

NEWS RELEASE

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eric Clark Coastal Preserve dedicated in Jackson County

BILOXI, Miss. – In April, the state Legislature passed a law creating the Secretary of State Eric Clark Coastal Preserve. This act recognized Clark’s successful efforts to permanently preserve natural lands on the Gulf Coast for public use. Clark served as Mississippi’s Secretary of State from 1996-2008.

Last week, this 900-acre preserve in Gautier was officially dedicated. The event was held by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR), led by Executive Director Joe Spraggins and Secretary of State Michael Watson. They spoke at the dedication, as did Senator David Blount, the lead author of the bill which created the preserve.

As Secretary of State, Eric Clark was responsible for overseeing management of more than 1.3 million acres of state-owned land, including 16th section lands for the benefit of the public schools. He also was trustee of the public trust tidelands on the Gulf Coast. In this role, Clark worked to balance economic development and preservation of the natural environment. He spearheaded the state’s acquisition of 16,000 acres of endangered coastal wetlands for permanent public use. These lands included Deer Island and the 900-acre tract that is now the Eric Clark Coastal Preserve. This tract features seven walking trails that total nearly two and one-half miles.

The dedication ceremony was attended by Clark’s wife Karan, several state legislators, employees of the MDMR, past and current employees of the Secretary of State’s Office and other interested citizens.

CUTLINE: Eric and Karan Clark attend the dedication of the Secretary of State Eric Clark Coastal Preserve in Jackson County.

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