



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grand Bay NERR Receives Outstanding Research Partner Award

BILOXI, Miss. – The University of South Alabama Faculty Senate has honored the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) with its Outstanding Research Partner Award at the annual awards banquet held April 13 in Fairhope, Ala. The Grand Bay NERR and Weeks Bay NERR were jointly nominated and selected to receive the prestigious award.

Leigh Minchew, chair of USA's Faculty Senate Planning & Development Committee said, "On behalf of the University of South Alabama Faculty Senate and Dr. Phil Carr, USA Faculty Senate President, I would like to congratulate you on your nomination and selection for the USA Faculty Senate's Outstanding Research Partner Award. You and your agency have provided direct support to the research mission of USA faculty through financial, in-kind, personnel, expertise, office space, consulting and other means."

David Ruple, manager of the Grand Bay NERR said, "One of the most important objectives of the Grand Bay science program is to assist and help facilitate the efforts of visiting researchers at the Reserve. Assisting others in their efforts greatly enhances our understanding of coastal resources. We are very appreciative that the faculty at the University of South Alabama recognized our staff for these efforts. We are especially proud of the fact that researchers from across the country have utilized our site as a platform for their studies."

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 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. For more information on the Reserve and directions to the Grand Bay Coastal Resources Center please go to their website at www.grandbaynerr.org.

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.

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PHOTO CAPTION: Accepting their awards, from left, are Eric Brundun, Weeks Bay NERR, Scott Phipps, Weeks Bay NERR, David Ruple, Manager of the Grand Bay NERR and Kelly Major, one of the USA faculty members who jointly nominated the Grand Bay NERR and Weeks Bay NERR for the University of South Alabama Faculty Senate’s Community Partnership Award for Outstanding Research Partner.

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