

## **Artificial Reef Council Meeting – June 28, 2022, 9:00 am**

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

### Attendees:

Patrick Brown, Quarter North

John Walter, CCA Louisiana

Jason Duet, LDWF

Melissa Longman, LDWF

- 1) Patrick Banks introduces himself, has the other Council members introduces themselves, welcomes everyone, and begins the meeting (*recording is video-only at this point*)
- 2) The Council approves the agenda
- 3) The Council approves the minutes.
- 4) Mike McDonough begins the Artificial Program update. Displays a map of Louisiana artificial reefs, explains the inshore area (within the coastline), nearshore area (coastline to 100 feet of water depth), and offshore area (beyond 100 feet, deepwater beyond 400 feet). SARS outside of Planning areas, require Council approval. Offshore: 80 reefs total—48 Planning Area, 19 Special Artificial Reef Sites, 13 Deepwater (1 new Deepwater: Ship Shoal 358). Total of 414 platform jackets, 8 rig legs, 40 APC’s, 1 jackup barge, 1 tugboat, 1 offshore supply vessel; 5 oil & gas structures in FY-21-22 (also completed acceptance of West Delta (WD) 117 C & F). Making a lot of progress on nearshore reefs, partnership with CCA: have completed 18 reefs; Vermilion (VR) 69, South Timbalier (ST) 51, and West Cameron (WC) 45 new; Bay Marchand (BM) 3 enhanced. Currently applying for permits for FY-22-23 CEA: VR-144 & 147, South Marsh Island (SM) 235, Ship Shoal (SS) 28 & 33, ST-77, Grand Isle (GI) 63, and WD-35. Ashley Ferguson gives inshore update: the Program enhanced Finfish Reef and Bay Ronquille, with 2200 tons and 1100 tons of recycled concrete, respectively. Each reef cost \$300,000 (\$150,000 LDWF). (*audio turns on*) Zach Chain provides an update on current monitoring efforts. The main objectives of monitoring are to determine the presence/absence of different animal and plant species on NRDA-enhanced reefs and to conduct surveys to assess angler utilization, awareness, and economic impact. Methods are gill nets, benthic sampling, rod and reel angling, and user observations. 440 specimens were collected overall, 18 species. Bird Island had highest abundance, 161 specimens; Point Mast highest diversity, 12 species. Gulf Menhaden most abundant, 198. Benthic trays proved unreliable; ponar sampler failed to grab reef material; GoPro camera

recorded drumming sounds, observed barnacles, bryozoans, eastern oyster, and southern oyster drills (in less turbidity). P. Banks asks about an oyster dredge; Z Chain answers haven't tried yet, but tried in past, similar to ponar. User observations: anglers on Bird Island, July 2021, snorkelers near West End, July 2021. Anecdotal accounts from local fishermen: productivity varies by reef, season, and environmental conditions. Julie Lively mentions there is an extensive underwater acoustic library, could compare to drumming (GoPro). P. Banks asks about eDNA research, worth going back to? Z Chain states there are problems with current/tide and where did DNA come from.

- 5) M. McDonough, budget: Council tasked with advising Program on how to spend Art Reef Fund

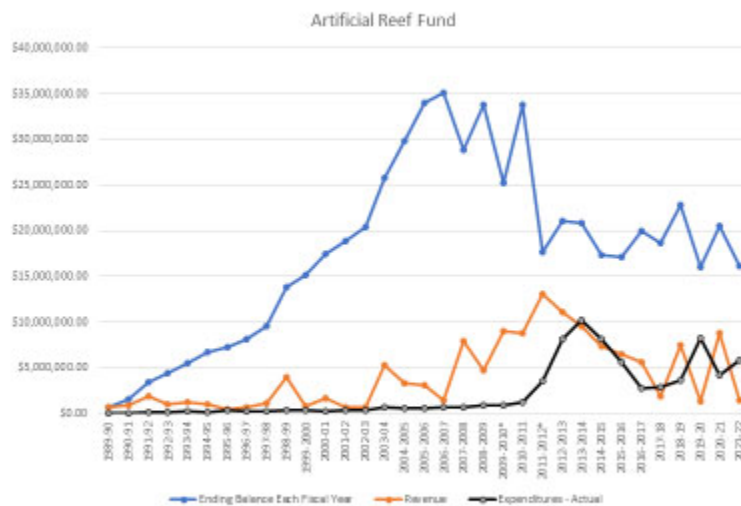


Figure 1. Artificial Reef Fund Balance by year. Additional lines show income and expenditures.

Income has been highly variable over recent years; expect that to continue. Petroleum prices have recovered; decommissioning (including reefing) will also. P. Banks points out that Legislature appropriated some money in some years; also approved to build Marine Lab. Legislature also directing Department on how to spend on projects. This is the last year covered by the Strategic Plan; external pressure on Fund always there.

## Artificial Reef Fund

Year	Beginning Balance	Actual/ Projected Revenue	Actual/ Projected Interest Earned	Actual/ Projected Operating Expenditures	Other Expenditures/ Withdrawals	Ending Balance
2017-18	\$19,989,334.00	\$1,542,637.00	\$370,262.13	\$2,933,739.64		\$18,997,282.91
2018-19	\$18,997,283.00	\$7,084,323.00	\$410,345.60	\$3,661,853.31		\$22,835,520.71
2019-20	\$22,835,521.00	\$959,415.00	\$407,088.07	\$8,211,322.23		\$16,013,479.45
2020-21	\$15,994,348.00	\$8,024,164.00	\$272,685.02	\$4,190,715.22		\$20,565,938.63
2021-22	\$20,565,938.63	\$1,234,196.00	\$218,866.69	\$5,825,356.67		\$16,193,693.62

\$8,296,849.02

*Flexibility* (Strategic Plan)*	Amount of flexibility "tapped"	Remaining flexibility
-\$4,347,153.03	\$1,864,479.22	-\$2,482,673.81

Figure 2. Table showing the Fund balance, income and expenditures across years. Additional table showing income FY-20-21, figures for expenditure planning. The Strategic Plan has some flexibility, but Program has tapped that flexibility a lot; will need to next FY.

### FY-22-23 Artificial Reef Budget

• Operations	\$2,520,000
• Permitting & planning and Monitoring	\$1,630,000
• Fisheries Research Laboratory	\$870,000
• Monitoring Activities	\$871,000
• Fund Master's-level research	\$71,000
• Other Monitoring activities	\$800,000
• Enhancement Activities	\$1,382,000
• Spat On Shell	\$282,000
• Reef deployments	\$900,000
• FAD Buoys	\$200,000
• Reef Marking	\$200,000
• Total	\$4,773,000



Figure 3. Planned expenditures (for Program) for FY-22-23. P. Banks asks to see slide again with anticipated vs. actual expenditures.

- 6) A. Ferguson presents the proposed Hackberry inshore reef. Originally approached by Jefferson Parish; consulted with Oyster Program to move area away from oyster drill predation and toward higher oyster suitability; also serves user groups in northern Barataria. Proposal was very similar to CCA proposal, so the two were combined. Asking Council's blessing for proposal. P. Banks likes projects that serve anglers and can also grow oysters (not all can do that). Council approves the proposal.
- 7) M. McDonough introduces Patrick Brown, presenting the ST-206 SARS proposal on behalf of Quarter North. The structure is an 8-pile in 173' of water depth, installed in 1988—very robust. Quarter North has performed a biological survey designed and analyzed by Blue Latitudes, conducted October 2021 (by SeaTrepid):

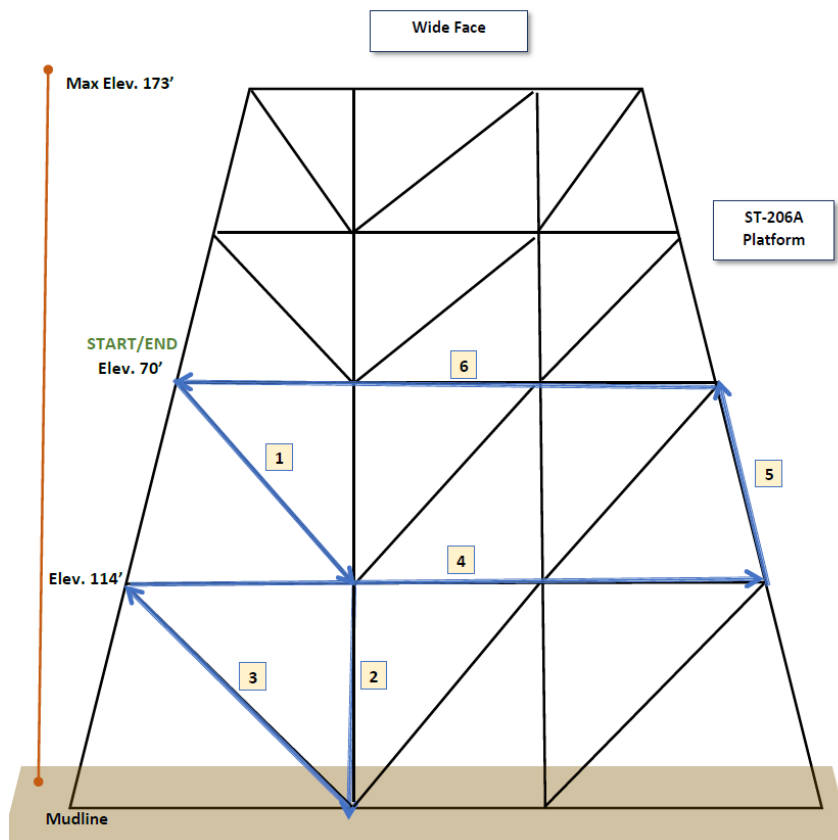
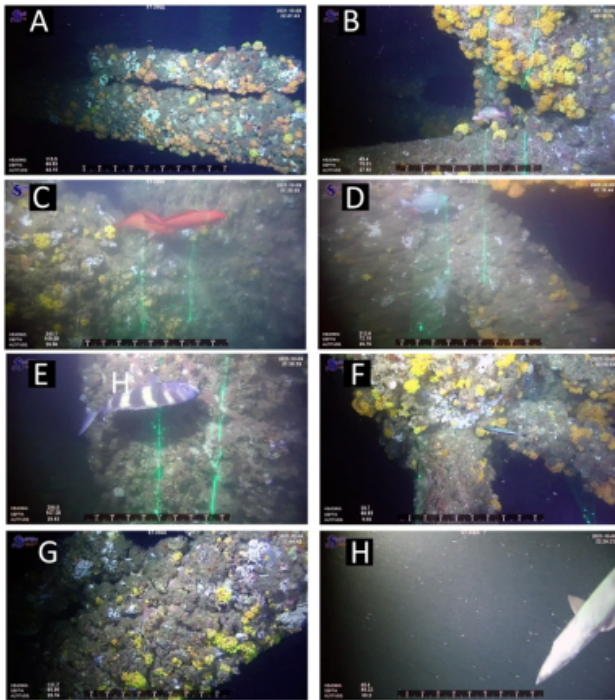


Figure 4. Survey design for ST-206.

## FINDINGS FISH (210 Individual Identifications)

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Examples of fishes observed in the shallower regions of the platform from approximately 65 – 100 ft (note: several taxa found near the 100 ft boundary were included). A: Spotfin butterflyfish (*Chaetodon ocellatus*); B: Gray snapper (*Lutjanus griseus*); C: Atlantic creolefish (*Paranthias furcifer*); D: Bermuda chub (*Kyphosus sectatrix*); E: Sheephead (*Archosargus probatocephalus*); F: Unidentified Scombridae; G: Rock hind (*Epinephelus adscensionis*); H: Great barracuda (*Sphyræna barracuda*).

Figure 5. Pictures/examples of the fishes (210 identifications) near ST-206

## FISH (Vertical Distribution)

Taxon	Number of Observations	Minimum Depth (Ft)	Maximum Depth (Ft)	Mean Depth (Ft)
Gray Snapper ( <i>Lutjanus griseus</i> )	51	65	123	88.1
Snappers Family Lutjanidae	12	92	174	119.2
Lookdowns ( <i>Selene vomer</i> )	23	92	171	122.3
Jacks Family Carangidae	8	111	172	128.6
Creolefish ( <i>Paranthias furcifer</i> )	7	79	114	102.3
Chubs Family Kyphosidae	6	57	116	76.8
Great barracuda ( <i>Sphryaena barracuda</i> )	5	76	152	99.4
Unidentified sharks	2	115	150	132.5
Spotfin butterflyfish ( <i>Chaetodon ocellatus</i> )	3	67	99	79.3
Rock hind ( <i>Epinephelus adscensionis</i> )	3	68	86	77.3

Figure 6. Table of species, the number of observations and the depth ranges of those species.

The full proposal includes the reefing of ST-205 B and ST-205 G; scheduled for 2023. M. McDonough elaborates that Program does like to see that there will be multiple structures going to a proposal. P. Banks asks if any of these structures were in the Great Red Snapper Count. Council approves proposal.

- 8) Public Comment: John Walther, CCA Louisiana: CCA and LDWF have done 34 projects and 40 reefs together over 20 years. Seven more for next fiscal year; moving more into nearshore waters. Preferred material is recycled concrete structures (keeps costs down, readily available, frequently donated). Obstacle exists that culverts and other round items are not on approved list. Talks about the SM-233 Reefs (2019) and the pilot project with concrete legs/round material. Are used in other Gulf states. P. Banks asks about that stability analysis and status thereof. M. McDonough answers that the site is in the current surveying contract, hope will be done soon. Will ask Council to update Inshore Nearshore Plan upon completion.
- 9) No other business
- 10) Meeting adjourns.