



The mission of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality is to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of present and future generations of Mississippians by conserving and improving our environment and fostering wise economic growth through focused research and responsible regulation.

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Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Environmental News

VOL. 13 ISSUE 9

NOVEMBER 2016

Mississippi Restoration Summit

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) hosted the first Mississippi Restoration Summit on November 15 in Biloxi. The day began with the announcement by Governor Phil Bryant of fifteen restoration projects for the coming year.



The projects total more than \$114 million and primarily focus on water quality, marine resources and land acquisition for conservation. The majority of the funds (\$60 million) target improving water quality.

“These projects will continue our efforts to ensure funds are spent in the most effective and strategic ways to restore and enhance our natural resources and our economy following the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill,” Governor Bryant said. “This latest round is another component of our efforts to improve our natural resources for wildlife, for marine life, for sportsmen, for recreation and for beach visitors.”

The projects are funded by three sources: The RESTORE Act (Bucket 1 \$27.34 million and Bucket 3 \$49.8 million), the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (\$16.1 million), and the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (\$21 million). By category, the funding for water quality totals \$60 million, \$27.3 million for marine resources, \$18.3 million for coastal habitat conservation and restoration and \$8.64 million for support of the economy.

RESTORE Act Projects:

Mississippi Gulf Coast Water Quality Improvement Program (Two projects -- \$45 million and \$11 million) -- This program will begin to identify and repair the areas along the coast that are having issues with water quality. With this initial investment, there is an expected decrease in the number of beach advisories.

University of Southern Mississippi Oyster Hatchery (\$7.7 million)– The money will fund the acquisition of an oyster hatchery and research center. The hatchery is state of the art and will be operated by the University of Southern Mississippi.

Pascagoula Oyster Reef Relay and Enhancement (\$3.5 million) – The enhancement will invest money in relaying oysters from unharvestable reefs to harvestable reefs and using the best science to select locations and to maximize oyster production.

North Rail Connector Planning Assistance (\$550,000) -- This project is the number one economic development priority in Jackson County. The funds will pay for planning, strategizing and permitting needs that will move the rail connector forward.

NOARC (\$2.75 million) – The National Oceans and Applications Research Center is designed to create the sky-to-sea market in Mississippi. It will attract new industries for environmental monitoring to the Mississippi Gulf Coast and establish an area for them to demonstrate their technologies.

Salvation Army Center of Hope (\$1.32 million) -- The Center of Hope will bolster workforce development for the Coast. Located in North Gulfport, it will provide activities such as job skills for the labor force so that people have a better opportunity to invest in themselves and their families.

Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center (\$3.52 million) -- The Coliseum and Convention center has the capacity to be a world-class facility and attract larger conference audiences. In order to do this, the coliseum needs to make site improvements. This project will support capacity improvements at the facility.

Compatibility, Coordination, and Restoration Planning (Two projects totaling \$1.8 million) – Funds support of restoration planning.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Projects:

Mississippi Marine Mammal and Turtle Conservation, Recovery and Monitoring Program (\$9.9 million) – This project will invest over \$9.9 million in dolphins and sea turtles and will help its partners lead the Gulf in restoration and research. This project will also help establish Mississippi State University as a leader in marine veterinary science.

It is a partnership among Mississippi State, the University of Southern Mississippi, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.

Coastal Bird Stewardship in Mississippi (\$6.2 million) – This provides \$6.2 million for coastal bird assessment and stewardship of the species and its habitat. Partners are Mississippi State, National Audubon Society, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.

Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) Projects:

Graveline Bay (\$11 million) – Money will be used to purchase key tracts to conserve habitat and invest in restoration at Graveline Bay. The project will protect wildlife for generations to come.

Photos from the Summit:

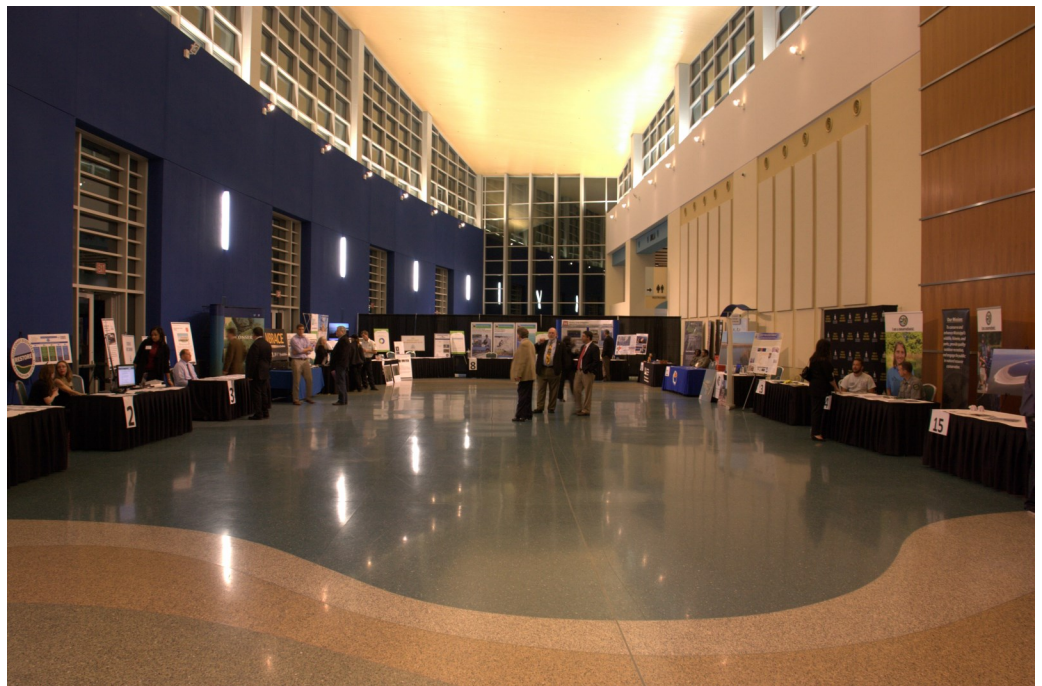
Top: MDEQ Executive Director Gary Rikard opens the evening meeting.

Bottom: the exhibit hall outside the meeting room.

Grand Bay (\$6 million) – This project fulfills the same purpose as the Graveline Bay investment.

Upper Pascagoula River Nutrient Reduction Alternatives (\$4 million) -- An investment of \$4 million will improve water quality on the Pascagoula River, one of the most important rivers in the state and the southeast.

Comprehensive information about all of Mississippi's restoration efforts can be found at www.restore.ms.



Round Island Update

Governor Phil Bryant, along with MDEQ and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR), recently visited the Round Island marsh restoration project.

The project uses dredge material to create a mixture of beach and marsh and will result in an island of about 220 acres. The construction of a sand berm began in April of 2016, and after about four months and 1.1 million cubic yards of sand, the berm was ready to receive dredge spoils from Pascagoula shipping channels.

Beginning November 15, pumping of dredge material through 30,000 linear feet of pipe to Round Island commenced. It is estimated that about 50,000 cubic yards of material a day will be sent to the island with the anticipation of increasing these totals as the dredging progresses. The pace of the dredge will ultimately dictate the overall schedule, but the project is targeted to be completed by the end of January 2017.

The \$21 million project is funded from Round Two of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund awarded to Mississippi and announced by Governor Bryant in November of 2014. Partners for Round Island include MDEQ, MDMR, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Port of Pascagoula.

MDEQ's Gary Rikard with Gov. Bryant and construction staff at Round Island.



Round Island Construction Photos





Beach Outfalls Challenge

MDEQ announced at the Mississippi Restoration Summit that registration for the Beach Outfalls Challenge will begin January 9, 2017.

The challenge is being implemented to address the water quality impact of beach outfalls along the Mississippi Sound by soliciting design ideas and solutions from the public. Individuals, students, companies, and teams can compete to create innovative solutions for untreated stormwater and improve water quality. It is expected that the designs will be implemented on a larger scale across the Mississippi Coast.

Beginning January 9, 2017, until March 15, registrations will be accepted at www.beachoutfallschallenge.org. The top twelve finalists will be announced in May, along with an opportunity to vote on these finalists during the following weeks. More information about the submission and the judging process will be available on the website and on the Challenge's Facebook page: [@BeachOutfallsChallenge](https://www.facebook.com/BeachOutfallsChallenge).

The Beach Outfalls Challenge is a project funded by a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund grant of \$544,600 to MDEQ to improve natural resources following the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.



Mississippi Ozone Results Below the Standard

The 2016 Ozone Season ended October 31 without any counties in Mississippi exceeding the current standard. In 2015, EPA revised the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) value for ozone to 70 parts per billion (ppb). In addition, during the most recent three years of data from 2013 to 2015, all ozone monitors achieved the 2015 ozone NAAQS. All counties in the state continue to be in attainment for EPA's standards.

For select counties the 2016 ozone design values were:

Hancock County: 63 ppb

Harrison County: 67 ppb

Jackson County: 67 ppb

DeSoto County: 64 ppb

MDEQ issues ozone and PM_{2.5} forecasts for the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the Jackson Metropolitan area, and DeSoto County daily April 1 through October 31. This information is available to the public as well as being provided to weather media for inclusion in daily weather reports. For more information and to sign up for the daily forecasts, use the following link: <http://bit.ly/2goqDCN>.

One of MDEQ's ten air monitoring sites.



Irrigation Summit to be Held December 13

The 2016 Mississippi Delta Irrigation Summit will be held on Tuesday, December 13, at the MSU Delta Research and Extension Center Capps Building in Stoneville.



The event will last from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and will include presentations on ways to better manage water resources to achieve both personal water management goals and regional goals for more efficient water use and reduced groundwater pumping.

The event is hosted by the Delta Sustainable Water Resources Task Force.

NetDMR and NPDES e-reporting rule

On October 22, 2015, EPA promulgated the NPDES e-reporting rule that mandates the electronic submittal of all Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) after December 21, 2016. All permittees required to submit DMRs must comply with this rule.

If you have completed all required sampling in compliance with your permit before the above deadline, you may submit your DMRs via mail or you may submit your data using the NetDMR system. **After** the December 2016 deadline, all DMRs must be submitted electronically using NetDMR.

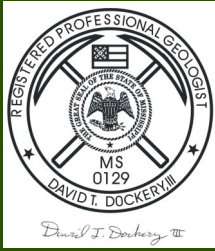
Several NetDMR training classes have been scheduled to help with the transition to electronic reporting. Visit MDEQ's website at <http://www.deq.state.ms.us/> for a complete list of classes and registration information. If you are unable to attend a class, a training video is also available on our website.

For questions or additional information, send an email to netdmr-help@mdeq.ms.gov.

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

MDEQ fielded a team for the tenth year in a row for the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk in Jackson on October 22. The team raised \$4,400 which placed third overall for the event!





USGS Survey Energy Assessment Team Utilizes MDEQ's Core and Sample Library

David T. Dockery III, RPG, Office of Geology

Paul Hackley, Celeste Lohr, and Javin Hatcherian of the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) energy assessment team visited MDEQ's Core and Sample Library in Jackson on November 9 where they collected 45 samples from 20 legacy wells that cut core in the Tuscaloosa Group, especially from the Tuscaloosa marine shale (Figure 1). Their study is to assess the unconventional resources potential of oil production and the sealing properties for carbon sequestration. Unconventional oil and gas production has greatly increased the country's oil and gas reserves and has made the nation less dependent on foreign oil. Domestic production of oil and gas make for a more secure country, thus the need by USGS for a national assessment of the nation's reserves.



Figure 1. Cores from the Tuscaloosa marine shale sampled by the U.S. Geological Survey at MDEQ's Core and Sample Library in Jackson.

Mr. Hackley relayed to us the importance of having access to the MDEQ facility: "Storage and archival of Mississippi's subsurface rock library from oil and gas exploration provides an important service to our agency and others. Without access to your facility and the ability to sample from the rocks stored therein, we could not accomplish our core mission goals."

On November 10, Mr. Hackley gave a presentation on findings from previous core samples taken from the Core and Sample Library at the River Hills Club in Jackson before a monthly meeting of the Mississippi Geological Society (figures 2-3).

The first oil production in Mississippi in 1939 came just before World War II at a critical time in the nation's history when energy was needed for the war effort. Currently, the state's oil production has increased over the last decade with an average production of 68,417 barrels per day in 2015.



Figure 2. Left to right, Javin Hatcherian, Celeste Lohr, and Paul Hackley at the November 10, 2016, meeting of the Mississippi Geological Society.



Figure 3. Paul Hackley, standing upper left, presenting data obtained from MDEQ's Core and Sample Library and elsewhere at the November 10, 2016, meeting of the Mississippi Geological Society (composite image).



MDEQ Environmental Action Links

- Draft permits currently at public notice, <http://opc.deq.state.ms.us/publicnotice.aspx>
- Environmental Permits Division Scheduled Public Hearings, <http://opc.deq.state.ms.us/publichearingheader.aspx>
- Geology Permit Application Public Notice, http://opc.deq.state.ms.us/geology_public_notice.aspx
- Permits and certificates issued in the last 90 days, http://opc.deq.state.ms.us/report_permits.aspx
- General permit coverages issued in the last 90 days, http://opc.deq.state.ms.us/report_gnp_issued.aspx
- Notices of Intent for coverage under a Statewide General permit received by the Environmental Permits Division, http://opc.deq.state.ms.us/report_gnp_notice.aspx
- List of the 401 Water Quality Certifications currently at public notice, http://opc.deq.state.ms.us/report_wqc_public_notice.aspx
- List of the compliance inspections recently conducted, http://opc.deq.state.ms.us/report_eced_tasks.aspx
- Orders issued by the Mississippi Commission on Environmental Quality, http://opc.deq.state.ms.us/report_orders.aspx

Connect with MDEQ

MDEQ Social Media



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Picture of the Month

Nabid nymph

Taken by James Starnes,
Office of Geology

