

# Alabama current connection

## Wolf Bay Receives Outstanding Alabama Water Designations

By TOM HERDER, MOBILE BAY NEP  
WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY STEVE  
MCCONNELL, GULF COAST NEWSPAPERS

On April 20, the Alabama Environmental Management Commission, an appointed board that oversees the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), voted unanimously to designate Wolf Bay an Outstanding Alabama Water (OAW), the highest state classification for water quality. The 6-0 vote and OAW designation validate the efforts of the Wolf Bay Watershed Watch (WBWW) who have spent nearly 10 years monitoring water quality and developing a comprehensive watershed plan and a public awareness campaign. Water quality parameters supporting the OAW classification are a significant benchmark for developing future monitoring activities, providing for prevention and control of new or existing discharges, and providing a basis for upgrading additional water bodies.

The classification applies to the segment of the Bay running from the Intracoastal Waterway to Moccasin Bayou in Baldwin County. Wolf Bay is only the fourth Alabama waterway to receive OAW designation – along with segments of the Cahaba and Little Cahaba Rivers, Hatchet Creek, and the Tensaw River – and the first estuarine OAW. To receive this designation ADEM must certify that a water body meets high standards for water quality, including bacteriological, dissolved oxygen, chemistry, land use and cover, and turbidity data among other indicators. WBWW Executive Director Stan Mahoney noted that volunteer citizens boated and even waded through the waters on hot summer and



cold winter days alike to collect the data necessary to earn this designation.

“This is not a final step, but rather one more step in the process,” said Mahoney, who noted that with sustainable development and government oversight the Intracoastal Waterway, Perdido Bay, Little Lagoon, and Bon Secour Bay could join Wolf Bay as OAWs. Noting that the eight years of data collection by WBWW was necessary for verification, Mahoney said, “I don’t think we have that much time to wait. There needs to be a cooperative approach among the municipalities and the county in order to get a system in place,” said Mahoney, recommending the usage of real-time submerged monitoring devices so that data can be consistently measured, reported, and verified. He added that local chambers of commerce, developers, and businesses should promote action for environmental quality in Baldwin County. “We would like to see an increased awareness from those who are benefiting from the county’s resources.”

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# Coastal Corner

BY PHILLIP HINESLEY, COASTAL SECTION CHIEF  
ACDNR-STATE LANDS

## The Forever Wild Program, Worth the Effort!

Wetlands, estuaries, riverine systems, deltas, pine savannahs; these are just some of the diverse habitats that make up the coastal environment. These coastal environments face increasing pressure from increased development and coastal population. These coastal habitats provide tangible benefits, such as buffering coastal communities against the effects of storms, filtering pollutants from runoff, and providing a basis for booming recreational and tourism industries. These habitats also provide breeding grounds, shelter, and food for a large number of animals, including some rare and endangered species. Preserving this habitat is critical to a healthy coastal environment. Serious habitat degradation is evident in the nation's entire coastline. Since the early settlers arrived in the United States, the nation has lost more than half of its wetlands, over 110 million acres. Many States have turned to land acquisition programs to preserve critical lands and wildlife for use by future generations.

The Forever Wild Program was established in 1992, by constitutional amendment, to provide for the purchase of public recreational lands. Funding for the program is derived from a percentage of the interest earned from state royalties on offshore natural gas leases belonging to Alabama. Since its inception, the program has purchased lands for general recreation, nature preserves, and additions to wildlife management areas and state parks. The Forever Wild Program is administered by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division. The Program operates with an

Alabama Forever Wild Land Trust Board of Directors. This Board is made up of state agency representatives and citizens appointed to the board by the executive and legislative branches of the State of Alabama.

The Board meets on a quarterly basis around the state to review nominations of land tracks and to review tract assessments. Any citizen of the State of Alabama can nominate property to the Forever Wild Program. Nominations to the Forever Wild Program are open-ended and can be sent to the State Lands Division or the Board at anytime. The Board encourages public input into the program. Only through active public participation can the best places in Alabama be identified and protected in order to remain forever wild. Once tracks are nominated, information is compiled for each track to assist in the assessment of the properties and its attributes. Each track is then rated by the State Lands Division for the Board, and the Board votes to pursue the acquisition or to reject it based on the properties' merit. The above activities can take up to 12-to-24 months, depending on the multitude of circumstances that can be encountered throughout the process. However, the end result ensures the acquisitions of only the finest property into Alabama's Land Trust Program.

The Forever Wild Program and Board over the last several years have obtained



thousands of coastal properties in Mobile and Baldwin counties. Many of these have been in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, the Grand Bay Savannah, the Perdido River Corridor, and the Weeks Bay area. These acquisitions were made possible due to the fact that the State was able to obtain federal grant funds through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Department of Interior. Many of these federal grants required matching funds and, without the Forever Wild Program, the State would not have been unable to purchase these properties.

In 1992, when the Forever Wild Program was approved by a vote of 83% of the States voters, it authorized for funding through fiscal year 2012-2013. At that time, the funding for the program will expire. I believe that this is an extremely important program in preserving land and providing habitat and should be renewed. In the meantime, you can help out by purchasing a Forever Wild car tag. A percentage of the sale of these tags goes back into the Forever Wild Trust Fund and is used for additional land acquisitions. So do your part and purchase a tag today.

# Estuary Reflections

By DAVID W. YEAGER, DIRECTOR  
MOBILE BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

## Stormwater Management A Local Initiative Gains Support

Baldwin County is one of the fastest growing counties in the State of Alabama. In fact, according to Byron Rush White of the Alabama Real Estate Research and Education Center at the University of Alabama, the population of Baldwin County is projected to reach 300,000 to 340,000 by 2016, over twice the current population estimate in just less than 10 years! To make matters worse, this growth is occurring in a region particularly susceptible to its impacts, the coastal zone. During the past year, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program led a group of individuals representing Baldwin County municipalities, the County Government, the legislative delegation, Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Alabama Coastal Foundation, Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, and others in efforts to generate an initiative to deal with one of the most significant by-products of this explosive growth – stormwater runoff. In fact, a conceptual plan for examining the feasibility of creating a regional stormwater management utility in Baldwin County was transformed into a proposed constitutional amendment that would allow creation of a public service utility capable of helping local governments manage the impacts of stormwater runoff and funded by a small, equitable user fee. Legislation to allow creation of such a utility passed the Alabama House of Representatives and was reported out of Committee favorably in the Senate before action on the bill was postponed on the last day of the 2007 regular session of the Alabama Legislature.

The problem with stormwater, simply put, is that increased growth converts acres of forest and pasture to rooftops, streets, and parking lots – areas categorized as impervious surfaces. These areas do not allow rainfall to infiltrate naturally into the ground but instead create more storm water runoff. More impervious surface in an area increases the volume and velocity of runoff and contributes to surface water quality degradation through increased pollutant loadings carried into area streams and coastal waters. Flooding, increased erosion, habitat destruction, and ultimately

aesthetic and property value impacts can all result. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has indicated that polluted runoff is the number one threat to water quality today.

Coastal growth and development are a fact of life. We all want to enjoy the amenities of coastal life, and Baldwin County's growth is certainly not unique. Estimates indicated that 53 percent of the population lived within the coastal zone in 2003 and predicted that 75 percent would live in this zone nationwide by 2025. Two major reports to the Nation since 2003, *The Pew Ocean Commission Report* and the *Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy*, have both cited the impacts of our growth and development in coastal areas on coastal waters and the oceans. Our local tourism economies and our public health are dependent on water quality, and our coastal water quality depends in large measure on effectively managing polluted runoff.

Stormwater runoff does not follow political boundaries. It is a regional problem and must be dealt with in like fashion, across jurisdictional boundaries. Twelve of the thirteen Baldwin County municipalities and the County Commission passed resolutions supporting development of enabling legislation for a regional stormwater utility. Other groups such as the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce also passed such resolutions.

The fate of this year's attempt at stormwater legislation for Baldwin County is not the most important thing resulting from the efforts of the Baldwin County Stormwater Working Group over the past 11 months. The effort to create a more broadly supported legislative instrument that supports local governments' ability to deal with stormwater management will no doubt continue. What is of primary importance is that Baldwin County's elected leaders and other stakeholders recognize that growth and development in the coastal zone are not without consequence, and that they are willing to initiate and support local actions to mitigate those consequences. The fact that a bill made it this far in the State House during the current session is simply proof of this recognition.

## "Grasses in Classes" Project at River Delta Marina County Park in Creola

On May 15, 2007 students from Satsuma High School's Grasses in Classes Program undertook a planting project to stabilize an eroding ditch bank at the River Delta Marina County Park in Creola. Despite the swarming bees, persistent mosquitoes, and blazing mid-day sun, the ten students used shovels, hand trowels, and bare fingers to plant 370 recently purchased marsh plants in the soft soil. The students planted bull tongue, also known as duck potato, pickerel weed, soft rush, and blue flag iris among existing native plants to give Mother Nature a needed "boost".

The project began when Ron Jones, of the Mobile County Parks and Recreation Department called on Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) Coordinator Kara Lankford to help coordinate the planting at the marina on Dead Lake Road. Lankford contacted The Mobile County Grasses in Classes Program at Satsuma High School to provide manpower for the restoration project. This MBNEP program, like its counterpart in Baldwin County, utilizes high school students who spend the school year cultivating native dune and wetlands plants for use in environmental restoration projects. The plants used in this project were not grown by the students but rather purchased from local vendors with funding from the Parks and Recreation Department. The Satsuma High School students worked enthusiastically and gained experience for fall plantings when they will use the plants they have been nurturing all winter and spring for restoration projects around Mobile County.

# The Gulf of Mexico Alliance Regional Restoration Coordination Team: Working to Improve Restoration Efforts Around the Gulf of Mexico

By *CARL FERRARO, ADCNR-SLD -  
COASTAL SECTION*

Whether it's mangrove restoration in Florida, salt marsh restoration in Alabama, Hurricane Katrina recovery in Mississippi and Louisiana, or seagrass restoration in Texas, restoration of wetlands and estuarine habitats is a priority in all five of the Gulf states. To better coordinate these activities and promote communication between the Gulf states the Gulf Alliance has formed the Regional Restoration Coordination Team (RRCT).

The RRCT includes representatives from all five Gulf states and Mexico. Additionally, a variety of federal agencies are represented, including the Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Participating non-governmental organizations (NGOs) include The Nature Conservancy and the Gulf of Mexico Foundation.

The first meeting of the RRCT took place in Biloxi, Mississippi in July 2006. During this meeting, team members discussed the Gulf Alliance Governor's Action Plan and steps and measures the RRCT could take to implement it. They decided to hold a "round-robin" of meetings in each Gulf state to discuss restoration issues,

projects and policies particular to that state. Following that discussion, a working session to address action items in the Governor's Action Plan would be held. Also during this first meeting in Biloxi, the RRCT voted to support an application by the Gulf of Mexico Foundation for EPA funding to support the round-robin meetings, assist in paying for travel expenses for the RRCT Gulf state leads, and produce a final report of the RRCT's activities. This application was eventually approved, and the Gulf of Mexico Foundation was awarded the grant to facilitate the RRCT.

The first of the round-robin meetings was held in New Orleans in early November 2006. During this meeting, the vast scale of wetlands loss along the Louisiana coast was highlighted, as well as the huge scale on which restoration is needed. Additionally, during this meeting work began on addressing the action items in the Governor's Action Plan.

The second round-robin meeting was a joint Mississippi-Alabama meeting held at the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' new 5 Rivers Delta Center in Spanish Fort, Alabama in March 2007. The first day of the meeting highlighted activities in Alabama, while the second day concentrated on Mississippi restoration efforts. The following morning consisted of another Governor's Action Plan

working session. Additionally, as part of the Governor's Action Plan, the Gulf Alliance has teamed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to produce a Gulf of Mexico Regional Sediment Management Plan. The last day of the March meeting was spent working on this plan.

The final two round-robin meetings of the RRCT will include a joint Texas-Mexico meeting in Galveston, Texas in late May 2007 followed by a meeting in Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida in late August 2007. With these meeting concluded, the RRCT will have taken great strides in addressing the Governor's Action Plan and will be closer to producing a final report to the Gulf states' governors. This report will outline current restoration efforts as well as policy, process, regulatory, and funding shortcomings and provide recommendations for improving restoration efforts around the Gulf. These efforts should allow the Gulf states to make great strides in improving wetland and estuarine habitats all around the Gulf of Mexico, leaving a better Gulf for our children and generations to come.

For more information about the Gulf Alliance, the Governor's Action Plan, and the RRCT, please visit the Gulf Alliance website at: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gulf/default.htm>

## Fifth Annual Derelict Crab Trap Removal

By *KARA LANKFORD,  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR,  
MOBILE BAY NEP*

On Saturday March 24, 2007 the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Marine Resources Division, and the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program held the Fifth Annual Derelict Crab Trap Removal effort which resulted in the successful removal of 154 crab traps from the Mobile Bay Causeway. Volunteers from both sides of Mobile Bay came out to remove the abandoned traps that can be dangerous to wildlife and aquatic creatures. Once abandoned, these derelict traps continue to fish,



This year the program focused on the Mobile Bay Causeway, instead of the entire Alabama coastline as in past years. Two zones were set up on the causeway – one at Meaher State Park and the other at the Chocolatta Bay boat launch. The tide was low on the morning of the removal, so the traps very visible. Some volunteers remarked that they had to get out of their boats and walk

causing crabs and fish to be trapped and die needlessly. They also damage boats and motors, cause personal injury, and look trashy.

through the mud to retrieve some of the traps, since the tide was so low. Weather conditions were also favorable with minimal wind, low humidity, and bright sunshine.

Thanks to Holcim, Inc. for their financial support and volunteers, the Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center for personnel, and the Coastal Conservation Association, Alabama Coastal Foundation, and the Mobile County Wildlife and Conservation Association for their boats, volunteers, and financial contributions. Thanks also to Mobile Gas for feeding the crew when recovery efforts were completed.

The volunteers were rewarded a hot lunch and baseball caps with the Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program's logo on the front. Special thanks to all the volunteers who made the 2007 effort a great success!

# Giving Red Snapper and Reef Fish Their Best Chance for Survival When Released

By TOM HERDER, MOBILE BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

With new bag limits imposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service for the 2007 red snapper season, the frequency of catch releases and problems associated with post-release mortality are sure to increase. A red snapper is released when 1) the limit has already been boated, 2) it is less than the 16 inch minimum, or 3) it is considered too small to keep with a two-fish limit. There are ways an angler can enhance the chances that his release successfully returns to the bottom to either be caught again or to join the potential spawning stock and ensure future recruitment of juveniles. Florida Sea Grant's guidelines for releasing catches are summarized at the end of this article, but a procedure called "venting" is particularly important before releasing reef or bottom fish.

When any reef or bottom fish, like a red snapper, is brought quickly to the surface by hook and line, gases in its swim bladder over-expand. When the bladder ruptures, gases escape into the body cavity and continue to expand, potentially damaging the fish's internal organs. Its stomach and intestines can be

forced out of the mouth or anus. Any catch released in this buoyant, inflated condition is likely to become an easy target for predators, like dolphins, or to die from exposure near the surface. "Venting" the fish prior to releasing it allows the gases to escape. It eliminates pressure on internal organs, which will return to their places on their own and heal unless damage is extreme. It also allows the fish to overcome buoyancy problems and swim back down to its habitat.

Venting is a relatively simple procedure. It is explained and described on (December of) the 2007 Alabama Marine Information Calendar published by the ADCNR-Marine Resources Division (MRD) and at [http://www.flseagrant.org/program\\_areas/fisheries/venting/](http://www.flseagrant.org/program_areas/fisheries/venting/) on the Florida Sea Grant web site. With the fish held firmly on its side, an approximately 16-gauge, plunger-less syringe is inserted forward at a 45° angle one to two inches behind the base of the pectoral fin. The tip should be inserted only deep enough to release the gases, which should produce an audible sound. Gentle pressure on the fish's abdomen with the hand securing the fish can aid the deflation. Other punctures, especially to distended organs (or to the angler!), should

be avoided. Return the fish to the water as soon as possible, point it downward, and move it forward and backward smoothly to allow water to pass over the gills before release.

Follow the guidelines below to give your release the best chance:

- Have a plan for releasing a fish before it's landed, and work efficiently with others in your party to release it quickly.
  - Avoid using gaffs or landing nets if possible.
  - Handle the fish with wet hands, gloves, or towel, and avoid removing the beneficial slime or damaging eyes or gills.
  - Back hooks out carefully with pliers, or cut the leader close to the hook in throat-hooked fish.
  - Use circle hooks instead of J-hooks, and use hooks which degrade rapidly in seawater.
- Free Fish Venting Kits are available courtesy of MRD and the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium at the Auburn University Marine Extension & Research Center at the USA-Brookley Campus (call 251-438-5690) or the MRD at (251) 862-8662 (Dauphin Island) or (251) 968-7576 (Gulf Shores).

## New Habitat Research Database Seeks Project Entries

By MELISSA SCHNEIDER, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, MISSISSIPPI-ALABAMA SEA GRANT CONSORTIUM

A new database is giving researchers in Mississippi and Alabama the opportunity to let others learn from their successes and setbacks in the field of habitat conservation and restoration.

The recently launched Mississippi-Alabama Habitat Conservation, Restoration and Enhancement Database is ready for use. Resource managers, scientists and other researchers are encouraged to enter their habitat projects into the easy-to-use system.

"At this point, we want resource managers to submit entries," said Roberta Arena Swann, deputy director of Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and manager of the Mississippi-Alabama Habitat Conservation, Restoration and Enhancement Database. "This database is only going to be useful if it captures a wide range of projects."

If all habitat researchers share their work, the database may prove to be a valuable tool in replenishing and protecting habitats in the bi-state area.

"It is our hope that this database will improve networking and coordination among grassroots groups, resource managers, scientists and local governments for better habitat conservation along the northern Gulf Coast," Swann said.

The database, which also maps project locations, currently logs 11 projects in the 11 southern-most counties in Alabama and Mississippi. Projects deal with issues such as restoring stable channel dimensions, eradicating invasive species and stabilizing shoreline to help increase wildlife habitat.

Stewardship Coordinator Christopher May of Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve said there are two particularly useful database features.

"First, the ability to upload images adds a valuable dimension to this database," May said. "Users will be able to see how a site looked before and after management activities occurred. The second feature I find useful is the interactive map. Users can locate projects nearby or projects in particular habitat types that might be most relevant."

Swann said the database will allow resource managers to work together.

"The hope is that resource managers can gain insight into available conservation methods, funding sources, etc.," Swann said. "They can network with other resource managers to tie small-scale restoration efforts into ecosystem-level projects."

The process for submitting projects consists of obtaining a user name and password and entering all project information, including photos and location.

The public also is invited to view the projects and learn about what scientists are doing to protect and restore habitats on the coast.

The Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium provided funding and technical expertise during Dauphin Island Sea Lab's initial development of the database. The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program provides ongoing funding and technical support.

The Mississippi-Alabama Habitat Conservation, Restoration and Enhancement Database can be found at <http://restoration.disl.org/database/>.

# Let the Water be Your Teacher

## 2007 Summer Educational Programs at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab

By LISA YOUNG, PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR, DAUPHIN ISLAND SEA LAB

The Dauphin Island Sea Lab offers one of the most extensive summer marine science programs in the nation. With programs for everyone from graduate students to teachers to middle school students, the Sea Lab combines excellence in education with a beautiful location, right on the beaches of the Gulf of Mexico.

✦ **Children Ages 5-8 - Ocean's Alive!** Make exploring the beach with your children a rewarding educational experience. Create a shell collection and learn about the animals living on our beaches and in our oceans! These half-day camps are held from 1:00 pm until 4:30 pm and will be limited to 20 students; admissions are taken on a first-come, first-served basis. Parents/guardians are required to attend, must be 18 years of age and may bring no more than 3 children. Cost: \$35 per student. Includes T-shirt, Estuarium pass, snack, and certificate. Dates: July 13, July 27, and Aug. 3.

✦ **Children Ages 9-11 - Treasure Island** High-tech meets history at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab! Kids ages 9-11 are invited to join us for a treasure hunt on the sandy beaches of Dauphin Island. We'll use Global Positioning System technology to hunt for buried treasure while learning about the history and ecology of the Island. This half-day adventure will take place from 1:00 to 4:30pm; child must be accompanied by an adult. Cost: \$35 per student. Includes T-shirt, Estuarium pass, snack and certificate. Dates: May 30 & June 15.

✦ **Middle School Students - Gulf Island Journey** Join the Sea Lab team for beach scavenger hunts, ghost crab crawls, marsh mushing, and collection trips aboard our research vessel *A.E. Verrill* and watch bottlenose dolphins swim by. The group will visit a historic civil war fort and travel to another small island off the coast of Dauphin Island to see nesting sea birds

and collect shells. This fun residential program instills a basic understanding of marine science with lots of hands-on activities. There are only 30 slots for each one-week program so sign up early. Designed for rising 7th, 8th & 9th grade students. Cost: \$450, includes tuition, room, meals and lab fees. Dates: July 15-20 & July 29-Aug. 3.

✦ **High School Students** An intensive summer course introducing the student to the marine environment through classroom lecture and laboratory and field activities is available to 9-11 grade students. The length of the course is four weeks, during which time the students live on campus and participate in over 150 hours of supervised academic activities. Classes are taught in an academic setting and are designed to give the student a better understanding and appreciation of the various fields in marine science. The Alabama State Department of Education approves the Discovery Hall Summer Programs and recommends that local systems grant participating students credit toward either an Advanced or Standard High School Diploma. Cost: \$1800, plus \$50 registration fee. Dates: June 3-29.

*Registration now available for updated teacher workshops.*

✦ **K-12 Educators** A variety of exciting courses are available to all teachers throughout the summer. Whether the topic is Beaches and Birds or Submerged Grassbeds, teachers will be able to bring the oceans back into the classrooms. Educators will be able to collect specimens for their classes, as well as receive an extensive teaching curriculum highlighting the following topics:

- Beaches, Birds and Barrier Islands June 10-14 (\$410)
- Sharks - July 8-12 (\$450)
- The Delta - July 18-21 (\$350)
- Coastal Connections - July 22-26 (\$393)
- Submerged Grassbeds of the Northern Gulf of Mexico - July 29-Aug. 2 (\$395)

*Most courses require overnight stays. Credit hours are available for most courses.*

### ✦ **Special for Alabama Educators!**

The Sea Lab will be offering FREE teacher workshops this summer, especially for Alabama educators, funded by federal agencies. Availability is limited, so please check on these right away.

• **Marine Applications of Science and Technology** - June 17 - 22 and June 24 - 29 (includes \$150 stipend and a GPS unit for classroom use. Applicant should be a math or science teacher for grades 6-12).

• **Center for Ocean Science Excellence in Education** - June 3-8 (includes \$500 stipend for educator. Applicant should be a science teacher for grades 5-9. *(Also open to educators from FL, LA, MS and TX.)*

✦ **College and Graduate Students** University Programs of the Sea Lab offer a wide range of courses for credit for undergraduates and graduate students during the summer, ranging from Dolphins and Whales to Coastal Birds of Alabama to Hurricanes of the Gulf Coast. Courses in this intense program will be offered from May to August; individualized directed research opportunities with resident faculty are also available. Sessions will run May 14-25; May 28-June 29; and July 2-August 3.

✦ **General Public** Be sure to visit the Estuarium, the aquarium of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, for an exciting look at the animals and habitats of the Mobile Bay estuary. The Estuarium is a cool place to be on a hot summer day! Open seven days a week. For more information: (251) 861-7500 or visit [www.sealabestuarium.org](http://www.sealabestuarium.org)

For more information on any of these programs, go to the Dauphin Island Sea Lab web site at [www.disl.org](http://www.disl.org), or call (251) 861-2141. Costs on all programs are subject to change

# Current events

## June

**Sat., June 9 through Mon., July 9**

**What:** Photographic exhibition at the **5 Rivers Delta Center**, featuring winning images from the 2007 Outdoor Alabama Photo Contest, highlighting Alabama's natural beauty – plants and animals in the photos are all native to the state. Winners represent seven categories, including: scenic/pictorial, birds, mammals, reptiles/amphibians/fish, other wildlife, nature-based recreation, and flora.

**Where:** 5 Rivers Delta Center

**Sponsored by:** ADCNR-Coastal Section

**Contact:** Shonda Bordon, (251) 625-0814

**Tues., June 19 - Wed., June 20  
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**What:** Living Streams Teacher Workshop

**Where:** Weeks Bay Reserve (WBNERR)

**Sponsored by:** WBNERR, Alabama Water Watch, and Coastal Wonders: Camp Beckwith

**Saturday, June 30, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**What:** Volunteer Water Monitoring

**Training:** Water Chemistry and Bacteria Monitoring Workshop

**Where:** Fish River Marina

**Sponsored by:** WBNERR, Alabama Water Watch

**Contact:** Mike Shelton, (251) 928-9792

## Coastal Alabama Clean Water Partnership, Juniper Creek Watershed Project

*By KARA LANKFORD,*

*PROGRAM COORDINATOR, MOBILE BAY NEP*

In a continued effort to determine the source of pathogens in Juniper Creek the Coastal Alabama Clean Water Partnership (CACWP) has partnered with a homeowner who lives on the creek. David Maples, president of the Juniper Creek Property Owners Association, has agreed to monitor rainfall at his home. He will record rainfall data and contact the CACWP whenever large rain events occur. The CACWP has been monitoring the creek, but drought conditions this spring have curtailed monitoring efforts. The CACWP will gather more water quality data when a more normal south Alabama rainfall pattern resumes.



*David Maples monitors rainfall at his home on Juniper Creek for CACWP.*

## July

**Monday, July 18, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

**What:** No Adverse Impact Workshop:  
**New Approaches to Floodplain Management**

**Where:** 5 Rivers Delta Center

**Sponsored by:** WBNERR, SARPC, Gulf Coast RC&D, ADCNR Coastal Section, and Association of State Floodplain Managers

## August

**Saturday, August 25**

**What:** Alabama Water Watch Trainer Refresher Course (Times TBA)

**Where:** Weeks Bay Reserve

**Sponsored by:** WBNERR and Alabama Water Watch

**Contact:** Mike Shelton (251) 928-9702

## September

**Tues. Sept. 4 - Wed. Sept. 5  
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**What:** Wetlands Rapid Assessment Workshop

**Where:** Weeks Bay Reserve

**Sponsored by:** WBNERR and Alabama Water Watch

## Alabama current connection

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The editorial staff reserves the right to edit submissions for content and grammar.

# Alabama current connection

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Dauphin Island, Alabama 36528

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 1226  
Mobile, AL 36601



## Weeks Bay Foundation: A Conservation Success Story

By **WALTER ERNEST**, EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR, WEEKS BAY FOUNDATION

The Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation was incorporated in 1990 as a non-profit organization to support the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Baldwin County. The Foundation supports the Reserve through donations of land and through educational exhibits, public awareness and education programs, water quality monitoring efforts, and by helping provide volunteers.

The Foundation is a strong advocate for the Reserve, raising money to allow the Reserve to develop facilities, including the Boardwalk behind the Interpretive Center and the Kurt G. Wintermeyer Boardwalk at the Pitcher Plant Bog. It funded the specimen collections, including live species and the cabinets in the Interpretive Center. The Foundation also pursues land acquisition activities in the Weeks Bay watershed, and publishes *The Pelican Post* newsletter quarterly.

The Foundation Board of Directors recently voted to change its name to the Weeks

Bay Foundation. The change is to reflect the Foundation's existing watershed approach to conserving ecologically sensitive land.

The Foundation has been involved in land protection since it was first established. The largest land protection success stories would be the acquisition of the Safe Harbor RV Park and Marina in 1997 and the 684-acre Bayou Sara tract in Mobile County. The marina and RV Park were purchased at public auction and later conveyed to the State of Alabama. The Bayou Sara Tract was donated to the Foundation by Dr. Thomas M. Roush and later conveyed to the State of Alabama. The Foundation has also conveyed numerous other properties to the State of Alabama.

The Foundation is a member of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). The LTA promotes voluntary private land conservation that benefits communities and natural systems. The LTA is the national convener, strategist and representative of more than 1,600 land trusts across America. The Foundation is working toward national accreditation as a land trust.

The national accreditation program is a

new program that will roll out in 2008 and be fully functional by 2012.

Some of the requirements are to adopt implementation of the LTA's *Land Trust Standards and Practices*, perform an organization self assessment, conduct an annual audit, and have completed at least two land transactions in the last two years. The Foundation can accept land donations, conservation easements, bargain sales of property, life estates, and fee simple acquisition purchases. The Foundation looks forward to its continued role as the friends group of the Weeks Bay Reserve and its continued work as a land trust in Coastal Alabama. The primary focus area will continue to be the Reserve and the Weeks Bay watershed. To learn more about the Foundation, visit the website at [www.weeksbay.org](http://www.weeksbay.org).

