

# Alabama current connection

## Volunteers Undertake Restoration Projects with Mobile Bay NEP Partners on Little Dauphin Island

By TOM HERDER, MOBILE BAY  
NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

Two restoration projects on Little Dauphin Island (LDI) coordinated by the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) in partnership with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (F&WS) and the Alabama Coastal Foundation (ACF) were recently undertaken with the help of community volunteers. Post-project monitoring indicates that both efforts contributed to restoring compromised habitat and stabilizing this vulnerable barrier island.

LDI is situated north of the eastern end of Dauphin Island (DI) and runs northwest from its eastern end near the DI/Ft. Morgan ferry landing to its western-most point beneath the Gordon Persons (DI) Bridge in Mississippi Sound. It is owned and overseen by the Bon Secour National Wildlife



*With the DI Bridge in the background, some volunteers begin to walk back towards the staging area while others continue tree planting operations.*

Refuge and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (F&WS). Maritime forest on the island provides habitat for neo-tropical migratory birds and nesting area for Snowy Egrets, Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons. A raised oyster shell area on the island's west end provides nesting area for a colony of Least Terns during summer months. In 1998 Hurricane Georges wiped out many of the trees on the island, and Ivan and Katrina further decimated the foliage. Strong storm activity carves a cut through the eastern portion of the island, Pass Drury, which is filled subsequently by the Army Corps of Engineers using dredge material. In addition to wildlife habitat, the island protects the developed northern shore of DI from the impacts of storms and flooding. The two restoration efforts on LDI included an August dune grass planting near Pass Drury and a December tree planting on the north side of the island.



*Patric Harper of the F&WS loads trees onto the boat for transportation to the northern shore of LDI. The planting area is visible in the background.*

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# Coastal Corner

By AMY KING, ADCNR, STATE LANDS DIVISION, COASTAL SECTION

## Alabama Coastal Program Undergoes Routine Evaluation

The Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP), operated by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), State Lands Division, Coastal Section, had its regularly scheduled federal evaluation this past December. Under the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972, Section 312, as amended, all states participating in the Coastal Management Program are subject to an evaluation every three years. Alabama receives funding for the ACAMP through the CZMA and is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The evaluation was conducted by the NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management and is intended to help states improve their Coastal Management Programs

A major part of the evaluation was to assess if the program is continuing the mission of an approved coastal zone management program. Elements of that assessment included determining if the program was playing a leadership role in coastal issues, monitoring the actions of state agencies and local governments, assuring the opportunity for full public participation, addressing coastal

management needs, and adhering to the terms and conditions of financial assistance awards. The evaluation also reviews the manner in which the ACAMP implements federal consistency and determines whether changes have occurred in the approved program during the review period.

During the four-day evaluation process,

the evaluation team reviewed relevant program documents and conducted site visits to interview program staff, federal and state agencies, and local entities. In addition, a public meeting was held to solicit public input on the ACAMP.

Upon completion of the assessment, the evaluation team will prepare a set of findings that identifies ACAMP successes and areas

needing improvement. Recommendations from the findings are used to negotiate future Coastal Zone Management Act financial assistance awards to the state. The final evaluation report is expected to be completed in spring 2008. The ACAMP is a cooperative program between NOAA and is administered by the ADCNR, State Lands Division, Coastal Section in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, local governments, and other partners.

*A major part of the evaluation was to assess if the program is continuing the mission of an approved coastal zone management program.*

## New Reminders for Those with Septic Tanks

If you had a new septic tank installed within the past two years, you will more than likely receive a reminder to have it pumped or serviced within the next year. The Alabama Department of Public Health in Baldwin County and the Mobile County Health Department has developed a voluntary septic tank maintenance reminder program in efforts to keep tanks working in an efficient and healthy manner. These programs also track and monitor onsite sewage disposal systems within their respective counties. In addition to keeping the septic tanks working at their optimum level, the purpose of these programs is to collect an inventory of area onsite sewage disposal systems (OSDS) in the two coastal counties in conjunction with meeting requirements for an approved Alabama Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program.

How does this program work? The county health departments collect Global Positioning System (GPS) readings for all onsite sewage systems that are permitted, installed, inspected, or repaired in their respective counties. Then that data is entered into the existing permit database. Next, the data is used to generate and mail notices for homeowners every three years from the last documented date of septic tank maintenance, installation, or repair.

“These programs provide an accurate insight to what is actually out there from this date forward and will assist in future water quality issues for both ground water and possibly surface water.” says Amy King, Natural Resources Planner for the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), State Lands Division, Coastal Section. “The next phase of the program is to record historical information. Where are the tanks that were installed five, ten, even 15 years ago?”

These programs are sponsored by the Alabama Department of Public Health, Mobile County Health Department and the ADCNR, State Lands Division, Coastal Section.

# Estuary Reflections

DAVID W. YEAGER, DIRECTOR MOBILE BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

## Long Term Monitoring of Fisheries Resources is Critical to Effective Management Strategy

Are our commercially and recreationally important fisheries stocks healthy? This was an important concern raised in a survey regarding indicators of environmental quality by local residents. Two recent analyses of Fisheries Assessment and Monitoring Program (FAMP) data collected over the last 20+ years by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Marine Resources Division as follow up to the Gulf of Mexico Estuarine Inventory (GMEI) are now available to help us answer this question and to target future sampling programs.

In March 2008, Harriet Perry, Director of the Center for Fisheries Research at the University of Southern Mississippi's (USM) Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL), and a team of researchers completed a statistical analysis of the long term FAMP data sets for coastal Alabama and Mississippi through a grant from the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium. The GCRL team included Ralf Reidel (GCRL), Steve Heath (AMRD), and Leslie Hartman (AMRD).

Their analysis of data from 1981 to 2007 focused on selected species (brown shrimp, white shrimp, pink shrimp, blue crab, lesser blue crab, hardhead catfish, Gulf butterfish, white trout, Gulf menhaden, spot and Atlantic croaker). The analysis concluded, "for most species, there was no significant change in status noted during this time frame. However, blue crabs did exhibit a significant downward trend. Declines in abundance of juvenile blue crabs have also been found in Mississippi and Louisiana during the same time frame. The cause of this decline is unknown. Factors that could be responsible for this trend include habitat alteration and loss, climatic change, water quality, and predator-prey interactions. Further research will be necessary to determine the precise cause(s) of blue crab population decreases in the northern Gulf."

The analysis by Perry's USM/GCRL team mirrors concerns regarding Blue Crab declines identified in a previous analysis of Alabama FAMP data by a team led by Dr. John Valentine in 2006. The Valentine team, including Derrick Blackmon and Kevin Kirsch of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, was under contract to the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and funded through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program. However, Perry's analysis examined Mississippi FAMP data and similar sampling data for Louisiana and links similar declines in those states. Both Perry and Valentine also noted two years of very high blue crab abundance in 1984 and 1989. Valentine's analysis concluded that a recent three year (2001-2003) decline in abundance of blue crab in samples "should be of concern and requires follow up to determine if the population has rebounded to previously documented levels of abundance."

In addition to these analyses of the FAMP data sets, the Alabama Marine Resources Division (AMRD) also completed stock assessments on two more species that are important, striped mullet and speckled trout in 2006 and 2007, respectively. According to AMRD Chief Biologist, Steve Heath, the striped mullet assessment indicates, "The current assessment found the stock to be self-sustaining, but impacted by commercial fishing. Concerns for future sustainability prompted the Division to increase the mesh sizes used in the commercial fishery to improve the reproductive capability of the stock." The speckled trout assessment also shows that "this stock is self-sustaining and changes in regulations were not recommended at this time."

These recent assessments and analyses exemplify the kind of data necessary for making good resource management decisions. The question of the health of our fishery stocks is a seemingly simple one but much more difficult to answer. Despite improvements in monitoring capability, the revolution made possible by satellite remote sensing and a myriad of other technological marvels, sampling programs continue to be the stock and trade of fishery population assessments. However fishery-independent sampling programs are labor intensive, difficult or impossible to design for simultaneous sampling of multiple species, costly, and provide many opportunities for gear or other biases. How much data is enough? I don't know the answer to that question, but I can tell you that for my money, we are not there yet.

We are fortunate that there is recognition in Alabama that long-term sampling is a necessity and that programs exist to gather such primary data sets. However, we (as

other states and even federal agencies) are hampered by the availability of additional resources to expand and continue these programs. Sound fishery resource management strategies depend on comprehensive long-term data sets and reliable baselines from which to assess change. So the next time you are tempted to say our conservation agencies have an easy task and that we already have enough data and studies, think again.

*Sound fishery resource management strategies depend on comprehensive long-term data sets and reliable baselines from which to assess change.*

# ADCNR-Marine Resources Division Biological Activities

By CHRIS DENSON, BIOLOGIST IV,  
MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION

The Alabama Marine Resources Division (MRD) continues to monitor Alabama's marine resources through existing fisheries-dependent and independent sampling programs. These programs are designed to collect landings and effort statistics vital to maintaining healthy stocks. Identifying participants using the resources is an essential task to these efforts. Beginning September 1, 2007, anglers in state waters with recreationally caught fish, regardless of harvest area, are required to possess a **recreational fishing license**. This includes individuals using cast nets, gigs, and/or crab traps as well as conventional gear.

Recreational fishing licenses are no longer issued for a year from the date of purchase, but all licenses expire August 31 regardless of purchase date.

The **availability of boater access** remains a high concern for MRD. Renovations were completed to three Baldwin County coastal boat ramps during the past year. At the Cotton Bayou boat ramp, the existing asphalt parking lot was resurfaced and an unpaved extension, created in 2006, was paved using new asphalt. The freshly paved parking lot was striped to allow for maximum parking accommodation. The second ramp receiving attention was the Ft. Morgan boat ramp where the parking area was repaired using gravel, spread over the existing gravel base, to fill in holes and soft spots. In addition to the parking repairs, the boat launch pier was strengthened and made safer for public use. Finally, repairs were conducted at the Pines boat ramp on Fort Morgan; this ramp had been closed since Hurricane Katrina due to safety issues. Renovations included laying asphalt, restoration of one ramp to operational capacity, and construction of a new launching pier. Recent renovations to the Boggy Point ramp in Orange Beach received national recognition by receiving the 2007 annual award for "Outstanding Project - Midsize Access" from SOBA (States Organization for Boating Access).

MRD remains committed to the **management of healthy fishery stocks** which in turn depend on a healthy marine environment.

In an effort to clean up the waters and shorelines, MRD initiated a monofilament recycling program. Four monofilament recycling stations on Dauphin Island were established at the Gulf pier, Dauphin Island Campground, Little Billy Goat Hole and Billy Goat Hole boat ramps. A positive response with this program has been observed; plans are being made to expand coverage to other locations in Mobile and Baldwin counties.

MRD has been given the responsibility of **overseeing a federally funded Emergency Disaster Relief Program (EDRP) for Alabama**. This program was designed to monitor the impacts and recovery of the fishery stocks and marine habitat, oversee the distribution of financial assistance to the commercial and charter fisherman, and assist in the re-establishment of the associated infrastructure post Hurricane Katrina. As per the requirements of this program, financial aid designated for commercial and charter fishermen is being disbursed through the completion of datasheets that provide additional information about their fishing trips that would not be collected through normal data collection activities. Over 9,900 forms from commercial fishermen and 3,500 forms from charter vessels have been returned through December 2007.

In addition to the fishermen assistance portion of the EDRP, **habitat restoration efforts** were initiated. A total of 7,500 cubic yards of cultch material (shell and small rock) was acquired by MRD and planted by local oystermen over 1,735 acres of existing oyster reefs in Heron Bay. Just under 850 cubic yards of large rocks unsuitable to oyster harvesting were removed from Buoy Reef in Mobile Bay by oyster dredgers.

Designated contributions from the Orange Beach Red Snapper Tournament were combined to MRD funds to deploy 415 new concrete and steel pyramid reefs in Alabama's offshore reef areas during the 2007 fiscal year. This cooperative agreement has resulted in the total deployment 866 pyramid reefs. These reef modules, each about ten feet tall and weighing near 5,000 pounds, are covered on each side with perforated steel plate up to one inch thick. The modules were distributed from east to west and shallow to deep, spreading out the fishing effort over the widest possible area.

The effort to create new inshore fishery habitat in south Baldwin County continued. Demolition of the Gulf State Park lodge and hotel facilities provided 10,482 tons of clean concrete rubble which completed the Bayou St. John Reef in Orange Beach. Demolition of the Fowl River Bridge provided enough material to complete approximately 85% of the Ross Point Reef and approximately 70% of the Ono Island Reef in Perdido Bay. Approximately 1,650 tons of concrete rubble was placed on the T.R. "Buddy" Beiser Reef (Upper Wreck Reef) in Mobile Bay.

The **2008 edition of the popular Alabama Marine Information Calendar** was produced. This publication, in its eleventh year of production, is an all-inclusive source for marine fishing info, tidal data, fishing creel limits, license schedules, boating information, and artificial fishing reef coordinates. Over 1,400 fourth-grade students from elementary schools in Mobile and Baldwin counties participated in our fifth annual **Kid's Marine Art Contest**, the purpose of which is to promote an awareness and appreciation of Alabama's coastal resources. The winning selections will be displayed in art museums in both coastal counties in conjunction to the Kid's Marine Calendar.

MRD has completed a **fifth reprinting of the Marine Resources' Kids Activity Book**. This teaching tool is distributed to elementary schools in Alabama's two coastal counties and at outreach activities. In addition, a new kid's marine coloring book targeting kindergarten and first-grade students of Mobile and Baldwin counties was developed by MRD. This new educational resource will be available upon request to kindergarten and first-grade teachers.

All **Divisional data collection programs** (commercial, recreational and fisheries-independent) currently in operation will continue during the next year. Additional programs designed to assist in hurricane recovery efforts are expected to be implemented in various stages. As construction of the new Gulf State Park fishing pier continues, MRD's saltwater pipeline, essential to the production of certain marine species, grows closer to being put back in operation. The upcoming year is anticipated to be an eventful year.

# Flood Plains Workshop Brings the Community Together at the 5 Rivers Center

By TOM HERDER, MOBILE BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM (MBNEP)

On Friday, February 15, over eighty participants met at the 5 Rivers Delta Center to exchange information about issues related to flood plain management in Alabama and neighboring Gulf states. The workshop, *Flooding Along the Gulf Coast – Building a Resilient Alabama*, was conceived by free lance journalist Steve Myers in partnership with the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, funded by the Open Society Institute, and hosted by the Department of Conservation, State Lands Division. Invited experts presented information on issues related to surge modeling, flood zone mapping, economics, and coastal construction to elected officials; state, county, and municipal planners and building officials; agency representatives; academicians; and business people.

NEP Director David Yeager opened the meeting, noting that the rebuilding effort that followed Hurricane Frederic was the beginning of the growth boom that continues today. Mr. Myers, author of a June Press-Register series on recovery efforts in flood zones, flood maps, and insurance, showed a video to provide perspectives of Alabama flood plain residents rebuilding after Katrina. His presentation highlighted the problem of the under-predictions of flooding in current maps.

Dr. Don Resio, the Senior Technologist for the U. S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center and Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory in Vicksburg, described complexities of post-Katrina scientific models currently used to generate predictions for storm surge. Historical data and methods and techniques used for predicting flood events prior to August, 2005 were revealed to be inadequate by that storm. He described the work of the Interagency Performance Evaluation Taskforce to design a new process for determining “inundation probabilities.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) representatives reported

the current status of mapping efforts nationally, in neighboring Mississippi, and in Alabama. Region IV Branch Chief Brad Loar discussed and compared the Mississippi Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFEs), rapidly prepared after Katrina and paid for with federal disaster funds, with their pending Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Their reported timetable for Alabama map revision sets 2009 for the beginning of the project with new maps to be delivered not before 2011. No ABFEs were prepared for Alabama, since no funding has been available.

Representing the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, BankTrust President Terry Harbin described a strategic planning initiative being developed with consultant Michael Gallas. Its goal is to prepare the Mobile Bay community for the pressures and opportunities including resiliency to changes in the coastal environment. He stressed the importance of a “regional framework” to overcome the fragmentation of public, private, and institutional sectors and the importance of marketing our “aggregate resources and people” to compete in a global economy.

Dr. John Lopez, of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, discussed his Multiple Lines of Defense Strategy, including large wetlands tracts to mitigate the effects of

storm surge. He used the experiences of his home state, Louisiana, to illustrate the economic and environmental problems they face not only in their recovery from the impacts of Katrina but in planning for future weather events.

Carl Schneider of the Alabama Independent Insurance Agents Association, provided their perspectives on the problems associated with defined flood zones, wind verses flood events, inadequate engineering/construction. He posed several questions throughout his presentation, and among his recommendations were to build “higher, dryer, stronger, safer, and smarter”.

Answers to Mr. Schneider’s questions were provided by the final speaker, Engineer Chris Jones, a consultant to FEMA and one of the authors of FEMA’s Coastal Construction Manual and the Home Builder’s Guide to Coastal Construction. Mr. Jones presented cost-benefit data which clearly illustrate the terms of damage reduction and lower insurance premiums. He pointed out that the cost of elevating a structure an additional foot represents only half of a percent of total construction costs. His presentation described various hazards inherent in flood zones and appropriate engineering and construction solutions to these threats.



## Announcing The Gulf of Mexico Program Partnership's 2008 Gulf Guardian Awards

The Gulf of Mexico Program is currently soliciting entries for the 2008 Gulf Guardian Awards Program. The entry deadline is May 1, 2008. Winners will be announced in the fall and the Awards Ceremony will be held during the month of December 2008. This is the ninth year for the awards program which was started to honor the businesses, industries, non-profit organizations, government agencies, individuals and partnerships who are striving to make an environmental difference in the Gulf of Mexico.

A first, second, and third place award is given in 7 different categories.

We encourage you to apply for this prestigious award!

Go on-line to the website listed below, complete the application, and e-mail before May 1, 2008 to: [gulf.guardian@epa.gov](mailto:gulf.guardian@epa.gov)

Gulf Guardian Application at <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo>

# Dr. L. Scott Quackenbush Named Executive Director of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab

By LISA YOUNG, DAUPHIN ISLAND SEA LAB

The Board of Directors of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) has named Dr. L. Scott Quackenbush the Executive Director of the Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, the state of Alabama's marine science education and research institution.

Dr. Quackenbush is currently the Director of Humboldt State University's Marine Lab in northern California, where he is also Associate Dean for Marine Science Programs. His previous professional experience includes Chair of the Biological Science Departments at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and Florida International University. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Minnesota, his Master's Degree at the University of West Florida, and his Doctorate at Florida State University.

The DISL was formed in 1971 by the State Legislature to minimize duplication of marine science programs among Alabama's four-year colleges and to promote the study of marine science. There are currently 21 public and private colleges and universities in DISL's consortium.

As Executive Director of the DISL, Dr. Quackenbush will be overseeing numerous educational, research, and outreach programs that serve the state of Alabama, the region, and the nation. The DISL's educational programs include students from Ph.D. to kindergarten level; its research initiatives span the disciplines of paleoecology to oceanography to biogeochemistry, in field sites as near as Mobile Bay to as far away as Antarctica. The DISL also encompasses the Estuarium, a public aquarium that greeted over 66,000 visitors in 2007. The DISL plays a visible role in Alabama's coastal policy as the host of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program.

The Executive Director of the DISL



*Dr. L. Scott Quackenbush, the new Executive Director of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, will replace recently retired Dr. George Crozier. Dr. Quackenbush will begin his tenure in July.*

also serves on the Board of Forever Wild, which provides for the purchase of public recreational lands for general recreation, nature preserves, and state parks. Since its inception in 1992, over 100,000 acres of lands and wetlands have been purchased.

"I am very pleased that the Board of Directors has asked me to become the next Executive Director of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab," Quackenbush said. "[Retired Director] Dr. George Crozier has set an ambitious course for the DISL for the past 30 years, and his accomplishments on behalf of the citizens of the state of Alabama are noteworthy.

"I hope to maintain the programs he has developed, and expand additional opportunities for the faculty, students, and staff that are the heart of the DISL. In particular, I would like to encourage students and faculty from outside Alabama to participate in the research and educational programs at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. By raising the national visibility of the lab, we can recruit new participation that will benefit the lab and its programs.

"The oceans and marine environments have come under increasing pressure from human activities in the past decades, and the Dauphin Island Sea Lab has been at the

forefront of both research and education to help understand these changes. I look forward to a bright future for the Dauphin Island Sea Lab and the participating universities to continue their leadership in these areas for the benefit of Alabama and the nation," he concluded.

Dr. Quackenbush plans to commence work at the DISL in July 2008. Dr. John Dindo is currently serving as Interim Director.

## Stormwater Best Management Practices in Neighborhood – Send Pictures!

By TOM HERDER, MOBILE BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

There are lots of ways to treat stormwater or keep it on your property before it runs off into storm gutters and down the watershed. Rain gardens, rain barrels, retention/infiltration swales, retention ponds, pervious pavement, and wheel tracks all contribute to preventing polluted runoff. All of us can be part of the "pollution solution"!

Provide some credit to those who already are, and help us get the word out and provide ideas. Send pictures of residential stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in your neighborhood, and we'll publish them in the *Current Connection*. E-mail digital photos to [therder@mobilebaynep.com](mailto:therder@mobilebaynep.com), along with addresses or locations of the BMPs and the names of the homeowners or residents (with their permission). We look forward to hearing from you.

# Current events

## April

### Wednesday and Thursday, April 9-10

**What:** **Green Coast Conference** - The conference and expo will feature interactive education sessions on commercial, residential, and public green building. The Green Expo will feature sustainable products and services used in a green building.

**Where:** Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center

**Contact:** info@smartcoast.org or (251) 928-2309

### Saturday, April 19, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**What:** **Discovery Day at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab Open House** at the Sea Lab includes environmentally themed children's activities.

**Where:** Dauphin Island Sea Lab

**Contact:** Lisa Young at 861-7509.

### Saturday, April 19, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

**What:** **Earth Day Mobile Bay 2008** Environmental displays and activities, Science Fair projects, a wide variety of interactive educational opportunities, as well as a live music line-up until 7 p.m.

**Contact:** (251) 947-4121 or

e-mail earthdaymobilebay@yahoo.com.

### Friday, April 25 through Sunday, April 27

**What:** **Weeks Bay Photography Class**

There will be a registration fee for this event

**Where:** Weeks Bay NERR Auditorium

**Contact:** Walter Ernest, IV at (251)990-5004 or L. G. Adams at (251) 928-9792

### Tuesday, April 29

**What:** **Coastal Kids Quiz** - A well-established annual educational event sponsored by the Alabama Coastal Foundation for Baldwin and Mobile County Fifth Graders

**Where:** Daphne United Methodist Church

**Contact:** ACF Director Bethany Kraft, (251) 990-6002

## May

### Saturday, May 10, 8 a.m. - Noon

**What:** **Weeks Bay Area River Cleanup/Renew Our Rivers** - Clean up of rivers and creeks in the watershed of Weeks Bay and the local component of the Alabama Power Renew Our Rivers program. Lunch provided. Come by boat or vehicle.

**Where:** Fish River Marina

**Contact:** Michael Shelton or Eric Brunden

(251) 928-9792

### Tuesday, May 13 - Thursday, May 15 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**What:** **Hydric Soils Indicators Workshop** - Weeks Bay NERR/Grand Bay NERR CTP Workshop on wetland soils and indicators

**Where:** Weeks Bay NERR

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

### Thursday, May 22, 8 a.m. - Noon

**What:** **Wetland Regulation and Compliance Workshop** - Weeks Bay NERR and Alabama Coastal Foundation CTP on wetlands regulation and compliance issues for land use professionals.

**Where:** Fowl River Community Center.

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

### Saturday, May 31, 7 a.m.

**What:** **The Springhill Medical Center Grandman Triathlon** - The area's premier triathlon to benefit Mobile BayKeeper. 1/3 mile swim/16.4 mile bike/3.1 mile run.

**Where:** Fairhope Municipal Pier

**Contact:** Visit [www.thegrandman.com](http://www.thegrandman.com) or call Mobile BayKeeper at 251-433-4229

## June

### Tuesday and Wednesday, June 10 -11 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**What:** **Weeks Bay NERR/Grand Bay NERR CTP and NOAA Coastal Services Center Workshop** on using GIS in coastal management for coastal resource managers. Proficiency with GIS is prerequisite.

**Where:** Jackson County Community College, Gautier, MS

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

### Thursday and Friday, June 12-13 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.

**What:** **Coastal Inundation Mapping GIS Workshop** -Weeks Bay NERR/Grand Bay NERR CTP/NOAA CSC Workshop on using GIS in floodplain and storm impact management for coastal resource managers. Proficiency with GIS is prerequisite.

**Where:** Jackson County Community College, Gautier, MS

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

### Saturday, June 14

**What:** **Dog Paddle** - Annual canoe and kayak race sponsored by the Dog River Clearwater Revival.

**Contact:** Valerie Blankenship, (251) 472-8383

## Alabama current connection

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*Alabama Current Connection* welcomes comments and suggestions from its readers. If you have recommendations for future articles or would like to subscribe, please contact:

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

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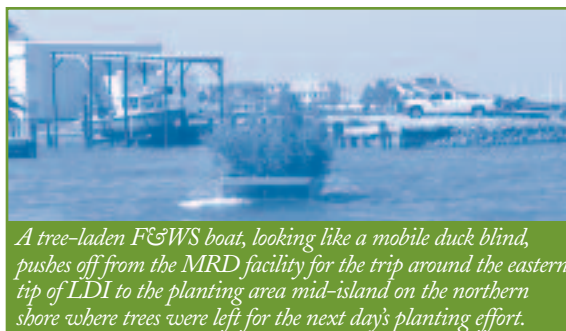


## Volunteers Undertake Restoration Projects with Mobile Bay NEP Partners on Little Dauphin Island

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On Saturday, August 25, twenty-five volunteers from DI participated in planting 1,100 dune plants, including sea oats, panic grass, seashore elder, sea purslane, and beach morning glory. The volunteers dug 18-24 inch holes in the sand and used Terra Sorb gel (a moisture absorbing gel) to help ensure the plants' survival. Four boats – one from the USFWS and three owned by local volunteers – were used to shuttle plants, tools, volunteers, and water to the restoration site, where the planting was accomplished in about two hours. Mr. Leroy Hill allowed the use of his DI home as an overnight storage area for the plants and a staging area for the volunteers.

On Saturday, December 1, 40 volunteers joined staff from the MBNEP, F&WS, and ACF at the Department of Conservation-Marine Resources Division (MRD) facilities on DI to plant 325 trees on the island. Five different tree species - Eastern Baccharis, Wax Myrtle, Yaupon, Sand Live Oak, and Slash Pine - all native to coastal Alabama,



*A tree-laden F&WS boat, looking like a mobile duck blind, pushes off from the MRD facility for the trip around the eastern tip of LDI to the planting area mid-island on the northern shore where trees were left for the next day's planting effort.*

were planted on the island. The project was coordinated by the MBNEP to re-establish habitat, stabilize the island, and preserve its buffering effects. The trees were purchased by MBNEP with funds from the F&WS, who also provided boats, staff, and fuel to transport the trees, tools, and volunteers to the island.

After a 10 a.m. delivery on the previous Friday, six F&WS and MBNEP employees made two trips in three small boats to transport the trees to the planting site on the north side of the island. With each boat carrying 30-80 trees in three gallon containers at idle speed towards Billy Goat Hole, DI residents might

well have wondered about the highly mobile duck blinds.

The staff of volunteers from Mobile and Baldwin Counties, the Town of DI, DI Sea Lab alumni, and Boy Scout Troop 42 from Silverhill who gathered at the MRD docks early Saturday morning received commemorative t-shirts from ACF. They were transported across the shallow channel to the LDI's

southeastern shore using the F&WS boats as well as those provided by volunteers Jay Isacks, Buddy Thompson, and Mike Rogers, whose boats and efforts were also used in the August planting. Volunteers with shovels hiked across the island and west to the area vegetated with the same five species, where the trees were left the previous day. Bon Secour Refuge Manager Jereme Phillips provided planting instructions to the volunteers, who planted the trees and marked each one with colored ribbon. The planting was finished by noon, at which time volunteers hiked back for a group photo and transportation back to the MRD facility.