

Environmental Conservation & Enhancement

The City of Biloxi actively supports conservation and restoration of the natural resources that provide a vast array of recreational and commercial opportunities to its residents and visitors. For instance, the City of Biloxi was one of the first cities in the state to employ a full-time City arborist and to adopt a **tree protection ordinance** to safeguard its magnificent Live Oaks, magnolias and other significant trees; the City is a long-time **Tree City, USA** designee.

A partner of the **Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain**, established to conserve and protect local open spaces of ecological, cultural or scenic significance, the City of Biloxi also was one of the first cities in Mississippi to establish a **Community Court** system to facilitate enforcement of local codes to improve the safety and appearance of residential and commercial property throughout Biloxi. Enforcement of local codes in 2010 resulted in 2,576 code violations being resolved, of which 937 involved the clearing of weeds and debris.

Biloxi's **Comprehensive Land Development Ordinance** requires a specific ratio of pervious surface to impervious area for residential and commercial development, which enhances stormwater management efforts in compliance with federal and state-mandated regulations.

Biloxi Code Enforcement

| Year | Code Violation Requests Processed | Total # Cleared |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2011* | 844 | 641 |
| 2010 | 2435 | 2576 |
| 2009 | 4787 | 3928 |
| 2008 | 3739 | 603 |
| 2007 | 1983 | 1847 |

*Through July 15, 2011
Source: Biloxi Community Development Department Annual Reports

Development of a comprehensive **Stormwater and Flood Management Ordinance** is underway, with adoption anticipated in early 2012, which will not only help minimize residential and commercial property damage from flood events, but will improve local water quality and erosion control efforts.

The City contracts for citywide, weekly **recycling pickup service** and participates in the Harrison County Beautification Program, a public-private partnership, to provide the monthly **Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program** to protect air, water and soil resources by providing a free alternative to illegal dumping and improper disposal

of harmful waste in local landfills. The City also participates in annual Telephone Directory Recycling, Christmas Tree Recycling, and Great American Clean Up Programs.

Deer Island and the Gulf Islands National Seashore

Located directly off of Point Cadet, the City annexed **Deer Island** in 1999. In 2002, 90% of the island was purchased by the state from private owners to become part of the **Mississippi Coastal Preserves System**, which is comprised of natural areas managed by the state to restore, enhance and maintain their ecological integrity.

Through its participation with the **Gulf Coast Heritage Trails Partnership** (GCHTP), the Biloxi Parks and Recreation Department is working with the Coastal Preserves Program and National Park Service to create a Deer Island Blueway that will highlight the ecological, cultural and historical resources of the island and enhance public access through designated canoe and kayak paddling routes and, possibly, pedestrian boat-ferry services.

Inclusion of Horn Island, Petit Bois Island, Ship Island, and two miles of the western tip of Cat Island in the **Gulf Islands National Seashore** ensures that these offshore resources are protected through federal reef re-establishment, erosion control and other island conservation programs. In 1978, Congress designated Horn Island and Petit Bois Island as national wilderness areas to minimize human impact on their ecosystems. All four of these barrier islands, located 10 -12 miles south of Biloxi, are home to a diverse range of plant and animal life, including a greater variety of bird species than any other ecosystem in the continental U.S. Lands and waters of the barrier island system provide habitat for marine creatures, insects, birds and mammals, including threatened and endangered species.



The **Gulf Coast Heritage Trails Partnership** is a public-private effort to establish a safe, coast-wide network of trails connecting neighborhoods, businesses, schools, and green and blue spaces to enhance the general public's enjoyment of and access to scenic, historic, educational and natural areas. The **Bike Biloxi Program**, which hosts a "Dinner Ride in Downtown" series and - thus far - has established downtown and East Biloxi bicycle routes, is one product of this partnership.

Biloxi's social offerings, aesthetics and openness are what attach residents to the community, according to the Knight Foundation and Gallop's 2010 "Soul of the Community" study.

A designated **Preserve America Community**, Biloxi's built environment benefits from the commitment of City officials and residents to preserve and enhance historic buildings, sites and cultural activities. The **Biloxi Preservation in May Celebration** is an annual collaborative effort of the City, Biloxi Main Street, Biloxi Bay Chamber, Biloxi Chamber of Commerce, Local History and Genealogy Department of the Biloxi Library and Biloxi Public School District that honors the past and showcases the City's rich cultural heritage through special programs, exhibits and receptions.



The Mississippi Gulf Coast's variety of environmental resources contributes greatly to residents' high quality of life and growth in the **ecotourism market** has favorably impacted these resources by expanding support for conservation and enhancement programs.

Local Biodiversity

The **Mississippi Coastal Bird Checklist** identifies the 387 local bird species and is available online, in a print-friendly format, at www.pascagoulaiver.audubon.org and www.mscoastaudubon.org.



The Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative

www.gulfresearchinitiative.org

The **Gulf of Mexico Alliance** is a partnership of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, formed with the goal of increasing regional collaboration to enhance the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico. In 2011, BP and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance executed an agreement for the implementation of BP's \$500 million **Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative** (GRI) to coordinate scientific studies, over a 10-year period, of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill effects and associated impacts on the environment and public health.

“Biloxi is the name that people know and the place that people love.”

Mayor A.J. Holloway

