



Newsletter

Winter 2019

www.littlelagoon.org

Next meeting:

Thursday, January 17, 2019
5:30 p.m.

Gulf Shores Activity Center
260 Clubhouse Drive

Little Lagoon Shoreline Restoration in the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge

Little Lagoon Preservation Society (LLPS) members and the public are invited to attend a quarterly meeting. Jackie Sablan, Wildlife Biologist, Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge (BNWR) and Patric Harper, Northern Gulf Coastal Program Coordinator, Alabama Restoration Biologist, should fill us in on an oil spill fine money funded project to restore 3 tenths of a mile of living shoreline along the Southwestern most shore of Little Lagoon. LLPS participated in a group effort to characterize the project and submitted it for funding in the oil spill project portal. The hope is to remediate and extend the eroded shoreline with shoreline grasses, protect it with wave break structures, and protect Pine Beach Road which is access to residents in the BNWR. Other expected project benefits are increased edge habitat, lagoon waters filtration and avoidance of Beach Mouse habitat associated with the alternative rerouting of Pine Beach Rd. The project will be looking for volunteers to help with planting when the effort kicks off.

In the event Jackie and Patric are unable to attend due to the Federal Government shutdown, LLPS President Dennis Hatfield will provide a high-level summary of the project.

LLPS will meet on Thursday, January 17, 2019 5:30 p.m., at the Gulf Shores Activity Center. The first half hour of the meeting provides an opportunity to meet, mingle and enjoy refreshments. The program begins at 6 and will include a question-and-answer period.

Little Lagoon Pass Update

On Oct 20, 2018 and subsequent to a 10-day trigger condition, a trigger was issued to ALDOT to commence dredging the pass. Roughly 3 days later ALDOT commenced dredging. The new technology worked fairly-well overall. There was a bit of a slow start, a learning curve on currents in the pass while using the barge, and a line

clog delay. Impressive dredging/pumping rates were established after a cautious beginning (slightly over 30% increase in hourly production). Currently there is shoaling at the mouth of the pass caused by recent winter storm easterlies. If we get a northerly storm, that could fix the shoaling at the mouth of the Pass by “blowing it out.” At present, the barge is on the shoreline with ALDOT doing final soundings on the channel, which was completed on Jan 2. Barge will then be removed.

The trigger point for dredging is usually North of the bridge. But the question remains, is ALDOT completely following the court order on what areas around the pass get dredged. In the northeast portion of the pass channel there is an area of shoaling sand (flood tidal shoal) that continues to increase in size which does not get measured or dredged. The flood tidal shoal is supposed to get surveyed once a year and once it reaches 150,000 cubic yards, by court order it should get moved to the west side along the beach. ALDOT is finally measuring parts of the flood tidal shoal (since 2013) but does not measure the entire flood shoal and has never issued a trigger to dredge the flood tidal shoal sands. A good question is, does the ever-increasing shoal reduce circulation and flushing of lagoon waters?

Oyster Gardening Update

Wednesday December 5th, five teams visited 43 oyster gardening sites in Little Lagoon and harvested 46,631 oysters with an average length of ~2.2”. Average site production was 1,050 oysters and 3 sites produced over 2,000 oysters. Our largest oyster measured was ~4”! The 46,631 oysters “restored” 2.32 acres (5/m²) in Mobile Bay which equates to an economic value of \$44,953. The LLPS volunteer-grown-oysters were delivered a day later, Thursday Dec 6th, to closed reefs in Mobile Bay. We are hoping and crossing our fingers that they will flourish and spawn next Spring, April-May time frame, and provide much needed habitat and spat to the decimated Mobile Bay oyster reefs. All gardeners received a certificate for their participation.

To quote our oyster gardening mentor, PJ Waters: “In terms of the BP funded oyster gardening Little Lagoon project, these results give me confidence that pretty much wherever the city has property they will allow us to use for the 'farm', oyster farming should be, with proper management, viable. This was a good year, representing an increase in gross production of 84.8%”. With the volunteer project and the BP funded “farming” effort, our oyster production in Little Lagoon will soon (by 2020) increase to 100’s of thousands of oysters vs the current 10’s of thousands of oysters along with a big increase in water filtering and habitat addition.

LLPS hopes to grow the volunteer gardening program for 2019 and oil spill fine moneys will fund a “commercial” size gardening project probably starting in 2020. With the extension unit from Auburn University in the local area, the project is hoping to use students to do a lot of the work with new gardens and maybe even operate a hatchery for Little Lagoon. The “commercial” gardening effort should have a large component in the eastern end of the Lagoon but should also have multiple sites across the lagoon. For the volunteer oyster gardening project in 2019, Dennis is looking for Team Captains

to monitor oyster growing in different established zones of the Lagoon. The concept is to maximize volunteer gardening production by having a checklist for best practices which each Captain will follow and recommend to gardeners in their respective zone when checking oyster gardens. Sign ups for 2019 Oyster Gardens now being taken.

Republic Services Community Grant

Little Lagoon Preservation Society won the Republic Community Grant program even though there were some anomalies with the final count. The other contender for the Grant was the local Educational Foundation. In the end, Republic awarded Grants to LLPS and the Educational Foundation. The funds will basically pay for the 2018 Oyster Gardens. LLPS will receive the check (\$3,500) at the Monday, January 14th City Council Meeting. Thanks to all who helped make this happen!



Committee Activity Updates

Outreach:

- **Watershed Management Plan (WMP)** Update from Christian Miller with Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, “I think we should be on track to get the watershed planning process that includes Little Lagoon underway hopefully by the end of the month.”
- **LL Restoration Project** – Awaiting update from City of Gulf Shores
- **Laguna Cove property acquisition** –
 - LLPS is concerned this whole thing is going to fall apart since there is no agreement on price and seems to be no action/effort towards that end with a \$2M difference. Per Dan Bond with the COGS- Price is still being negotiated between the Erie Meyer Charitable Trust and the State of Alabama. If it goes the way of development LLPS plans to fight for decreased density vs the Planned Unit Development (PUD) and a 30-foot setback from the wetlands. For a setback of only 10-feet (as in the current

PUD plan), a waiver by the City Council would have to be granted and for a marina a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) would be needed. If the property is purchased and a park built by the City, LLPS and residents should lobby to modify/reduce the park size and impact on West Beach Property owners.

- An LLPS position paper was sent to various organizations with interest in final use/development plans for Laguna Cove. The paper outlined the history of planning for the property since around 2006 including Court rulings and State involvement. The paper further outlined the environmental and ecological significance and possible impacts due to overdevelopment. The final point of the paper was to delineate possible outcomes and actions needed to impact the result in a positive manor.
- **Out Reach** – Several Gulf Shores High School students helped with the oyster gardening harvest. Further student involvement with oyster gardening and the possibility of a tank for the students to spawn oysters as part of a science project with awards could be a good option. Brooke (new Board member) volunteered to work outreach with the “younger” population for involvement in LLPS and suggested development of a Plan with social media channels to get the word out. Another opportunity is to hook up with “Share the Beach” program to educate the general public on Little Lagoon and oyster gardening.

Membership

2019 Dues are now being collected. Membership dues are vital to LLPS and our efforts to preserve and sustain Little Lagoon for all to enjoy. Please make sure you have submitted your dues for 2019. \$25 for one-year membership gives you updates on Little Lagoon health and ongoing efforts to preserve the Lagoon for years to come. LLPS policy is to deactivate members that are more than 2 years in arrears on membership dues. Make sure you don’t get deactivated and pay your dues. You can pay by snail mail and a check or by using PayPal: <http://littlelagoon.org/membership> . Thank you for your support!

Financials

October 1 thru December 31, 2018	
Starting Balance	\$48,816.50
Total Income	\$925.00
Total Expenses	\$464.74
Ending Balance	\$49,276.76

Notable Expenses- Phyto Net \$160, probe shipping \$74.15, OG cert mailout \$59.44, SurveyMonkey \$111

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.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

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**