

Artificial Reef Council Meeting - May 1, 2023, 1:00 pm

Joe L. Herring Louisiana Room, LDWF Headquarters, Baton Rouge, LA

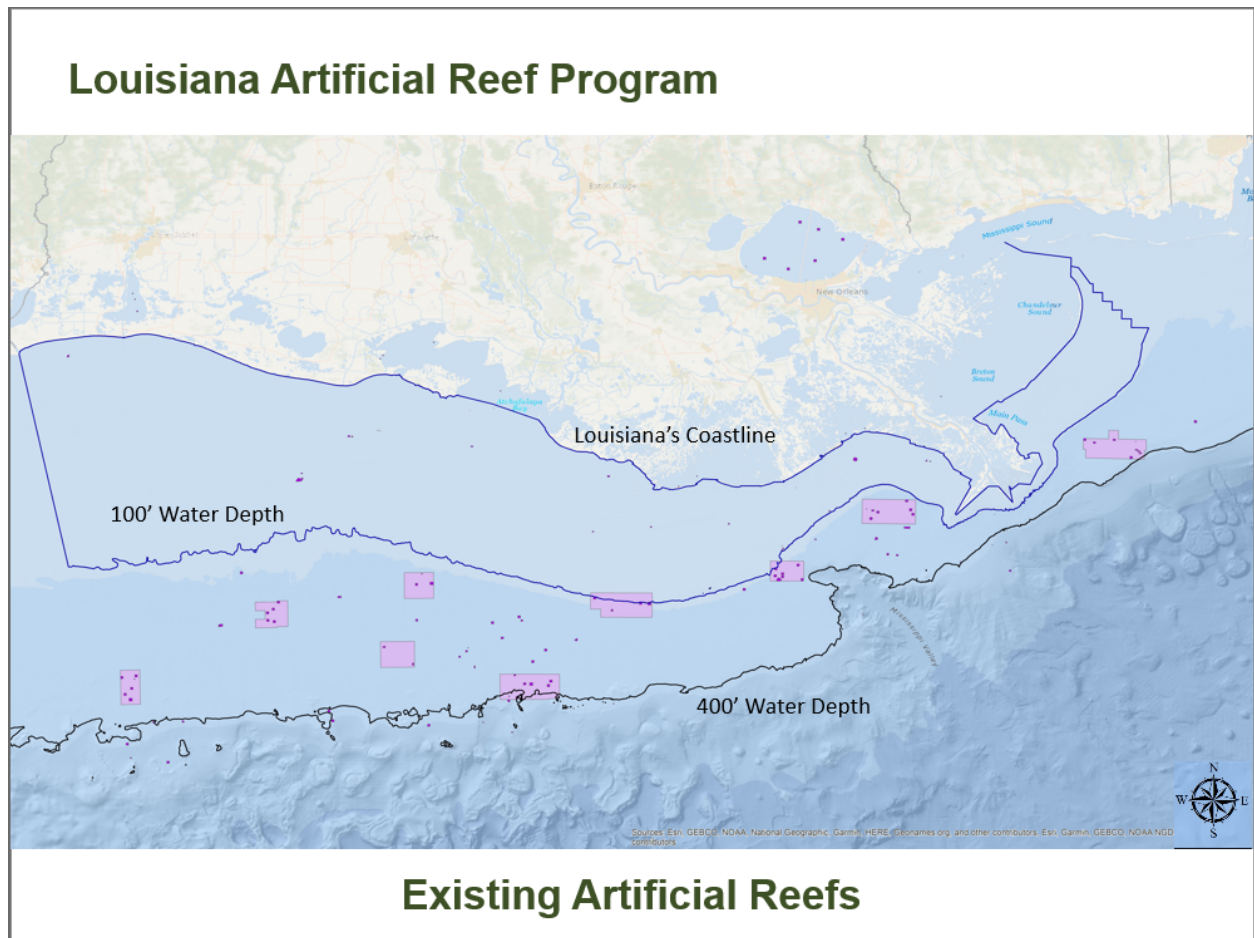
Council Members:

Chris D’Elia, Dean of the College of the Coast and Environment, LSU

Julie Lively, Executive Director of Louisiana Sea Grant

Patrick Banks, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Fisheries, LDWF

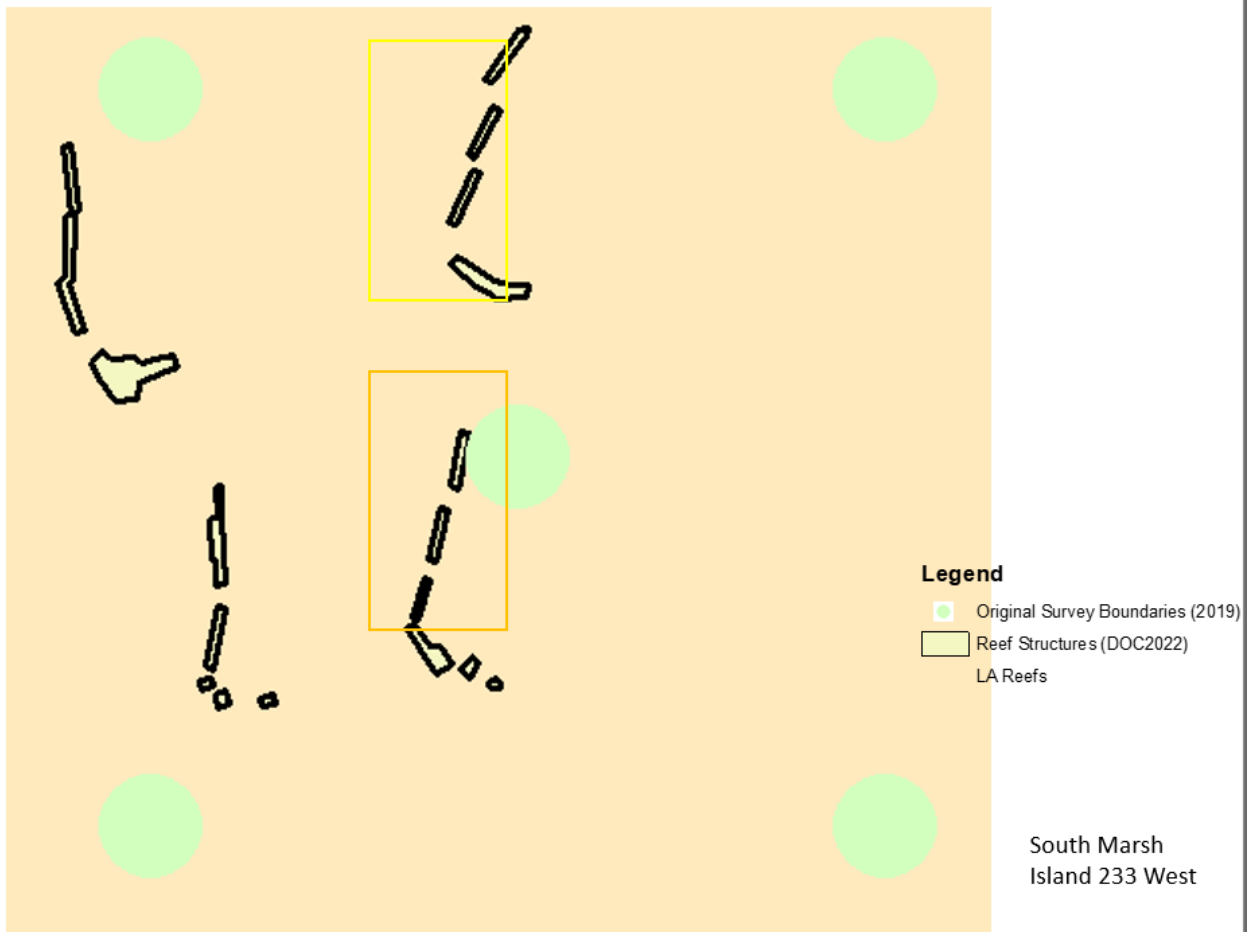
1. Introduction and Welcome – Patrick Banks, Christopher D’Elia, Julie Lively
2. Approval of agenda
3. Approval of minutes
4. Artificial Reef Program updates - Mike McDonough begins the update by reminding the audience the boundaries of the Program



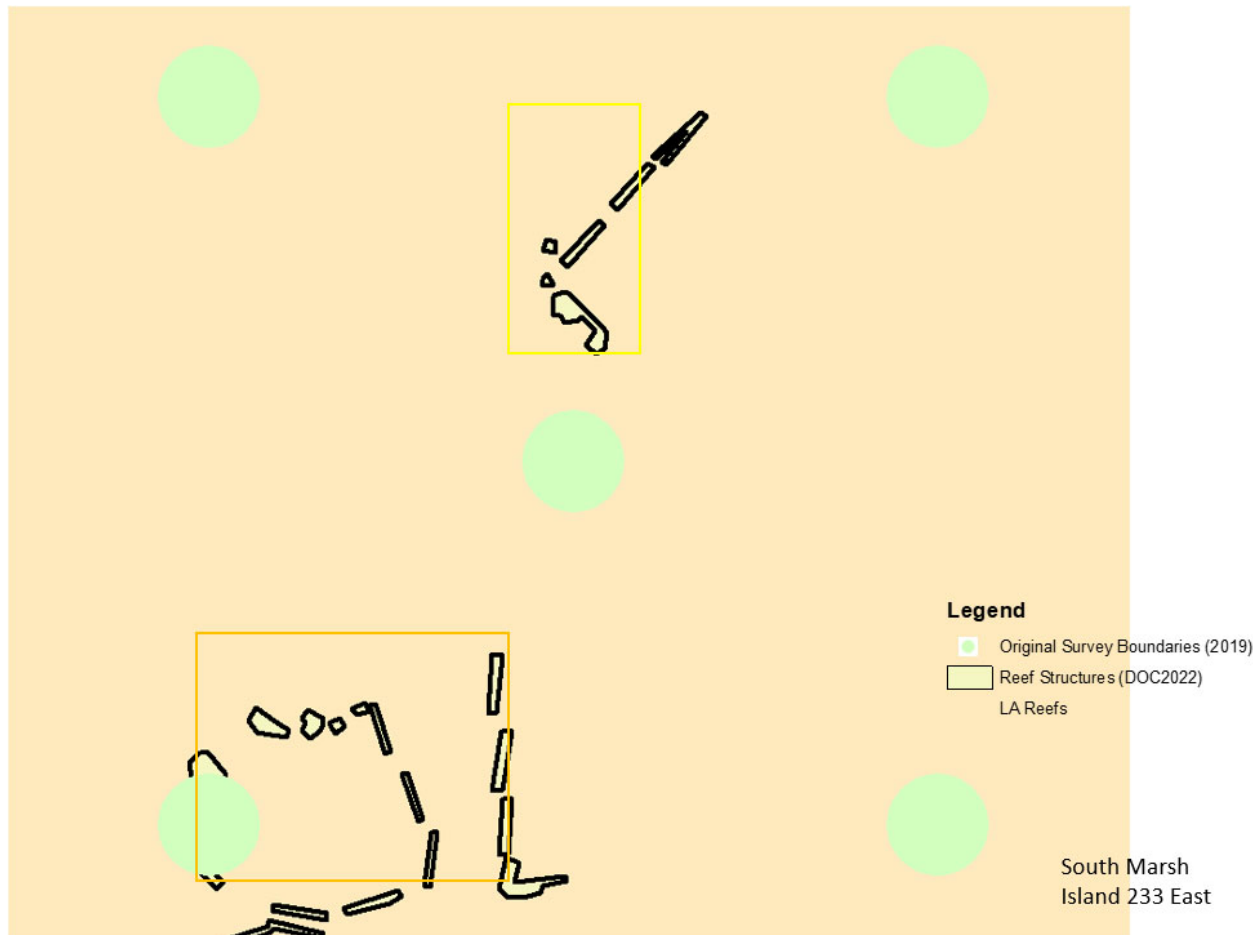
Current numbers: 81 offshore reef sites: 48 Planning Area, 19 SARS, 14 Deepwater; 438 platform jackets reefs, 15 in FY-22-23 (looks like recovery from Covid era. 19 nearshore reefs, close to 21.

Recently completed 1 new inshore reef, 1 enhancement to existing. P. Banks asks about what coastline used, i.e., inside-outside line. M. McDonough responds that he believes that is the case. P. Banks asks whether we have documentation of usage of Deepwater reefs. M. McDonough responds no. P. Banks talks about app tracking fishing effort for red snapper—not used much, but did any data get to Art Reef Program. No, so P. Banks directs Program to get with the Finish Program Manager. Chad Courville, CCA, asks whether LA Creel has any of that info. P. Banks believes that question was part of LA Creel, but would have to check.

5. East Cameron 328 SARS Proposal – M. McDonough introduces the proposal. EC-328 “A” is a storm-topped structures. Was not proposed before the SARS moratorium. When the Council approved lifting the SARS moratorium, approved change to SARS amendment, restricting the reefing of toppled structures; M. McDonough recommends against acceptance of EC-328 “A”. Chuck Webb presents on behalf of Maritech. EC-328 “A” is storm-topped (2008, Ike). Was a 4-pile in 243-ft water depth. Maritech managed to P&A all wells, remove jacket in pieces from 2010-12. While working on decks, found that they had significant damage. In 2021, discovered that decks have rolled, considerable collapse. Did perform marine life survey—7 species of invertebrates, 29 species of fish. Area of pinnacle trends (low shrimp trawl effort). C. D’Elia expresses doubts that it’s legal to take. P. Banks asks M. McDonough whether the shrimp effort data shows that effort is low or high. M. McDonough answers he doesn’t know, would normally have done that step when going to Shrimp Task Force (next step in SARS). C. D’Elia expresses concern that accepting it would start a trend. M. McDonough answers he has same concerns. Compares this proposal to another SARS proposal in the area that is better, recommends that it would be better to develop that proposal (not able to do both). J. Lively asks about shrimp effort. M. McDonough pledges to start bringing that info earlier in SARS process. P. Banks asks about Master Plan that included spots favored by recreational community (is EC-328 one). M. McDonough answers that that effort was specific to nearshore (<100’ WD), so no. P. Banks asks how Council wants to proceed. C. D’Elia answers he’d like for Program’s rejection to stand. J. Lively concurs, it does not meet amendment. Council moves to reject; motion carries.
6. South Marsh Island 233 West and East – pilot project with “round items”: edit Inshore Nearshore Plan and amend Inshore Nearshore Plan to Louisiana Artificial Reef Plan – M. McDonough: materials are still hard to find for nearshore projects, ability to take culverts (plentiful) would be great help. When the SM-233 W & E reefs were deployed, done with Council’s blessing to deploy some round items (platform piles) to study movement. Additional survey now done, time to assess. There are differences in quality between initial post-deployment survey and follow-up survey, so best comparisons are done in GIS.



Nothing lines up perfectly, but no concerns of significant movement. (problem with permit boundary, but Program will get that re-permitted).



And the East site appears to look even better.

The Program’s proposal based on the results of the pilot project are to: remove the line “Cylindrical or spherical materials (round culverts, drums, pipe, etc.)” and replace it with just “Spherical materials” under “Unacceptable Materials for artificial reef development include but are not limited to” section of the Inshore Nearshore Plan; and add the Inshore Nearshore plan to the Louisiana Artificial Reef Plan as Amendment IV. P. Banks asks again that the surveys are showing that the items didn’t move. M. McDonough answers again that the surveys do not compare perfectly, doesn’t believe items have moved. Can do another survey to compare with the improved data from the most recent surveys (and will do eventually). P. Banks is concerned about the surveys not being high quality enough to make an accurate determination of movement. M. McDonough replies that among lessons learned in nearshore reefing is that some companies will not have the capability to do work in this zone. No longer working with company that did initial post-deployment survey. P. Banks asks how far some of the images (from the different surveys) are? M. McDonough responds, no, that when we got the initial survey, we just didn’t get the coordinate-level, shapefile info. P. Banks would like to see a subsequent survey that has the quality that would allow the geo-rectified comparison; is same company still available (follow-up survey)? P. Banks asks about dates, was it done post-Ida? It’s not certain, but maybe. C. D’Elia asks about getting another survey also. M. McDonough states that we can get the site re-surveyed when we do the regular offshore surveys done. Council motions to accept changes, but wants to hear public discussion. John Walther, CCA Louisiana, reminds Council that every other state uses culverts, not using is a hindrance, drives up cost. Survey, if it shows movement, it’s not large scale, within permit area. Program and Council agree that getting sites surveyed again soon would be helpful.

Motion to accept changes carries. Council further moves to amend Inshore Nearshore to LA Artificial Reef Plan; motion carries. P. Banks commends CCA, J. Walther on partnership with Program.

7. No general public comment
8. No further business
9. Meeting adjourns