

NEWS RELEASE

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21-51-CWS
October 4, 2021

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NOAA awards funding to study water quality in the Mississippi Sound estuary

BILOXI, Miss. – The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recently awarded a total of \$126,646 to a team of managers and scientists collaborating on a research plan to develop a science-based tool for reducing critical uncertainties to support management of the Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama Coastal System (LMACS), with particular attention to water quality and oyster habitat.

Because Mississippi's historically productive oyster fishery has been declining since Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and has remained closed the past two years, resource managers have faced difficulties in deciding upon management actions. The future of the resource is complicated by major uncertainties, which include chronic coastal erosion and acute freshwater inputs from Bonnet Carré Spillway releases.

The team working on this project is trying to find effective solutions developed in coordination with efforts that include Louisiana's Coastal Restoration and Protection Authority Coastal Master Plan, Alabama's Coastal Plan, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program Mobile District and others.

The project is a first step toward building Mississippi's capacity to engage with Louisiana and Alabama in managing the Mississippi Sound estuary, which spans the three state LMACS.

The project, which began this month, will end in August 2022. An application plan will be developed to transition the team's research into implementation by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) and its partners.

MDMR Director of Ecological Restoration George Ramseur serves as lead investigator for the team. Natural resource managers are Jon Hemming of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Justin McDonald of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jim Pahl of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, and Will Underwood of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The project team is Anna Linhoss of Auburn University, Soupy Dalyander and Mike Miner of the Water Institute of the Gulf and Paul F. Mickle of Northern Gulf Institute.

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