



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
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News Release

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13-9-SLP
Feb. 1, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grant to Help Fund Deer Island Restoration Project

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) has received a \$55,040 grant from the Gulf of Mexico Community-based Restoration Partnership (GCRP) to help fund part of the Deer Island Restoration Project. The grant will be matched by MDMR and will be used to create a living shoreline 10 feet by 1,600 feet on the north side of Deer Island, just west of Grand Bayou. The Deer Island Restoration Project is part of an ongoing effort to restore Deer Island to its original size prior to Hurricane Katrina.

The GCRP is a multi-year, regional partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Gulf Ecological Management Sites (GEMS) Program, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) and the Gulf of Mexico Foundation (GMF). The purpose of this Partnership is to strengthen the conservation efforts by supporting on-the-ground habitat restoration of real property benefiting living marine resources and fostering local stewardship of the sites.

Volunteer organizations such as Hands On Mississippi, Mississippi Habitat Stewards Program, Mississippi State Extension Service Master Naturalist Volunteers, Coastal Conservation Association and Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District Earth Team will provide the labor to complete the project.

One-hundred-sixty coconut fiber coir logs 20 inches in diameter by 10 feet long will be placed along the marked shoreline. Volunteers will create 8,000 bags out of one-inch mesh by 24-inch width poultry netting. The bags will be filled with oyster shell using MDMR equipment and a conveyor belt offered for use from Wayne Eldridge. An estimated 320 cubic yards of oyster shell will be purchased from Crystal Seas Seafood. The bags will be transported to the site by the MDMR vessel *Conservationist*. MDMR staff along with volunteers will use MDMR boats to transfer the bags off the *Conservationist* to the site. Bags of recycled oyster shell will be placed along the seaward side of the coir logs 10 feet wide by 1,600 feet long.

The coir logs and oyster shell should reduce erosion along the shoreline and create an intertidal oyster reef. The poultry netting will eventually rust away leaving oyster reef without exposed wire.

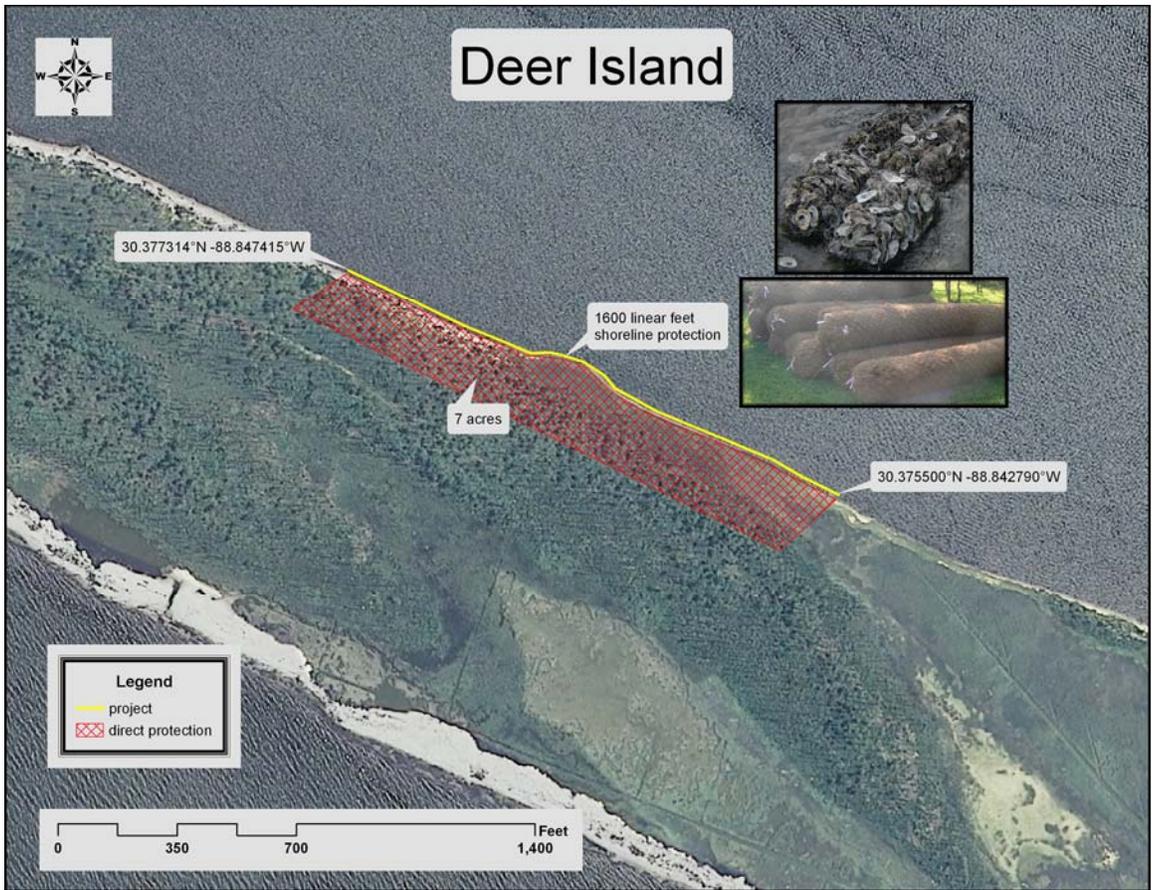
The initial deployment of oyster shell is planned for early March 2013.

The University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory's Marine Education Center (MEC) will help educate Sea Camp participants and provide them with an introduction to the Deer Island Restoration Project. The MEC promotes coastal stewardship through educational programming

for individuals of all ages. They provide hands-on marine education opportunities to better educate local residents about their coastal ecosystem.

Deer Island is a GEMS site, which is part of a program developed in coordination with the EPA and the Gulf of Mexico Program to acquire information about coastal wetland sites and make them accessible to the public through the Internet. The MDMR management team for the Mississippi GEMS Program are Jeff Clark, site manager; Rhonda Price, coordinator; Scott Gordon, MDMR Shellfish Bureau director; and Marty Jones, MDMR Marine Fisheries Scientist and project grantee; Gulf of Mexico Foundation (GMF) Restoration Program Manager Ryan Fikes and GMF Executive Director Quenton Dokken, corresponding project grantor.

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 MDMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.



13-9-SLP (A): An aerial view of Deer Island shows the restoration project and a close up of the coconut fiber coir logs which will be used to reduce erosion and create an inter-tidal oyster reef.



13-9-SLP (B): This photo of the north side of Deer Island shows the site of the restoration project which will create 10 feet by 1,600 feet of living shoreline.

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