



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILOXI, Miss. – On Friday, December 14, 2012 starting at 5 PM you are invited to join the staff of the Reserve and their special guest, Mr. Jeff Ehmen, an Education Programs Specialist at the NASA George C. Marshall Space Flight Center in AL, for an evening of **Grazing and Gazing Under The Stars** at the Grand Bay Coastal Resources Center. Mr. Ehmen has been an amateur astronomer since he was 7 and has turned his hobby into a career. Our event will be held on one of the two peak viewing nights for the **Geminids Meteor Shower**, one of the largest meteor showers of the year. We will have amateur astronomers on hand to help you learn how to view the meteors, identify constellations, use a telescope, navigate by the stars and use your smart phone apps to help locate the constellations.

Additionally free bowls of chili and soft drinks will be served from 5 pm to 6 pm to get you in the mood to lay back and enjoy viewing the night sky. Later in the evening we will be offering star cookies, hot chocolate and coffee. Be sure to bring a lawn chair and a headlamp/flashlight with a red light option. Additional items that you might want to bring (but are not required) include a telescope, pair of binoculars, camera, blanket and bug spray. This event will go on rain or shine. If it is cloudy, we have plenty of hands-on astronomy activities planned inside to keep you engaged for the evening!

The Grand Bay Coastal Resources Center is located at 6005 Bayou Heron Road near Moss Point, Mississippi. For directions, please visit our website at www.grandbaynerr.org. Although pre-registration is not required, we do encourage you to call the Reserve at 228.475.7047 to sign up for this event.

The Grand Bay NERR is located 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.

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 MDMR 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,

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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 MDMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Photos Courtesy of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Photo caption 1: Mr. Ehman demonstrating is astronomy skills.



