

Artificial Reef Council Meeting- June 4, 2018, 1:00 pm

Fourth floor conference room, LDWF Headquarters, Baton Rouge, LA

Council Members:

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

Rex Caffey for Robert Twilley, Executive Director of Louisiana Sea Grant

Jason Froeba for Patrick Banks, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Fisheries, LDWF

Attendees:

Chris Auer, Freeport McMoRan Oil & Gas

Jerry Gilmore, TSB Offshore

Clint Rayes, ExxonMobil

1. Jason Froeba welcomes everyone to the meeting, adjourns, and introduces the other council members.
2. Jason Froeba motions to adopt the agenda, motioned, seconded, passed.
3. Jason Froeba asks if there changes needed for the previous meeting minutes, motioned to approve, approved.
4. Mike McDonough gives the Reef Program update. Proceeds to show a map of the current artificial reefs present in the inshore, nearshore, and offshore to help distinguish between the different reef sites in relation to depth deployed in. M. McDonough points out the Planning Areas, SARS, and Deepwater reefs (on map). There are currently 76 offshore reefs: 48 Planning Areas, 18 SARS, 10 Deepwater. At the moment the artificial reef program has reefed 391 structures. Deployed 7 structures in the current fiscal year 2017-2018. In the works are permits for 5 offshore reefs, 3 Deepwater and 2 SARS. The SARS are still projects from Katrina and are old proposals. A moratorium has been lifted but not has any proposals for any more SARS. 68 platforms proposals, 40 have permits ready and 28 are still in process of obtaining permits. In the nearshore, 6 reefs have been deployed with the recent one being Bay Marchand 3. 4 permits are available with 2 being for enhancement on Grand Isle 9 and Ship Shoal 26, the Pickets. These are both rec use sites so money is available. 2 permits to do new reef sites, one on ship shoal 94 for replacement of reef. Ship Shoal 108 is another new site. Ashley Ferguson begins to talk about the inshore reef updates. 29 inshore reef sites can be found state wide. Goal is to enhance and create new reef sites nearshore. Materials used vary of limestone rock, recycled concrete, and molded concrete (reef balls). In fiscal year of 17-18, St. John artificial reef site in Lake Pontchartrain was deployed which consisted of 4000 tons of crushed limestone. On the coastline, Point Mast artificial reef was enhanced with 2000 tons of crushed limestone. Showed video of St. John reef being dumped by excavator into Lake Pontchartrain. Survey plat shown of St. John reef to depict the material shown underwater in three rows. Point Mast is a 50 acre site being enhanced. Was a natural reef site that was enlarged by adding 2000 tons in December 2017. Future reef sites include

the sweet lake reef site, adding between 1000-2000 tons and the contract has not been finalized. A. Ferguson says that they have requested proposals for new artificial reef sites for the nearshore. A total of 7 projects were submitted for review. Projects would be chosen later that week to prepare for the upcoming fiscal year. Multi-beam surveys are being done for the inshore reefs post deployment. A. Ferguson shows picture of proposed sweet lake reef and the deployment area. Large crushed concrete was placed in the middle of the area. Shows the council an example of the multi-beam done at twins span to let the council become familiar. Side scan was the previous tool of surveying but the program has switched to the multi-beam for a clearer picture of the materials. A. Ferguson shows the funds for the inshore artificial reef. P. Banks informs the council of issues of reef construction. Office of state purchasing requested the artificial reef program to run through the capital outlet instead of Office of state purchasing. Positive confirmation was not shown from the Office of State purchasing to be able to fulfill the artificial reef program. M. McDonough says he had received a voicemail the morning of saying that we could be heading into that direction. Craig Gothreaux begins to hit on the monitoring aspect of artificial reefs. NRDA allows the program to do enhancement projects totaling in \$6 million on 11 reef sites state wide. \$750,000 has been allocated towards enhancement of the Pickets, Grand Isle 9, and Bird Island reef; these are the most outer reefs. \$400,000 for each additional reef sites. \$50,000 has been allocated to ensure long term monitoring is done. C. Gothreaux shows picture of all broken funds available. A plan from December 2017 is for 4 projects in total of \$22 million of recreational use funds. A final restoration plan is to be ready by July of 2018. C. Gothreaux says trap deployment monitoring has been occurring in St. John, Point Mast, and East Calcasieu by the monitoring team. Biological aspects are the main focus on these traps deployments. Biological monitoring is done to assess the overall ecology of the deployed reef areas. C. Gothreaux's monitoring team conducted dredge samples, reef sampling trays and tonging to look for oysters. In Calcasieu an oyster total was at about 60% alive some even marketable size. CSA conducted a dive survey looking for oysters on Independence Island to conclude oyster growth is occurring on the larger limestone. Reef sampling trays (picture) have been deployed at California Point, St. John, Independence Island, and East Calcasieu to determine the non-motile organisms inhibiting these newly deployed reefs. For organisms that are mobile the monitoring team uses fish traps, acoustic telemetry in Lake Pontchartrain and with hopes of using gillnets and maybe longline. A. Ferguson had spearheaded the telemetry project to observe patterns of spotted seatrout, bull sharks, and Red Drum. C. Gothreaux explains the process and decision of what survey studies were completed for these monitoring trips. C. Gothreaux designed a protocol for the monitoring team to use at each reef sites to keep consistency between reefs. Pre-deployment and post deployment monitoring was done on the East Calcasieu to determine if the reef increased diversity of species in which it did. Lake Pontchartrain is not as successful but only due to possible freshwater present. Trap deployment times (24hrs, 48 hrs, 1 week) can vary on target species. Two Environmental DNA projects are underway with testing water is being done by Southeastern University funded by Sea Grant and Sportfish restoration program. Sportfish restoration is focused on 9 different recreational use enhancement sites. Sea grant is focused on 6 reef sites 3 on

the north shore and 3 on the south shore across the saline gradient. Rec use sites include Lake Front and West End. Human Dimension surveys are being completed by saltwater anglers to determine the usage of artificial reefs. Council asked if this is for the inshore reef and C. Gothreaux answers saying it was more for spotted seatrout regulations with the hopes of creating a better survey to fulfill the needs of saltwater fishermen in relation to artificial reefs. C. Gothreaux explains of future ROV data and transects coming from offshore platforms to get fish counts. Brett Falterman from the Grand Isle lab begins to touch on their monitoring efforts in coordination with C. Gothreaux's monitoring team. B. Falterman focus on three types of surveys: vertical line survey, vertical line video survey, ROV survey. The grand isle lab also coordinates with SEAMAP with NOAA. B. Falterman shows their vertical line survey conducted and sampled since 2011. Hook and line is the main method with go pro videos. B. Falterman wants to increase the amount of artificial reef structures they monitor in the coming year.

5. M. McDonough explains how the Louisiana Fishing Enhancement Act established the composition of the Artificial Reef Council and gave the Council responsibilities regarding the Artificial Reef Fund and how it's spent. The Legislative Auditor has given the Department a finding that Artificial Reef Fund money being spent to maintain the Grand Isle Research Lab must be reviewed and approved by the Council. McDonough's reading of the Act is that Program should be informing the Council of its budget plans on a yearly basis. Program has completed 3 projects for a total of \$246,357, with seven more likely projects (\$1,582,580) for FY-17-18. Monitoring would include surveys of inshore, nearshore, and offshore reefs. Inshore and inshore-like nearshore reefs will be side-scanned. Offshore reefs will be multi-beamed; planning to take ROV survey to more reefs with a defined set of transects. \$500K budgeted for inshore enhancements. \$2M budgeted for deploying one or two reefs in the Nearshore Ship Shoal Planning Area; \$1.25M for Ship Shoal 26, the Pickets. Dr. D'Elia asked if the information used for monitoring would be used for scientific papers C. Gothreaux answers saying they report to the Gulf Coast Artificial council. Dr. D'Elia responds with maybe having online accessible information. C. Gothreaux responds with the current interactive map posted on LDWF website. M. McDonough hits on the planning vs the permitting sides of the artificial reef program. M. McDonough explains the responsibilities of the Gulf Coast Artificial Council in relation to the work done with LDWF Artificial Reef Program with Red Snapper and other recreationally target species. LA Creel is the main source of finding out the current harvest data. R. Caffey asks: what does LA creel do in relation to Red Snapper regulation? By area? By site? J Froeba responds that the app is downloadable to smartphones and will be able to give full details on catches and other parameters on why people were fishing where they were. M. McDonough speaks on the last five fiscal years based on interest, donations, expenditures, and overall budget of the program going forward. Revenue has also been declining for a few years. Fund bump due to Hurricanes Katrina & Rita is mostly over. M. McDonough speaks on the constitution, states we use 10% on inshore reef development. The Louisiana Fishing Enhancement act envisioned a time when the Artificial Reef Program can sustain off the interest of the program. M. McDonough says that this varies from year to year from interest fluctuating. A decision was made to double the fund balance to shoot for \$40 million and set aside

expenditures and begin saving. This began the 10:10:10 rule in percentages used. The total planned activities are about \$4.6 million. Someone asked if we planned on using this decided fund to fulfill the overall budget. M. McDonough responded saying this was not the case and we have allocated funds to certain areas. Reef sites are partnered with outside organizations which help lower the cost of many proposed reefs based on the spending of said organizations. Compliance monitoring is based on doing a survey for inshore every three years and off shore every five years. From minutes last year about the Coastal Scientist Assistantship Program, M. McDonough is heavily for possibly funding master student projects to help increase the long standing connection of universities and government agencies. J Froeba speaks about the Grand Isle Lab and B. Falterman speaks on the Grand Isle lab costs about salaries for employees, costs to maintain facility, and future project. B. Falterman and M. McDonough ask for permission to allow spending on the Grand Isle lab and the Gulf council expenditures. Dr. D'Elia, how to make sure this expenditures being allotted are being used for the Artificial Reef Program rather than other LDWF programs J Froeba answers that these expenditures will be used for the marine fisheries lab for the monitoring of nearshore and offshore. SEAMAP will not be using the money allowed for the artificial reef program even if they have some of the same objectives. Someone comments 1:26:45 about LUMCON creating a new marine lab facility and possibly reaching out to LUMCON about future projects. C. Gothreaux explains that LDWF already has a standing relationship with LUMCON which allows LDWF boat to be docked at LUMCON and can be allowed to be used by LUMCON and record any expenditures experienced when operating. Council votes to allow extra expenditures to allow the Grand Isle lab to remain receiving funds and actively doing monitoring for the Artificial Reef Program. The program asks the council to make a motion and vote on that the council approves the expenditures being used for future to clear the air of the legislator auditor and spending done in the past years. The motion passes to allow expenditures increase to the Artificial Reef Program.

6. No Public comment
7. Someone says 1:32:04 about the making this information for public use and M. McDonough talks about the interactive map online and possibly increasing more outreach information.
8. Adjourn