



**Newsletter
Summer 2021**

www.littlelagoon.org

**Next meeting:
Thursday, July 22,
2021, 5:30 PM
Gulf Shores Activity
Center**

Four Years of Oyster Gardening in Little Lagoon: How is it Going?

Little Lagoon Preservation Society (LLPS) will host our first non virtual member meeting since the Pandemic started last Spring. Come see the presentation covering Four Years of Oyster Gardening in Little Lagoon at the Activity Center in Gulf Shores on Thursday July 22, 2021, at 5:30 PM. Refreshments and snacks will be provided for the meet and mingle before the first guest speaker on the agenda at 6 PM.

Dr. PJ Waters, Associate Extension Professor, Assistant Director of the School of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences for the AU Marine Extension & Research Center, AKA “The Sheriff of Oyster Gardening”, will be our guest speaker and provide an overview of gardening, tips on cage and oyster maintenance, a review of fauna (animals) found in our gardens, and an update on the Restore funded large scale oyster gardening project. If you are a new gardener, thinking about gardening in the future, or are a veteran gardener please bring your questions and observations to share during this session.

Little Lagoon Pass Update

A “Trigger Notification” was issued on January 29, 2021. ALDOT declared they were done with the cycle on Thursday May 27th. The 4-month dredging process was the “dredging cycle from hell” fraught with nearly constant spoil pipe integrity issues and pumping issues. When ALDOT’s contractor finished the cycle, areas north of the bridge had “new” shoal deposits which put the pass in a near trigger condition. It is still in that same near trigger condition.

ALDOT awarded a new dredging contract near the end of the dredging cycle and selected M D Thomas Construction (sub-contractor during the last dredging cycle).

On June 11th we received a surveyed shoal volume estimate from Dr. Webb. A graph he provided us showed shoal volumes consistently close to 120,000 cu yds for 2015 thru 2019. For the 2021 survey he showed a volume of nearly 137,000 cu yds. Recall a trigger is issued once the shoal volume exceeds 150,000 cu yds. Close but not quite at trigger yet.

Oyster Gardening Update

Thursday, May 17th, baby/spat oysters were delivered to 30 gardens in Little Lagoon and 6 research locations. Collectively, the LLPS gardening sites and research garden cages

meant Little Lagoon has 43+ gardens for the 2021 season. Not bad considering what the past 9 months have been like.

Recycled shells with spat set on them revealed a heavy set this year and PJ has



gone back to full size shell vs the smaller shell experiment from last season. Reports are incredibly positive from gardeners that we are growing lots of oysters this year and they are growing fast! Recent measurements from the Hatfield pier show oysters already 35+mm versus their 2-5 mm size when they were delivered.

Committee Activity Updates

Watershed Management Plan (WMP)

Completed WMP draft given to MBNEP. It could be available for steering committee input in around three weeks. Following review there would be a public roll out of the completed plan. Dr. Beebe on his “Little Lagoon Watershed Nutrient Assessment and Source Tracking” investigation has been installing minimally invasive, shallow (6’) wells on 10 properties to sample for nutrients, other pollutants and water level of the aquifer. Marlon Cooke has been sampling locations and wells for his “ASSESSMENT OF WATER QUALITY, GROUNDWATER CONTRIBUTIONS, AND LAND-USE IMPACTS IN THE LITTLE LAGOON WATERSHED, BALDWIN COUNTY, ALABAMA”.

Lagoon Restoration Project- Dan Bond (COGS)

City finally received feedback and comments on the project from the Restore Council. University and City project leads have reviewed the comments, added their respective comments, and resubmitted the plan to the Restore Council for final agreement and funding. The City is anticipating a fast turnaround on returned comments, with contract in place by end of year, and start-up early next year.

Laguna Cove- Dan Bond (COGS)

A public meeting was held on June 3rd with Dan Bond, Mark Acreman, and consultants for input on site plan design for Laguna Cove property. Mostly attended by West Beach property owners. Consultants will put together a gathering spot plan incorporating public input. Dan met with the design team Thursday 8 July to review their draft plans. City input/guidance will follow, and another public meeting will be scheduled to review the Beta plan.

Outreach

GSHS Scholarship fund raising team- Johnna Kolaks has volunteered to head up the group and host a planning/kickoff meeting for the team.

GSHS Outreach- LLPS and GSHS have received a mini grant for \$20,000 for several uses by both the school and our organization from the Alabama Association of Resource Conservation and



Development (RC&D). The grant is for 1 year to start in late May. Kudos to Steve for making us aware of the opportunity and Ron and Krista for helping put the plan together! The grant is a flow thru award where LLPS will fund purchases and be reimbursed by RC&D in a one-time reimbursement at the end of the 1-year grant period.

The grant will pay for oyster gardening expenses for this year for LLPS and GSHS and will purchase new weather stations for both LLPS and GSHS, a drone and mapping software for use by GSHS Biology, Ecology, Engineering, Aviation, and LLPS, and assorted lab supplies including a dissecting microscope and camera. It will also pay for 2 summer interns to monitor and maintain GSHS gardens in the lagoon, and for substitute teachers during all day outings by GSHS classes and nearly 1,000 miles of transport costs for field outings.

Jackie McGonigal, Program Director with The Gulf Coast Center for Ecotourism and Sustainability, submitted a NOAA B-WET grant request, with LLPS support, to train teachers to perform and teach AWW protocol WQ monitoring in the Lagoon to Gulf Shores HS science students. Unfortunately, she did not receive the Grant.

On Thursday April 29th, Dennis presented the \$5,000 Little Lagoon Preservation Society Barney and Maxine Gass Scholarship to Andrew Meza at the GSHS Awards Ceremony. Andrew seemed genuinely happy and received significant scholarship offers from multiple sources. Andrew is apparently extremely popular with his peers and LLPS was positively recognized by the students in attendance.



WQ Monitoring - Finally, we are back! We have had several water quality outings beginning June the 3rd. Thanks to Lloyd, Susan, Graham, Avery, and Beth for getting us going again. We have lost a few volunteers and need at least several more. Please contact Dennis if you want to help with this important activity.

Membership- Sadly, LLPS lost a former LLPS Board Member and Officer, George Dunn. He passed on Thursday, May 6th and will be deeply missed. George and wife Jean were in large part responsible for our WQ efforts in the Lagoon and were hard working, significant contributors to our organization. Details can be found here- <https://mobilememorialgardens.com/george-dunn/>

Financials

April 1, 2021, thru June 30, 2021	
Starting Balance	\$77,687.15
Total Income	\$1,525.00
Total Expenses	\$4,028.22
Ending Balance	\$75,183.93

Notable expenses- \$2,400 Oyster gardening cages and Spat (RC&D grant reimbursement), \$908.00 Board Liability Insurance, \$249 WQ Probe Supplies

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

**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.

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