wanted to know how often should we hold these meetings, and everyone thought we would love to hear what

you are talking about every year which is quite a challenge to put on a meeting of this size, but we also wanted to know about cost. A lot of them thought it should remain free, but others were willing to pay a small registration fee, in order to learn more about the State of our Coast (indicating slide).

This gives us an idea of some recommendations that we could use for next year's meeting, maybe concurrent sessions, or poster sessions. Some of them would even like to tour our facilities (indicating slide).

I think, as this moment in time, it would be proper to thank those that helped pull this meeting together, and that would be the Office of Coastal Restoration and Resiliency, Kristen Holley, Daphne Viverette, Jennifer Wagner and George Ramseur. We also had a meeting team, Traci Floyd, Ali Leggett, Jason Rider, Brooke Goff, and Amber Jones. Of course, we could not have been this successful without the support of our sponsors.

Thank you for your time.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you very much. Melissa.

MELISSA SCALLAN: Good morning again everybody.

I want to add something to Rhonda's presentation. The only negative that I heard about the

conference is that some people said, "We didn't know about it and we definitely would have attended and we want to know next year." They are on the list for next year. So we probably will have about five hundred next year, we're hoping.

Since the last Commission meeting, the agency has been mentioned a hundred and sixteen times in local, state, and national media which is up quite a bit from past time.

The items of particular interest were the opening of shrimp season, the opening of the Federal red snapper season, and the sinking of the Barataria Bay to create an artificial reef.

Something else that got a lot of attention and attention that we don't necessarily care for, the young man who drowned at Ship Island, and I wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you to Chief Davis and his staff. They did an excellent job handling that with the family, and they were very appreciative of our efforts and the way that we were able to handle that in the public and with them privately.

The agency partnered with several other groups in Mississippi to promote the State and its seafood at the Atlanta Food and Wine Festival, May 29th through the 31st. We partnered with the Gulf Cost Convention and Visitors

Bureau, Visit Mississippi and Visit Oxford. We had chefs from around the State who cooked Mississippi seafood, and there were several thousand people each day who came to this event. Mississippi seafood was cited in several national articles and blog posts that we were the best that they had tasted, and there was a lot of food there. So that is quite an accomplishment.

The following week, on June 5th, just this past week we held the sixty annual Mississippi Seafood Cook-off. Ten chefs from around the State participated, and the winner was Thank you Thames, owner of Restaurant Tyler in Starkville. He is going to represent the State in the Great American Seafood Cook-off in New Orleans in August, and have let him know we want him to win that event for us. We won in 2013, and he would like for him to bring that home to Mississippi again.

Marine Patrol held two boat and water safety classes in May and certified twenty-nine students. Since July of 2014, Marine Patrol has taught nineteen classes with two hundred and twenty-two students. Some of the other events they have participated in included a special needs fishing rodeo, a fallen officers remembrance, the blessing of the fleet in Pass Christian and Biloxi, and the torch run for Special Olympics. They also did community outreach events such as Conservation Day at

Flint Creek, the bridge walk at the Biloxi-Oceans Springs bridge, the Youth for Christ Lock-in, and the National Boaters Week event at Academy Sports.

We have also had quite a few events at the Grand Bay NERR, in the past month. They included tours of the facility, the monthly kayak adventure, Life on the Water presentation, a boat trip through the Reserve, and several events for the Boys and Girls club. This past Saturday, they hosted a seafood grilling event, and that was very well attended and we got some press on that. Through these events, they reached out to more than five hundred people in the community.

Any questions?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: It sounds like you have been busy.

MELISSA SCALLAN: We have been busy. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Melissa.

Do we have any other business, at this time?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have public comments next. We have Mr. Rick Schillaci.

RICK SCHILLACI: Good morning Commissioners, Ms. Chestnut, Director Miller. I'm Rick Schillaci with Omega Protein, and I just want to come here and thank the department for working with us on the sinking of the

Barataria Bay, turning it into an artificial reef.

As you heard Ms. Scallan mention, it has been mentioned quite a few times in the public media, but I just wanted to bring this to your attention. I had a video of it. It was four minutes and thirty-eight seconds. I posted it on my Facebook, gave credit to Omega Protein, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks. I had over three hundred and eighty shares of the video, with over sixteen thousand views of this particular sinking.

Melissa, you can add that to your listings.

I thought it was awesome, sixteen thousand views of this thing. I know some of them who shared it. It stretched everywhere from Connecticut to California to Virginia and, of course, in Mississippi and Louisiana.

We appreciate everything the Department has done to help make this reef a success, and thank y'all again. That's all I wanted to say.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Rick, I appreciate the invite to get to go see it. That was quite interesting.

I did have one question. Once it went down, did it land sitting right?

RICK SCHILLACI: It landed perfect. Primo Charters did some diving on it right after and took underwater video, and it was perfect.

I also wanted to mention that this is the third vessel that Omega Protein has donated for an artificial reef. The Von Rosenberg was the first one. The Great Wicomico was the second one, and, now, we've got the Barataria Bay.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: She was a hundred and forty-five feet?

RICK SCHILLACI: About a hundred and sixty-five, or a hundred and sixty-seven foot long.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That's quite a reef. That's good. Thanks.

RICK SCHILLACI: I have seen underwater video like a year after of these artificial reefs and there is just fish everywhere. They are just a great haven for fish, and I guess maybe the smell of the fish and the boat doesn't hurt things either.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Thank Omega for us, Rick.

RICK SCHILLACI: I will, and thank y'all.

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: It was quite impressive.

RICK SCHILLACI: We appreciate it.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Next, we come to Shelby Drummond's favorite part of the meeting.

Do we have a motion to adjourn?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I make a motion we

adjourn.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So seconded.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

CERTIFICATE

I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the June 16, 2015, meeting of the Commission on Marine Resources, as taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated in the aforementioned matter in shorthand, with electronic verification, and later reduced to typewritten form to the best of my skill and ability; and, further, that I am not a relative, employee, or agent, of any of the parties thereto, nor financially interested in the cause.

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