



## Newsletter

Spring 2020

[www.littlelagoon.org](http://www.littlelagoon.org)

**Next meeting:  
Thursday  
July 16, 2020**

**5:30 pm**

**Gulf Shores Activity Center  
260 Clubhouse Drive**

Welcome to Stay-At-Home Days in Alabama. Just think of all the things you can do while staying at home. You can get your oyster cages ready for the upcoming season. And what about that dock or pier? Could it use some minor renovations in anticipation of oyster cages? Maybe your boat could use a good cleaning. Stuck at home, make the best of it. So here we go with the latest updates on Little Lagoon.

### **1,000' living shoreline restoration project in the SW corner of Little Lagoon in the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge**

The best of plans goes awry. Dr. Eric Sparks, Assistant Extension Professor, Mississippi State University, and Jackie Sablan, Wildlife Biologist, Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, were going to give an update on the Living Shoreline Project in Little Lagoon. Due to the current pandemic and based on feedback from the board and our guest speakers, this presentation and our Spring Quarterly Membership Meeting has been cancelled (along with everything else in Gulf Shores). The talk has been tentatively rescheduled for our Summer Quarterly Membership Meeting on Thursday, July 16<sup>th</sup>. We did work on and consider electronic presentation by the guest speaker but have concluded it is best to reschedule. Something to look forward to. We may all be wearing masks still, but what the heck – the new normal.

### **Little Lagoon Pass Update**

Pass dredging was completed on Jan 30<sup>th</sup> and the barge, pipeline and equipment were removed for long term maintenance and repair. The pass channel has remained in compliance with the court order since completion of the last dredging cycle. There have been several south easterlies associated with Spring low pressure systems which have essentially filled up the sediment traps north of the pass bridge. There has also been significant shoaling just south of the pass mouth also caused by the spring low pressure systems. While the shoaling has kept the channel to the west side of the pass, the channel then does a hard turn to the west outside of the pass mouth. There are plans by ALDOT for a survey of the shoal sands to be completed as soon as possible. Drove down to the Pass. Whole parking area roped off and barricaded. Wanted to get a picture of the Pass but was afraid I might get arrested. LOL Will have to make do with something else – next page.

## Oyster Gardening Update

For the 2020 Lagoon Oyster Gardening season we have signed up 43 gardeners who will maintain 50 gardens in Little Lagoon. Several gardeners dropped out after 2019 gardening season and a slightly greater number of new gardeners signed up for 2020. Uncertainty exists concerning logistics for this gardening season. The program is over seen by Auburn University and they have social gathering guidelines in place which have changed the season kick off process. Current plan is, we will not be having our usual get together seminar (will miss the free lunch) and equipment distribution for new gardeners. Distribution of spat by volunteer teams will not happen. New gardeners will come by Dennis' house to pick up their cages, clips, zip ties and rope plus get a quick how-to seminar on an individual basis. Seasoned gardeners who require replacement cages will also need to schedule a visit to Dennis' house to pick up their cages. PJ will be distributing spat to gardens by himself over the course of 3 days due to social distancing guidelines by AU. Spawning and spat set on recycled shell at the AU Shellfish lab tentatively set for the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April so with some luck we should see our gardens up and running by June 1. Spring temps and the virus will need to cooperate so stay tuned for updates. Regardless, it will be imperative that each gardener have their cages/gardens sitting on/attached to their piers and ready for spat delivery when PJ delivers the baby oysters. If we're still in lockdown, you can amuse yourself by watching oysters grow instead of paint dry. In lieu of Lagoon Pass pictures, we have:



Black Drum caught in Little lagoon



Gulf Shores public Beach shut down for Coronavirus

## Committee Activity Updates

- **Watershed Management Plan (WMP)** Sixty-five people attended the Feb 6<sup>th</sup> watershed management plan community workshop at the new Gulf State Park Learning Center despite inclement weather that day. 53% of the attendees were from Gulf Shores, 20% Orange Beach, 7% Foley, 4% Mobile, 3% Bon Secour and the remainder

were visitors or “other”. Obviously, the Lagoon Watershed was well represented. Participants were asked to identify **strengths, weaknesses and opportunities** within the Gulf Frontal Watershed area and to prioritize the top 3 in each category. The main identified **strengths** were conservation of land, water quality, and biodiversity. Identified **weaknesses** were septic tanks, loss of critical habitat, and water quality. **Opportunities** were real time water quality monitoring, upgrading and enforcing regulations and prioritizing septic to sewer conversions and living shoreline restoration. For those who could not attend you can still give input to the plan by taking a survey at <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/7939d16c14fa4056a18fe5946e994042> . Opportunities will be further refined with additional survey input and prioritized later this year. Geosyntec has asked us to provide them with some photos for the WMP - “We don’t want photos with people necessarily, but photos of erosion issues, heavy boater traffic, waves crashing on shore or structures, flooding, storm surge, litter, etc. would be very helpful!” If you have any photos which fit this description please send them to Dennis at [dennishatfield17@gmail.com](mailto:dennishatfield17@gmail.com). Marlon Cook, Ron Phelps, Dennis, Wade Burcham, Don Blanchard and Mollie Taylor had an electronic conference meeting March 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss possible point sources of pollution into Little Lagoon and an action plan to investigate. The group came up with 10 ground water input points for evaluation. Dennis discussed 10 possible point sources in the Lagoon and talked with the group about previous studies characterizing and estimating input from various aquifers into the Lagoon. Action item: Marlon to summarize literature and recommend sampling needs. Other items discussed include GS Park sewage processing system and the weir on the bayou connecting Little Lagoon to Lake Shelby and possible fisheries impacts.

- **LL Restoration Project by Dan Bond**

- The City of Gulf Shores (COGS) will work in partnership with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), Auburn University (AU), The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES), the University of South Alabama (USA), Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL), Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant (MS-AL SG), and Mississippi State University (MSU) to implement programs that improve water quality, increase and enhance habitat area, and improve ecological productivity. The project will have secondary beneficial impacts to the region including more resilient and sustainable infrastructure and increased recreational and ecotourism opportunities. Specific programs will include living shorelines, improved hydrologic connectivity of the existing canal system, conversion of approximately 200 individual septic systems to municipal sewer, shellfish restoration programs, marsh and seagrass restoration, hydrodynamic modeling, ecological research and long-term water quality monitoring.
- ADCNR, as the recipient of RESTORE funding, will conduct grant administration, project development and oversight, and sub-recipient monitoring. COGS will act as the sub-recipient to ADCNR and will be the project manager and pass-through entity for the specific programs that make up the discrete components of the project. COGS will hire a qualified professional services firm to provide program management, grant administration, engineering, and environmental services as needed. Project implementation and monitoring will occur over a five-year period. The project will be implemented in coordination with the Mobile Bay

National Estuary Program’s RESTORE-funded Gulf Frontal Watershed Management Plan. The project team will also work with local community groups including the Little Lagoon Preservation Society and Gulf Shores High School’s Sustainability Academy to develop opportunities for volunteer involvement and public outreach/education.

- **Laguna Cove property** – On Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup> the Mayor and City Council will review and then vote on a Engineering and Design contract with GMC (Goodwin Mills Cawood) architect and engineering firm. The work session was originally supposed to be on April 6<sup>th</sup> and followed one week later by a formal City Council meeting for Mayor and Council approval. The April 6<sup>th</sup> work session was cancelled and rescheduled for the 13<sup>th</sup> along with the formal City Council Meeting. Current high-level design plan is for dune/habitat restoration, bathroom, boardwalk (vs. fishing pier), kayak launch, i.e. passive recreation park design.
- **Outreach** – GSHS water quality monitoring with Earth Science teacher Krista Marcum and students has come to a halt likely for the remainder of the school year due to the virus, school closing and social distancing needs. She has signed up for 4 oyster gardens at Dennis’ pier for 2020 but there is uncertainty as to who will maintain them for the summer. Krista? Middle and high school students? She will probably fully implement/finish WQ monitoring objectives when classes return in Fall 2020. LLPS has offered and GSHS has accepted a \$1,000 scholarship for a deserving college bound student each graduating class for the next 5 school years. Working on a plan to grow the scholarship to \$1,000 per year for 4 years of college for a deserving college bound student. GSHS/Krista has received \$3,500 from Republic/COGS for WQ Monitoring and Oyster gardening expenses. Dan Bond (COGS) has talked with Krista to have GSHS Honor students conduct nutrient analysis as part of the Lagoon Restoration project. They would be funded by the Restore moneys from the Lagoon Restoration project grant and utilize expertise and lab capabilities from GSU.
- **Website** – Prediction of working on incorporating library material etc. from old website, beta phytoplankton DB set up, working on Activities Page (WQ Monitoring, Oyster Gardening, Quarterly Members Meeting, Out Reach), working on financial module plan hasn’t happened due to circumstances beyond our control. Waiting.  
[www.littlelagoon.org](http://www.littlelagoon.org)

## Financials

<b>January 1, 2020 thru March 31, 2020</b>	
Starting Balance	<b>\$58,493.03</b>
Total Income	\$1,895.50
Total Expenses	\$1,605.39
Ending Balance	<b>\$58,783.14</b>

**Notable expenses-** Chamber Dues \$210, D&O Ins \$883, USPS Mailbox \$118, YSI Calibration Supplies \$155

And further waiting to see what “the new normal” is going to look like. Stay busy at home for now.

We invite you to be a part of preserving Little Lagoon for generations to come. Your support is crucial if we are to preserve and protect this unique environment. Please join us as a member of Little Lagoon Preservation Society



Members receive a quarterly newsletter, meeting notifications, and updates regarding special issues.

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*Email allows us to keep our costs down so that a greater percentage of your donation may be applied toward our goals. Your email will be used by LLPS only to distribute newsletters and any important LLPS communications.*

**FAMILY MEMBERSHIP**

\$25    \$50    \$75    other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT MEMBERSHIP**

\$10

**BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP**

\$200    other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Business members are eligible to place a logo on LLPS brochures and a link to their web site on the LLPS site, [www.littlelagoon.org](http://www.littlelagoon.org).*

**Please complete this form and mail it with your check payable to LLPS  
Little Lagoon Preservation Society      5  
P. O. Box 3193  
Gulf Shores, AL 36547**