

# Alabama current connection

FALL 2012 • Vol. VII, Issue 2

## Protecting Coastal Values Through Conservation Planning



BY ROBERTA SWANN, DIRECTOR, MOBILE BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

Photo by Buzz Sierke

**O**n a recent Sunday afternoon, my husband LaDon, friends Buzz and HaiYing, and I took a leisurely boat ride on Fowl River in an attempt to “catch dinner.” Although the fish weren’t exactly biting – our surroundings caught us hook, line and sinker. The various bends in the river opened to serene settings of marshes and pine forests, mullet jumping, boathouses dotting the shore, and yes – a bald eagle gracing

*the intense blue sky. I sat back in the bow with my face pointed to the sun thinking this is truly heaven.*

To most of us who live along the northern Gulf coast, our way of life affords us these perfect moments – opportunities to let go of the daily grind and find peace in the simple pleasure of being on or looking out at the water.

As I soaked in the sensations of Fowl River, I thought about our current efforts to re-write the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) and how it would ensure those “perfect moments.”

Planning began with determining what people value most about living in coastal Alabama coupled with what is putting the most stress on our varied habitats and associated **ecosystem services** (see article on page 14). In order to restore, protect, and conserve this coast that we love, it will be imperative that the strategies of the next CCMP be embraced by all. By basing the next CCMP on what people value, our hope is to more fully engage our coastal community in taking ownership of our environmental future. For as Henry Ford once said, **“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”** *Continued on page 4*

**1** Protecting Coastal Values Through Conservation Planning

**2** Coastal Corner: Do Comprehensive Plans Matter? Should We Bother? Why?

**7** Three Mile Creek – A No Motor Zone

**8** Alabama’s Coastal Connection – A National Scenic Byway – Partnership and Planning: Successful Projects and a Successful Future are Built on Common Ground

**10** Shore and Pier Fishing  
A Personal Journey

**12** Upcoming Projects for the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program

**13** 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup

**14** Gloria Car Retires

**14** What ARE Eco System Services?

**15** Current Events

Currently Inside



# Coastal Corner

By PHILLIP HINESLEY, COASTAL SECTION CHIEF, ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES, STATE LANDS DIVISION,

## Do Comprehensive Plans Matter? Should We Bother? Why?

**Local comprehensive planning gets a bad rap, one that it has partially, although not completely, deserved. In the past few years, I seem to encounter more and more elected officials, planning commission members, developers and citizens who are either trying to avoid comprehensive planning or trying to hybridize their comprehensive planning with something more “practical,” like a short-term development strategy.**

Many economic developers, and a few community planners, have told me that comprehensive planning is irrelevant, a waste of time and consumes money that could be better spent to “make something happen.” Others have complained that comprehensive planning hurts development, and some have gone as far as to say it is some type of international conspiracy. There is nothing novel or recent about community planning.

The earliest known city planners were from ancient Greece and prepared plans for Greek cities in the fifth century B.C. Throughout history, plans have been drawn for cities in Europe, Asia and America. Famous early American plans included L’Enfant’s for Washington D.C., William Penn’s for Philadelphia and General Oglethorpe’s for Savannah.



The Code of Alabama requires cities and towns to have a comprehensive plan. In some cases, counties, such as Baldwin County, are also allowed to develop comprehensive plans. The statutory requirements call for the local planning commission to prepare a master (comprehensive) plan for the city or town and the surrounding area. It requires the planning commission to make comprehensive studies of current conditions and future changes in the planning area. It requires that the plan be adopted by the planning commission and city council or county commission, and that it be updated every few years. Most planners like to update the plan, at least, every five years.

A comprehensive plan is an official public document adopted by local government as a policy guide to decisions about the physical development of the community. It looks at various elements such as population, housing, roads and bridges, waste water and potable water issues and most important - carrying capacity, and current and future land use.

It indicates, in a general way, how leaders of government want the community to develop in the next 20 to 30 years. It is a

road map that sets forth major policies concerning desirable future physical development. The plan is long range and general and is not law. It has no legal effect on private property. It is merely a tool to help planners and communities

develop better zoning and subdivision regulations, which are legal documents and can control private property and are enforceable in court.

Why is a plan needed?

Local government has a great deal of influence on the way a community develops. The buildings, facilities and improvements provided by

local government affect the daily lives of all citizens, give form to the community and stimulate or retard the development of private and publicly-owned lands. The local governments, and particularly the legislative body made up of lay citizens, need some technical guidance in making physical development decisions that will impact the local community for the next 20 to 50 years. Tools, like the comprehensive plan, are needed to make the right decisions for street improvements, parks, housing and other critical infrastructure that citizens are dependent on.

Again, development is inevitable and must be accommodated. Communities need new roads, housing, parks and other infrastructure. We must achieve a balance between protecting our environment and providing adequate new infrastructure to handle the growth *Continued on next page*

*The Code of Alabama requires cities and towns to have a comprehensive plan.*

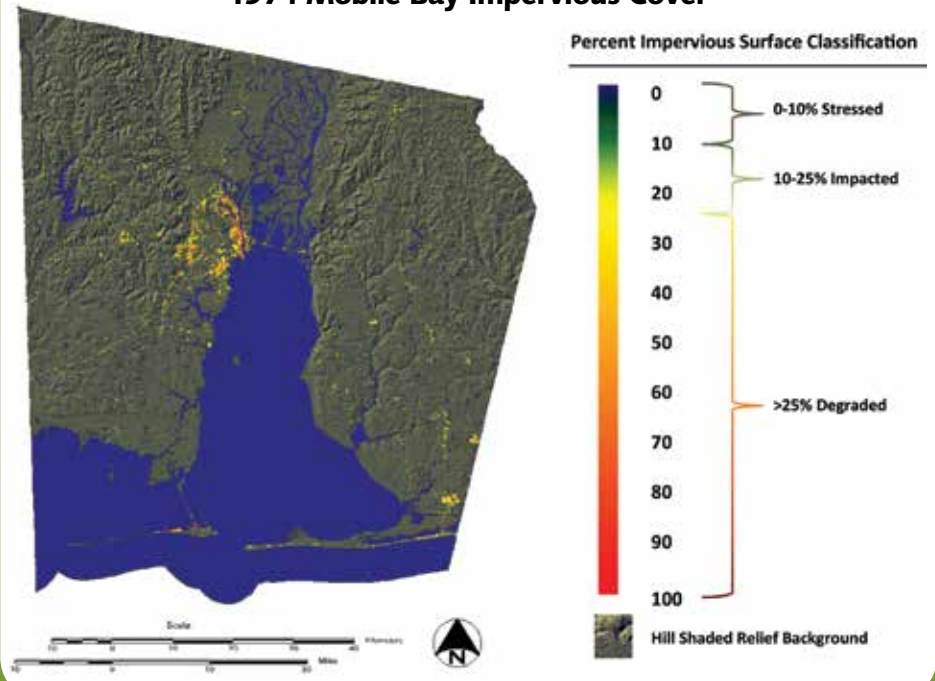


Certainly, there are no shortages of comprehensive planning efforts that look like everything you might ever possibly have wanted to know about the place and a whole lot you didn't. Other plans are dominated by massive public meetings and extensive numbers of focus groups. Some plans focus on development with a belief that "If You Draw It, It Will Somehow Turn Into Reality." Some plans lean toward stopping development, with the mindset of "I am here, and I want to keep things just the way they are." Each of these approaches takes an element of what a comprehensive plan should be and is reasonably expected to contain - existing conditions information, recommendations, conceptual graphics and future land use.

*Development is inevitable and must be accommodated.*

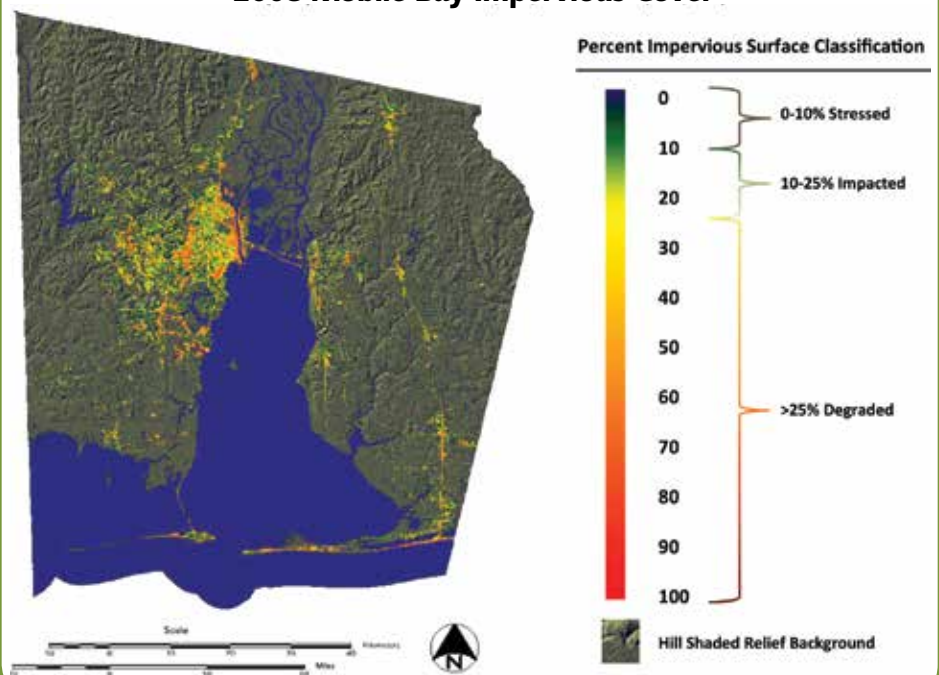
Like I said, development is going to happen and we have to find a way to reach a balance between protecting our environment while allowing for growth. It is even more important for planning in coastal and waterfront communities. **All indications are that by 2050, 75% of the nation's population will live in the coastal zone. Coastal communities must be ready to respond to this tremendous growth.** Not only do coastal communities need to plan for future infrastructure, but also need to plan for changing weather and climate. Designing infrastructure to be storm smart and resistant is critical. Planning and comprehensive planning can help communities make more efficient investments in buildings and other infrastructure, protect and restore critical environmental areas, and protect public health. Comprehensive planning can help coastal and waterfront communities manage growth and development while balancing environmental, economic and quality life issues.

### 1974 Mobile Bay Impervious Cover



Comparable charts from 1974 and 2008 indicate land use change associated with growth which has resulted in more impervious surface creating more stormwater runoff into Mobile Bay.

### 2008 Mobile Bay Impervious Cover



Source: Aiding Mobile Bay, AL conservation and restoration with Landsat data from 1974-present (NASA Grant NNX10AC57G, PI: Ellis)

## The Values of the Alabama Coastal Conservation Plan

Continued from page 1

During an extensive citizen input process, the following six values were identified as important to our coastal quality of life.

- **Access to the water and open spaces** (*for recreation and vistas*)
- **Beaches and shorelines** (*protection, economy, beauty*)
- **Fish** (*fish habitats, abundance, livelihood*)
- **Heritage and culture** (*protecting the legacy*)
- **Resiliency** (*rebounding from unforeseen events; protecting beauty*)
- **Water quality** (*drinking water quality and quantity, rivers, creeks, bay- fishable, swimmable, drinkable*)

The same input process also revealed their biggest concerns:

- **Stormwater** (*flooding, erosion, trash, polluted runoff, increased sediments*)
- **Public indifference**

The focus then turned to determining where the stresses were throughout our coastal system.

A group of 30 scientists representing a diversity of disciplines evaluated the levels of impact of the following stresses on the ecosystem services provided by a variety of coastal habitats.

- **chemical contamination**
- **dredging and filling**
- **fire suppression**
- **habitat fragmentation**
- **invasive species**
- **nutrient enrichment**
- **pathogens**
- **sea level rise**
- **climate variability**
- **freshwater discharge**
- **resource extraction**

From this work it was determined that freshwater wetlands; intertidal marshes and flats; and streams, rivers and riparian buffers were under significant stress from factors primarily related to land use change. As you can see from the accompanying table, these three habitat types and the ecosystem services they provide are related to several, if not all, of the things that people value about living in coastal Alabama.

Continued on page 6

*We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.*

—Aldo Leopold

Habitat	Ecosystem Services Most Stressed	Top Stress Impacts	Citizen Values
Freshwater Wetlands	Nesting for birds and turtles Biodiversity Wildlife Fisheries	Land Use Change Fragmentation Dredging and Filling	Access Fish Heritage Resilience Water Quality
Intertidal Marshes and Flats	Biodiversity Fisheries Wildlife Water Quality	Sediment Sea Level Rise Fragmentation	Access Fish Heritage Resilience Water Quality Beaches
Streams and Rivers (Riparian Buffers)	Fish Biodiversity Water Quality Sediment	Freshwater Discharge Land Use Change Sediments	Access Fish Heritage Resilience Water Quality



*Maritime pine savannahs*

*Photo by Buzz Sierke*



Maritime pine savannahs occur along the margins of extensive salt or brackish marshes and on barrier and bay islands. Structure within this forest type was historically maintained by natural fires and the underlying hydrology. Because maritime forests have been fragmented by changes in land use, these natural fires have been suppressed, hydrology has changed and the result is that these pine forests have been degraded by hardwood encroachment. (*The Center for Conservation Biology*)

*Aerial view of the headwaters of Mobile County's Fowl River show where once dense forests have been removed to make way for other land uses.*

*Photo by Sam St. John*



## The Values of the Alabama Coastal Conservation Plan

*Continued from page 5*

The next step was to evaluate whether or not we, as a community, collectively achieved what was included in the first CCMP plan. This report ([http://www.mobilebaynep.com/what\\_we\\_do/ccmp/](http://www.mobilebaynep.com/what_we_do/ccmp/)) identified over one hundred recommendations to be considered in the development of future actions. These recommendations included citizen participation; development of a monitoring program for key species that are proxies of ecosystem health; improving citizen education with a particular focus on stormwater management; identifying/restoring/protecting areas of most stress and least stress throughout the estuary; improving estuarine research; improving the regulatory framework to support environmental protection; improving management of critical habitats that support estuarine-dependent species and supporting/employing new technologies to mitigate human impacts on the environment.

With this information in hand a group of resource managers and restoration specialists have been studying the landscape of our two coastal counties, assessing land use/land cover changes over time to identify where development is occurring in proximity to these stressed habitats; what watersheds have management plans, sediment studies or water quality surveys; and where sea levels are projected to rise, among other data. In addition, they are studying demographics of the coastal watersheds to determine where potential

resources exist to support the alleviation of identified stresses and restoration activities.

In November, teams consisting of Federal and State resource management, policy and non-governmental representatives and a leader who is a respected expert in the field associated with each value will develop actions for undertaking status and trends, habitat restoration and protection, capacity building through policy

changes and professional training, and citizen involvement over the next five years. These actions will then be brought together in a draft Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan that will be available for public comment during the month of January, 2013.

***I promise you that I won't wait until January 2013 to get back out on the water or in the woods – whether Fowl River, Three Mile Creek, Fish River, or the Gulf – I tend to get cranky if I am inside for too long.***

***The ebb and flow of the water and rhythm of its currents, the majesty of pine trees and songs of birds in my backyard forest, nourish my soul. And in meeting so many people along this journey to a new CCMP, I can assure you that I am not the only one who feels this way. Together, as a coastal community, we can achieve success in protecting this unparalleled way of life for us and for the many generations to follow.***

***The ebb and flow of the water and the rhythm of its currents, the majesty of the pine trees and the songs of the birds in my backyard forest nourish my soul.***

***He who fails to plan is planning to fail.***

***—Winston Churchill***

*Photo by Buzz Sierke*





# Three Mile Creek A No Motor Zone

By DEBI FOSTER, MBNEP

**N**ow that planning is underway for transforming historic Three Mile Creek into a viable recreational opportunity for all to enjoy, the State of Alabama has consented to local requests and declared the creek's 14 miles of waters a No Motor Zone to boat traffic.

The law, 220-6-.63 Three Mile Creek Vessel Restrictions, prohibits anyone to operate a vessel with a combustible engine (gasoline or diesel powered) in the following area in Mobile County: from the headwaters of Three Mile Creek, to the railroad bridge at Telegraph Road. This prohibition shall not apply to law enforcement, government, or emergency vessels. It further states that any person violating any of the provisions of this regulation shall be punished as provided by §33-5-62, Code of Alabama 1975.

According to Colonel Steve Thompson, Director of the Alabama Marine Police, he and other members of the state department traveled up and down the waterway and found that no launch facilities exist anywhere and that the entire stretch is too shallow and/or overgrown with vegetation for any motorized recreational vessels to successfully navigate.

"We thought it was a fantastic idea," Colonel Thompson said. "It's ideally suited for use by canoe, kayak or trolling motor propelled vessels only. I think when completed, it will be a beautiful place and keeping it a No Motor Zone will help keep it more natural."

Letters requesting the change had been sent to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Alabama Marine Police by members of Mobile City Council, its mayor, the Mobile Housing Board, the Mobile Bay Kayak and Fishing Association, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, and the Martin Luther King Avenue Redevelopment Corporation.

All parties agreed they wanted to ensure protection of the pristine habitat along the creek and its backwater tributaries while ensuring safety for recreational paddlers who already travel the quiet

stretch enjoying the native wildlife and vegetative species.

*It's ideally suited for use by canoe, kayak or trolling motor propelled vessels only. I think when completed, it will be a beautiful place and keeping it a No Motor Zone will keep it more natural.*

Colonel Steve Thompson  
Director of the Alabama Marine Police



# Alabama's Coastal Connection A National Scenic Byway

## *Partnership and Planning: Successful Projects and a Successful Future are Built on Common Ground*

By COLETTE BOEHM, ALABAMA GULF COAST CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

**A**labama's Coastal Connection National Scenic Byway exemplifies what can happen when a diverse group of partners work toward common goals. The project began nearly 10 years ago with the purpose of bringing a successful national and state program of packaging, promoting and preserving some of the most valuable natural, scenic, historic, cultural and recreational assets to Alabama's Gulf Coast.

Unique to the coast, people can travel nearly 130 miles virtually any time of the year and enjoy the best the area has to offer. From two national historic treasures in Fort Morgan and Fort Gaines to world class birding on Dauphin Island, there are exceptional protected lands including the Audubon Bird Sanctuary, Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge and Gulf State Park in addition to the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, which is one of only 28 in the country. All this, in addition to the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities of our variety of waterways, makes the Coastal Connection an impressive addition to the nation's collection of byways.

The National Scenic Byway program designates, supports and promotes routes or corridors throughout the country that are unique or show regionally significant characteristics of an area. Its goal is to provide

resources and marketing opportunities to connect those areas with the people seeking them. By using the program, visitors looking for authentic travel option destinations can find those special places.

With three other nationally designated byways in the state and about a dozen with state designation built upon the same goals and objectives, the idea of developing a local route arose. A Corridor Advocacy

Group came together and determined that state and national designation offered opportunities to leverage public and private interests and extend funding, planning and promotional resources of the partners involved.

Through a series of planning meetings, key assets were identified and mapped, preservation and promotion goals were set and priorities were determined. While sectors and disciplines varied, everyone in the group, whether representing protected lands, a historic landmark, or a cultural/recreational attraction, shared common ground. The need to preserve the natural and historical assets of Alabama's Gulf Coast was a priority and everyone had a need for additional resources to do so. From that common ground, a vision and goals for the project arose.

Through a grant from the Alabama Scenic Byways Advisory Committee and matching funds from the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), a Corridor Management Plan was developed. The plan identified corridor-wide top priorities that focused on communications





# Alabama's Coastal Connection

## Butterflies



A Gulf fritillary

The autumn skies of Alabama's Gulf Coast are filled with orange as Monarchs migrate to their wintering grounds in Mexico. These caterpillars feed only on milkweed plants of Alabama's dunes. The Gulf fritillary, a monarch mimic, is also bright orange, with small white spots on top of its wings.



A monarch butterfly on flowering milkweed

Butterflies are related to crabs and lobsters! Why? Like those sea creatures, butterflies have skeletons on the outside of their bodies, called arthropods. Butterflies can't beat, but they can feel vibrations. Female butterflies usually are bigger and live longer than male butterflies. Butterflies have compound eyes; each eye is made up of about 6,000 tiny parts called lenses, which let in light.



A swallowtail butterfly on a pink flower

Swallowtails are the largest butterflies in the world. Most are brightly colored and found on all continents except Antarctica. Their distinguishing characteristic is a tail-like extension on the edge of each hindwing. In some cases these resemble antennae. Along with the red-orange eyespots near the end of their bodies, their hind end looks like the head end, confusing predators. The Eastern Tiger Swallowtail is the state butterfly of Alabama. They have yellow on the forewings with black "tiger" stripes.



A skipper butterfly

Skipper butterflies are found in the warmer climates of the Americas. Long-tailed skippers (left) are one of the most common skipper butterflies in the Southeast. Notice their long, projecting hindwings and their iridescent blue-green head and body. They are named for their rapid flight patterns.

Sulphur butterflies are very common in our southern states. Huge flocks of bright yellow butterflies are an impressive sight during migration. Adults perch with their wings closed and never open them except in flight.



A sulphur butterfly on a white flower

Butterflies and plants enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship. Butterflies spread pollen from flower to flower so the plants can grow. Most butterflies deposit their eggs onto a specific type of plant that they enjoy eating so that when the caterpillar is born it doesn't have to go far for its first meal. After a few weeks caterpillars will curl up in a chrysalis, attaching themselves to plant stems. Inside the chrysalis the adult butterfly forms and emerges as an adult.

It begins seeking out nearby flowers and spreads pollen flower to flower, repeating the cycle again.



and marketing efforts. Based on that plan, another grant was received through the national scenic byways program to create directional signage and marketing materials. Those materials include a printed brochure, a website, and a mobile application. In addition, the byway has been promoted through the media relations efforts of the CVB as well as the recently formed South Mobile County Tourism Authority.

Another corridor-wide project that exemplifies the value of collaborative planning involved the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (NEP). Leveraging resources from several entities, an interpretive signage project, which focused on the environmental resources along the

byway, was implemented. Mobile Bay NEP funded the project with support from the Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, State Lands Division, Coastal Section and in-kind contributions from the CVB, Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, the Estuarium at Dauphin Island Sea Lab, as well as several attractions and municipalities. Not only is this signage an excellent example of a collaborative effort, it is a practical way to reach visitors (and residents) who are out enjoying the resources, with a sustainability message as well as a byway marketing message. Sign topics include coastal birds, migratory birds, pitcher plant bogs, sea turtles, marine mammals, estuaries and more.

These projects represent partnerships among local entities that, by focusing on corridor-wide efforts, are forwarding their own cause as well. And these are only the beginning of the opportunities for collaborations and teamwork along the corridor to achieve even more success in the promotion, preservation and the ultimate sustainability of area resources.

The Corridor Advocacy Group for Alabama's Coastal Connection developed this strategy for the byway, which spans southern Mobile and Baldwin Counties and the eastern shore of Mobile Bay. The byway gained national designation in 2009.

## Vision

To create a sense of place, a destination, where coastal Alabama's natural, historic and recreational assets are all a part of an enjoyable and educational experience for visitors and where the spirit and importance of coastal stewardship are encouraged.

## Mission

To identify, promote and enhance the assets of "Alabama's Coastal Connection" through the development and implementation of a Corridor Management Plan and through obtaining both state and national designation as a Scenic Byway.

## Goals

- Increase efficiency and effectiveness through communicating and coordinating individual asset/agency planning efforts as part of a Corridor Management Plan.
- Develop a marketable entity, in the form of a byway, in order to raise public awareness, appreciation and support of the area's historic, scenic and nature-based assets.
- Increase visitation by targeted markets including eco- and geo-tourists, in accordance with the sustainability of individual assets, resulting in positive economic impact for the assets and the surrounding area and in increased coastal stewardship.
- Provide a positive environment and growth opportunities for additional assets consistent with the theme of the corridor.

<http://www.alabamabyways.com/>  
[www.alabamascoastalconnection.com](http://www.alabamascoastalconnection.com)



# Shore and Pier Fishing

## A Personal Journey

By DAVID THORNTON, PIERPOUNDER

**The wide variety of life in and around Alabama's coastal waters has held a long fascination for me, not just as a casual recreational fisherman, but as an interested steward of our God-given natural resources.**

As a native Mobilian and the youngest of four children growing up in the 1960s, my summers were often filled with crabbing, boating, gill netting and seining around the wharf in front of the Bay house my family built near Mullet Point on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay. Each day was as different as it was magical. I never realized at the time how the joy of those carefree days would help mold my personality and influence my later life leading to my current career.

As a teenager, tagging along with my older brother, I was introduced to the Gulf beaches and became interested in surfing. Learning how the waves reacted and broke on the sandbars was another fascination for me, and it gave me insight and respect for the forces at work there. It also made

me a more knowledgeable fisherman. Eventually all of these interests led me to the University of South Alabama where I majored in Geography and minored in Geology and Biology.

But my interest in fishing, especially pier fishing, really expanded when I reached age 16 and could drive. I, along with my neighborhood friend, Tom Allenbach, would head to the piers on Dauphin Island and Gulf Shores to fish or we'd surf with friends. Hardly a week went by that I did not do one or the other, or BOTH! The richness and variety of what those green waters provided was not missed by my inquiring eyes, and the fruits of my efforts were always shared with my family and friends.

My current path began in the 1980s when I used to call in reports to WKRG – 710's weekly local radio fishing show. My calls were so frequent in fact, the hosts of the show Mike Thompson and Mike Tyndal, gave me the nickname "Pierpounder." The name really took off about 10 years later when I started posting reports and answering questions from people on Internet fishing-related message boards. The power and reach of the Internet social media has amazed me as more of these "fishing forums" have sprung up to the point where there are several in our region that specifically target groups of fishermen who fish piers. More and more frequently I was surprised on the pier by strangers from all parts of the country, who would recognize me from pictures posted on the sites and would walk up to me and say, "thanks" for answering a question or just

for posting reports and pictures from the pier.

It takes a different breed of fisherman to spend hours on a pier, waiting for a bite from that one fish that will 'make his day,' or a surfer to wait patiently and be in the right place at the right time for that 'perfect wave.' An angler on the shore can pick up and move to a new spot



Robert and David fishing - 1960.



L-R pictured are: Chris Eberley, David Thornton, Steve Eberley holding Tarpons they caught off the Gulf State Pier in 1978.





David pictured above with 5 year old Alex Prieto.  
Photo by: Carlos Prieto.



David with Monica Manley holding a small King Mackerel. Photo by: John E. Phillips.

farther down the beach, but a pier angler is always anchored to "The Rock" and, like a seasoned surfer, learns to accept whatever the sea is willing to send his way.

It's like my old fishin' buddy Wyley Burnette used to say, "You live by the pier, and you DIE by the pier." So if patience and persistence are the keys to success in angling, then good bait, tackle and timing are the locks that are opened. Well, last November my fishing passion took a turn when I was laid off from my 30-year career in photogrammetric mapping. I was too young to retire and too old to be considered employable by many businesses, and I didn't want to move. With a lot of prayer and the insistence and support of another fishing buddy, the renowned outdoor writer John E. Phillips, I began taking people to the

pier and beach as a fishing guide. The main focus of my unique G-rated 'boatless' fishing service is to share with them my lifetime of fishing experience, helping them get even more enjoyment out of the time they are here. I try to take whatever tackle they have, and their current level of fishing experience and speed up the learning process for them a bit. I even try to clue them in on our local weather, tides and fishing tactics and what species they can catch, eat, and which to be careful of when handling. It hasn't been so much about 'catching fish' as it has been 'teaching them to fish here' along with giving them some of the other experiences and amenities our area has to offer. So far the feedback from my clients has been uplifting and many have expressed their

gratitude in various ways, even promising to call me again or refer me to acquaintances. After a recent charter, the teenage girls of the Carlton family group from Texas even renamed me, "The Fish Instructor." I guess that's a good fit.

*David Thornton is a pier, wade, surf, and jetty fishing guide for the Alabama coastal waters of Dauphin Island, Fort Morgan, Gulf Shores and Orange Beach. More information about the services he provides can be found online at <http://www.gulfshoresfishing.com/Pier-and-Surf-Fishing-Guide.htm>*

*Or contact him by phone (251-458-2775) or email at [pierpounder@gmail.com](mailto:pierpounder@gmail.com).*

Pictured left to right, front row: Lane Ross Albey, Rhett Robinson, Reid Robinson; back row: Lawson Albey and Mark Albey  
Photo by: David Thornton





# Upcoming Projects for the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program

By AMY KING, ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**The Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP) was established in 1979. This program serves to protect and enhance coastal resources and reduce potential conflicts between environmental and economic interests. It strives to strike a balance of economic growth with the need for preservation of natural resources.**

Major functions of the program are resource protection and public access. Encompassing a multitude of coastal resource issues, resource protection looks at shoreline erosion, water quality, wetland protection, wildlife habitat, community development, education and outreach, and hazard management.

Providing adequate public access to coastal waters is a prime concern for the program. This is accomplished through low cost construction projects that are provided by

the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division, Coastal Section, in part, from grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management.

The ACAMP has several jointly funded projects set to begin this fall that will reflect these major functions including three public access projects.

The City of Foley will construct a canoe/kayak launch with an accompanying picnic area as part of the development of the new Wolf Creek Park. The development of this coastal water access is the first step in creating a waterfront park for the community and serve to encourage preservation of natural areas for the community's enjoyment.

In south Mobile County the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board will enhance the public access and guest experience at the Bird Sanctuary of Dauphin Island. The Tupelo Swamp Boardwalk recently damaged by fire, will be repaired, and a

pavilion and benches will be added. The Swamp Overlook Boardwalk will be rebuilt with an overlook platform with benches. And the East Beach Boardwalk will be rebuilt with a covered pavilion. Interpretive signage following the themes of water quality and aquifers, wetlands and swamps, invasive species, and fire-adapted landscapes will also be erected.

And, the City of Chickasaw will enhance the Brooks Park boardwalks and construct a bird viewing tower and platform. This viewing tower will provide an impressive 360-degree view of the land/water interface along the wetlands and waterways of Chickasaw Creek.

Other planning projects for the upcoming year include development of comprehensive plans for coastal communities, watershed management studies with corresponding management plans, and monitoring and research at two habitat restoration sites in coastal Alabama.

*William Brooks Park*



# 25th Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup

By LINDA MCCOOL, ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES,  
STATE LANDS DIVISION, COASTAL SECTION

**T**he 25th Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup was held on Saturday, September 15, 2012. The notable silver anniversary saw a record number of 5,094 volunteers helping to get an astounding 207,557 pounds of “trash out of the splash” by either walking or boating 26 different coastal and inland waterway zones across Mobile and Baldwin counties.

Over the last quarter century, Alabama’s participation in the Ocean Conservancy’s yearly international event has resulted in the removal of some 1,448,488 pounds of marine debris from state waterways. With a total of more than 70,349 participants, Coastal Cleanup is the largest annual volunteer event in Alabama. Besides picking up or digging and dragging out the visual pollution from our waterways, volunteers carefully record all items with the information compiled and used in the Ocean Conservancy’s ongoing efforts. Here along the coast, the event kicks off a yearly three-week celebration known as Coast Weeks, which brings

*Over the last quarter century, Alabama’s participation in the Ocean Conservancy’s yearly international event has resulted in the*

**removal of some  
1,448,488 pounds  
of marine debris  
from state waterways.**

*With a total of more than  
**70,349 participants,**  
Coastal Cleanup is the largest annual  
volunteer event in Alabama.*



2012

1998

1988

attention to our coastal resources through stewardship.

The first Alabama Coastal Cleanup was held in 1988 with only two zones, Gulf State Park and Dauphin Island. Records indicate that the cleanup had 630 volunteers collecting 8,340 pounds of marine debris. “It is very exciting to see this year’s record numbers in comparison to the 1st cleanup, which proves we are moving in the right direction,” according to Phillip Hinesley, Coastal Section Chief and Coordinator of this year’s event.

At our Fort Morgan Peninsula zone this year, one of our dedicated volunteers, Ms. Mildred Hanson, wore the tee-shirt she received at the very 1st Alabama Coastal Cleanup (1988), her son-in-law wore his 11th year tee-shirt (1998), and another volunteer displayed this year’s 25th Alabama Coastal Cleanup tee-shirt (2012). The beautiful tee-shirts printed each year, made possible with donations from generous sponsors, are given to volunteers during the cleanup as a token of appreciation for their dedication and hard work (photo above).

The legions of Coastal Cleanup volunteers are coordinated by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), State Lands Division, Coastal Section and Alabama People Against A Littered State (AL PALS).

The endeavor would not be possible without generous support this year from sponsors such as National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, The Original Oyster House, Bebo’s, BP, ExxonMobil, Hyundai, Alabama Power Company, Alabama Seafood Association, Alabama Department of Transportation, Compass Media, Ike’s Beach Service, LuLu’s, Vulcan Materials Company, ALFA, Honda Manufacturing of Alabama, Alabama Farmer’s Cooperative, City of Gulf Shores, Baldwin County Commission and The Ocean Conservancy. To learn more about this event, held every third Saturday in September, go to [www.alabamacoastalcleanup.org](http://www.alabamacoastalcleanup.org).

# Gloria Car Retires

By DEBI FOSTER, MBNEP

**A**fter devoting nearly two decades to improving the waters in and around the Gulf of Mexico, Gloria Car has retired from her official post as Deputy Director of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Program, but vows to keep active in programs that support and restore the country's Third Coast.

Ms. Car began her career with the EPA in 1992 where, three years later, she was appointed Associate Director of Administration for the Gulf program. In 2005, she became Deputy Director until taking over the helm of Director from 2010 until her retirement this summer.

According to the former deputy, the Gulf of Mexico Program is a five-state organization established to identify key environmental issues, while working at the regional, state, and local levels to define and recommend solutions. The program brings together diverse interests under a set of common



environmental objectives and a defined process to achieve those objectives through voluntary actions of its individual partners.”

During her reign, she served as co-chair of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program's Executive Steering Committee. Having a relationship between the GOMP and the NEP was a natural progression, according to Ms. Car, who says that both programs are similar in their structure and approaches to solving problems. Through the EPA's program, the NEP has been able to secure grants providing for various education, monitoring and restoration projects.

During her tenure, she served as the Designated Federal Office of Gulf Program's Federal Advisory Committee Act chartered committees and on numerous committees and workgroups at the headquarters level. She managed the GOMP's financial and administrative programs as well as spearheading innovations in dealing with the Government Performance Results Act and Excellence in Government in guiding the program's grants and contracts.



*Gloria Car, former Deputy Director of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Program*

Though Ms. Car said many challenges remain for the Gulf of Mexico including the general lack of support not usually found in other parts of the country, she feels confident that through the collective efforts of programs like the GOMP and the NEP, “a lot of the problems are going to be solved,” she said.

In the meantime, the North Carolina native and Mississippi resident plans on spending time traveling with her husband Martial and volunteering with activities that support and restore the 300-million-year-old Gulf of Mexico.

## What ARE Eco System Services?

By DEBI FOSTER, MBNEP

### Benefits People Obtain from Ecosystems

A relatively newly adopted scientific term, eco system services can be defined as the things that we as people depend on for life as we know it, that come from a varied group of individual sources found only in nature.

Services can include everything from the clean air we breathe, which is derived from the carbon dioxide-oxygen exchange from trees, to the reduction of flooding of urbanized areas, provided by

the vegetation found only in wetlands, to a plethora of bounty enjoyed by every fisherman and seafood lover.

Scientists and environmentalists have been trying to put words to this give-and-take between humans and nature, but it wasn't until the four-year study known as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was unveiled by the United Nations in 2005 that a formal definition was given. At that time, a group of some 1,300 scientists worldwide came together and outlined four basic categories for what constitutes an

ecosystem service. These are

- **Regulating Services** such as climate, water, and disease regulation as well as pollination;
- **Supporting Services** such as soil formation and nutrient cycling;
- **Cultural Services** such as educational, aesthetic, and cultural heritage values as well as recreation, and
- **Provisioning Services** or the provision of food, fresh water, fuel, fiber, and other goods, and tourism. *Source: USDA*

*Continued on page 16*



# Current events

## November

### November 3

**What:** 5th Annual Gulf Coast Oyster Cook Off - Fun, food and live music  
**Where:** The Hang Out, Gulf Shores, AL  
**For information,** [tara@thehangout.com](mailto:tara@thehangout.com)

### November 14-15

**What:** Mississippi-Alabama Bays & Bayous Symposium - This year's theme: Finding a Common Currency: Natural resource economics, ecology and culture.  
**Where:** Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center, Biloxi, MS  
**To register, visit:** <http://masgc.org/bb2012/registration>

### November 15

**What:** America Recycles Day - The 15<sup>th</sup> annual event is the only nationally-recognized day dedicated to recycling.  
**Where:** Metro Mobile Recycling Drop-Off Center, 1451 Government St. Mobile, AL 36604 (251) 478-3333  
**When:** Open 7 days a week, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

### November 24

**What:** Coastal Half Marathon, 5K and 1 Mile - A Thanksgiving Saturday fun mix of paved trail through the Orange Beach, Gulf Shores and Gulf State Park "back-country" along with stretches on the Gulf State Park main drive - all but about 3 miles is on the beautiful, back-country paved trail system.  
**Where:** Orange Beach, AL  
**For more information, visit:** <http://www.team-magic.com/events/kaisercoastal/index.html>

## December

### December 1

**What:** Electronics Recycling  
**When:** 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
**Where:** Greater Gulf States Fairgrounds Mobile, AL

### December 16 - January 9, 2013

**What:** Christmas Tree Recycling  
**Where:** Designated locations  
**For information about both recycling events, contact Keep Mobile Beautiful (251) 208-6029**

## January 2013

### January 12

**What:** Christmas Tree mulch giveaway  
**Where:** Greater Gulf States Fairgrounds Mobile, AL

## February

### February 16

**What:** Battle of Mobile Bay 5K Race  
**Where:** Historic Fort Gaines  
**When:** 7 a.m. - 12 Noon  
Registration begins at 7 a.m.  
5k race sponsored by the Port City Pacers starts at 9 a.m., followed by fun run and an awards ceremony. Blacksmithing demonstrations at fort throughout the day.  
**Cost:** Admission charged.  
**For information, call 251-861-6992 or visit [www.pcpacers.org](http://www.pcpacers.org)**

## April

### April 6

**What:** Dauphin Island Civil War Trust Park Day

### April 6-18

**What:** Spring Bird Banding  
**Where:** Gulf Shores, AL

### April 24

**What:** Earth Day

## Alabama current connection

### About the Mobile Bay National Estuary

**Program:** The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program's mission is to lead the wise stewardship of water quality and living resources of the Mobile Bay and Tensaw Delta. The MBNEP serves as a catalyst for activities of estuary stakeholders, helping to build community-based organizational capacity for sound resource management and leveraging commitment and investment to ensure the estuary's sustainability. For more information, please contact the MBNEP office at 251-431-6409.

### About ADCNR, State Lands Division, Coastal

**Section:** In an effort to protect and enhance coastal resources and reduce potential conflicts between environmental and economic interests, the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP) was approved by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 1979. The ACAMP is administered through the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division, Coastal Section. For more information, please contact the Coastal Section office at 251-621-1216.

*Alabama Current Connection* is produced biannually by the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program. Support is provided in part by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), State Lands Division, Coastal Section; the U. S. EPA; NOAA; and the Dauphin Island Sea Lab/Marine Environmental Science Consortium.

*Alabama Current Connection* encourages reprinting of its articles in other publications. If you have recommendations for future articles or would like to subscribe, please contact the editor:

Debi Foster  
Mobile Bay National Estuary Program  
4172 Commanders Drive  
Mobile, AL 36615  
Office: 251-431-6409  
Fax: 251-431-6450  
Email: [fosterpoint1984@yahoo.com](mailto:fosterpoint1984@yahoo.com)

We reserve the right to edit submissions.

*Funding for this newsletter provided by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division, Coastal Section, in part, from a grant by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management. Award #12NOS4190173.*

# Alabama current connection

Dauphin Island Sea Lab  
Marine Environmental Science Consortium  
101 Bienville Boulevard  
Dauphin Island, Alabama 36528

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 1343  
Mobile, AL 36601



## What *ARE* Eco System Services? *Continued from page 14*

An example of just one of the many individual ecosystems that provide such services is a forest. Let's say a pine forest like that which is mentioned in our cover story.

According to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, "Healthy forest ecosystems are ecological life-support systems. Forests provide a full suite of goods and services that are vital to human health and livelihood, natural assets we call **ecosystem services**."

Many of these goods and services are traditionally viewed as free benefits to society, or "public goods." Things like

- Wildlife habitat and diversity,
- Watershed services,
- Carbon storage, and
- Scenic landscapes, for example.

**Lacking a formal market, these natural assets are traditionally absent from society's balance sheet; their critical contributions are often overlooked in public, corporate, and individual decision-making.**

It's like the goods and services a company provides to its customers.

In a private company, when the goods are depleted, more are manufactured so the shelves can be restocked. In the environment today, however, many independent ecosystems are struggling to replenish themselves. By being able to identify the services provided by these various ecosystems, we can begin to develop ways to help them continue to flourish.

Here along the bay, our forests are dependent upon the services provided by other ecosystems like healthy wetlands, which provide water purification, and flow and erosion control, to name only a few.

With populations increasing and coastal living on the rise, the importance of identifying and placing a value on these services will help communities plan for the future. Sometimes it's more cost effective to invest in managing and protecting an ecosystem than to build new or renovate water purification plants or flood control structures.