



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
PHIL BRYANT, GOVERNOR

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
GARY C. RIKARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MDEQ To Host Resource Summits Next Week

(JACKSON, Miss.) -- The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) will host a series of Resource Summits on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday next week across the three coastal counties. The summits will focus on specific resources identified by the public during the Community Conversations held by MDEQ last fall.

The Resource Summits are a part of a \$3.6 million planning grant awarded to the State of Mississippi from the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This multi-phase, three-year project will develop a comprehensive plan for restoring and conserving Mississippi's coastal natural resources.

"These Resource Summits are an opportunity to pick up where we left off from the Community Conversations, and they will give the public a great opportunity to have a detailed and in-depth conversation about specific priority resources," said Gary Rikard, MDEQ Executive Director.

As part of the planning process the Community Conversations allowed local residents to voice individual values, ideal characteristics, and visions for their communities as participants identified priority restoration resources.

Rikard said the three priority resources identified by the public during the Community Conversations were Water Quality, Land Conservation, and Living Resources. The summits will also provide the public with an opportunity to see how the Mississippi Comprehensive Ecosystem Restoration Tool (MCERT) works, and how it will be utilized

in the restoration process.

“Valuable information will be shared by local, state, and federal experts about each resource area, and then we will explain how MCERT works along with roundtable discussions. This will be a real hands on opportunity for the public to see how their input affects the restoration process through MCERT,” said Marc Wyatt, Director of MDEQ’s Office of Oil Spill Restoration.

- The Land Conservation Summit will be held in Jackson County, Tuesday, February 24th at the Ocean Springs Civic Center from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a meet and greet beginning at 5:30 p.m.
- The Living Resources Summit will be held in Hancock County, Thursday, February 26th, at the Bay St. Louis Community Hall from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a meet and greet beginning at 5:30 p.m.
- The Water Quality Summit will be held in Harrison County Saturday, February 28th, at the Handsboro Community Center in Gulfport from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. with a meet and greet beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Further information about the Resource Summits and other oil spill restoration resources can be found at www.restore.ms.

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