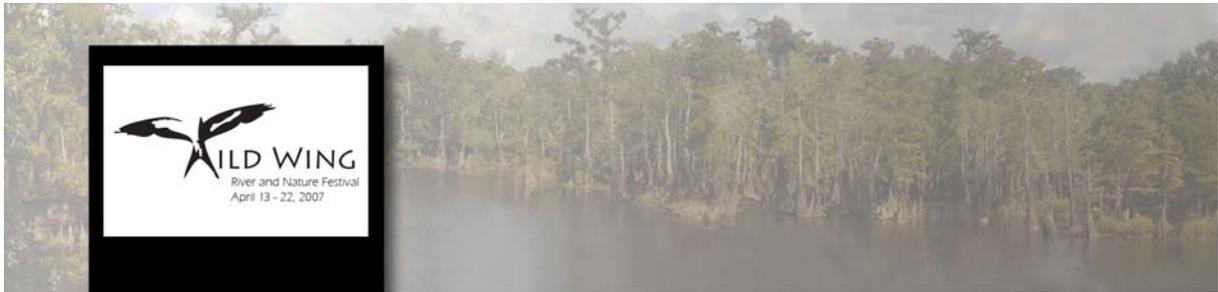


Economic Impact of the 2007 Wild Wing Festival on the Jackson and George Counties of Mississippi



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Executive Summary

The 2007 Wild Wing River and Nature Festival was held in and around the Pascagoula River Corridor during April 13 through 22, 2007. Major findings are summarized below.

Scope of the Festival

1. There were 12 paid events with total capacity of 177, of which 85 tickets were sold to 75 persons.
2. There were 12 free events. An estimated 3,500 persons attended these free events.

Survey of Participants in Paid Events

3. The genders of participants are summarized in Table 2-1. Genders are almost equally split between female (54.1%) and male (45.9%).
4. The predominant age group of participants is 51-65 (56.8%), which is followed by 36-50 (27.0%), 35 or below (10.8%), and 66 or more (5.4%).
5. No less than 83.7 percent of participants had household incomes of \$50,000 or more. Almost half (45.9%) had household incomes of \$100,000 or more.
6. The level of education of participants is very high with 83.8 percent having at least a bachelor's degree. No less than 56.8 percent had a graduate degree, and 27.0% had a bachelor's degree. Only 16.2 percent did not have a bachelor's degree.
7. One important question relates to where the participants reside. Of the 37 who responded, 12 (32.4%) live in Jackson County, 6 (16.2%) live in George County, 5 (13.5%) live in Harrison County, 7 (18.9%) live in other Mississippi, and another 7 (18.9%) live in other places such as Alabama (4), Wisconsin (1), Canada (1), and United Kingdom (1).
8. Most important sources of information for participants of paid events are, in order, friends and relatives (33.3%), Internet/websites (29.6%), and magazine/newspaper (14.8%). For those who came mainly for the Festival rather than happened to be here, the sources of information are, in order, Internet/website (35.7%), friends and relatives (28.6%), magazine/newspaper (14.3%) and brochures (14.3%).
9. The quality and expertise of guides and presenters, and the diversity of birds and wildlife species are either important or very important, while the number and types of festival activities and the reputation of the festival are not as important as the

other two. What the responses indicate is that it is important to select qualified guides and presenters and possibly that organizers may try to select sites that show a greater diversity of birds and wildlife species.

10. Two-thirds of all participants indicated that they would plan to participate in the next year's Festival or visit the area for bird-watching or other nature-based activities. Almost all (94.6%) said that they would recommend the Wild Wing Festival to others.

Survey of Participants in Free Events

11. Car tag counts indicate that there were large numbers of out-of-state car tags (13.1%) and out-of-town car tags in Mississippi (24.2%).
12. Unlike visitors to paid events who selected friends/relatives and Internet/website, visitors to free events selected friends/relatives and magazine/newspaper. In other words, magazine/newspaper replaced Internet/website as one of two most important sources of information. Other sources that these visitors to free events relied on are brochures and signs/street signs.

Direct Economic Impact

13. Economic impact arises from expenditures in the local economy that would not have been made without the Festival events. There are three sources of these expenditures. One is the amount of expenditures made by out-of-town visitors to all paid events, and the other is the amount of expenditures made by out-of-town visitors to all free events, and the third is the operating budget for the Festival that would not have been spent without the Festival.
14. Total direct economic impact of out-of-town participants to paid events on the local economy is \$3,254. Note that expenditures made by local participants are not included because they represent transfer expenditures, meaning that they could have been spent locally even without the Festival.
15. Total direct economic impact of out-of-town participants to free events on the local economy is \$44,066. Note that expenditures made by local participants are not included because they represent transfer expenditures, meaning that they could have been spent locally even without the Festival.
16. Total operating budget for the Festival is \$56,285
17. The total direct expenditures impact of the 2007 Wild Wing Festival is \$103,605.

Total Economic Impact

18. Total economic impact is obtained by multiplying direct impact by multipliers that are developed specifically for Jackson County, Mississippi.
19. The total expenditures impact of the 2007 Wild Wing Festival is \$142,664. These expenditures created direct and indirect employment in the area that is equivalent to seven (7) jobs during the Festival period.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 1

Section:

1.	Introduction	6
	The Wild Wing River and Nature Festival	6
	Scope of the Festival	8
2.	Survey of Participants in Paid Events	10
	Profiles of Participants	10
	Place of Residence	12
	Source of Information	13
	Trip Motivators	14
	Future Participation	15
	Out of Town Visitors Only	16
	Any Suggestions	18
3.	Survey of Participants in Free Events	19
	Car Tag Counts	19
	Primary Residence	19
	Reasons for Visiting the Area	21
	Information on Staying in the Area	21
	Source of Information	24
	Expenditures by Participants of Free Events	26
	Any Suggestions	27
4.	Estimation of Economic Impact	28
	Direct Expenditures by Out-of-Town Visitors to Paid Events	28
	Direct Expenditures by Out-of-Town Visitors to Free Events	28
	Operating Budget	29
	Total Economic Impact	29
	Epilogue	31

List of Tables

1-1.	List of Paid Events	8
1-2.	List of Free Events	9
1-3.	Estimates of Participants to Free Events	9
2-1.	Gender of Participants	10
2-2.	Age Group of Participants	10

2-3.	Annual Household Income – All Participants	11
2-4.	Annual Household Income – Those Who Came for the Festival	11
2-5.	Highest Level of Education	11
2-6.	Are You With	12
2-7.	Are You With: Those Who Came for the Festival	12
2-8.	Place of Primary Residence	13
2-9.	Source of Information	14
2-10.	Source of Information: Those Who Came for the Festival	14
2-11.	Trip Motivators	15
2-12.	Trip Motivators: Those Who Came for the Festival	15
2-13.	Past and Future Participation in the Wild Wing Festival	16
2-14.	Past and Future Participation in the Wild Wing Festival - Those Who Came for the Festival	16
2-15.	What is the primary reason for your visit to the WWRN Festival?	17
2-16.	How Long to Stay in Jackson or George County	17
2-17.	Where to Stay	17
2-18.	County to Stay in	18
2-19.	Expenditures per Person/Couple	18
3-1.	Summary of Tag Counts of Cars Parked at the Event Site	19
3-2.	Residence of Visitors to Free Events	20
3-3.	Residence of Visitors: Those Who Came to Attend the Festival	20
3-4.	Those Attended Paid Events	21
3-5.	Primary Reason for Visit	21
3-6.	Length of Stay in Jackson or George County	22
3-7.	Length of Stay in Jackson or George County: Those Who Came to Attend Festival Events	22
3-8.	Place of Stay	22
3-9.	Place of Stay: Those Who Came to Attend Festival Events	23
3-10.	County to Stay In	23
3-11.	County to Stay In: Those Who Came to Attend Festival Events	23
3-12.	Number in Your Party	24
3-13.	Number in Your Party: Those Who Came to Attend Festival Events	24
3-14.	Source of Information	25
3-15.	Source of Information: Those Who Came to Attend Festival Events	26
3-16.	Expenditures per Party during Stay	26
3-17.	Expenditures per Party during Stay: Those Who Came for the Festival	27
4-1.	Total Operating Budget for the Festival	29
4-2.	Total Direct Expenditures Impact	29
4-3.	RIMS II Multipliers for Jackson County	30
4-4.	Total Expenditures and Employment Impact	31

Section 1

Introduction

Hosted by the Institute for Compatible Development and the Pascagoula River Audubon Center, the 5th Annual Wild Wing River and Nature Festival was held in and around the Pascagoula River Corridor during April 13 through 22, 2007. The main objective of this report is to estimate economic impact of the Festival on the local economy. Included also in this report is the review of surveys of participants that can be informative to planning future festivals. This report will proceed, first, to introducing the Festival itself.

The Wild Wing River and Nature Festival

Back in 2003, the first annual Migration Discovery Festival was held, focusing on the wealth of natural resources along the Pascagoula River, including migratory birds and fishes. Since that time, the event has grown and a broad collaboration has been established to host the annual festival. In the spring of 2007, the Institute for Compatible Development with city, county and private partners, hosted the 5th annual natural heritage festival: Wild Wing River and Nature Festival – April 13 – 22, 2007. The week-long event featured community celebrations in each of the five cities as well as ticketed ecotour events offered for the first time highlighting over 170,000 acres of public natural lands in the Pascagoula River Corridor in George and Jackson Counties.

According to the World Tourism Organization, the most rapidly growing segment of the tourism market is nature-based tourism; most tourists express an interest in natural, historic and cultural sites (Travel Industry Association). The growth of nature-based tourism not only increases incomes but is also compatible with the long-term conservation of natural and cultural resources of the State of Mississippi. Such preservation and development of natural and cultural attractions in turn enhances the quality of life and the appeal of location for industries with higher-income employees.

Collaborators hosting the Wild Wing River and Nature Festival understand the potential economic and community benefits of nature-based tourism and the importance of an annual event from which to build a regional marketing base. Over time, successful heritage festivals have brought hundreds of thousands of tourism dollars to local economies. South Mississippi is an undiscovered market for major nature-tourism events and the Institute for Compatible Development along with partners is delighted to selectively market Mississippi's undiscovered gem, the Pascagoula River!

The mission of the Institute for Compatible Development (ICD) is “to foster the advancement of innovative solutions in the field of compatible development by serving as a convening authority for collaboration and problem-solving in the George and Jackson County area”. Recognizing that leadership is essential to creating a successful, annual, regional festival, the ICD pledges the umbrella of its mission, the support of its board and

the venue of the Scruggs Center in Moss Point as the “home” of Wild Wing – River and Nature Festival. (www.ecologic-restoration.com)

Sponsors and partners of the 2007 Wild Wing River and Nature Festival are listed below.

Sponsors

Jackson County Board of Supervisors
Sun Herald
M&M Bank
MS-AL SeaGrant Consortium
Chevron Pascagoula Refinery
Eco-Logic Restoration Services
Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area
US Fish & Wildlife Service
Mississippi Power
Compton Engineering
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce
Gulf Hills Hotel & Conference Center
AT&T BellSouth
Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain

Partners

George County Chamber of Commerce
JL Scott Marine Education Center
Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce
The Nature Conservancy
Jackson County Chamber of Commerce
Gulf Hills Hotel & Conference Center
City of Gautier
McCoy’s River & Marsh Tours
City of Lucedale
Eco-Tours of South Mississippi
City of Moss Point
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
City of Ocean Springs
Gulf Islands National Seashore
City of Pascagoula
Mississippi Museum of Natural Science
Moss Point Oaks Bed & Breakfast
DeSoto National Forest
Mississippi Coast Audubon Society
Mississippi Coastal Preserves
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Pascagoula River Wildlife Management Areas

Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge
Pascagoula River Basin Alliance
Mississippi Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge
Walter Anderson Museum of Art

Scope of the Festival

The Festival was organized as two broad groups of activities: paid events and free events. The list of paid events is summarized in Table 1-1. The table shows not only the list of events, but also the dates, maximum capacity and the number of actual tickets sold for each event.

Table 1-1. List of Paid Events

Events	Date	Maximum	Tickets Sold
Sunset Dinner Cruise on the Escatawpa River	13 (Fri)	20	7
Escatawpa Canoe/Kayak Tour*	14 (Sat)	12*	6*
Horn Island Naturalist and Birding Tour	17 (Tue)	20	8
Davis Bayou – Triton	18 (Wed)	20	20
Creole Bayou Heritage Tour	18 (Wed)	6	5
Birding in the Ocean Springs Greenway	18 (Wed)	12	3
Birdathon	18 (Wed)	16	1
Birding the Grand Battures	19 (Thu)	15	10
Botanical Walk with Dr. Robert Mohlenbrock	19 (Thu)	15	8
Davis Bayou Kayaking Tour	20 (Fri)	20	5
BirdSong Identification Field Trip	21 (Sat)	15	9
Creole Bayou Heritage Tour	22 (Sun)	6	3
Total		177	85
Persons Participated**			75**

*Rescheduled to June.

**Ten tickets of total 85 are purchased by participants of other PAID events.

The total capacity was 177, and the total number of tickets sold was 85. Because of multiple purchases by the same person, the number of persons, i.e., the headcount, who participated in the paid events was 75.

In addition to the paid events, which are summarized in Table 1-1, there were numerous free events that were hold as part of the Festival activities. The list of free events is summarized in Table 1-2 below. Table 1-2 also indicates the dates of the free events.

Table 1-2. List of Free Events

Date	Event
14 (Sat)	Gautier Day in the Park, Gautier City Park
14 (Sat)	Moss Point Waterfront Market
17 (Thu)	Pascagoula – Portrait of a River
20 (Fri)	Singing River: Rhythms of Nature
20 (Fri)	BirdSong Identification, Lucedale Fine Arts Building
20 (Fri)	Moss Point Rhythms on the River
21 (Sat)	Lucedale Greenway Nature Walk
21 (Sat)	Earth Day Celebration at Gulf Islands National Seashore
21 (Sat)	Birding at Gulf Islands National Seashore
21 (Sat)	Audubon Family Night on the Pascagoula River
22 (Sun)	Wild Wing Bird Watch - Pascagoula River Audubon Center
22 (Sun)	Earth Day Ecumenical Service at Twelve Oaks Park

It is difficult to estimate the number of participants in free events mainly because visitors are in and out all the time. Estimates are made, however, for selected free events as summarized in Table 1-3. Since many, if not most, participants attended more than one event, total number of participants to all free events may be approximated to be 3,500, same as those who attended the Ocean Springs Earth Day.

Table 1-3. Estimates of Participants to Free Events

Ocean Springs Earth Day	3,500
Gautier	700
Lucedale Greenway	75
Pascagoula	15

Section 2

Survey of Participants in Paid Events

This section summarizes surveys of participants in all paid events. All tables are organized in two ways. One is for all participants, and the other is only for those who came mainly to participate in the Festival. This distinction is made because any estimation of net economic impact should be limited to those who are visiting the area because of the Festival. If someone, who is already in the area for other reasons, participates in the Festival, the local economy would be feeling the economic impact of the person with or without the Festival.

Profiles of Participants

The genders of participants are summarized in Table 2-1. Genders are almost equally split between female (54.1%) and male (45.9%). Among those who came to the area mainly to attend the Festival, the gender split was 4 females and 5 males.

Table 2-1. Gender of Participants

	Jackson/ George	Others	Total
Female	10	10	20 (54.1%)
Male	8	9	17 (45.9%)

The predominant age group of participants, summarized in Table 2-2, is 51-65 (56.8%), which is followed by 36-50 (27.0%), 35 or below (10.8%), and 66 or more (5.4%). Among those who came to the area mainly to attend the Festival, the age profile is quite similar in that there were 5 in 51-65, 3 in 36-50, and 1 in 66 or more category with none in 35 or below.

Table 2-2. Age Group of Participants

	Jackson/ George	Others	Total
35 or below	2	2	4 (10.8%)
36-50	2	8	10 (27.0%)
51-65	13	8	21 (56.8%)
66 or more	1	1	2 (5.4%)

The levels of household income of participants are summarized in Table 2-3. No less than 83.7 percent of participants had household incomes of \$50,000 or more. Almost half (45.9%) had household incomes of \$100,000 or more. Among those who came to the area mainly to attend the Festival shown in Table 2-4, the income level is indicated to be lower.

Table 2-3. Annual Household Income – All Participants

	Jackson/ George	Others	Total
less than \$25,000	0	2	2 (5.4%)
\$25,000 - \$49,999	1	3	4 (10.8%)
\$50,000 - \$74,999	4	4	8 (21.6%)
\$75,000 - \$99,999	5	1	6 (16.2%)
\$100,000 or more	8	9	17 (45.9%)

Table 2-4. Annual Household Income – Those Who Came for the Festival

less than \$25,000	2 (22.2%)
\$25,000 - \$49,999	3 (33.3%)
\$50,000 - \$74,999	2 (22.2%)
\$75,000 - \$99,999	0 (0.0%)
\$100,000 or more	2 (22.2%)
total	9

The level of education, summarized in Table 2-5, of participants is very high with 83.8 percent having at least a bachelor’s degree. No less than 56.8 percent had a graduate degree, and 27.0% had a bachelor’s degree. Only 16.2 percent did not have a bachelor’s degree. Among those who came to the area mainly to attend the Festival, all nine (9) had a graduate degree. Those who came to the area mainly to attend the Festival may not be the richest, but most educated.

Table 2-5. Highest Level of Education

	Jackson/ George	Others	Total
High school or GED	1	1	2 (5.4%)
Associate degree	2	2	4 (10.8%)
Bachelor’s degree	7	3	10 (27.0%)
Graduate degree	8	13	21 (56.8%)

Summarized in Table 2-6 are the findings on whether participants came alone or as a group. The numbers are almost equally split among spouse/companion, group, and alone. Among those who came to the area mainly to attend the Festival, however, only one was part of a group, 5 were with spouse or companion, and 3 came alone as shown in Table 2-7.

Table 2-6. Are You With

Your spouse or companion	6 (33.3%)
A group	7 (38.9%)
None, I am alone.	5 (27.8%)
total	18

Table 2-7. Are You With: Those Who Came for the Festival

Your spouse or companion	5
A group	1
None, I am alone.	3

Place of Residence

One important question relates to where the participants reside. Findings on primary residence are summarized in Table 2-8.

Of the 37 who responded, 12 (32.4%) live in Jackson County, 6 (16.2%) live in George County, 5 (13.5%) live in Harrison County, 7 (18.9%) live in other Mississippi, and another 7 (18.9%) live in other places such as Alabama (4), Wisconsin (1), Canada (1), and United Kingdom (1). Among those nine who came to the area mainly to attend the Festival, five were from Mississippi other than Jackson, George, and Harrison Counties, and four were from outside Mississippi, i.e., 3 from Alabama and 1 from Wisconsin.

Table 2-8. Place of Primary Residence

	Jackson/ George	Others	Total
Jackson County MS	12	0	12 (32.4%)
George County MS	6	0	6 (16.2%)
Harrison County MS	0	5	5 (13.5%)
Other Mississippi	0	7	7 (18.9%)
Other states	0	7	7 (18.9%)
total			37
Others in Detail:			
Alabama Baldwin			3
Alabama Mobile			1
MS Hinds			2
MS Stone			1
Wisconsin Dane			1
Canada			1
UK			1

Source of Information

One of the important questions asked visitors was where they obtained the information about the Festival: “What information sources did you use in deciding to attend WWRN Festival? (check all that apply)” .

The most important sources of information are, in order, friends and relatives (33.3%), Internet/websites (29.6%), and magazine/newspaper (14.8%) as shown in Table 2-9. For those who came mainly for the Festival in Table 2-10, the sources of information are, in order, Internet/website (35.7%), friends and relatives (28.6%), magazine/newspaper (14.3%) and brochures (14.3%).

Due to the small size of samples, the order may not be as important as the sources they listed. The three primary sources are: Internet/website, friends/relatives, and magazine newspaper.

Table 2-9. Source of Information

Source	Jackson/ George	Others	Total
Friends/relatives	10	8	18 (33.3%)
Brochures	3	2	5 (9.3%)
Internet/website	9	7	16 (29.6%)
Welcome center	0	0	0 (0.0%)
Magazine/newspaper	5	3	8 (14.8%)
Other (please specify)	4	3	7 (13.0%)
total	31	23	54
Other Sources in Detail:			
Employers	2	0	2
Company trip	0	1	1
Triton	0	1	1
email	0	1	1
TV WLOX	1	0	1
Mark LaSalle	1	0	1

Table 2-10. Source of Information: Those Who Came for the Festival

Friends/relatives	4 (28.6%)
Brochures	2 (14.3%)
Internet/website	5 (35.7%)
Welcome center	0 (0.0%)
Magazine/newspaper	2 (14.3%)
Other (please specify)	1 (0.7%)
total	14
Other Sources in Detail:	
email	1

Trip Motivators

Another important question relates to what motivates them to participate in the Festival activities: “Please check one of the three for the following trip motivator questions” In Table 2-11, figures in the parentheses indicate where they live. The first figure in the parentheses is the number of respondents who live in Jackson or George County, while the second figure is the number of respondents who live in other areas.

Messages in Table 2-11 and Table 2-12 seem to be clear in that the quality and expertise of guides and presenters, and the diversity of birds and wildlife species are either important or very important, while the number and types of festival activities and the reputation of the festival are not as important as the other two. What the responses indicate is that it is important to select qualified guides and presenters and possibly that organizers may try to select sites that show a greater diversity of birds and wildlife species.

Table 2-11. Trip Motivators

	Not important	Important	Very important
Quality & expertise of guides and presenters	1 (0, 1)	10 (4, 6)	24 (12, 12)
Diversity of birds & wildlife species	0 (0, 0)	18 (11, 7)	16 (7, 9)
Number & types of the Festival activities	8 (4, 4)	18 (8, 10)	4 (3, 1)
Reputation of the Festival	11 (5, 6)	16 (8, 8)	3 (2, 1)

First figures in the parentheses are those for Jackson and George Counties, and second figures in the parentheses are those for other places..

Table 2-12. Trip Motivators: Those Who Came for the Festival

	Not important	Important	Very important
Quality & expertise of guides and presenters	0	2	7
Diversity of birds & wildlife species	0	2	6
Number & types of the Festival activities	3	4	0
Reputation of the Festival	5	2	0

Future Participation

An interesting question was whether this year's participants would be willing to participate in future festivals. The findings are summarized for all participants in Table 2-13 and for those who came mainly for the Festival in Table 2-14.

As shown in Table 2-13, about one out of five (21.6%) attended past Wild Wing Festivals, while two-thirds of all participants indicated that they would plan to participate in the next year's Festival or visit the area for bird-watching or other nature-based activities. Almost all (94.6%) said that they would recommend the Wild Wing Festival to others. The percentages are similar among those who came mainly for the Festival.

It may be noted that the number of participants who said they would plan to attend the next year's Festival is two out of three, or two-thirds of all participants. The reason why this percentage is not any higher may be that they enjoyed, but they may want to move on to others that they have not seen.

Table 2-13. Past and Future Participation in the Wild Wing Festival

	Jackson/ George	Others	Total
I attended the WWRN Festival in the past.	7	1	8 (21.6%)*
I plan to attend the next year's WWRN Festival.	17	7	24 (64.9%)*
I plan to return to the area for bird watching or other nature-based activities within the next 12 months.	13	12	25 (67.6%)*
I will definitely recommend WWRN Festival to others.	18	17	35 (94.6%)*

*Percentages are in relation to total responses of 37. Participants are allowed to answer all that apply.

Table 2-14. Past and Future Participation in the Wild Wing Festival:
Those Who Came for the Festival

I attended the WWRN Festival in the past.	1 (11.1%)*
I plan to attend the next year's WWRN Festival.	6 (66.7%)*
I plan to return to the area for bird watching or other nature-based activities within the next 12 months.	6 (66.7%)*
I will definitely recommend WWRN Festival to others.	8 (88.9%)*

*Percentages are in relation to total 9.

Out of Town Visitors Only

Questions in this sub-section are asked only to those who reside outside Jackson and George Counties.

The first question relates to why they came to the area. As indicated in Table 2-15, nine of total 17 (52.9%) indicated that they came to attend the Wild Wing Festival, five (29.4%) came to attend business or convention, two (11.8%) came for vacation/pleasure trip, and one (5.9%) came to visit friends and relatives.

Table 2-15. What is the primary reason for your visit to the WWRN Festival?

To attend WWRN Festival	9 (52.9%)
To visit friends/relatives	1 (5.9%)
For vacation/pleasure trip	2 (11.8%)
Business or convention	5 (29.4%)
total	17

Table 2-16 indicates how long they are staying in the area, while Table 2-17 indicates where they are staying. Table 2-18 indicates the county they are staying in. It is not clear what these tables indicate because the small number of samples.

Table 2-16. How Long to Stay in Jackson or George County

	All Participants	Those Who Came to Attend the Festival
Day-trip only	9	4
1 night	0	0
2 nights	3	2
3 nights	4	3
4 nights	0	0
5 nights	0	0
6 nights	1	0
7 or more nights	0	0

Table 2-17. Where to Stay

	All Participants	Those Who Came to Attend the Festival
Bed & breakfast	0	0
Rental	0	0
Friends & relatives	0	0
Campground RV	0	0
Hotel or motel	9 (56.3%)	5
None – only a day outing	7 (43.7%)	3
total	16	8

Table 2-18. County to Stay in

	All Participants	Those Who Came to Attend the Festival
Jackson County	5 (55.6%)	4
George County	1 (11.1%)	1
Other	3 (33.3%)	0
total	9	5

Importantly for impact estimation, out-of-town participants are requested to make best guesses of how much they will be spending on the selected items during their entire stay for the Wild Wing Festival. If expenses are combined with a spouse or companion, participants are asked to write the total amount for the couple in only one questionnaire, not in both questionnaires that all filled out. Results are summarized in Table 2-19.

Table 2-19. Expenditures per Person/Couple

	All Participants	Those Who Came to Attend the Festival
Lodging	\$81.25	\$108.33
Meals & drink	\$70.63	\$ 94.17
General shopping including souvenirs	\$12.13	\$ 16.17
Automobile – gasoline, repair, parking, etc.	\$30.00	\$ 35.00
Any other big ticket item	\$13.13	\$ 17.50
total		\$271.17

Any Suggestions

Responses to the question of “Any suggestions to make your visit to the Festival more pleasant?” are copied below:

- (a) Great trip
- (b) Excellent experience – would be nice (on one hand) if other Alabamians knew about this event but (on the other hand) more people knowing/attending may have negative effects in terms of logistics, noise, craziness, etc.
- (c) Motivation to get a new boat and enjoy what great natural resources we have here on the Gulf Coast. I live in Jackson Co. and enjoyed the Horn Island Trip.
- (d) Photographer guided tour
- (e) More advertisements – paper, radio...
- (f) What a wonderful trip! The knowledge of the group was great! Thank you!

Section 3

Survey of Participants in Free Events

When out-of-town visitors attend free events, they are likely to spend money on meals, transportation, and possibly others. Visitors to free events, therefore, are surveyed and the results are summarized in this section. Note that the questionnaire has been completed only for those who said they came from areas outside Jackson and George County with the exception of car tag counts shown in Table 3-1.

Car Tag Counts

Car tag counts are made at three different locations: Gautier Park, Lucedale, and the Earth Day activities in Ocean Springs. Figures in Table 3-1 are the sums of car tag counts at different times of the particular location and thus do not represent the total number of cars visited the places. It is interesting to note that there were large numbers of out-of-state car tags (13.1%) and out-of-town car tags in Mississippi (24.2%).

Table 3-1. Summary of Tag Counts of Cars Parked at the Event Site

	Gautier Park	Lucedale	Earth Day	Total	Percent
Number of cars with Jackson County tag:	134	4	276	414	57.8%
Number of cars with George County tag:	0	16	19	35	4.9%
Number of cars with other Mississippi tag:	74	12	87	173	24.2%
Number of cars with tags of other states:	36	10	48	94	13.1%
Total number of cars surveyed:	244	42	430	716	100.0%

Primary Residence

One of the questions asked to visitors of the free events was where they came from: “What is the place of your primary residence?”. The findings are summarized in Table 3-2. Among 67 visitors who answered the question, 67.2 percent said they lived in Mississippi, while a relatively large 32.8 percent said they lived outside Mississippi. These outside places include 10 states and Washington, D.C. They may not have come to attend the Festival, but it indicates many out-of-town visitors roaming the area.

Table 3-2. Residence of Visitors to Free Events

Mississippi	45 (67.2%)
Others	22 (32.8%)
total	67
Others in Detail:	
Alabama	Mobile 2
	Escambia 1
	Unspecified 2
District of Columbia	1
Florida	Escambia 4
Wisconsin	1
Iowa	1
Louisiana	Unspecified 3
Minnesota	Dakota 1
	Olmstead 1
Nevada	Las Vegas 1
New Mexico	Unspecified 1
New York	1
Pennsylvania	Erie 1
Unspecified	1

Among those 44 who indicated that they came to see the Festival events summarized in Table 3-3, 81.2 percent lived in Mississippi and 18.2 percent lived outside Mississippi. These outside places were mostly Alabama.

Table 3-3. Residence of Visitors: Those Who Came to Attend the Festival

Mississippi	36 (81.8%)
Others	8 (18.2%)
total	44
Others in Detail:	
Alabama	Mobile 2
	Escambia 1
	Unspecified 2
Louisiana	Unspecified 3
Minnesota	Dakota 1
Nevada	Las Vegas 1
Pennsylvania	Erie 1

Reasons for Visiting the Area

Virtually all participants of free events did not participate in paid events as indicated in Table 3-4. The sole person who attended a paid event came to the area to participate in the Festival.

Table 3-4. Those Attended Paid Events

	Mississippi	Other States	Total
Yes	1	0	1 (1.5%)
No	44	22	66 (98.5%)
total			67*

*There were eight that did not identify place of residence

When visitors were asked what was the primary reason for their visit to the area, 63.8 percent said they came to attend the Festival event. The answers may be biased in that questions were asked to those who were attending the event. About 24.6 percent said they were visiting friends and relatives, while others said they were here for business or convention (7.2 percent) and for vacation or pleasure trip (4.3 percent). Results are summarized in Table 3-5.

Table 3-5. Primary Reason for Visit

	Mississippi	Other States	Total
To attend this Festival event	36	8	44 (63.8%)
To visit friends/relatives	5	12	17 (24.6%)
For vacation/pleasure trip	3	0	3 (4.3%)
Business or convention	2	3	5 (7.2%)
total			69

Information on Staying in the Area

Table 3-6 summarizes the number of days that visitors said they planned to stay in Jackson or George County: “How long do you plan to stay in Jackson or George County, Mississippi?” Perhaps more interesting is Table 3-7 that summarizes responses to the same question, but only by those who indicated that they came to the area to attend Festival events. Among these visitors who came mainly to attend Festival events, 76.2 percent said

they were day trippers, 7.1 percent said they were staying one night, and 16.7 percent said they were staying 2 nights in the area.

Table 3-6. Length of Stay in Jackson or George County

	Mississippi	Other States	Total
Day-trip only	33	6	39 (60.9%)
1 night	4	1	5 (7.8%)
2 or more nights	5	15	20 (31.3%)
total			64

Table 3-7. Length of Stay in Jackson or George County: Those Who Came to Attend Festival Events

	Mississippi	Others	Total
Day-trip only	28	4	32 (76.2%)
1 night	3	0	3 (7.1%)
2 or more nights	3	4	7 (16.7%)
total			42

Regarding the places of stay as summarized in Table 3-8, most visitors stayed with friends and relatives. Only one out of 32 selected bed and breakfast and another selected hotel or motel. Among these visitors who came mainly to attend Festival events as shown in Table 3-9, only one selected bed and breakfast and none selected hotel or motel.

Table 3-8. Place of Stay

	Mississippi	Other States	Total
Bed & breakfast	1	0	1
Rental	4	0	4
Friends & relatives	8	16	24
Campground RV	1	1	2
Hotel or motel	1	0	1
None of these – only a day outing	27	5	32

Table 3-9. Place of Stay: Those Who Came to Attend Festival Events

	Mississippi	Others	Total
Bed & breakfast	1	0	1
Rental	4	0	4
Friends & relatives	4	5	9
Campground RV	0	0	0
Hotel or motel	0	0	0
None – only a day outing	25	3	28

It is interesting to see that a fairly large percentage of visitors (19.4%) indicated that they were staying outside Jackson or George County as shown in Table 3-10. Among those who came to attend Festival events in Table 3-11, 27.8 percent (5 out of 18) indicated that they were staying outside Jackson or George County.

Table 3-10. County to Stay In

	Mississippi	Other States	Total
Jackson County	11	16	27 (75.0%)
George County	2	0	2 (5.6%)
Other	3	4	7 (19.4%)
total			36

Table 3-11: County to Stay In: Those Who Came to Attend Festival Events

	Mississippi	Others	Total
Jackson County	8	5	13
George County	0	0	0
Other	3	2	5

It may be important to note that those who come to free events rarely come alone. Only 11 out of 66 (i.e., 16.7%) who responded said they came alone as indicated in Table 3-12. Among those who came to attend Festival events in Table 3-13, only 5 out of 44 (i.e., 11.4%) said they came alone.

Table 3-12. Number in Your Party

	Mississippi	Other States	Total
I am alone	5	6	11
2	11	9	20
3	10	2	12
4	7	3	10
5 or more	11	2	13
total			66

Table 3-13. Number in Your Party: Those Who Came to Attend Festival Events

	Mississippi	Others	Total
I am alone	3	2	5
2	9	3	12
3	9	0	9
4	6	2	8
5 or more	9	1	10
total			44

Source of Information

One of the important questions relates to where visitors first heard of Festival events: “What information sources did you use in attending this event: (Check all that apply)”. Unlike visitors to paid events who selected friends/relatives and Internet/website, visitors to free events selected friends/relatives and magazine/newspaper as indicated in Table 3-14. In other words, magazine/newspaper replaced Internet/website as one of two most important sources of information. Other sources that these visitors to free events relied on are brochures and signs/street signs. Among those who came to attend Festival events in Table 3-15, the result is similar in that magazine/newspaper and friends/relatives are the two most important sources of information.

Table 3-14. Source of Information

Source	Mississippi	Other States	Total
Friends/relatives	12	7	19 (23.8%)
Brochures	4	5	9 (11.3%)
Internet/website	4	1	5 (6.3%)
Welcome center	4	0	4 (5.0%)
Magazine/newspaper	15	3	18 (22.5%)
Others	18	7	25 (31.3%)
total			80

Others in Detail

Source	Mississippi	Other States	Total
news media	3	0	3
signs/street signs	7	1	8
personal contact	2	4	6
email	2	0	2
school/class	2	1	3
mailing	2	0	2

Table 3-15. Source of Information: Those Who Came to Attend Festival Events

	Mississippi	Others	Total
Friends/relatives	9	3	12 (24.0%)
Brochures	2	2	4 (0.8%)
Internet/website	2	0	2 (0.4%)
Welcome center	1	0	1 (0.2%)
Magazine/newspaper	14	0	14 (28%)
Others	14	3	17 (34%)
total			50

Others in Detail

	Mississippi	Others	Total
news media	3	0	3
signs/street signs	2	1	3
personal contact	2	1	3
email	2	0	2
school/class	1	1	2
mailing	2	0	2

\ Expenditures by Participants of Free Events

Participants were asked to make their best guess of how much their party will be spending on the following items during your entire stay for the Wild Wing Festival. Table 3-16 summarizes responses from all participants, while Table 3-17 summarizes responses from only those who came to attend the Festival events. Note that responses in the two tables are only from those who came from outside Jackson and George Counties. They do not include responses from those who came from Jackson or George County.

Table 3-16. Expenditures per Party during Stay

	Mississippi	Other States	Total
Lodging	\$29.29	\$30.86	\$29.91
Meals & drink	\$41.90	\$44.71	\$43.30
General shopping	\$19.05	\$40.36	\$27.57
Automobile – gasoline, repair, parking, etc	\$73.81	\$29.07	\$55.91
Any other	\$ 2.57	\$42.86	\$18.69

Table 3-17. Expenditures per Party during Stay: Those Who Came for the Festival

	Mississippi	Others	Total
Lodging.....	\$30.75	\$0.00	\$26.63
Meals & drink.....	\$43.00	\$35.00	\$41.67
General shopping.....	\$20.00	\$16.25	\$19.83
Automobile			
– gasoline, repair, parking, etc.	\$77.50	\$21.25	\$68.13
Any other.....	\$ 2.70	\$ 0.00	\$ 2.25
total			\$158.51

Any Suggestions?

Suggestions made by participants in free events are reprinted below as they are written by these participants:

- (a) Increase number booths on outside
- (b) More animals
- (c) Advertise more
- (d) Better map of area
- (e) More access to drinks
- (f) Serve food to the public
- (g) Have more plants, displays, lectures. This is a great event - keep it growing!

Section 4

Estimation of Economic Impact

Economic impact arises from expenditures in the local economy that would not have been made without the Festival events. There are three sources of these expenditures. One is the amount of expenditures made by out-of-town visitors to all paid events, and the other is the amount of expenditures made by out-of-town visitors to all free events, and the third is the operating budget for the Festival that would not have been spent without the Festival.

Direct Expenditures by Out-of-Town Visitors to Paid Events

The total number of tickets sold was 85. The total number of persons who participated in paid events was 75 since some bought more than one ticket by participating in more than one event. The percentage of 75 participants who came from outside of Jackson and George Counties was 37.8 percent (Table 2-8), while those who came specifically for the Festival were 52.9 percent (Table 2-15). In other words, the number of persons who came from outside Jackson and George Counties and who came specifically to attend paid Festival events was:

$$75 \times 0.378 \times 0.529 = 15$$

Of 15, half came with a spouse or a companion (Table 2-7). The total number of parties who came from outside, and came specifically for paid Festival events, therefore:

$$15/2 + 15/2/2 = 12 \text{ persons}$$

The amount that each party spent during their stay is \$271.17 per party (Table 2-19). Total direct economic impact of out-of-town participants to paid events on the local economy is:

$$12 \times \$271.17 = \$3,254.04$$

Note that expenditures made by local participants are not included because they represent transfer expenditures, meaning that they could have been spent locally even without the Festival.

Direct Expenditures by Out-of-Town Visitors to Free Events

The total number of participants in free events is conservatively estimated at 3,500 (Table 1-3). Among all the cars parked at free events, 37.3 percent had car tags that were not those of Jackson or George County (Table 3-1). Of all visitors to free Festival events, 63.8 percent said they came specifically to attend Festival events (Table 3-5). The median number of persons in a party was 3. The total number of parties who attended free Festival events and who came mainly to attend Festival events is:

$$3,500 \times 0.373 \times 0.638 \div 3 = 278$$

The amount that each party spent during their stay is \$158.51 (Table 3-17) per party. Total direct economic impact of out-of-town participants to free events on the local economy is:

$$278 \times \$158.51 = \$44,065.78$$

Note that expenditures made by local participants are not included because they represent transfer expenditures, meaning that they could have been spent locally even without the Festival.

Operating Budget

Total operating budget for the Festival is summarized in Table 4-1. It is assumed that most, if not all, of this amount would not have been raised and spent locally if there were no Wild Wing Festival.

Table 4-1. Total Operating Budget for the Festival

Personnel	\$19,000
Program expenses	19,385
Travel	3,000
Advertising/Web	7,400
Community celebration	4,500
Postages, printing, other	3,000
Total	\$56,285

Total Economic Impact

The total direct expenditures impact of the 2007 Wild Wing Festival is summarized in Table 4-2 at \$103,605. Total expenditures impact is also indicated in Table 4-2 based on Jackson County output multipliers explained in this sub-section.

Table 4-2. Total Direct Expenditures Impact

Source	Amount
Participants to paid events	\$ 3,254
Participants to free events	\$44,066
Operating budget	\$56,285
total	\$103,605

Direct expenditures are re-spent and circulated before they are exhausted. For instance, local vendors who received visitor dollars will be spending the same dollars on local grocery stores and restaurants after they pay taxes. This is known as the multiplier effect. Multipliers for Jackson County are calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Selected multipliers for Jackson County are summarized in Table 4-3 for four industries related directly to the Festival: (a) retail, (b) amusement, gambling & recreation, (c) accommodation, and (d) food services & drinking places. Averages of the four industries are also calculated in Table 4-3. RIMS in the table stands for regional impact multipliers.

To explain what the multipliers are, consider an out-of-town visitor who spends \$1,000 for room and board in Pascagoula. The impact is not limited to the initial expenditures of \$1,000. Owners and employees of those businesses that provide room and board to the out-of-town visitor will be spending some of their earnings in the local economy for their groceries, gasoline, clothing, hair styling, and other goods and services sold locally. These indirect local expenditures that are triggered by the initial expenditures should be included in estimation of an economic impact. Assume that the amount of total final expenditures, including the initial expenditures, is \$1,500. Dividing this amount (\$1,500) by the initial expenditures (\$1,000), we obtain the multiplier of 1.5. In reality, multipliers are different for employment and earnings. Multipliers shown in Table 4-3 are specifically for selected industries in Jackson County, Mississippi, as developed by the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Table 4-3. RIMS II Multipliers for Jackson County

Industry Group	Final Demand Output Multipliers	Final Demand Employment Multipliers	Direct Effect Earnings Multipliers	Direct Effect Employment Multipliers
Retail	1.3622	19.4981	1.2769	1.2110
Amusement, Gambling & Recreation	1.4080	17.1269	1.3305	1.2708
Accommodation	1.3743	13.2290	1.3622	1.3401
Food Services & Drinking Places	1.3634	27.7683	1.3095	1.1330
Average	1.3770	19.4056	1.3198	1.2387

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2007.

Total expenditures impact and the employment impact can also be calculated on the basis of multipliers shown in Table 4-3. In Table 4-4, total expenditures impact is obtained by multiplying the direct expenditures impact by the final demand output multiplier:

$$\$103,605 \times 1.377 = \$142,664$$

In Table 4-4, employment impact is derived by dividing expenditures impact by final demand employment multipliers times 1,000:

$$\begin{aligned} \$103,605 \div (19.4056 \times 1,000) &= 5 \\ \$142,664 \div (19.4056 \times 1,000) &= 7 \end{aligned}$$

Table 4-4. Total Expenditures and Employment Impact

	Direct Impact	Total Impact
Expenditures	\$103,605	\$142,664
Employment	5	7

Epilogue

Major findings of this report are presented in the Executive Summary in the beginning of this report.

If the Pascagoula River communities choose to develop good marketing strategies, great public access, world-class visitor education and unique amenities, visitors will be drawn to the Pascagoula River to enjoy the beauty of its unique ecosystems – a wonderland of tupelo swamps, oxbow lakes, bayous and marshes. In 2006-2007, the region is most fortunate to have the Pascagoula River Audubon Center and the Wild Wing River and Nature Festival under development to serve just this purpose.

One of the largest free-flowing rivers in the continental U.S, the Pascagoula River is the archetype for southeastern river systems. It is home to a diverse assemblage of species; its beauty and wildlife habitats have created a rich cultural heritage. Just minutes from the busy interstate 10 corridor, one can experience a large, wild river system.

Around the world, people have a growing thirst for natural connections, so it is no surprise that the Pascagoula River system might attract large numbers of affluent visitors who want to see ecological wonders firsthand. Nightlife, shopping and spiffy beachfront hotels are a secondary consideration for the type of visitor who would come here for a unique outdoor experience: they are willing to pay well to see unique wildlife such as the Mississippi Sandhill Crane, paddle our wild river and bayous and visit a wilderness barrier island. The idea of combining vacations with ecological marvels is called ecotourism.

Traditional tourist resorts, in order to attract visitors, must invest heavily in great views, tennis courts and golf courses, luxury rooms and first-class restaurants. Then after they've sunk a fortune into a project, there's always a danger of someone building an even more expensive resort next door to lure away clientele, making the place obsolete. The facility must be top quality and well maintained to stay even with today's competitive

market. Without something special tourists have little reason to patronize a particular resort.

Ecotourism, however, is a game played in a different league. It does not necessarily require an enormous investment in land and accommodations. The point is that ecotourists search out facilities located away from fancy hotels, nightlife and boutiques. The best nature preserves are located along inaccessible country roads or tucked away behind isolated marshes far from shopping centers, beauty parlors, miniature golf and other “necessities” of civilization. It isn’t necessary to provide nightlife, gourmet restaurants and deluxe accommodations. In fact, most visitors would be disappointed if they found them.

Land for ecotourism development can be incredibly inexpensive, because it has little commercial or agricultural value, is difficult to reach by automobile, and is of interest only to ecologists and special types of tourists. If visitors have to fight their way through mosquito-infested swamps or across muddy roads to arrive at their nature accommodations, so much the better. This adds to the feeling of isolation from civilization. If getting there requires an hour’s boat trip, having to wade the last 50 yards to get to shore, ecotourists do not complain. It’s part of the adventure. It is also less expensive for the investor.

Investment in a successful eco-project can be quite modest, and tourists will still be eager to visit. They’re satisfied with small and sparsely furnished rooms, a community bathroom, and meals that consist of simply prepared local foods. An ecotourist is happy to find safe, clean and welcoming accommodations. Some successful resorts might even put guests in tents, where they sleep on cots, use outdoor showers, and wear rubber boots to breakfast. And ecotourists love every minute of it! An ecotourist would gladly trade a night in a fancy hotel in order to sleep under the stars on a sandbar. Their sole purpose would be to learn about and enjoy the ecological treasures the Pascagoula River has to share.

Ecotourism dining rooms operate on the same premise. Instead of a fancy menu with a list of gourmet selections, the kitchen serves up one meal for everyone. The food is tasty and well prepared, that’s true, but from the management’s position very efficient and cost-effective. After working up an appetite slogging through dripping forests looking for songbirds or paddling through miles of swamps and backwaters looking for alligators and turtles, simple home-cooked food served with grace is most welcomed.