



MISSISSIPPI SOUND  
ESTUARY PROGRAM

# AROUND THE SOUND

#6 | DECEMBER 2025

## A MEETING OF MINDS: OUR ANNUAL FULL MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE MEETING

In mid-November we held our annual full management conference meeting. This was our first and only meeting of the year as we spent most of the year working on edits to the CCMP. We updated the conference on all we have been doing over the past year, provided updates on the CCMP edits, and laid out next steps on our road to certification. We also introduced our new team members to the conference, as well as solicited input from them on the monitoring plan. We wrapped up the meeting with some Q & A about items discussed and how the program will move forward with certification.







## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL ANNUAL COASTAL CLEANUP

We held our annual coastal cleanup on October 18<sup>th</sup> this year and it was another great success. 954 volunteers rallied to collect over 1700 lbs of trash from our 10 sites across the coast! Cigarette butts continue to be our highest picked up item, with volunteers removing over 9500 of them. Remember to properly dispose of trash when you visit our beaches and waterways and if you are interested in running your own clean up with friends, family, or work, we offer the request-a-bin program year-round! Check out the website for more information.

## ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM FALL TECH TRANSFER

During the first week of November, the MSEP team headed over to Mobile to attend the Association of National Estuary Programs' Fall Tech Transfer. This 3-day event was a wonderful opportunity to network with members of the 28 NEPs and to learn from their trials and successes. Mobile Bay NEP served as the conference host and had wonderful field trips showing the impact that they along with their community partners have made on their estuary and watershed.





## On the line:

### MSEP PARTNERS WITH DMR ON MONOFILAMENT RECYCLING

Each month, our team partners with MDMR to empty every one of these stations and bring the collected material back to the Coastal Research and Extension Center. There, we sort and analyze the waste using the Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol (ETAP) to better understand what's really ending up in these bins – and let's just say, it's not only fishing line being tossed in! Properly recycling your used fishing line helps protect wildlife and keep our coastal waters clean. Next time you reel in, make sure your old line goes in a recycling tube near you, but please no trash!!

Learn more about the program and where these stations are located at

[DMR.MS.GOV/MONOFILAMENT-RECYCLING/](https://DMR.MS.GOV/MONOFILAMENT-RECYCLING/)



DID YOU KNOW THAT  
IMPROPERLY DISCARDED  
FISHING LINE CAN HARM  
MARINE LIFE, DAMAGE BOAT  
PROPELLERS, AND EVEN  
ENTANGLE DIVERS?



REMOVED

39.29

LBS OF TRASH  
FROM TUBES



**4.65 lbs**  
of monofilament



**9.16 lbs**  
other fishing debris

THE MAJORITY OF TRASH  
COLLECTED IS PLASTIC!





## *New Project:* ART DOING ITS PART!

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The Mississippi Sound Estuary Program (MSEP) alongside the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain announces a statewide art and slogan competition: Art Doing Its Part. The competition seeks youth artwork depicting or inspired by reducing trash in freshwater and marine systems to raise awareness of the connection between local litter and the pollution of our waterways. The high school competition is aimed at personalizing the issue for communities by showcasing litter challenges specific to their regions, illustrating how local actions impact local and distant environments. By fostering a sense of shared responsibility, the contest encourages communities to take pride in their surroundings and actively participate in waste reduction, prevention, and cleanup efforts.

We are actively looking for organizations to serve as regional hub spots to organize and oversee the regional competitions. Each of the 7 selected agents will receive a \$10,000 reimbursable stipend to offset the cost of their individual regional competitions.

If your organization is interested in serving as a hubspot, or if you are interested in learning more about the competition, check out our website at

**[MSUCOASTAL.COM/ARTDOINGITSPART/](https://msucoastal.com/artdoingitspart/)**





## GET TO KNOW YOUR WATERSHED!



Water Quality Coordinator, and data savvy guru, Kim Cressman, has been working on creating a characterization “book” online highlighting different features of the Mississippi Sound Watershed.

**Check it out at**

**<https://msepcharacterization.netlify.app/>**

Please note this document is in active development.

## THERE IS STILL TIME TO LEND YOUR VOICE!



Recently the Enhancing Science, Treatment, and Upkeep of America’s Resilient and Important Estuarine Systems (ESTUARIES) Act (House Bill (H.R.3962), Senate Bill (S.2063)) was brought before congress to reauthorize the National Estuary Program (NEP) that is administered through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This bill would reauthorize the NEP through 2031, providing funding to the 28 nationally recognized estuary programs.

Mississippi is one of 3 states and the only Gulf state to not have a national estuary program. We hope that with this reauthorization, congress and the EPA will hear our call to certify the Mississippi Sound Estuary as an estuary of national significance and provide MSEP with the designation of being a national estuary program.

*What you can do* →



## *What would that mean?*

The annual funding that the MSEP would receive from the NEP would fund our goals and actions as outlined in our CCMP. This means annual funds for conservation, restoration, and stewardship of the Mississippi Sound Estuary and its watershed.

## *Where we stand.*

MSEP has been amended to H.R. 3962 which passed committee and awaits a final House vote. The Senate bill (S.2063) still needs to match the amended House version and be voted on as well.



## NOT SURE WHERE TO START? HERE'S A SAMPLE SCRIPT TO SEND TO YOUR CONGRESS MEMBERS:

"[TITLE OF YOUR CONGRESS REP], I'm writing to ask that you support the Enhancing Science, Treatment, and Upkeep of America's Resilient and Important Estuarine Systems (ESTUARIES) Act (House Bill (H.R.3962), Senate Bill (S.2063)) that was introduced on the House and Senate Floors on June 12<sup>th</sup>. This bill would reauthorize the EPA's National Estuary Program through 2031, ensuring that estuaries of national significance continue to receive federal support. The federal funding NEPs receive enables crucial work to be carried out that is critical to conserve and restore the ecosystem, culture, and community of the estuary.

The Mississippi Sound Estuary Program (MSEP) is seeking to become the state's National Estuary Program. Encompassing approximately 21,000 square miles between the Pearl and Pascagoula Rivers, the Mississippi Sound Watershed covers roughly a third of the state and houses just over half of the state's total population.

[FEEL FREE TO SHARE WHY THE ESTUARY IS IMPORTANT TO YOU AND WHAT IT WOULD MEAN TO HAVE MISSISSIPPI SOUND ESTUARY BECOME AN ESTUARY OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE!]

I ask that you support the ESTUARIES Act to ensure the future of the National Estuary Program, Mississippi Sound Estuary, and all of the other estuaries of the nation, so they remain vibrant and thriving ecosystems for generations to come. Thank you for your consideration."





## 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](http://WWW.MSSOUNDEP.COM)



This project was paid for [in part] with federal funding from the RESTORE Council and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality under the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act).