

# NEWS RELEASE

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



*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## ***Grand Bay NERR receives grant from National Park Foundation***

BILOXI, Miss. – The Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Jackson County is one of 186 federal sites selected to receive a 2015 field trip grant from the National Park Foundation, the official charity of America’s national parks.

The \$650 grant provides funding to the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast and Jackson County to transport all fourth-grade club members to the Grand Bay NERR this summer to have a fun-filled “Estuary Adventure to Remember.”

This grant, part of the Foundation’s “Open Outdoors for Kids” program, supports the White House youth initiative, “Every Kid in a Park.”

“We are so excited to be part of the “Every Kid in a Park” initiative this year,” said Ayesha Gray, director of the Mississippi Department of Resources’ Grand Bay NERR. “This summer we will be introducing more than 250 urban fourth graders to a variety of outdoor adventures at our reserve. We hope these children will learn they can have fun outdoors, while doing their part to protect nature in the coastal preserves, reserves and parks that are located near or within their communities.”

This summer, the boys and girls will visit the NERR and participate in a variety of onsite activities, such as hiking, fishing, birding, wetlands discovery and a bayou discovery tour. Additionally, the children will rotate through a variety of hands-on stations, each conducted by an experienced educator, researcher and/or volunteer to learn how to appreciate and conserve estuaries.

“It is inspiring to see the National Park Foundation and many other partners step up to support our goal of getting fourth graders and their families into parks, public lands and waters that belong to all Americans,” said Sally Jewell, U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

“These generous grants will ensure children across the country have an opportunity to experience the great outdoors in their community while developing a lifelong connection to our nation’s land, water and wildlife.”

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NPF grants have made it possible for more than 400,000 students to visit national parks and other public lands and waters.

"We want to help people everywhere, from all backgrounds, discover how national parks, forests, wildlife refuges and other public lands and waters are relevant to their lives," said Will Shafroth, president of the NPF. "The best way to do this is to give people the opportunity to experience them firsthand. Through our grants that provide funding for transportation and in-park learning, we are able to connect youth and their families to these special places and inspire people across the country to find their park, which, in turn, can foster a lifelong connection to all that public lands and waters have to offer."

The NERR is managed through a state-federal partnership between the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources 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 [dmr.ms.gov](http://dmr.ms.gov).

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