

NEWS RELEASE

MS Dept. of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi 39530



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grand Bay NERR creates video series for National Estuaries Week

BILOXI, Miss. – In years past, the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) would celebrate National Estuaries Day with an event called “Seaside with a Scientist.” The event would feature a boat ride bringing participants into the field giving them an up-close understanding of the estuary, as well as meeting Grand Bay NERR scientists and learning about the work done at the reserve.

However, with COVID-19 changing plans for many, the Grand Bay NERR has taken this opportunity to bring “Seaside with a Scientist” to many more people than they have before.

A video series of “Seaside with a Scientist” is being developed by Grand Bay NERR staff featuring many shots of the estuary, both aerial and close up, and highlights the scientists working in the field and data they collect in different estuary habitats.

“The program will give participants a virtual outdoor adventure on the water and an opportunity to learn about Mississippi’s coastal habitats and critters, as well as a view into the science we do at the Grand Bay NERR,” said Dr. Ayesha Gray, director for the Grand Bay NERR. “There will be a series of 15-minute videos we will post to our YouTube channel. For National Estuaries Week, which is Sept. 19-26 this year, we will post a new episode each day to our Facebook page inviting the public to view the videos. We will monitor our posts and answer any questions posted in the comments.”

These videos will become part of the Grand Bay NERR’s permanent education and outreach program. Staff are currently working to partner with schools across Mississippi to develop lessons associated with these videos.

“As part of the program, the teacher will show the video and teach the lesson. Our educators can then engage with the classrooms remotely via video conferencing to talk with the students and answer questions,” added Gray.

For 20 years the Grand Bay NERR, a state-federal partnership which is managed by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, has been working with local schools to engage students in science and learning about the estuary. Due to COVID-19, staff had to find a different way to

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expand their reach and continue educating students in the state of Mississippi about our coastal waters.

"Programming is being developed that can be available in every school in Mississippi from Jackson to Vicksburg to Pontotoc, and that is our silver lining," said MDMR Executive Director Joe Spraggins. "We want to share these amazing coastal habitats with as many Mississippians as we can, and through adversity and technology, we have found a new way."

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Estuaries Week is a celebration of incredible ecosystems and the benefits estuaries provide, including recreational opportunities, which are especially important to physical and mental health. The opportunities in the National Estuarine Research Reserves, parks and other outdoor spaces would not be possible without coastal heroes, who report to duty keeping these spaces maintained and safe.

"We hope we reach more people than ever before for National Estuaries Week and this becomes our time to launch into a virtual world where everyone can experience something new, get excited about science and learning, and understand why conservation of our coastal habitats is important," added Spraggins. "We also hope that Mississippians far and wide will get inspired to come and visit the Grand Bay NERR."

The Grand Bay NERR, which contains approximately 18,000 acres of land, was established in 1999 and is located in Jackson County. To view the video series during National Estuaries Week, visit [youtube.com/channel/UCD3m5hKRgMOWeNEe3ootrqA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD3m5hKRgMOWeNEe3ootrqA). For more information about the Grand Bay NERR, visit their website at grandbaynerr.org/.

Photos courtesy MS Department of Marine Resources

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 dmr.ms.gov.

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