MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA INSTALLS BLUEWAY WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area (MGCNHA) continues its commitment to provide technical and financial resources to the mapped blueways (water trails) across the Coast. In addition to the Blueways Design Guide that was developed in 2018, wayfinding signage is currently being developed and installed to lead paddlers to and along the blueways in accordance to the standards in the design guide for 13 different blueways. In all, the MGCNHA is working with local government, blueways committee members and volunteers to install:

- 39 roadway/directional signs
- 69 mile markers
- 17 points of interest
- 11 directional signs

Blueways are important to the MS Gulf Coast for many reasons. Bringing awareness to our beautiful waterways fosters conservation and appreciation of our resources. In addition, water trails contribute to the health of the outdoor recreation industry, which includes 145 million Americans who spent $887 billion on outdoor recreation and created $124 billion per year in national, state and local tax revenues, (The Outdoor Recreation Economy, 2017). Investing in outdoor assets attracts employers and employees looking for an enhanced quality of life.

The Gulf Coast Business Council (GCBC) consistently works to drive the Coast’s future economic prosperity and viability. Ashley Edwards, president of the GCBC, says, “millennials represent the largest segment of the United States population, and they are changing the way we approach the development of our communities. Research indicates that millennials are especially attracted to quality of place amenities. The regions that have been most successful in attracting millennials are those regions that are leaders in establishing nature-based tourism options and other quality of life amenities. It is especially important that the Mississippi Gulf Coast consider these factors as we continue to make investments in projects that will enhance our quality of life and our attractiveness as a region.”

Investing in MS Gulf Coast Blueways with the development of a design guide, amenities, signage and publicity is a recommendation of the 2016 Nature-based Tourism Plan for Coastal Mississippi. This plan was developed for the MGCNHA by stakeholders in the industry.

Visit https://gis.dmr.ms.gov/Blueways/ for a story map with pictures, maps and blueway route details.

By Bridgette Varone

WELCOME

As we start a new year, we continue our mission to bring Coast leaders and citizens together to share ideas that promote the heritage and natural resources of our communities and economy. We met our goal last year and recognized eight nature-based tourism businesses as Gulf Coast Outposts. We hope to work with partners to recognize even more this year. Another goal set for this year is to install interstate “Welcome” signs at entry points of the Gulf Coast National Heritage Area.

There is a lot to see and do here in the winter months. Mardi Gras is in full swing and our temperate climate is often perfect for hiking, biking or watching one of our beautiful red sunsets. Be sure to check out our events calendar on the back of this newsletter or on our website for upcoming festivals, Mardi Gras parades and cultural events.

Rhonda Price, MGCNHA Director
HERITAGE COMMUNITY GRANT 2019 RECIPIENTS

The key to preserving the heritage of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, is to preserve local history. This is achieved each year through funding from the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Community Grants to organizations within the designated six southernmost counties of Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, George, Stone and Pearl River. This year we are pleased to announce the award of 17 grants totaling $157,418.18. Each of these projects are ambitious in increasing public awareness and appreciation for cultural, historic, natural and scenic resources within our heritage area.

Funded projects provide a platform for our stories to be told. They help visitors learn about our heritage and experience it for themselves. Each grant not only helps build the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Area as a destination, but provides economic stability for historic preservation which becomes a greater resource for authentic experiences.

On Friday, January 11, 2019, the heritage office and the 2018/2019 grant recipients came together in a collective manner to discuss the awarded projects and logistics. During this meeting it was clearly determined that working together in partnership toward a shared goal of preservation will benefit everyone. More can be accomplished together than by working alone.

The seventeen (17) grant recipients include:

100 Men Hall
Alice Moseley Folk Art Museum
Biloxi Cruise Company, LLC
Biloxi Main Street
City of Moss Point
City of Ocean Springs
Disability Connection
Hancock County Chamber of Commerce

Hancock County Tourism Development Bureau
Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain (2)
Lynn Meadows Discovery Center
Mississippi Heritage Trust
Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church
University of Southern Mississippi
Walter Anderson Museum of Art
Waveland Ground Zero Hurricane Museum

By Kristen Kapiotis
GULF COAST LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area was proud to serve Mississippi Legislators a true “farm-to-table” dish at the Gulf Coast Legislative Reception on Wednesday, Jan. 9, at the Trademart in Jackson. The MGCNHA partnered with the Hospitality and Resort Management Center of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. Chef Todd Reilly, instructor of the culinary arts program, created a Lamb and Goat Tamale with Citrus Chutney. The ingredients were sourced locally from G&M Goat Farm and Mert’s Satsumas.

The products available from farms on the coast are as varied and unique as the small business farmers themselves. We invite you to explore the farms that hold events and offer tours. You might be surprised to find that they are all within a short driving distance.

Visit our website, msgulfcoastheritage.ms.gov, and click the Agritourism link under the “Natural” tab to discover a way to connect with your local farms, tour the properties, participate in events and purchase the products for your own “farm-to-table” dinner.

Agritourism is an important component of the MGCNHA nature-based tourism plan.

REMEMBER THE PAST FESTIVAL

The inaugural “Remember The Past” event was held Saturday, November 17, 2018, at the Historic Shaw Homestead in Barth, Mississippi. Approximately 150 visitors lined Barth Road to take a step back in time and tour the renovated buildings. The Shaw Homestead, established in the late 1800’s was handed down through the same family until it was donated to the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain in 2007. The property is home to a dog-trot log cabin with a detached kitchen, jar house, smoke house, corn crib, tractor shed with grist mill and sheep dip.

Vendors and exhibitors were on hand to sell hand made goods, like wooden spoons, pine needle baskets, freshly ground corn, cane syrup, canned pears and handmade aprons. Demonstrations included corn shelling, wool spinning and weaving, corn husk dolls, livestock, corn milling, quilting and butter churning. Live music was provided by TruNorth, a bluegrass band from Lucedale. This event was funded by a grant through the Lower Pearl River Valley Foundation and sponsored by the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Trust. Another event is planned for Spring of 2019. For more information, visit the Land Trust website at LTMCP.org/shaw-homestead.

By Daphne Viverette

HERITAGE COMMUNITY GRANT UPDATE: OLD BILOXI CEMETERY TOURS

In its 318-year history, Biloxi has been home to some wonderful characters who have fascinating stories to tell. Over the last eleven years, the Preserve Biloxi Committee, a collaboration of City of Biloxi, Biloxi Main Street, Biloxi Bay Chamber of Commerce, Biloxi Public Schools, Biloxi Public Library Local History and Genealogy Department and University of Southern Mississippi History Department, has organized these cemetery tours to tell those stories and bring those characters to life. Some of the stories are well known, such as Edward Barq and the creation of his namesake beverage, but others are more obscure like Joseph “Dinker” Lamas being mauled by a bear at the Biloxi City Zoo.

Through this short selection of tour stops, we hope you will get a better insight into our City’s rich and diverse history. We understand this small selection of stops doesn’t even begin to scratch the surface of stories the cemetery has to tell and we look forward to adding on to the tour and bringing more history to life.

Bill Raymond, Historical Administrator City of Biloxi
This past October, the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area (MGCNHA) held a series of events to recognize eight nature-based tourism businesses who have qualified for the Gulf Coast Outpost program. Gulf Coast Outpost (GCO) is a business recognition program to bring awareness of nature-based businesses who are going above and beyond to protect and conserve the environment. The program is aimed at those companies whose primary business is dependent on the natural environment in Mississippi’s six coastal counties. This includes eco tours, locally-owned outfitters, charter boat operators, tour guides, eco-lodges and agritourism entities.

The benefits of a Gulf Coast Outpost recognition include access to the MGCNHA marketing materials, promotion on tourism websites and eligibility to apply for the MGCNHA Heritage Community Grants program.

The first Gulf Coast Outpost business to take advantage of the grant opportunity was the Biloxi Cruise Company, dba Biloxi Shrimping Trip. This grant will subsidize a “Gulf Coast Culinary Tour Package” that promotes the Mississippi Gulf Coast partners during the typical slow tourism season.

Visitors will receive half off the admission price of the whole package, which includes: the Biloxi Shrimping Trip, a culinary demonstration with lunch, a tour of the Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum and the city of Biloxi.

For more about the Biloxi Shrimping Trip and details of this package, call 228-392-8645.

Gulf Coast Culinary Tour Package
Package Includes:
- Biloxi Shrimping Trip *10-Minute Living Marine Adventure Cruise*
- Culinary Demonstration & Lunch with Julian Brent at the Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum. Julian Brent is a food writer and photographer who for the last ten years has stirred the pot of Mississippi food culture. He has studied the origins of the po'boy, made gumbo with the best of them, and never burned a roux. He is a cookbook author, and writes columns for a small handful of magazines and the local newspaper.
- Tour of the Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum
- City Tour

Biloxi Cruise Company, LLC
Biloxi, Mississippi
228-392-8645

By Bridgette Varone
Mardi Gras parades have a long tradition on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Although it may be impossible to determine when the first parade occurred, in the 19th century, Biloxians typically feted Mardi Gras day with a parade. These parades featured an ad hoc route, twisting and turning through downtown. In 1892, a Biloxi parade, consisting of carriages and several fire department wagons that had been decorated as floats, began on the beach at “Johnson’s Wharf” and continued up Main Street to Howard Avenue, turning north on to Reynoir Street and ending when the parade reached the railroad.

In 1908, Mardi Gras became big business with the founding of the Gulf Coast Carnival Association and featured 17 floats in their inaugural parade. This parade began and ended at Biloxi City Hall which, at the time, was located at the intersection of Howard and Main Streets. Beginning in 1927, Biloxi parades would end at the newly expanded Buena Vista Hotel, beginning a long-held tradition of involving the Beach Boulevard hotel in official Mardi Gras festivities.

In 1977, Urban Renewal created the Washington Loop and the Vieux Marche Mall, closing the Howard Avenue business district to vehicular traffic. This ended the decades-old tradition of parading through Biloxi’s primary business district. To this day, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard / Washington Loop is a parade route mainstay. With the recent re-opening of Howard Avenue to two-way traffic, will we now see parades return to Howard Avenue? What is your favorite parade route?
ACROSS THE COAST...

CHARNLEY-NORWOOD OPEN HOUSE
On Sunday, Dec. 10, the MGCNHA staff welcomed visitors to the annual Charnley-Norwood Christmas Open House. Every year we look forward to seeing old friends and new faces at our event to view the decorations and exhibits. If you missed the open house or would just like to tour the Charnley-Norwood House, please call 228-523-4150 or email heritage@dmr.ms.gov for tour inquiries.

PINEY WOODS HERITAGE FESTIVAL
In November 2018, MGCNHA staff members celebrated the heritage of the Piney Woods with The Crosby Arboretum. Demonstrations included traditional skills, such as blacksmithing, quilting, spinning and basket-making. The Crosby Arboretum holds festivals and events throughout the year. Visit the events calendar on their website, crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu.

DOLLY SHOULD
The 4th annual Dolly Should was a wonderful success! More than 40 Dollys registered for Smith & Lens’ look-alike contest emceed by Reba Douglas on the porch of the Mockingbird Cafe. Several merchants of Old Town Bay St. Louis got in on the fun by hosting different artists and activities in their shops. After the look-alike contest, the Bay Ratz Marching Battery came to drum everyone to the 100 Men Hall for the first ever, Dolly Should Karaoke After Party. The community is already looking forward to next year. But first, don’t miss Frida Fest on July 13, 2019.

COASTWIDE MLK CELEBRATION
The Mississippi Gulf Coast honored Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a 3-day celebration of his life and legacy, and the Civil Rights Movement. Events included a gospel concert, an “Old School Party,” the Village Social Justice Symposium and a parade, which culminated with the MLK Battle of the Bands at MGM Stadium in Biloxi on January 21. Many other organizations held community service projects in King’s honor. The national holiday was introduced by U.S Representative Katie Green Hall from Mound Bayou, Mississippi, and was signed into law in 1983.
UPCOMING EVENTS

MARDI GRAS (FAT TUESDAY)  
March 5
This annual tradition is celebrated on the day of and the weeks leading up to Mardi Gras with parades and carnival balls. Check the events calendar on our website for the parade dates and times. Visit msgulfcoastheritage.ms.gov/events.

BATTLE ON THE BAYOU  
March 30
The largest paddling event in Mississippi is for both the experienced and novice; kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddle boards. Enjoy an 8.5-mile nature lover’s paradise - Old Fort Bayou Blueway with fun as the primary focus. Visit battleonthebayou.com.

SPRING PILGRIMAGE  
March 27-30
Tour beautiful homes and gardens across the coast with the MS Gulf Coast Council of Garden Clubs. Opening will be at the Biloxi Visitors Center before embarking on your four-day adventure touring homes and gardens. Visit springpilgrimage.com

SAVE THE DATE!

FEBRUARY 28, 2019
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140 Marcus Pierce Rd.  
Lucedale, MS 39452
For questions, call: 601-947-4223

MARCH 12, 2019
The Camellia  
27360 HWY 603  
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DOWNLOAD THE MGCNHA APP!
Discover the cultural, historical and natural treasures of the
Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area. From museums
and historic sites, to year-round festivals and miles
of sandy beaches, we have it all.

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