



GULF COAST OUTPOST

NATURE BASED TOURISM VOLUNTARY BUSINESS RECOGNITION PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Does your business make every effort to celebrate the Coast's natural resources with visitors while protecting clean water, reducing litter and providing a safe experience? Would you like to be a Recognized Nature Based Tourism Business? If so, GULF COAST OUTPOST may be for you!

Goal: Recognition will be awarded annually to ecologically sustainable Nature Based Tourism Businesses that foster "environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation, and conservation."

Target Businesses: The target audience for nature based business recognition includes businesses whose primary purpose is contributing to the enjoyment of South Mississippi's Natural Heritage, including among others, tour guides, charter boat operators, eco-fitness guides, outfitters, eco-lodges, agri-tourism, and other businesses where nature based activities are 50% or more of the primary business line.

Upon successful completion of this checklist, your business will be recognized as a "Gulf Coast Outpost." You'll receive window clings for your doors and windows, and you'll be recognized on the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area website as a premier nature tourism business.

Complete the checklist to determine if you are eligible to be recognized as a Mississippi Gulf Coast Outpost. 80 points or greater will be required for recognition.

CHECKLIST

1 IS YOUR BUSINESS NATURE-BASED? YES IS REQUIRED

Yes [] No [] Does 50% or more of your primary business line focus on Nature Based activities?

If Yes, provide the name of your business and continue to next section:

If No, your business is not defined as a Nature Based Tourism Business and cannot be "recognized" as a Gulf Coast Outpost. **STOP HERE**

2 IS YOUR BUSINESS LEGALLY OPERATING AND INSURED? YES IS REQUIRED

Yes [] No [] Has your business obtained all required licenses, registrations, insurances, and permits and is legally operating in Mississippi?

If Yes, continue to the next section.

If No, your business must obtain all licenses and permits before being considered for Recognition as a Gulf Coast Outpost. **STOP HERE**

3 DEVELOPMENT OF KEY PLANS FOR SUSTAINABLE GREEN BUSINESS - 10 POINTS (5 EACH)

Yes [] No [] Has your business developed a business plan with emphasis on sustainable and responsible operations and growth management?

Yes [] No [] Has your business developed an environmental management plan or natural resources stewardship plan?

POINTS_____

4 OWNER/OPERATOR PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING FOR SUSTAINABILITY - 40 POINTS (10 EACH)

Provide the names and dates of relevant training completed. There is a minimum of THREE training programs required in the following areas (The following programs will count as two training programs each: master naturalists training, leave no trace training or habitat stewardship training), Gulf Coast Outpost Business Summit, South Mississippi Natural Habitats, Environmental Stewardship, and (List of training opportunities provided on last page):

a) _____ Date: _____

b) _____ Date: _____

c) _____ Date: _____

d) _____ Date: _____

POINTS_____

5 CONDUCT AND SAFETY TRAINING - 3 POINTS (1 EACH)

- Yes [] No [] Does your business provide staff training regarding professional conduct?
Yes [] No [] Does your business provide staff training regarding natural hazard preparation and evacuation?
Yes [] No [] Does your business provide staff to be trained regarding safety and CPR?

POINTS _____

6 SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING CHECKLIST QUESTIONS - 8 POINTS (1 EACH)

- Yes [] No [] Does your business ensure safe pedestrian access?
Yes [] No [] Does your business provide for emergency access?
Yes [] No [] Does your business building(s) meet accessibility standards?
Yes [] No [] Does your business have regular emergency training and drills for staff?
Yes [] No [] Does your business have an evacuation plan that is clearly communicated to staff?
Yes [] No [] Does your business regularly review emergency response procedures with staff?
Yes [] No [] Does your business have a disaster preparedness plan?
Yes [] No [] Does your business plan include a secondary activity for income during times of natural or manmade disaster?

POINTS _____

7 STAFF WATERSHED AND STEWARDSHIP TRAINING - 6 POINTS (2 EACH)

- Yes [] No [] Does your business provide staff training regarding watershed connectivity?
Yes [] No [] Does your business provide staff training regarding environmental stewardship?
Yes [] No [] Does your business provide staff training on heritage and cultural aspects of the Mississippi Gulf Coast?

POINTS _____

8 NATURE BASED TOURISM BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES - 10 POINTS (1 EACH)

- Yes [] No [] Does your business only use pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers responsibly?
Yes [] No [] Does your business use proper disposal practices for paints, oils, gasoline, grease, chemicals, etc.?
Yes [] No [] Does your business ensure no direct discharges of contaminated materials and/or sewage enter nearby waterbodies?
Yes [] No [] Does your business recycle materials when possible?
Yes [] No [] Does your business use biodegradable materials where possible?
Yes [] No [] Does your business reduce the amount of imperviousness on site?
Yes [] No [] Does your business utilize sediment and erosion controls on site (If applicable)?
Yes [] No [] Does your business control litter on site?
Yes [] No [] Does your business dispose of pet waste properly?
Yes [] No [] Does your business properly dispose of wildlife, fish, or bait carcasses?

POINTS _____



9 NBT BUSINESS LEAVE NO TRACE CHECKLIST - 14 POINTS (2 EACH)

- Yes [] No [] Does your business plan ahead and prepare adequately for outdoor activities?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business operate, travel and camp on durable surfaces?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business dispose of waste properly?
- Yes [] No [] Do you and your customers leave what you find (what is meant to stay)?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business minimize campfire impacts?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business respect wildlife?
- Yes [] No [] Are you and your customers considerate of other visitors?

POINTS_____

10 NBT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST QUESTIONS - 6 POINTS (1 EACH)

- Yes [] No [] Is your equipment routinely inspected to stay in good working order?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business follow a regular maintenance plan for your equipment?
- Yes [] No [] Is your equipment low emission and fuel efficient?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business train employees to watch for inappropriate discharges?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business have a predetermined procedure for handling polluters?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business have a backup plan for stranded situations?

POINTS_____

11 OUTREACH & VISITOR EDUCATION CHECKLIST QUESTIONS - 6 POINTS (1 EACH)

- Yes [] No [] Does your business post educational environmental information in clearly marked places (bulletin board)?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business encourage and recognize visitors who try to prevent pollution?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business seek to educate patrons of the importance of Leave No Trace?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business use social media to communicate NBT practices with visitors?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business distribute environmental education materials to patrons?
- Yes [] No [] Does your business encourage and recognize visitors who practice environmental stewardship?

POINTS_____

12 TELLING MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST'S STORY - 9 POINTS (3 EACH)

How does your business tell an accurate story of the Mississippi Gulf Coast?

How does your business avoid misleading content in advertisements, signs and other communications?

How does your business seek opportunities to market the MS Gulf Coast and other NBT opportunities?

POINTS_____

13 NATURE-BASED TOURISM OWNER/OPERATOR PLEDGE- 6 POINTS (2 EACH)

- Yes [] No [] Does your business pledge to operate as environmentally friendly as possible?
 Yes [] No [] Will you and your employees strive to become more aware of ways to improve business practices that will balance economic development and conservation?
 Yes [] No [] Will you work towards making the natural resources that your business relies on better than it was when you found it?

POINTS _____

OUTPOST SCORING

Use the table below to calculate your score, and compare to the baseline score needed to successfully complete program and be recognized as a Gulf Coast Outpost. At least 80 points is required to be recognized.

SECTIONS 1-13	POINTS	BASELINE SCORE	COMMENTS
1		YES	
2		YES	
3		10	
4		40	
5		3	
6		8	
7		6	
8		10	
9		14	
10		6	
11		6	
12		9	
13		6	

TOTAL POINTS _____



EXAMPLE TRAINING PROGRAMS ARE PROVIDED IN THE TABLE BELOW:

PROVIDER	TRAINING PROGRAMS
Chambers of Commerce	Multiple training opportunities
Coastal Conservation Association	Fishing Seminars
Conservation Corps	Gulf Coast Restoration Initiative
Department of Marine Resources	Boater Education
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve	Leave No Trace; Master Naturalist; Student Field Experiences; Community Workshops
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve	Coastal Science Workshops
Gulf Coast Research Lab Marine Education Center	Multiple educational opportunities to study aquatic life and habitats
Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain	Adopt-A-Stream; Replant South Mississippi
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources	Habitat Stewards
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks	“GO WILD” Classroom Programs; Fishing education
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (Jackson County Campus, Jefferson-Davis Campus)	Estuarine Education & Leadership Development Center (Associated Program in Outdoor Recreation Leadership - Jackson County); Hospitality and Resort Management Center (Jefferson-Davis Campus)
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College	CPR & Safety
Mississippi State University	Natural Resources Enterprises
Mississippi Wildlife Federation	Habitat Stewards; Adopt-a-Stream
MSU Extension Service	Master Naturalist
Pascagoula River Audubon Center	Master Naturalist; All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory
Red Cross	Health & Safety; Disaster Training
The Crosby Arboretum	Native habitats education
University of Southern Mississippi	Institute for Disability Studies
Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast	Visitor Touch Point Training
Wildlife Mississippi/ Mississippi Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Conservation Finance

For additional information on the Gulf Coast Outpost program, contact the
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The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area is managed by the
 MS Department of Marine Resources

