



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grand Bay NERR Hosts Moss Point 4th-graders for B-Wet Watershed Adventure

BILOXI, Miss. — The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' (DMR) Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) hosted Moss Point fourth-graders this week for a watershed and estuary adventure. The adventure was the third in a series of educational adventures funded through a grant entitled "Connecting Kids to Coastal Watersheds," awarded to the Grand Bay NERR by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Bay-Watershed Education and Training Program (B-WET).

All Moss Point fourth-graders are taking part in the program, which aims to teach students to be "watershed wise." Watersheds are the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place. The program takes students into the field to teach them about watersheds and coastal habitats and how to keep them healthy.

From March 22-March 24, 75 students visited the Grand Bay NERR and split into four groups that rotated between stations to learn about watershed and polluted run-off; cast-netting/dip-netting; water quality; and recreational fishing and stewardship. Students learned about the aquatic creatures they can find in watersheds, how to fish and the regulations they have to follow.

"Connecting Kids to Coastal Watersheds" is a four-part adventure series, which began earlier in the 2010-2011 school year. With the help of a Watershed Harmony puppet show, the first adventure taught students what watersheds are and how to protect them. The second adventure took students to the beachfront and marshes in Ocean Springs to explore the habitat. The third, at the Grand Bay NERR, took them into estuaries to learn about aquatic creatures and recreational opportunities. The fourth adventure, which begins in April, will take students on a boat ride through waterways of the Pascagoula River. At the end of the school year, the fourth-graders will have a watershed festival and teach what they've learned to third-graders.

The Grand Bay NERR is located near the community of Pecan in southeast Jackson County and includes wetlands and waterways from Bang's Lake to the Alabama state line. A major goal of the Reserve is to provide for research coordination and dissemination of scientific data to the community and local decision-makers to provide sound information on which to base management decisions.

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The 18,000-acre Reserve is home to several rare or endangered plant and animal species and serves as an essential nursery habitat for numerous important commercial and recreational fish species. The Reserve is managed through state-federal partnership between the DMR and its local partners—Mississippi Secretary of State’s Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mississippi State University and the Nature Conservancy—and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov. Visit the NERR online at www.grandbaynerr.org.

Photos courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources



Cutline (11-31-LDJ Photo A): NERR Education Specialist Rick Ranew, right, shows Moss Point fourth-grader Lamiracle Apple White how to throw a cast net during a fishing adventure held at the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve on March 24.

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Cutline (11-31-LDJ Photo A): Moss Point fourth-grader Lamiracle Patterson, foreground, and classmates fish off a pier in Bayou Heron and the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.



Cutline (11-31-LDJ Photo C): Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Education Coordinator Jennifer Buchanan shows Moss Point fourth-graders a model of a watershed and explains how pollutants can run off into the watershed.



Cutline (11-31-LDJ Photo D): Moss Point fourth-grader Zyairria Davenport is guided by Sheila Brown of the Marine Education Center (MEC) as she drops a Secchi disk in the water to measure water clarity.

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