COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, March 17, 2015
10:00 a.m.
Bolton State Building Auditorium
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Commission Members:

Richard Gollott, Chairman

Shelby Drummond, Vice Chairman

Steve Bosarge

Ernie Zimmerman

Also Present:

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

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I would like to call this meeting to order.

Welcome everyone. The first thing we are going to do is have the Pledge of Allegiance led by Jamie Miller.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We now have to approve the minutes of the last meeting.

Do we have any modifications?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: With no modifications, do we have a motion to approve the minutes?

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: Second, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: All those in favor say aye.

(All in favor.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Opposed?

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Motion carries.

Now, we come to approval of the agenda.

Any modifications, or do we have a motion to approve it as written?

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: Motion to approve as written, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion.

Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Second.

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.

Executive Director's report.

JAMIE MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've got just a very brief report.

Update on the public hearings that are being held currently with the Governor's Oyster Council. We held the first public meeting, in Hancock County last night in Bay St. Louis. Tonight we will hold the second of three public hearings, in the Bolton Building in this room here, at 5:30. The public and everyone is invited to participate in that and give public comment, and, then, tomorrow, Wednesday, we will be at Gautier City Hall at 5:30 for a public meeting. Then, Thursday, we will travel to Jackson to give a presentation and update to a joint

meeting of the House and Senate Oversight committees.

That will conclude our round of public meetings. Of course, we will be taking public comments throughout the process, with the delivery date of the report and plan to the governor scheduled for the first week in June.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have Marine Patrol up next.

KYLE WILKERSON: Commissioners and Director, you guys have the list of all of our violations and activities in March.

If you have any questions, I will answer them.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: No questions. Looks like it's been pretty quiet.

KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.

KYLE WILKERSON: Thank you.

KEITH DAVIS: I've got one other request, Mr. Chairman. I would like to request if you would consider a moment of silence for the U. S. Deputy Marshall.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Be glad to.

KEITH DAVIS: I've got a couple of words. I had to run down here so I'm out of breath.

Deputy Marshall Wells was twenty-seven years of age. He was born in Wade, Mississippi, graduated from

East Central High School, and later joined the U.S. Marshall Service.

On March 10th, 2015, he died, during the service of an arrest warrant for a murder suspect.

As I thought about that this morning, I thought about a Bible verse, John 15:13, and it simply reads:

"Greater love has no man than this that one lay down his life for his friend."

Please join me in a moment of silence.

(Whereupon, a moment of silence was observed.)

KEITH DAVIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.

Joe Jewell, Marine Fisheries.

TRACI FLOYD: Good morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Director Miller and legal counsel.

I'm Traci Floyd. I'm representing Fisheries office today. Mr. Joe Jewell is attending the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting in Point Clear.

I wanted to mention a couple of items, before we get to our agenda presentations.

First is our finfish commercial quota status. Red drum is currently at twenty-seven thousand one hundred and fifty-three pounds, our Spotted Seatrout at one thousand four hundred and ninety-one pounds, and flounder is at one hundred and forty-two pounds.

Our Mississippi Oyster Season, as you know, closed on March 14th, this past Saturday, at 4:00 p.m. Overall for the season, our harvest was twenty-six thousand and four sacks. That's the result of three thousand three hundred and thirty-six trips taken this season.

With that, I'm going to go to our agenda presentations. First up, I'm pleased to introduce Ms. Carly Somerset. She is representing the Finfish Bureau, and she will talk today about the Red Snapper reporting program.

CARLY SOMERSET: Good morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Director Miller and Counselors.

Today, I would like to present to you some of what the Fisheries staff has been working on for Red Snapper reporting.

Recalling some decisions from late last year, effective October 21st, 2014, the Commission adopted a regulatory modification to Title 22, Part 9, Statistical Reporting and Confidentiality of Statistical Data for Marine Fisheries in the State of Mississippi.

This provided provisions to reporting requirements, making it mandatory for the owner, or captain, of any vessel recreationally harvesting Red Snapper to complete a harvest report that is provided by

MDMR.

Fisheries staff reviewed all options of reporting and concluded the best method was to develop an electronic reporting system.

The purpose of the mobile app is to collect information on all recreational Red Snapper landings in Mississippi, during the 2015 season.

Anglers will be required to register and request a trip number, prior to any trip on which they intend to target Red Snapper.

New trip numbers will not be issued, until the previous catches are reported.

Active trips each day will be available to Marine Patrol for enforcement purposes.

A call-in option will be available for anglers without smartphones, or internet access.

The information collected, once the trip has been completed -- this is per vessel -- is the location of the vessel landing, the number of anglers, the time spent fishing -- this means the time spent with the line in the water, not including travel time -- the number of Red Snapper harvested, and the area fished, natural bottom, rig, or artificial reef.

We contracted with an information technology company in Texas called Elemental Methods to develop a

smartphone app and web portal, and we are in the final stages of the development and testing process.

As far as time frame goes, the reporting system will be ready to go in plenty of time before snapper fishing starts.

I would like to show you some examples of the system, in the next few slides.

This is the icon that will appear on your phone, representing the mobile app and the web portal and what will appear when the app is initially downloaded.

The app is called Tails n' Scales. This is the initial flash screen with the MDMR logo, and, then, the next screen is the login screen with the icon. This is where the user first registers and creates an account, or logs in with their information.

Once logged in, users can create a new trip, or report on a current trip, or check on a recent trip status.

We are providing, within the app, an area for anglers to check the weather for their convenience. We think it is very important to provide the marine weather forecast for the anglers and allow them to access it easily.

The system will create a comprehensive log that the anglers will be able to access to see their past trips

taken, and the system will also allow managers to track all trips and harvest information in real time.

This is the screen shot of the web portal, and, essentially it's the same as the mobile app, but it is for the internet for anyone who can't download the app on their phone (indicating slide).

The registration process for the web portal and reporting process is the same. We will be asking users for name, email address, mailing address, vessel type and vessel registration number, or Coast Guard documentation.

Again, users will be able to see their past trips taken, and the system will also allow managers to track all the trips and look at harvest information in real time.

I will be happy to answer any questions.

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: Is the web portal and the app one sign on and you use either or, or is it two different sign ons?

CARLY SOMERSET: It will be same information. As long as the user creates an account with their email and password, they can use that on their phone with the app, or on the internet. It will be the same across all of them.

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: That's a lot easier.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I would just like to say

good job. I know you put a lot of work into developing this.

CARLY SOMERSET: Thank you very much. I'm excited about it.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: You will download this app through the MDMR?

CARLY SOMERSET: Yes, sir. We will have a link so that it will be easy to get to and download, and it is for iPhone and for android. We wanted it to be as accessible to all types of phones as possible. So it will be in the iPhone store and the Google store.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Great.

CARLY SOMERSET: Thank you.

TRACI FLOYD: Next up for Fisheries, I'm introducing Mr. Jason Saucier. He will represent the Shrimp and Crab Bureau, and he will talk today about live bait shrimp.

JASON SAUCIER: Good morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Director Miller and Counselors.

I'm presenting an update on the live bait shrimp for the 2014 and 2015 season.

This is an overview of our live bait regulations which can be found in Title 22, Part 6.

The applicant may submit an application any time, during the year.

The inspection is completed within thirty days of submittal of a complete application.

They are allowed to shrimp twelve months out of the year.

They are allowed to shrimp inside the half mile of the shoreline.

The are not allowed to shrimp at night.

Tow times are limited to twenty-five minutes, and that is including the time taken to pick the trawl up and put it out.

They cannot sell shrimp for consumption.

They must report landings and sales monthly to the MDMR.

These are the inspection requirements:

The facility must be able to safely serve the public.

The dealer must have a Mississippi state sales tax number and all privilege licenses.

The facility must have signage easily visible from the nearest public roadway, using letters at least six inches high and one-half inch wide, with the words "LIVE BAIT" and the name of the camp.

Holding tanks must have adequate water flow for optimal survival of shrimp.

Catcher vessels are allowed trawls that are no

larger than sixteen foot wide and have four foot doors. The tanks have to be covered, or shaded, and must be clearly marked with "LIVE BAIT BOAT" and the name of the camp.

Catcher vessels and transport vehicles must also pass an MDMR inspection.

This is an example of a holding tank at one of our live bait camps. You will notice the sufficient aeration and the rounding in the corners (indicating photograph).

This is an example of one of our catcher boats. You can notice the shaded holding tanks on the stern, or close to the stern, sufficient markings on the side that have to be on the port and starboard sides at least six inches high with the words "LIVE BAIT" and the name of the camp (indicating photograph).

This is our dealer report. We do have, on the report, number of purchasers, live shrimp numbers caught, live shrimp numbers sold, dead shrimp sold and that's in pounds, chum in pounds sold, squid and hard crabs and that's in numbers sold (indicating slide).

This is our live bait purchases going all the way back to 2002 through the 2013-2014 season. You will notice a significant drop, in the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 seasons. That's dues to hurricanes, as we are well aware.

Then, you will see another drop in 2010-2011 season, due to the oil spill (indicating slide).

This is a graph of our live bait sales, going back to 2002. The same thing. You can see a significant drop, in our 2004-2005 season and our 2005-2006 season, as well as in 2010-2011. The blue line marks shrimp caught and the green marks shrimp sold (indicating slide).

This shows our dead bait sales from 2002. The same thing applies here where the dips are; shrimp sold with the blue line, and, then, chum, squid and crabs are put together into the green line (indicating slide).

Here are the number of live bait camps and vessels from 2002 to 2014 (indicating slide).

Here are our camps that we have currently. There is a total of fifteen camps that are inspected and licensed in the state (indicating slide).

In Hancock County, we have three.

In Harrison County, we have Biloxi Harbor, Boardwalk Marina, Crabb's, Tackle Box Gulfport, Tackle Box Long Beach.

In Jackson County, we have Bait Box, CC's, Fort Bayou, Marine Mart, Mary Walker, Little River Marine and Who Zat.

There are twelve live bait vessels inspected and licensed, and there are nine live bait transport vehicles

currently.

Here is a map that shows the location of all of our camps (indicating slide).

That concludes my presentation. If there are any questions, I will be happy to answer them.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.

JASON SAUCIER: You're welcome.

TRACI FLOYD: Finally for Fisheries, we have Mr. Scott Gordon, the Shellfish Area Director, and he will talk today about oyster basket dredge and gear requirements.

SCOTT GORDON: Good morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Director Miller and Counselors.

I was asked to put together a brief review on basket oyster dredges.

The basket dredge is also known as a self-dumping dredge, or Alabama Oyster Dredge, and here are some pictures illustrating those).

Here is your typical bag dredge that has the rope bag (indicating photographs).

Basket dredges.

The reasons they are used:

The are self-dumping. Less muscle is required to operate them. They require fewer deckhands. The ease of use. They are required in the state of Alabama. There

is probably less maintenance required with the basket dredges, since they are all metal.

Some of the concerns that have been expressed:

It may be more difficult to fish them properly. They may damage, or bury, oysters. They may dig too deep. They may make oysters in the area muddy, by stirring up excessive sediment.

That is my presentation.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: When you say they are required in Alabama, refresh my memory, but most of the oystering done in Alabama is done by tonging.

I don't recall seeing many dredge boats.

SCOTT GORDON: Alabama has a relatively small area set aside for dredging and, on those, they require the basket dredge use.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: If I remember correctly, that area is open just on rare occasions.

SCOTT GORDON: That's correct.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: In other words, they don't use them in Alabama very much.

SCOTT GORDON: That's correct.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I would like to say this. The old rope dredge, or bag dredge, was used for probably fifty to seventy years without any problems.

I've gone over some of the minutes to try to

find out why they changed and went to the basket dredge, and about the only thing that comes out is that it is self-dumping and easier to use.

I think we need to err on the side of conservation and go back to the old tried-and-true method of the hundred-and-fifteen pound dredge with sixteen teeth.

With that, I would like to get a motion, or anybody else's opinion on this.

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a motion that we do that. We should prohibit the basket dredge and go to a maximum bag dredge of a hundred-and-fifteen pounds with sixteen teeth.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: We have a motion.

Do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second that 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. Thank you.

SANDY CHESTNUT: This is going to be a

regulation change. It is going to have to go out on public notice and all that, with the Administrative Procedures Act.

Do you-all want some language brought back to you next month to approve, or do you want to go ahead and give the staff the authorization to write that language and go ahead and start the administrative procedures?

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Well, we're really not in a hurry. Oyster season is closed. So come back and get approval for it.

SANDY CHESTNUT: Okay.

SCOTT GORDON: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: I know y'all have worked hard on getting us some information, and thank you for the work y'all have done.

TRACI FLOYD: This concludes Fisheries. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Next we have Office of Finance, Bill Feidt.

BILL FEIDT: Good morning everyone. I'll go through the financial results as of the end of February.

At the end of February, we had State revenue of five point two million dollars. We are still having some challenges with MAGIC. There is revenue in the pipe that

we haven't received yet, in particular appropriations, and we haven't received any interest from Treasury yet.

We did complete our first transfer from Wildlife, Fish and Parks of six hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Total agency revenue, we are just under twenty million dollars and, from a state net income standpoint, we are negative one point six million dollars. That is impacted by the revenue we haven't received yet, as well as we did do some spending out of cash on hand which would show up as a negative as well.

From a total agency standpoint, we are positive three point three million dollars.

Any questions?

(No response.)

BILL FEIDT: From a budget standpoint, we are in good shape, after eight months of the fiscal year.

Our Operating Funds have fifty-two percent of the budget remaining.

Tidelands Trust Fund has fifty-nine percent remaining.

Any questions?

(No response.)

BILL FEIDT: Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Bill.

Now, we come to Melissa.

MELISSA SCALLAN: Good morning Director Miller, Commissioners, and Counselors.

The Department of Marine Resources was mentioned -- your paper says thirty-one times, but it was actually thirty-two, with the report from WLOX last night on our public meeting on oysters. We had mentions in local, state and national media, since the last Commission meeting.

The things that garnered the most attention were the rescue of a man in Ocean Springs who went missing after going fishing in Davis Bayou, as well as the citation of a man carrying unrefrigerated oyster from Louisiana to Alabama.

Our agency employees participated in the Region VI Science and Engineering Fair at the Coast Coliseum and Convention Center. More than seven hundred students participated, in this annual event, and we gave out five awards, the Excellence in Marine Sciences Award, which we give out every year, and the winners were from the Coast. They were from third grade to seniors.

One of the winners, Trey Rocha, did a report entitled "Can Oysters Clean Water", and we got Trey to come to the council meeting last week, the Oyster Council meeting, and he gave his presentation about his project at

the meeting, and did a very good job.

We also got a call last week from an international magazine. Their reporter attended the World Aquaculture Society, when they toured the Lyman Fish Hatchery, and he had a few questions. So Dr. Kelly Lucas and the hatchery will be featured in that magazine that is published in English, Spanish and Chinese. We look forward to reading that.

That's all I have, unless you have any questions.

(No response.)

MELISSA SCALLAN: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: Melissa, I would like to thank you. We are in the public. DMR is out, and I really enjoy seeing investment in the children. We've got to get conservation environment in the kids. It's so important to everything, and I appreciate the job y'all are doing.

MELISSA SCALLAN: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have any other business that anybody wants to discuss?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: If no other business, we come to public comments. Mr. Gilbert Ramsey would like to come up and talk to us.

State your name, Gilbert, and you have five minutes, sir.

GILBERT RAMSEY: Good morning Commissioners. My name Gilbert Ramsey. I'm here to represent the veterans. I'm initiating a new program with the City of Biloxi at Hiller Park location.

I have been networking within the state and community to initiate options for mobility impaired citizens and wounded warriors to enable other amenities to involve family-oriented activities throughout our region, heritage and culture.

We believe, through educational training and the use of adapted angling equipment, everyone is able to share in a dream come true with the goal to open up the great outdoors and the world of fishing to people with disabilities.

We are united in our support for the men and women who served our state. As home for four Federal military basis, two Army National Guard installations, three Air National Guard units, eighty-five National Guard readiness centers, our state's military operation creates thousands of direct and indirect jobs. Economic impact generates an estimated two point five million dollars a year.

I recognized this, during my research for

Delbert Hosemann's book, and, also, I recognized the Tidelands Funds that have been awarded for projects.

I need assistance and guidance and a letter of support from DMR, supporting our activities to consider an opportunity for the hospitality state to be recognized globally. I will market it strategically for global representation for the hospitality state to include this opportunity for this venture.

I have recognized an opportunity to enable the mobility impaired paraplegics to involve themselves with their own personal watercraft.

I have accessorized their own personal watercraft to accommodate them appropriately with their loved ones and caretakers.

I recognize the problem with the existing position with the pontoon boats. The pontoon boats are utilized by Fishing Has No Boundaries. They have fifty-two chapters throughout the United States. The director is stepping down in May to associate themselves more appropriately with us to accommodate our passion and vision for this application.

I have a 501c3 sponsorship within the community, and they have been recognizing my determination to implement this program appropriately.

I have a conference call coming in from eight

hundred recreational therapists across the United States, and all VA hospitals across the United States are interested with what I'm associating myself with for this application within the state of Mississippi.

Here we go, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Gilbert Ramsey, backwoodsflyingangels@gmail.com, and I will be honored and will handle things appropriately to handle this within our vision.

I have associated myself with the veterans, state representatives, and Mr. Fred Boykin (phonetic) who owns a company that contracts with Sam's and Walmart has made a charitable donation for this application.

I am here to help to pursue this application appropriately. I have been through all three counties' boards of supervisors, and they are all aware of my application to pursue this appropriately.

I have various locations. The Scranton Museum, I recognize the senior citizens and disabled people do not have the means to do it the proper way.

I felt like, in a pontoon vessel, the gentlemen and ladies that are involved in this family-oriented activity possibly could have a diaper on, or a catheter, and, during a group event, it would be an embarrassing situation. I don't want to subject them to something like that.

I want it more appropriately with their own personal watercraft to accommodate them at their leisure and participate in this opportunity for fishing and nature observation.

Any questions?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Thank you, Mr. Ramsey.

GILBERT RAMSEY: Thank you, sir.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I think we are coming to Shelby Drummond's favorite part of this meeting.

Do we have a motion to adjourn?

COMMISSIONER DRUMMOND: I make a motion we adjourn, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Do we have a second.

COMMISSIONER ZIMMERMAN: Second.

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. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 9:33 o'clock, a.m., the March 17, 2015, meeting of the Commission on Marine Resources was

concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the March 17, 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.

COURT REPORTER

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