



# AROUND THE SOUND

#4 | APRIL 2025

## *A Year in Review*

**2024** marked the first fully operational year for the **Mississippi Sound Estuary Program**. We kicked things off with the announcement of the estuary program at the MSU Coastal Research and Extension's annual Producers Advisory Council meeting in January. Over 200 community and industry partners attended to learn more about the program and how to be involved. We then went to work forming our management conference and advisory committees, engaging with organizations and individuals with an interest in the Mississippi Sound. As the year progressed, we continued to meet with those who signed up to be members of our management conference, which serves as the steering force behind the estuary program. We heard their concerns, ideas, and aspirations for the program's geography.

With that knowledge, and the management conference's guidance and review, MSEP staff have worked diligently to craft our comprehensive conservation and management plan (CCMP). The CCMP will serve as our guidebook over the next 5 years on actions and activities to conserve and improve the Mississippi Sound Estuary. The CCMP will be available for public comment soon so check out our social media and website for more information.



# Continued...

The CCMP wasn't the only thing we did! We attended and presented at several meetings and conferences, completed outreach, attended community events, and wrote a lot of grants. We were excited to be part of newly launched projects such as Coastal Climate Connections, Glass Roots, Barrier Island Clean Up, and the Native Plant Producer Network. We were also excited to work with our community through outreach. MSEP staff interacted with almost 2500 people last year through education and outreach opportunities.



## KICKING OFF THE YEAR! WE AREN'T SLOWING DOWN IN 2025!

MSEP staff have already been working hard out in the community. We kicked off the year with disaster response training through the Extension network.

**And then it was off to the fairs**, science fairs that is! In addition to judging for the Gulfport School District Science Showcase at Mississippi Aquarium and the Region I and Region VI Science Fair hosted by The University of Southern Mississippi, MSEP co-hosted our first Homeschool Science Fair with our colleagues in the SWAPS program. It was so great to engage with the homeschool community and see the amazing projects they brought forward!





# CLEANUP KREWE

MSEP with the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Program kicked off cleanup season earlier than normal with a Mardi Gras Cleanup on Front Beach in Ocean Springs. This event was done in collaboration with Corona and Oceanic Global.

Shout out to Osprey Initiative for coming out to recycle plastic, aluminum, and glass found during the cleanup. Osprey Initiative also facilitated the transport of intact Mardi Gras beads to ARC NOLA to be processed for next year's throws. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who came out to clean the beach and help sort the trash for recycling.



In partnership with





# NEW PROGRAMS IN ACTION!

We've also been busy with our newly formed **Coastal Climate Connections** program and **Glass Roots**.



The team has been in schools teaching about the importance of coastal restoration and resilience and recently did a greenhouse planting of Saltgrass with students at Crossroads Elementary in Gulfport.



## homeschool Learning lab

Spring semester meant the launch of Homeschool Learning Labs! We had great attendance and feedback for our first one in March, where we learned about the importance of watersheds and students got to paint their own watershed models. We are gearing up for our April and May editions so follow our social media pages for more information!



# Meet Our New Staff Members!



## QIYAMAH WILLIAMS COMMUNITY RESILIENCE COORDINATOR

Qiyamah Williams joins us as our Community Resilience Coordinator. In addition to filling this role for MSEP, she also serves as the Community Resilience Coordinator for our partners at the Program for Local Adaptations to Climate Effects (PLACE). Qiyamah already has a strong presence in our local communities, having worked along the Gulf coast to build collaboration between researchers and coastal decision-makers to address environmental and climate hazards. Her work focuses on community relationship building and technical support for resilience planning and actions by fostering proactive engagement, preparedness, and adaptive strategies for addressing a variety of risks and challenges. Qiyamah received her bachelor's degree in marine science from the University of Hawaii at Hilo and her master's degree in Marine Biology from Northeastern University.



## KIM CRESSMAN WATER QUALITY COORDINATOR

Kim Cressman joins us as our Water Quality Coordinator. She will be collaborating with internal teams, regulatory bodies, and community partners to address community concerns regarding water quality, maintain water quality standards, and enhance research. Kim has a bachelor's degree in Biology and master's degrees in Marine Biology and Applied Statistics. She has extensive experience with water quality monitoring in a variety of freshwater and coastal ecosystems in the southeastern US and has also spent time working in environmental education and science communication.

# 2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

Learn more about our upcoming events and register on our website.

## **MSEP EVENTS PAGE**

[MSUCOASTAL.COM/MSEP-EVENTS](https://msucoastal.com/msep-events)

## **LIVING SHORELINE WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM**

[MSUCOASTAL.COM/LIVING-SHORELINES/](https://msucoastal.com/living-shorelines/)

## **BARRIER ISLAND CLEANUP REGISTRATION FORM**

[MSUCOASTAL.COM/ISLAND-CLEANUP/](https://msucoastal.com/island-cleanup/)

## JOIN US TODAY

INTERESTED IN CONSERVATION,  
RESTORATION, AND STEWARDSHIP?

Check out our website to learn more  
about how you can be a sound  
supporter.

**GET INVOLVED!**

**BE A SOUND SUPPORTER!**  
DONATE NOW

[info@mssoundep.com](mailto:info@mssoundep.com)

[WWW.MSSOUNDEP.COM](https://www.mssoundep.com)



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- **Living Shorelines Workshop For Property Owners- *Diamondhead*, April 7**
- **Petit Bois Island Cleanup, April 12**
- **Advanced training- Conservation Grazing, April 12**
- **Little Lagoon Living Shoreline Workshop, April 14**
- **Homeschool Learning Lab, April 15**
- **GRITS April Mini Camp, April 16**
- **Advanced training- Herpetology, April 19**
- **GRITS April Mini Camp, April 30**
- **Nightjar Survey Training, May 3**
- **Petit Bois Island Cleanup, May 9**
- **Living Shorelines Workshop For Property Owners- *Ocean Springs*, May 12**
- **Living Shorelines Workshop For Property Owners- *Pass Christian*, May 14**
- **Advanced training- Carnivorous Plants, May 17**
- **Living Shorelines Workshop For Property Owners- *Pascagoula/ Moss Point*, May 27**
- **Living Shorelines Workshop For Property Owners- *Gulfport*, May 29**
- **Living Shorelines Workshop For Property Owners- *Biloxi*, June 9**
- **Ship Island Cleanup, June 14**
- **Teacher Workshop, June 17-19**
- **Teacher Workshop- *Glass Roots*, June 25-26**
- **GRITS June Summer Camp- *applications closed*, June 23-27**
- **Petit Bois Island Cleanup, July 11**
- **GRITS July Summer Camp, July 14-18**
- **Petit Bois Island Cleanup, August 9**
- **Horn Island Cleanup, September 12**
- **Petit Bois Island Cleanup, October 10**