



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.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

VW Funds 1

New Website 3

**MDEQ Recycler
of the Year** 3

MRC Awards 4

**Turkey Creek
Meeting** 7

**Restoration
Project** 8

**Helicopter Del-
ta Survey** 10

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Environmental News

VOL. 15 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2018

Gov. Bryant Designates MDEQ to Administer VW Trust Funds

State to Receive \$9.8 Million

Gov. Phil Bryant has designated the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to administer the state's portion of the funds resulting from the Volkswagen Diesel Settlement. The state has been allocated \$9,874,414 out of the \$2.7 billion Environmental Mitigation Trust to implement air emissions reduction projects. Each of the states involved in the litigation will receive settlements based on the number of offending vehicles registered in that state. VW established the Mitigation Trust Fund, in part, to settle claims under the Clean Air Act that it sold vehicles with "defeat devices" designed to cheat emissions tests for its diesel vehicles.

"MDEQ has managed a successful Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) program for many years that has reduced diesel emissions statewide. I am confident the agency will administer these funds with the best benefit for the state's air quality and economy," said Bryant.



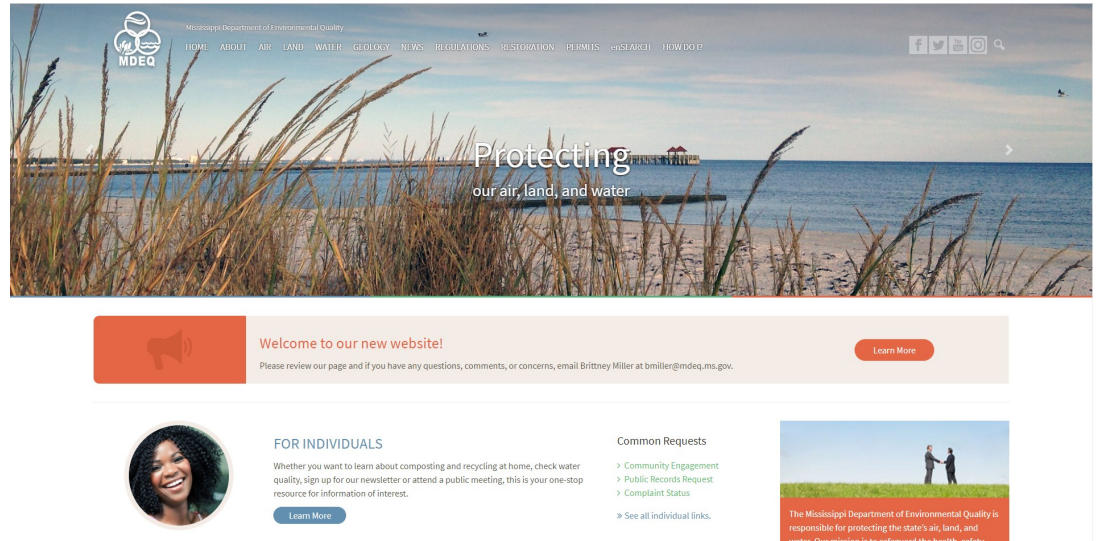
The funds from the trust will be used to fund mitigation projects to replace older diesel emission sources with cleaner technology to reduce excess nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions and improve air quality in Mississippi. Examples of projects could include replacing or modifying vehicles and equipment such as:

- Class 8 local freight trucks and port trucks (large trucks)
- Class 4-8 school buses, shuttle buses, or transit buses
- Railway freight switchers
- Ferries and tugs
- Shorepower for ocean going vessels
- Class 4-7 local freight trucks (medium trucks)
- Airport ground support equipment
- Forklifts and port cargo handling equipment
- Supplementing the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) program

MDEQ is seeking public input on how these funds will be used before it submits a plan to the Mitigation Trust and will soon announce public meeting and public comment opportunities.

More information is available on a [webpage on the agency's website](#). There is also a comment form on the webpage [here](#) and a sign up form for a notification email list [here](#).

New MDEQ Website!



MDEQ's new website launched February 5 with a revamped look and easier navigation. Check it out at www.mdeq.ms.gov.

MDEQ is State Agency Recycler of the Year

MDEQ Executive Director Gary Rikard accepted the Mississippi Recycling Coalition's State Agency Recycler of the Year award from the [Mississippi Recycling Coalition](#) (MRC) at the State Capitol on February 7. Pictured with Rikard are Jennifer Milner, State Recycling Coordinator, and Sarah Kountouris, MRC Board Chair. The full list of award recipients follows on page 4.



Photos

Top: Sarah Kountouris, MRC Board Chair, Hattiesburg Mayor Toby Barker, and Sustainability Officer Nkrumah Frazier.

Bottom: Sarah with Lindsey Abernathy, Associate Director, UM Office of Sustainability.

MRC Announces 2017 Environmental Heroes

The Mississippi Recycling Coalition (MRC) announced the 2017 Environmental Hero Award recipients on February 7 honoring outstanding recycling programs and organizations. Each year, MRC seeks nominations of organizations, businesses, agencies, schools, and local governments that have excelled in their recycling and materials management program efforts.

The **City of Hattiesburg** is the recipient of the 2017 "Local Government Recycler of the Year" Award. The City of Hattiesburg has made great strides in increasing participation among residents in the city's recycling program. The city conducts various outreach activities and programs in area schools and as part of community events throughout the year to promote recycling and educate residents on its many benefits. In addition, the city's Recycling Division under the Public Works Department has put several plans in place to increase recycling rates including working with community and neighborhood organizations, marketing the program, and increasing recycling efforts in the city's departments.



The **University of Mississippi** is the recipient of the "Educational Institution Recycler of the Year" Award. The University conducts several programs and projects which encourage students, faculty, staff and visitors to reduce waste, reuse, and recycle. A campus-wide recycling program collects mixed paper, cardboard, plastics, aluminum, and steel. Recycling stations are provided in all buildings on campus and large roll-off bins are available for the collection of larger amounts of materials. In addition, recyclables are collected during football season as part of the Green Grove Gameday Recycling Program with the help of student volunteers who hand out recycling bags and sort collected materials. The University has operated an on-campus composting facility since 2013, and more than 45 tons of pre-consumer food waste has been diverted from landfills.



Sarah with Lance Walters, PACCAR plant manager.

PACCAR Engine Company is the recipient of the 2017 “Business and Industry Recycler of the Year” Award. PACCAR, in Columbus, has been a zero waste facility since starting production in 2010, and in 2016 was admitted to MDEQ’s enHance Program at the Steward Level. As part of their application for enHance, the company developed a project to reduce the amount of wood waste produced by using plastic returnable containers instead of wooden crates to transport their products. This change enabled PACCAR to reduce the amount of wood waste from over 1,200 tons in 2015 to less than 700 tons in 2017, a 43 percent reduction. In 2017, PACCAR reused or recycled nearly 5,800 tons of materials including wood waste, plastics, scrap metal, and cardboard.



MDEQ is the recipient of the 2017 “State Agency Recycler of the Year” Award. MDEQ has been recycling since the early 1990s, but has recently increased efforts to improve the program to make recycling easier and more convenient for their employees and to help ensure the collection of both a higher quantity and quality of materials. In addition, MDEQ continues to lead and assist other state agencies and institutions with recycling as well as promoting and encouraging recycling throughout the state.

Top: Sarah, Ridgeland Mayor Gene McGee, Jan Richardson, Chair, Keep Ridgeland Beautiful, "Ridgeland Recycle Ranger" (Rachel Collier), Phyllis Parker, Mike McCollum, Public Works Director, and Polly Hammett.

Bottom: Sarah with June Williams, Winona City Clerk.

Keep Ridgeland Beautiful (KRB) is the recipient of the "Non-Profit Organization Recycler of the Year" Award. KRB works with the city, area schools, and other community organizations to educate residents on the importance of recycling through various outreach and education activities and community events. Recently, KRB created a recycling mascot called the Ridgeland Recycle Ranger.



The **City of Winona** is the recipient of the 2017 "New Program Recycler of the Year" Award. The City of Winona started the recycling program in 2016 with one drop-off location consisting of one 16 cubic yard roll-off bin purchased through MDEQ grant funding. This brightly colored bin, with recyclables as cartoon-like characters with happy faces, not only serves to hold materials, but also promotes the program. The local garden club and other community organizations also helped the city promote the new program to residents by conducting presentations at the Public Library and area schools. The city's recycling program was so successful that an additional bin was added to the site.



The MRC is a consortium of recycling companies, local governments, state agencies, and other interested organizations that promote and encourage responsible solid waste management. MDEQ provides staff support to the organization.

Turkey Creek Project Public Meeting

MDEQ is hosting a community meeting about the Habitat Restoration and Conservation in Turkey Creek project on February 27. This project is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund and seeks to conserve important habitat and enhance water quality in the Turkey Creek watershed through habitat and stream conservation and restoration.

Please join MDEQ for a community meeting to learn more about the project and to meet the team of professionals who will be working in the area.

When: Tuesday, February 27, 2018.

Time: Open House 5:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

Public Meeting 6:00 p.m.

Where: Isiah Fredericks Community Center – 3312 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Gulfport, 39501.

For more information contact Melissa Collier at 601-961-5025 or mcollier@mdeq.ms.gov.



Restoration Project Update – Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture Program

The purpose of this program is to create an off-bottom oyster aquaculture program to train and develop a new workforce to diversify the oyster industry on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.



Off-bottom oyster farming is the culture of oysters in some type of mesh container that is held above the seafloor. Oysters grown this way are typically hatchery-reared single set oysters instead of clumps of oysters normally found in the wild. The container provides protection from predators and eliminates burial in sediment. Suspending oysters in the water column improves growth rates due to improved water flow (*Alabama Cooperative Extension System, 2012*).

Diversification of the oyster industry using off-bottom aquaculture techniques to grow oysters has proven very successful for enhancing workforce development and job creation in other states.

The Mississippi program will develop and implement a two-phase program for qualified and interested individuals to learn the ecological, economic, and business components of initiating and maintaining an off-bottom aquaculture operation. Training will be provided in off-bottom oyster aquaculture operations, including business development and aquaculture methodologies, and will result in hands-on training on state-owned farms.

Phase 1 includes classroom and field education on aquaculture, business operations and demonstrations of off-bottom aquaculture techniques, while an optional Phase 2 allows participants a more hands-on opportunity to implement aquaculture methodologies.

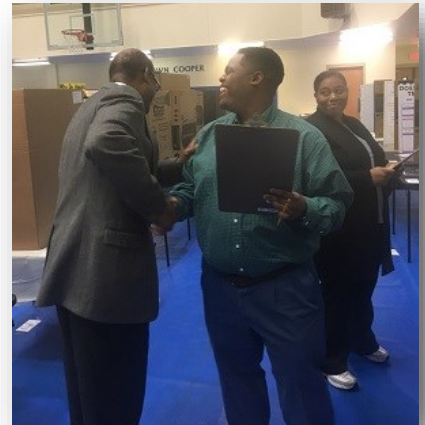
The U.S. Department of the Treasury awarded a grant of \$1.11 million to MDEQ for the program in 2017, and it in turn has issued a grant to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) for implementation. The program was included in the state's Multi-year Implementation Plan and is funded under "Bucket 1" of the RESTORE Act.

MDMR anticipates issuing a call for applications later this spring. For more information please contact Jason Rider at MDMR at 228-523-4037 or Jason.rider@dmr.ms.gov.

Geology Outreach

Science Fair Judge

Jeremy Baugh (center) helped judge a science fair at the New Hope Christian School in Jackson on January 25. Jeremy works in the Office of Geology's Environmental Geology Division.



Gem, Mineral, Fossil, and Jewelry Show

MDEQ Geologists will be on hand for the Gem, Mineral, Fossil, and Jewelry Show sponsored by the Mississippi Gem & Mineral Society on February 24 and 25. This annual event will take place in the Mississippi Trade Mart at the State Fairgrounds in Jackson. Come by and visit the Office of Geology's display booth. More information about the event is available [here](#).

Fossil Road Show

MDEQ Geologists will also be part of the annual Fossil Road Show on March 3 at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science in Jackson. The event begins at 10:00 a.m. and concludes at 3:00 p.m. Bring your finds for the experts to identify. Find out more [here](#).



MDEQ's James Starnes helping a young man identify his treasure at the 2017 Fossil Road Show.



USGS to Collect Data Using Helicopter in Mississippi Delta

Beginning February 21 and running through early March 2018, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) will use a specialized instrument towed beneath a low-flying helicopter to collect data about the Mississippi River Valley Alluvial Aquifer in an area just north of Greenwood. The instrument is contained in a 30-foot long torpedo-shaped tube suspended 100 feet below the helicopter, which will fly at an altitude of 200 feet. The data collected will allow scientists to better understand the properties of geologic layers beneath the land surface. Additional information can be found [here](#).

The shallow alluvial aquifer supplies most of the water for irrigation, aquaculture, and wildlife habitat enhancement in the Delta. Water levels in this aquifer have declined as demand has increased since the 1980s. The Delta Sustainable Water Resources Task Force, led by MDEQ, was formed in 2011 to develop strategies to assure that the Delta will have adequate agricultural water resources for the future.

MDEQ and USGS officials held a briefing for the public on February 20 at the Greenwood-Leflore Airport that included a demonstration of the helicopter rig.



The helicopter-based survey beginning this month north of Greenwood is the first phase of an airborne geophysical survey of the entire Mississippi Alluvial Plain, which includes portions of Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana,



Tennessee, and Missouri. Data gathered will be used to improve the USGS regional water availability computer model, which will assist state and local water management agencies like MDEQ and the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Joint Water Management District (YMD) in making decisions regarding the region's water supply. The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has received funding for a groundwater-to-groundwater transfer pilot project to be constructed by the Vicksburg District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in the Shellmound area later this year. This project is one of several alternatives the Task Force is investigating that could potentially contribute to reducing declines in the aquifer. The helicopter-based survey data will be useful in the design of this pilot project.

In 2017, the USGS, working with ARS, YMD, and MDEQ, installed groundwater monitoring wells and collected data at the Bush farm near Money. The data collected in that project will also be used in the design of the groundwater-to-groundwater pilot project. John Bush said, "In collecting and analyzing the data on our farm, the USGS team was easy to work with and careful not to disturb our operations. I am confident that this helicopter-based data collection will go smoothly, and I am convinced that the work is important to the future of agriculture in the Delta."

Kay Whittington, Director of MDEQ's Office of Land and Water Resources, said: "We are very fortunate that this work is beginning in Mississippi. The data collected will help us better understand the alluvial aquifer. Accurate information is critical for the evaluation of alternatives to provide sustainable water resources for irrigation, aquaculture, and wildlife enhancement."

The Task Force consists of Delta Council, Delta F.A.R.M., MDEQ, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, USACE, and YMD. The USGS, the Mississippi State University Delta Research and Extension Center, and ARS have coordinated with the Task Force on studies and projects.



SAVE THE DATE: enHance Workshop Scheduled for April 5

The enHance environmental stewardship workshop and awards luncheon in downtown Jackson will be held Thursday, April 5, 2018, beginning at 8:00 a.m. This annual event is sponsored by MDEQ and the Mississippi Manufacturers Association, and this year's workshop will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the program.

The workshop will provide information concerning the principles of environmental stewardship, lean manufacturing, waste reduction through best management practices, presentations, and case studies. The workshop is also a great opportunity to network with Mississippi's environmental stewardship leaders.

When: Thursday, April 5, 2018, 8:00 a.m.

Where: Jackson Marriott Downtown, 200 East Amite Street, Jackson, 39201.

Register [here](#).

For more information, contact Mr. Khairy Abu-Salah with MDEQ at KAbuSalah@mdeq.ms.gov and 601-961-5284 or Mr. Mark Williams at mwilliams@mdeq.ms.gov and 601-961-5304.

More information about the program is available at www.enhance.ms.



2017 workshop presentation from Nissan.



MDEQ Environmental Action Links

- [Draft permits currently at public notice](#)
- [Environmental Permits Division Scheduled Public Hearings](#)
- [Geology Permit Application Public Notice](#)
- [Permits and certificates issued in the last 90 days](#)
- [General permit coverages issued in the last 90 days](#)
- [Notices of Intent for coverage under a Statewide General permit received by the Environmental Permits Division](#)
- [List of the 401 Water Quality Certifications currently at public notice](#)
- [List of the compliance inspections recently conducted](#)
- [Orders issued by the Mississippi Commission on Environmental Quality](#)



Connect with MDEQ



Mississippi Department of Environmental
Quality

Post Office Box 2261

Jackson, Mississippi 39225

601-961-5171

<http://www.mdeq.ms.gov/>

Picture of the Month

Bywy Creek in Choctaw
County.

Taken by Shawn
Clark, Surface Water
Division.

