October was Agritourism Month and the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area (MGCNHA) will be promoting agritourism by working with Pearl River County on a pilot program. The program will work with local agritourism businesses to provide and distribute a reusable shopping bag with the area’s farm name and/or logo along with the MGCNHA logo.

After completing a short customer survey, the bags will be given to customers where agricultural products are sold, such as farmer’s markets. Our goal through the survey will be used by the MGCNHA and local agritourism businesses to make sure the industry is providing sustainable resources and gauging a customer’s need working towards repeat agritourism business.

I hope that you will consider taking part in agritourism in your area, jump on a hayride, get lost in a corn maze or enjoy an outdoor festival. October and November are extraordinary months for activities on local farms. Visit our website for a full list of farms and other fun events happening along the MS Gulf Coast National Heritage Area.

Rhonda Price, MGCNHA Director
The three National Heritage Areas in Mississippi: The Hills, The Delta and the Gulf Coast, are joining together to promote the Passport to Your National Parks© program. Through this program, you can collect free cancellation stamps at places of historical and cultural significance at NPS-affiliated areas. Stamp pads and stamps are usually located in a park or area’s visitor center, gift shop or headquarters, and you can collect your stamps in a special spiral-bound passport.

Together, there are 65 locations to collect the passport stamps across the state. What a great way to discover incredible places, meet interesting people and learn about Mississippi’s rich heritage!

LIKE OUR NEW FACEBOOK PAGE, @MSNHAPASSPORTPROGRAM AND START COLLECTING!
THE 13 GRANT AWARDS INCLUDE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Amount</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$9,800</td>
<td>ALICE MOSELEY FOLK ART &amp; ANTIQUE MUSEUM</td>
<td>to support a designated Art Manager at the Museum to care for and promote the collection of Folk Art by Miss Alice Moseley, and to teach national and international communities about her art and its significance in capturing Mississippi’s historical and cultural heritage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>BEAUVOIR-THE JEFFERSON DAVIS HOME &amp; PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY</td>
<td>to provide engineering services for the design of a boardwalk and nature trails along Beauvoir’s Oyster Bayou.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$11,500</td>
<td>CITY OF BILOXI</td>
<td>to create a historical archive and a self-guided digital tour of the Old Biloxi Cemetery which will tell 10 to 15 of the over 80 stories and histories collected through pictures and text, as well as video from previous annual tours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>CITY OF GAUTIER</td>
<td>to provide engineering services for Phase II exterior repairs and interior renovations on a historic two-story log cabin that will serve as a welcome center at the Shepard State Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>CITY OF GULFPORT</td>
<td>to develop bike trails to increase recreation opportunities while protecting natural resources at Brickyard Bayou.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$11,500</td>
<td>CITY OF MOSS POINT</td>
<td>to develop a heritage discovery center and touring program that will highlight the art, culture and history of the region and the City of Moss Point. The Mayor’s Youth Council will conduct these tours as they serve as ambassadors of Moss Point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>LA POINTE-KREBS FOUNDATION</td>
<td>to continue to educate and work with local schools on fourth grade lesson plans about the historical and culture significance of early settlers in the Jackson County area, particularly to the La Point-Krebs House and property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$19,000</td>
<td>DISABILITY CONNECTION</td>
<td>to support a film documentary, brochure and expand on the Disability Connection website to provide trip accessibility features for the public with information on how to connect with their roots, celebrate the diversity of cultures and plan trips to visit and celebrate these differences, all while being accessible for people with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>HANCOCK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION</td>
<td>for directional and interpretive signs for visitors and residents to locate heritage resources in Hancock County and across the coast that would highlight waterways, nature areas, history and the arts. This signage can be used to promote connectivity of the heritage resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$14,000</td>
<td>LAND TRUST FOR THE MISSISSIPPI COASTAL PLAIN</td>
<td>to repair and restore the timbers in the walls and foundation of the Smoke House located at the Shaw Homestead in Poplarville. In addition, the Land Trust will begin planning for expanding public use of the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>MISSISSIPPI HERITAGE TRUST</td>
<td>to host a series of Preservation Toolkit workshops that will increase financial literacy, thereby encouraging stakeholders to leverage powerful financial incentives to save historic places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>THE CROSBY ARBORETUM FOUNDATION</td>
<td>for four outdoor ecological and/or cultural festivals at The Crosby Arboretum that will increase the community’s cultural and ecological understanding of the resources of the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>USM’S MARINE EDUCATION CENTER</td>
<td>to construct a Universal Access compliant trail at the Marine Education Center that will allow visitors a free and unique opportunity to enjoy the coastal habitats and wildlife that resides around the facility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2013, a Nature Tourism Summit brought industry leaders together who developed a “Framework for Nature Tourism,” in part, due to the final GoCoast 2020 Report, Ecotourism Work Stream. The recommendations from this task force then resulted in the development of the 2016 Nature-based Tourism Plan for Coastal Mississippi (Plan) by the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area (MGCNHA), administered by MDMR. Implementation of the Plan is an important component of the mission of MGCNHA, which is to promote understanding of and to conserve and enhance the heritage resources of the six counties of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The Plan proposed the creation of a program that recognizes sustainable nature-based tourism (NBT) businesses, a voluntary program designed to reward those who are knowledgeable about the natural product, prioritize customer safety and protect the natural environment. The MGCNHA developed the Gulf Coast Outpost as the program’s “seal of approval.” With this stamp, businesses will be recognized as an exemplary NBT business.

Recognition can be achieved by a successful completion of the Gulf Coast Outpost Checklist administered through the MGCNHA. Like the Clean and Resilient Marina program, a point-based plan will evaluate nature-based businesses whose primary purpose is to contribute to visitors’ enjoyment of south Mississippi’s natural heritage. The target audience for nature-based business recognition includes, among others, tour guides, charter boat operations, eco-fitness guides, outfitters, museums, attractions and agritourism entities.

Each nature-based business, once recognized as a Gulf Coast Outpost, will have the opportunity to access and download resources. A Gulf Coast Outpost can utilize marketing materials, such as door clings, counter cards, posters, maps and logos, as well as ready-to-use descriptions of area attractions/destinations.

To achieve a successful program launch, the MGCNHA will coordinate a NATURE-BASED TOURISM BUSINESS SUMMIT on November 29, 2017 at the West Side Community Center in Gulfport. The summit will be open to those whose business is primarily focused on NBT activities and are interested in being a recognized Gulf Coast Outpost. Registration begins October 16 on Eventbrite.

The summit will provide insight from NBT industry leaders, training opportunities from program managers and access to business resources. According to the survey completed during the development of the 2016 NBT Plan for Coastal Mississippi, approximately 30% of respondents planned to hire new staff within the next year. With anticipated growth in employment comes the need for new skills training. Information will be available for business owners who are looking for resources to expand their business and train their employees.

PLEASE ADDRESS ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS TO PROGRAM COORDINATOR, BRIDGETTE VARONE. SHE MAY BE REACHED VIA EMAIL: BRIDGETTE.VARONE@DMR.MS.GOV OR BY PHONE: 228-523-4075.
FIRST WORLD WAR CENTENNIAL
THE MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR EFFORT
AND THE LASTING IMPACT ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the United States entry into the First World War. While many soldiers from Mississippi served both overseas and stateside, civilians also served a variety of tasks related to the war effort that insured an Allied victory. Activities on the home front had a remarkable impact on our built environment and heritage that can still be seen today in many places across the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area. Listed below are two sites associated with events that took place 100 years ago. Of the many places that are associated with the war, these are a few of the places that still can be seen today.

THE INTERNATIONAL SHIP BUILDING COMPANY EMPLOYEE HOUSING
-PASCAGOULA, JACKSON COUNTY
Roughly bounded by Columbus Drive, Yazoo Lake and Lafayette Avenue. Pascagoula, MS 39567

This National Register Historic District is a rare surviving example of a residential neighborhood constructed by a corporation for employee housing. Around 1918, the International Ship Building Company built approximately 285 residences in five different styles, which were rented to shipyard employees. Today it is the largest and most-intact enclave of early 20th century industrial housing in Mississippi. The International Ship Building Company Employee Housing Historic District was listed to the National Register of Historic Places on November 30, 2011.

U.S. NAVAL TRAINING CAMP
-GULFPORT, HARRISON COUNTY
200 East Beach Boulevard Gulfport, MS 39507

This facility was built to house the Mississippi Centennial Exhibition, but the exhibition was canceled when the U.S. entered World War I. The state leased the property and existing centennial exhibition buildings to the Department of the Navy for a naval training camp. Sadly, no buildings remain from the naval training school era. This site would later become the Gulfport VA Medical Center, which operated from 1921 to 2005. Currently plans are in development to adapt the grounds and buildings into a mixed-use complex containing hotels and shops. The site was listed to the National Register of Historic Places as the Gulfport Veterans Administration Medical Center Historic District on January 15, 2014.
ACROSS THE COAST...

POLLINATOR WORKSHOP
The Mississippi Urban Forestry Council held a Gulf Coast Pollinator, Urban Forestry and Invasive Species Workshop at the Charnley-Norwood House on September 21. Speakers included Christian Preus, landscape architect, Robert Smith from Wildlife Mississippi and Mike Pursley of MDMR. Participants learned about the benefits of a pollinator site and how to establish one. They discovered how to manage invasive species, flowers and forests.

BILOXI SEAFOOD FESTIVAL
MGCNHA celebrated with thousands of locals and visitors at the Biloxi Seafood Festival September 9-10. Seafood and food vendors, arts and craft vendors, live entertainment, children’s activities, and of course, the delicious Gumbo Championship were fun for the crowds at this year’s 36th Annual event.
DESTINATION DOWNTOWN
Destination Downtown 2017 is a regional conference developed and hosted by Mississippi Main Street Association in partnership with Louisiana Main Street and Main Street Arkansas. MGCNHA welcomed Main Street directors and staff from across the tri-state area. Rhonda Price and Jeff Rosenberg brought several on a heritage tour to visit the French Memorial Garden and Cemetery in Biloxi and the Charnley-Norwood House in Ocean Springs.

ESTUARIES DAY
MS Gulf Coast National Heritage Area spent Estuaries Day on September 30 at Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The day was spent with families across the coast celebrating the many ways we benefit from a healthy coastal environment. “An estuary is a partially enclosed, coastal water body where freshwater from rivers and streams mixes with salt water from the ocean.” (epa.gov) The Mississippi Sound is an important estuary that supports many varieties of valuable fish and shellfish. Over 98% of Mississippi seafood is estuarine dependent. Not only are the marine life dependent on this healthy ecosystem, but the rivers, bays, bayous and Gulf shape a world of natural experiences and provide many nature-based adventures for residents of and visitors to south Mississippi. There are a wide variety of activities for nature enthusiasts on the Coast, including nature trails, wildlife viewing areas, hunting, fishing, paddling and camping. Visit msgulfcoastheritage.ms.gov/natural for opportunities to enjoy independent discovery or a list of small businesses who offer guided tours of many destinations. Please make sure that you leave these areas better than you left them. Pack all of your belongings and any other garbage that you see. Take care of the environment and it will take care of you.
UPCOMING EVENTS

PINEY WOODS HERITAGE FESTIVAL
November 19, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
The Crosby Arboretum, Picayune
crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu

GULFPORT HARBOR LIGHTS FESTIVAL
November 24 - December 31
Jones Park, Gulfport
@GulfportHarborLights

CHARNLEY-NORWOOD CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE
December 10, 2-4 p.m.
509 East Beach, Ocean Springs
msgulfcoastheritage.ms.gov

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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Rhonda Price, MGCNHA Director
Marie Lewis, Administrative Assistant
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