



*Grand Bay National Estuarine  
Research Reserve*

*Volunteer  
Handbook*



November 2010

# *Table of Contents*

<b>Directions to the Reserve .....</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Welcome and Thank You .....</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Volunteer Interest Form .....</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Emergency Contact Form .....</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Release from Liability Form .....</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>About Grand Bay NERR .....</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Core Programs of the Grand Bay NERR .....</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
<b>Volunteer Position Descriptions</b>	
Research Volunteer.....	<b>Page 11</b>
Education Volunteer .....	<b>Page 11</b>
Stewardship Volunteer .....	<b>Page 12</b>
Administrative Volunteer.....	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>Volunteer Policies:</b>	
Qualifications and Application Process .....	<b>Page 13</b>
Volunteer Duties and Expectations .....	<b>Page 13</b>
Duty of Grand Bay NERR to Volunteers .....	<b>Page 13</b>
Benefits of Volunteering at Grand Bay NERR .....	<b>Page 14</b>
Volunteer Orientation and Job Training .....	<b>Page 14</b>
Grievance and Discipline Policy .....	<b>Page 14</b>
Volunteer Policy on Safety .....	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>Grand Bay NERR Volunteer Survey .....</b>	<b>Page 16</b>
<b>Emergency Contacts .....</b>	<b>Page 17</b>

# *Directions to Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve from I-10*

From I-10 take exit 75 on to Franklin Creek Road. Turn Right on Franklin Creek Road and a Right on Highway 90 where they intersect. From Highway 90 W take the first left (1.3 miles down) onto Pecan Road. A half mile down Pecan Road turn onto Bayou Herron Road and, cross the railroad tracks. The Coastal Resources Center will be about a half mile down Bayou Heron on the right.

See you there!

6005 Bayou Heron Rd.  
Moss Point MS 39562

Questions?  
Contact Stevie Lewis  
[volunteernerr@gmail.com](mailto:volunteernerr@gmail.com)  
228 245 7047

# *Welcome and Thank You*

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. I would like to take a moment to thank you for choosing to volunteer with us. Whether you are greeting guests from the front desk or are in a boat collecting water samples with our scientists, as a volunteer you act as a link between visitors and the reserve. To those who stop in, your presence here is a welcoming sign and represents the principle that, here, there is something to be people care about.

Please feel free to approach me about any thoughts, questions or concerns you have. I invite your ideas and feedback. As a volunteer myself, I understand the commitment you make in donating your time. I would like to emphasize that through your service, not only are you helping us, you also helping to share the wonderful resources of the Grand Bay Reserve with others. Finally I hope you find your time here a rewarding experience.

Thank you for your time, and your energy, and thank you in advance for your service.

Sincerely,

Stevie Lewis  
GBNERR Volunteer Coordinator



# *Grand Bay NERR Volunteer*

## *Interest Form*

NAME (last, first): \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

BEST TIMES TO CALL: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have time constraints, please list the dates and times you are available:

Please check areas where you are interested in volunteering:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive Species Control | <input type="checkbox"/> Event Staffing                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planting and Gardening   | <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting Research            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds Projects         | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation and Exhibit Aid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing Visitor Center  | <input type="checkbox"/> Education Programs            |

Other Interests:

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Additional Comments:

Grand Bay NERR  
6005 Bayou Heron Rd  
Moss Point MS 93562

Stevie Lewis  
[volunteernerr@gmail.com](mailto:volunteernerr@gmail.com)  
(228) 475 7047



# *Grand Bay Emergency Contact Form*

**NAME (last, first):** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAILING ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY, STATE, ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT**

**Name and Relationship:**

**Phone number(s):**

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Questions? Please contact Stevie Lewis

[volunteernerr@gmail.com](mailto:volunteernerr@gmail.com)

228 475 7047



**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES**  
1141 Bayview Avenue  
Biloxi, MS 39530

**RELEASE FROM LIABILITY FOR DEATH OR BODILY INJURY**

In consideration of being offered passage in any airplane, boat, or vehicle belonging to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, I, the undersigned, do hereby waive for myself and for my estate, any rights to claims for damages, incident to death or any bodily injuries whatsoever, that may result from riding in, embarking, disembarking, or being on board any airplane, boat, or vehicle belonging to said Department. This waiver of damages for death or bodily injury shall apply likewise to any minor child (under 21 years of age) for whom I have legal responsibility.

This instrument releases the State of Mississippi, the Department of Marine Resources and all employees of the State and of the Department of Marine Resources, from liability for death or bodily injury to the undersigned or to minors for whom I am legally responsible, as a result of riding in an airplane, boat, or vehicle of the Department of Marine Resources.

Names \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_  
Names of Minors \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This instrument shall not serve to reduce or negate in any way legal insurance of Worker's Compensation claims for policies held by the State of Mississippi.

I have read the above instrument and fully understand its intent.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESSED: \_\_\_\_\_

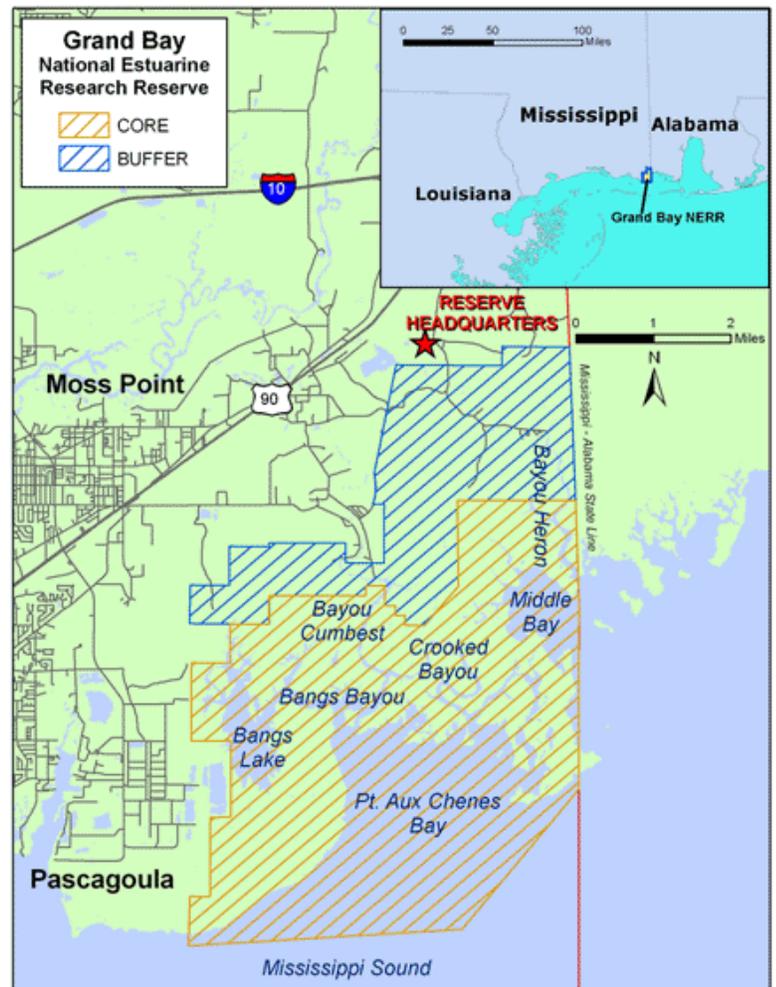
# *About Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve*

Grand Bay NERR is one of 27 sites across the country that together, make up the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. These reserves were established for long-term research, monitoring, education and stewardship, and provide excellent opportunities for the study of coastal ecosystems.

Designated in 1999, the Grand Bay NERR is a state and federal partnership between the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Partnerships of the Grand Bay NERR also extend to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mississippi Secretary of State, The Nature Conservancy and several state run universities. Together these agencies help to establish the programs and facilities of Grand Bay NERR.

The Grand Bay NERR boundaries encompass 18,448 acres of protected area on the Mississippi-Alabama state line. Seventy-five percent of the property located within the reserve's boundaries is owned by public agencies. The federal portion of the reserve is made up of some of the lands that fall within the Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge (see boundary map). This national refuge was established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the early 1990's to protect the nation's last and largest remnant of wetland pine savanna habitat.

The Grand Bay NERR hosts a variety of ecologically important habitats including cypress swamps,



freshwater marshes, fire-maintained pine savannas, estuarine salt marshes and salt flats. The reserve protects habitats for many species ranging from those protected and endangered, to those commercially and recreationally important.

Alongside the biological importance of the Grand Bay NERR is the unique cultural heritage of the area. Archeological evidence indicates that the lands within the Grand Bay NERR were occupied as early as 4,500 years ago. Early aboriginal people probably utilized the waters for fishing and the adjacent lands for hunting, gathering and refuge. These theories are supported by the numerous earth and shell middens that have been located within the reserve. Recent civilizations have constructed homes along the bayous, and continue to utilize the waterways for commercial and recreational fishing and boating.

A new asset to the Grand Bay NERR is the newly constructed Coastal Resource Center. The facility was opened and dedicated on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. It was built to meet the growing needs of the reserve. The building itself emphasizes education, research and stewardship with its classrooms, lab facilities and green design. In many ways, the building is an educational tool promoting the mission of the reserve: to conduct research, monitor and educate decision making and proper resource management.

The Grand Bay NERR is a valuable community asset. The rich biodiversity and cultural heritage are the reasons the NERR exists today. Understanding, protecting, and educating about the resources of the Grand Bay will help us enjoy and appreciate this beautiful area for many years to come.



# *Core Programs of the Grand Bay NERR*

***Education:*** an integrated program of life-long learning designed to educate a variety of audiences on the importance of wisely caring for estuarine resources. In our education programs, we pass on information gathered by our scientists and other researchers to our audiences through the use of hands-on learning methods both inside classrooms and out in the field.

***Stewardship:*** activities at Grand Bay NERR are designed to demonstrate best management practices that other resource professionals, local decision-makers, and the general public can apply in their own communities. The components of the stewardship program at Grand Bay NERR include monitoring, management and restoration activities.

***Research:*** The goal of the Grand Bay NERR Research program is to conduct and facilitate studies which contribute to a better understanding of the ecology of the area and ultimately lead to solutions of problems associated with coastal management. The research program conducted by the reserve's research staff is made up of two major components: (1) the System-wide Monitoring Program and (2) the Graduate Research Fellowship Program.



***Costal Training Program:*** The intent of CTP is to identify and fill gaps in coastal resource management training opportunities by providing practical science-based information, tools, and training to coastal resource managers. The program targets coastal decision-makers and provides opportunities to create new and enhance existing interagency partnerships in an effort to implement a coordinated approach to coastal resource management training along the north-central Gulf Coast.

# *Volunteer Position Descriptions*

## *Research Volunteer*

**Qualifications:** This position is available for someone who has experience in a lab, in the field, in data collection and data entry.

**Schedule:** There is a time commitment of one to two work days a week in the lab or as needed in the field.

**Other:** Specific job descriptions will be created for each new research volunteer and will be adjusted based on experience, interest and our research need.

### **Example Research Volunteer Opportunities:**

- Invasive species mapping
- Fish Sampling and measuring
- Nutrient sampling and water quality monitoring
- Bird monitoring
- Data entry
- Diamondback Terrapin monitoring

## *Education Volunteer*

**Qualifications:** Must work well with people. It is helpful to have some naturalist training.

**Schedule:** As needed for educational programs.

### **Example Education Volunteer Opportunities:**

- Help create educational materials
- Lead tours of the building
- Lead naturalist walks outside
- Help with events and tabling

## *Stewardship Volunteer*

**Qualifications:** A majority of the stewardship volunteer work is labor intensive. Stewardship volunteers should be physically fit for lifting, hiking, and other physically intensive work.

**Schedule:** Stewardship volunteer work hours are based on the need of the tasks outlined and agreed upon.

### **Example Stewardship Volunteer Opportunities:**

- Treating invasive species
- Planting and weeding
- Trail maintenance
- Roadside cleanup
- Boat maintenance



## *Administrative Volunteer*



**Qualifications:** Must work well with people. Must be organized.

**Schedule:** Flexible, but Administrative Volunteers are most helpful on Saturdays.

### **Example Administrative Volunteer**

#### **Opportunities:**

- Help to create and update exhibits
- Welcome visitors from the information desk
- Help to organize materials for seminars
- Organize and inventory resource library

# *Volunteer Policies*

## **Qualifications and Application Process:**

- Be at least 21 years of age or have a guardian's signature on the Volunteer form and the Release from Liability forms.
- Complete a volunteer interest form.
- Read the Volunteer Handbook.
- Complete informal interview with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Sign the Release from Liability forms.
- Receive a Volunteer Orientation and training related to your volunteer duties.

## **Volunteer Duties and Expectations:**

- Work effectively with the public, other volunteers and staff members.
- Maintain an open mind, and show a willingness to learn and try new things.
- Maintain a professional demeanor.
- Show commitment to your volunteer project and fulfill the number of hours required for your volunteer position.
- Notify the Volunteer Coordinator when unable to report for assignment.
- Record volunteer hours in volunteer log.
- Maintain open communication with the Volunteer Coordinator and other supervisors.
- Give adequate notice if resigning from a volunteer position.
- Complete an exit survey and/or interview with the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Duty of Grand Bay NERR to Volunteers:**

- Clearly define volunteer roles and tasks.
- Make assignments complementary to skills and interests of each volunteer.
- Provide proper training and supervision.
- Listen and respond to volunteer feedback.
- Offer fair and non-discriminating treatment.

## **Benefits of Volunteering at Grand Bay NERR**

- Training and information on coastal aquatic life and environments.
- Opportunity to gain valuable work skills and experiences.
- Recorded volunteer hours which are regarded as professional experience.
- Enhanced professional skills.
- Appreciation from the staff.
- Network, personally and professionally.
- Attend educational training opportunities.
- References for future jobs.



### **Volunteer Orientation and Job Training:**

All volunteers will receive orientation to the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve before beginning volunteer hours. This training aims to equip volunteers with knowledge about the reserve so they become comfortable and informed members of the Grand Bay NERR team. Orientation can be done individually or in groups based on need.

Job training will also be provided before volunteers begin working hours. Job training is specific to the tasks the volunteer will be performing and may be done on an individual or group basis. Job training will cover job safety, and other information needed to succeed during volunteer hours. Job training is ongoing. At any time, volunteers can ask questions or get clarification on their projects to the Volunteer Coordinator or their job supervisor.

### **Grievance and Discipline Policy**

The Grand Bay NERR seeks to treat all volunteers with fairness, objectivity and consistency. The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for handling all issues related to grievance and discipline involving volunteers.

## **Volunteer Policy on Safety:**

The reserve is dedicated to the safety of its employees, volunteers and visitors. The reserve will provide general volunteer safety training during the Volunteer Orientation. Also, specific safety training will take place during Job Training. If a volunteer is uncomfortable performing a task or feels that they are not fully trained, the volunteer has the right to inform their supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator immediately. All volunteers are highly encouraged to carry personal health insurance in case of emergency. For the safety of our guests and our volunteers, volunteers are never to be alone with minors. A parent, guardian, teacher or NERR staff person must always be with volunteers who are working with children. *Please Note the Emergency contact information at the end of this Handbook.*





## *Grand Bay Volunteer Survey*

**Thank you for volunteering with us at the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. We appreciate your time, your energy and your input! When you have completed your hours, please take a moment to fill out this survey.**

**Name:**

**Date:**

**Hours Volunteering:**

What did you do for your volunteer experience today?

Was the experience what you expected?

Did you have everything you needed to perform your volunteer duties?

Was someone available to help you if you needed assistance?

How could your experience have been improved?

Please rate your overall volunteer experience (1 being lowest):

1

2

3

4

5

Other comments:

# *Emergency Contacts*

## **Community Emergency Numbers- 911**

### **US Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Officer**

James McClellan: 228.217.0715

**Marine Patrol Dispatch:** 228.523.4134

**Moss Point Police:** 228.475.1711

**Forts Lake Fire Department:** 228.474.2421

**Ambulance:** 800.259.1111

**Singing River Hospital:** 228.809.5000

**Wildlife Rescue:** 228.452.9453

**Forest Fires:** 800.240.5161

**Our Location:** 6005 Bayou Heron Road; Moss Point MS 39563