



Wave Maker's News

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Inside this issue:	
Florida Update	2
Aveda Earth Month Huge Success	3
Gulf Gathering Recap	4
Mississippi's Terrible Ten	

The Pascagoula River is Listed as Top 10 Most Endangered

On a cool spring morning this April, dozens of individuals, including GRN's Mississippi Organizer Raleigh Hoke, gathered together in Gautier, Mississippi



River Gathering Led by GRN's Raleigh Hoke

along the banks of the Pascagoula River's extensive estuary to announce that this pristine river had been named one of the top ten most endangered rivers in the nation by American Rivers, an organization dedicated to the restoration of North America's Rivers. The Pascagoula, which is one of the last, large free-flowing rivers in the nation, was included on the list because of an irresponsible Department of Energy plan to hollow out a series of salt caverns near Richton, Mississippi.

resource, home to a dazzling diversity of plants and animals and renowned for its vibrant marshes and wonderful fishing.

Unfortunately, the proposed plan would require withdrawing 50

million gallons of water per day for five years from the Pascagoula River to dissolve salt in the underground caverns. The extremely salty water from this process would then be discharged just south of a Mississippi barrier island.

The proposed plan could have major consequences for the health of the Pascagoula River, the Mississippi Sound, and the Gulf of Mexico. Reduced water flow could impact important marsh habitat and lead to salt-water intrusion at the river's

The Pascagoula River is an amazing natural

Continued on page 2

Another Summer, Another Large Dead Zone

While the first day of summer has officially just passed, we in the Gulf South have been experiencing it for quite a while now. Summer may bring us swimming, boating, and mosquitoes, but it also brings the world's second largest human-caused Dead Zone to the Gulf of Mexico. This Dead Zone is an area of extremely low oxygen (known as hypoxia) that is caused by nitrogen and phosphorous pollution flowing down the Mississippi River system. At its height, the ocean life in the Dead Zone must swim away or suffocate.

scientists have released predictions of its size, based on models that they have developed. These predictions can be found at www.gulfhypoxia.net. Three predictions have been made using these models, and predict the size of the Dead Zone to be anywhere from 7,335 to 9,668 square miles. Regular measurements of the Dead Zone started in 1985, and this year's predictions would place the 2009 Dead Zone anywhere from the 6th largest to the largest ever measured. While we still have to wait to see the results of the actual measurement in late July, these predictions are yet another indication that this national issue must be addressed now.

While the official measurement of the Dead Zone does not happen until late July,

Continued on page 3

GRN Continues Nature Coast Protection Work in Florida

Since GRN launched its Florida Program in 2007 we have worked diligently to protect and preserve Florida's Nature Coast. Stretching from just north of Tampa to the Big Bend region of Florida, the Nature Coast is one of Florida's last wild frontiers. Hundreds of miles of healthy rivers, pristine coastal estuaries, and seagrass beds make the Nature Coast home to everything from manatees and sea turtles to Florida Black Bears. While the Nature Coast is an incredible ecological resource that has been mostly spared from the rampant overdevelopment that has plagued Florida, there is growing pressure to develop this natural paradise. The bulldozers are at the gates of Eden.



of folly. The challenge of learning from our past mistakes in Florida and not repeating them is a daunting one indeed.

GRN is fighting back by building a coalition of allied groups, including member group the Gulf Coast Conservancy, to stop this massive mistake dead in its tracks. We have launched a campaign to ensure decision makers in Florida do not permit this disaster, and that local communities and wildlife avoid the negative effects of over-development. If we are to save the Nature Coast, this is a project that we must stop, as it is poised at the southern gateway of the Nature Coast. Stay tuned for more information and updates as we continue this fight!

One of the most egregious and dangerous development threats facing the Nature Coast is the Sunwest Harbourtowne project in coastal Pasco County. This megadevelopment is representative of Florida's unsustainable model for coastal development. Florida cannot support or sustain projects like this as we move into the future.

The Sunwest Harbourtowne megadevelopment proposes to build massive amounts of housing and commercial space, as well as a golf course, within a stone's throw of the Gulf of Mexico. Coastal habitat for Florida Black Bears, coastal marsh and wetland systems, and regional seagrass beds all stand to be lost or degraded. Anyone who lives along the Gulf Coast can tell you that building huge new developments right along the coast as sea level rises and climate change worsens is the worst type

In addition to our work to protect Florida's Nature Coast, GRN has launched a statewide campaign to pressure Florida Governor Charlie Crist to improve his work as Governor to protect Florida's lakes, rivers, wetlands, estuaries, and coastlines. GRN Staff and Volunteers are criss-crossing the state to build community support and develop political pressure on Governor Crist to ensure that the Clean Water Act is fully enforced in Florida. Florida has lost thousands of acres of wetlands since the 1990's, and poor wetlands and water quality permitting by local, state, and federal government agencies threatens Florida's environment and economy. We hope to encourage Governor Crist to make cleaning up Florida's waters a part of his legacy as Governor. Florida's environment and citizens deserve no less.

The Pascagoula River is Listed as Top 10 Most Endangered (continued from page 1)

mouth and estuary. The project may also rob local companies and communities of the water they need to grow. Finally, the 330 miles of pipelines required for the project will impact over 1,500 acres of wetlands. The Department of Energy also predicts more than 75 salt water spills and 18 oil spills during the construction of the pipelines and the initial fill of the storage site. To add insult to injury, this economically and ecologically destructive project is estimated to cost the American tax-payer \$4 billion dollars!

This summer, the DOE is set to release its final report on the project and will likely hold a series of public hearings over the course of the summer before issuing its final decision this fall. The Gulf Restoration Network will continue to partner with local and national individuals and groups to stop the salt domes and save the Pascagoula River.

Another Summer Another Large Dead Zone (continued from page 1)

The Mississippi River system drains 42% of the United States. Given this fact, no one state can solve the Dead Zone problem on their own. This is why GRN is calling for national action to stem the tide of the nitrogen and phosphorus pollution that is getting washed off agricultural fields and pumped out of sewage treatment plants. In order to initiate this needed action, GRN, along with Mississippi River conservation partners, petitioned the United States Environmental Protection Agency last summer to do two things: set limits on the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution that is allowed in the waters of the Mississippi River States, and determine how much pollution needs to be removed from the system in order to adequately reduce the size of the Dead Zone.* We hope to see a response to this petition sometime this year.

While EPA has a distinct responsibility to make sure the size of the Dead Zone is reduced, individual states and other federal agencies must do their part as well. For example, we are working with our partners to make sure that farmers are properly incentivized to implement conservation practices on their fields and rangelands. Not only should these farming practices be implemented, they must be targeted on priority waters that will improve the health of local streams and reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution flowing into the Gulf.

While the predictions of the Dead Zone do not bode well for this Summer, we must use them as a call to action, and bring attention to the health of a national resource: the Gulf of Mexico.

* This process of determining how much pollution must be removed is called developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). A TMDL is required under the Clean Water Act, in order to produce clean up plans for polluted waters in the United States.

Aveda Earth Month Huge Success



Fusion Salon and Spa in Miramar Beach, FL hosted a Spa Day for Young Women

Throughout April 2009, Aveda salons across the Southeast partnered with GRN to raise awareness and funds to keep our waters clean. The GRN extends a heartfelt thanks to all of the hardworking Aveda salon staff and their clients for everything they do to make Earth Month a success. Their contributions will support our work to keep our waterways clean by protecting wetlands and keeping pollution such as sewage and fertilizer runoff out of our waters. Aveda stands out as a shining example of an authentic 'green' company that makes protecting our

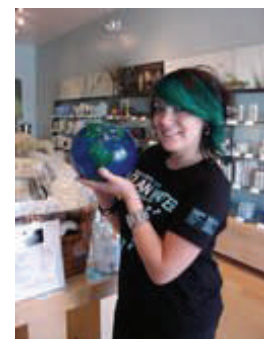
environment central to the way they do business.

Salons also encouraged Earth Month supporters to join our "Text for Clean Water" campaign to ask President Obama to prioritize these issues for Clean Water:

1. Protect and Restore Gulf wetlands! Wetlands provide important water filtration for the Gulf and the nation that we cannot do without.
2. Take immediate action to reduce Dead Zone-causing pollution.
3. Protect our rivers! As states seek to increase water withdrawals from rivers, we must ensure that there is enough clean water to support the wildlife and the fishing industry that depend upon healthy rivers and coastal estuaries.



Avant Garde Salon in Destin, FL, held cut-a-thons to help raise money



Tiffany of Lemongrass Salon in Ft. Worth, TX created hand painted globes to help stylists remember to talk about Earth Month.



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UNITED FOR A HEALTHY GULF

GRN Hosts Gulf Gathering 2009

The GRN teamed up with SouthWings and the Sierra Club this May to bring activists and citizens together from all over the Gulf Coast region. Attendees got the opportunity to network, attend workshops, and even celebrate the GRN's 15th birthday.



Networking by the campfire



Musicians jam out by the campfire in celebration of the GRN's 15th birthday

Casey DeMoss-Roberts leads a workshop on fighting sewage pollution



Gulf Gathering 2009 Group Photo

The Terrible Ten in Mississippi

Some plans are so bad that opposing them is a no-brainer. This is not one of those times. On the surface, the Mississippi Gulf Region Water and Sewer Plan looks like it has potential. The stated goal of the Plan is to construct or expand 60 water and sewer systems to help coastal Mississippi recover from Hurricane Katrina, which has some truth to it.

The Federal dollars slated for the project come from the US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Katrina relief fund for low and moderate income family housing. The State of Mississippi asked for and received a waiver for the \$600 million Plan in August 2007 stating there was a compelling need for water treatment that would benefit families of all income brackets. After all, no one wants raw and poorly treated sewage flowing into waterways.

The problem is that ten of these federally financed projects do not necessarily help families recover from the hurricane. Instead, the Katrina relief money is funding sewer and water projects to help private developers suburbanize rural Mississippi at the expense of wetlands, critical habitat, and scenic rivers. Furthermore, the State of Mississippi has ignored federal rules on cumulative environmental impact studies. Instead of supplying an "Environmental Impact Statement" which considers the impact of all 60 of these projects, they only performed "Environmental Assessments" on each little project. This is known as "Piecemealing" in government circles and is not allowed. While some of the 60 projects might have relatively small impacts, the cumulative impacts, including wetland destruction, critical habitat impacts, encouraged new development, and water pollution are significant and must be addressed.

GRN will be working hard to make sure the terrible ten do not move forward and we could use the help of our members! If you are interested in learning more contact Casey DeMoss Roberts at (504)525-1528 x 205 casey@healthygulf.org