

# THE PELICAN POST

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2017 Pelican Paddle

Executive Director	2
Education and Restoration	2
Alabama Coastal Cleanup	3
New Board Members	4
John Manelos	5
Photo Contest	5
Pelican Paddle	6-7
BirdFest	8
Calendar	9
Donors	10-11
Internship Reflections	11
Kids Fishing Day	12
Plant Sale	12

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*The Weeks Bay Foundation is a non-profit organization whose members work to protect the natural resources of coastal Alabama and to provide assistance and support for the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve's goals and programs.*

Cover photo by  
Veronica Herndon, Weeks Bay  
Foundation Board Member

Layout & Design by  
Kathy Hicks

*From the Executive Director . . .*

As the sun starts setting earlier each evening, marking the end of another southern summer, I try to spend as much time as possible outside. Soon, we will find our days whittled down to 5 p.m. sunsets, but for now, we can revel in the humid wonders of coastal Alabama during the dog days of summer!

Like many local families, the Weeks Bay Foundation has been squeezing every ounce of fun out of the summer. We dodged thunderstorms to hold the fifth annual **Pelican Paddle Canoe and Kayak Race** where more than 170 paddlers tested their endurance on Weeks Bay. We also worked into the dark with 10 volunteers to complete a small restoration project on Fish River. And Andrew and Jack, our **2017 summer interns**, worked tirelessly to remove invasive plants, restore properties, and conduct a fish survey on the bay.

Now, as the leaves start changing, we look forward to a beautiful fall. With numerous events planned for September and October, we hope to reconnect with those of you who have been out of the area. Meet new friends and join more than 4,000 volunteers to get the “trash out of the splash” at the 30th annual **Alabama Coastal Cleanup**. Visit the Safe Harbor Pond with your rods and reels for **Kids Fishing Day**, where your children can safely catch their first fish. Or, break out your binoculars and field guide for the **Alabama Coastal BirdFest**. In its 14th year, BirdFest has something for everyone, with scenic paddles, sunset cruises, and trips to all the prime birding spots in the area.

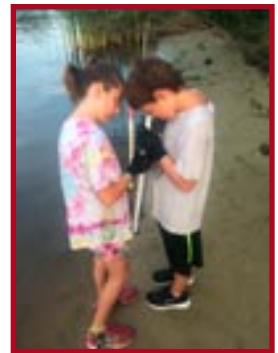
See you on the bay!



**Education and Restoration on Fish River**  
*by Yael Girard, Executive Director*

On a Friday evening in late July, 10 hardy volunteers met to learn about restoration techniques, data collection, and the importance of wetlands in our coastal landscape. The participants ranged from homeschoolers to college students to reservists in the US Coast Guard. Weeks Bay Foundation executive director, **Yael Girard**, and Mississippi State PhD candidate, **Nigel Temple**, lead the group through the hands-on activities.

The evening started with dinner and discussion about the project and effective data collection. Everyone gathered around a family-style meal and a lively conversation followed. Yael and Nigel discussed the proper techniques for collecting *E. coli* samples, testing water turbidity, and processing biomass. They also talked about the best way to install marsh plants to increase the likelihood of survival. Participants asked questions about climate change, the effect of boat wake on river shore erosion, and carbon sequestration in wetlands.



Testing turbidity





Collecting mini-cores

With full tummies, sturdy gloves, and lots of bug spray, the intrepid group trekked down to the shores of Fish River to become citizen scientists. They took readings for temperature and turbidity, which shows the clarity of the water based on how much sediment is present. They took mini-cores to look at the amount of carbon already in the planting sites. All of this data will be used to compare conditions at the site before and after the planting. The hope is that conditions will improve!

The group installed two plots of black needlerush (*Juncus roemerianus*) in two different planting patterns, similar to the planting schemes used in our Swift Tract project. The “checkerboard” pattern spaces the plants out across the entire plot and allows each plant to grow without any competition. The “clump” planting puts numerous plants in a single hole, the theory being that plants grouped together will protect one another from intense wave action and environmental changes. Using both patterns in nearly identical plots will show if more of the plants survive in one pattern over the other.

Although the volunteers finished the evening covered in mud and wet through and through, all participants agreed that they had learned a great deal during the experience. One of the younger volunteers enjoyed it so much, she offered to live at the planting site to keep an eye on the plots. Needless to say, her mother did not agree to this unpaid internship opportunity.

The Weeks Bay Foundation would like to thank all of the volunteers who gave up their Friday evening to battle the mosquitos and donate their backs to this collaborative effort. We would also like to acknowledge the NOAA Climate Stewards Education Program and the SeaVibe Foundation for their generous support of this citizen science opportunity.

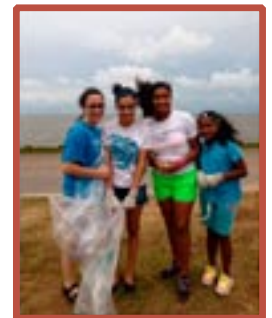
## Alabama Coastal Cleanup

*by Yael Girard, Executive Director*



This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Alabama Coastal Cleanup. After three decades of community effort, more than 1.6 million pounds of trash have been collected and disposed of properly, trash that won't be in our waterways and on our beaches.

An exciting addition to this year's cleanup will be an effort to collect and recycle waste such as beach toys and chairs, coolers, and other rigid plastics that normally end up in landfills. Alabama Coastal Cleanup, with support from the Weeks Bay Foundation, Thompson Engineering, and Alabama Coastal Foundation, will partner with the TerraCycle Company to provide plastics recycling. TerraCycle offers free recycling programs, funded by brands, manufacturers, and retailers around the world, to help collect and



recycle the hard-to-recycle waste found along beaches and shorelines. This includes plastic products covered in barnacles that traditional recycling programs could not accept. Given the recent recognition of the harmful effects of marine debris in the environment, we are excited to be a part of this effort to remove and recycle plastics from our area waterways.

You can get involved by visiting [alabamacoastalcleanup.com](http://alabamacoastalcleanup.com) and contacting the zone captain for the area that interests you. With 30 cleanup zones from Bayou La Batre to Perdido Bay, there is a place in your neighborhood where you can be part of the effort!



## Welcome New Board Members

by Diana Brewer, Development and Communications Coordinator

### Daniel R. Galbraith

Daniel Galbraith was born and raised outside of Birmingham along the headwaters of the Cahaba River. He grew up fishing the surrounding lakes, creeks, and rivers with his family and gained a love for all things outdoors and for conservation. Daniel attended the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Immediately following graduation, Daniel moved to Baldwin County so he could enjoy south Alabama's various outdoor activities. He is currently pursuing a real estate management career after spending 10 years in the banking industry. Daniel and his beautiful wife, **Addie**, have a two-year-old son named **Fisher**. Residents of Fairhope, the Galbraiths strive to serve Baldwin County's citizens and natural resources through work with the Weeks Bay Foundation, 3 Circle Church, United Way of Baldwin County, and the Fairhope-Point Clear Rotary Youth Club.

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### John L. Stump, DC, PhD, EdD

Dr. John Stump, a long-time practitioner and advocate of chiropractic, acupuncture, and alternative medicine, lives in Fairhope, where he is clinic director of the Integrative Medicine Center. John earned his bachelor's degree in biological sciences at the University of Maryland. His background in athletics and in sports medicine led him to pursue chiropractic medicine, and he earned a Doctor of Chiropractic degree from Palmer College in Davenport, Iowa, in 1976.

After completing his chiropractic training, John spent extensive time in the Orient, where he earned a PhD in acupuncture research. He served as staff physician with the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympic Games, where he and his staff were in charge of chiropractic care for athletes. Back home, John earned two more degrees—a Master of Sports Science in sports medicine and a Doctor of Sports Management. He has written nine books and more than 70 peer-reviewed articles.

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### Veronica Herndon

Veronica Herndon (Ronnie) has more than 30 years of marketing and management experience in highly competitive fields. In 1986, Ronnie established her own advertising and marketing company in New York, serving such clients as Merrill Lynch, Continuum Health Partners, and Pitney Bowes. Before establishing her agency, Ronnie worked for Home Box Office as part of the Cinemax launch team.

Born in Mobile, Ronnie spent summers at Point Clear where she came to know and love the water. She moved to New York to attend college and lived there until 2002 when she returned to her roots. She and her husband, a retired AP photojournalist, built a home on Mobile Bay at the mouth of Weeks Bay. Several years ago, they moved to Josephine, where they enjoy fishing, swimming, and watching the dolphins, osprey, and alligators.

## JOIN US!

Weeks Bay Foundation memberships, renewed annually, start at \$35. As a member, you are joining a group of people with similar interests and concerns for natural resources. More important, you are supporting and investing in clean water for boating and swimming, fish and wildlife habitat, and the quality of life we are so proud of in coastal Alabama. You will also receive communications about upcoming events, classes, and volunteer opportunities. To join, or renew your membership, visit [weeksbay.org/why-protect/membership](https://weeksbay.org/why-protect/membership).



## Fairhope Resident Steps Up for Conservation

by Diana Brewer, Development and Communications Coordinator

**John Manelos** takes the idea of clean water personally. After all, his business is literally on Mobile Bay. As the owner of Fairhope Paddleboard, John offers stand-up paddleboard rentals and lessons.

Several months ago, John was attending a Fairhope City Council meeting during which Yael Girard, Weeks Bay Foundation executive director, spoke to the council about the importance of protecting wetlands and how the community can, and should, conserve these habitats.

“Her presentation really drove home how non-profits are protecting our day-to-day lives,” John said. “And the reality is, the government is not. Her presentation struck me as to how important the Weeks Bay Foundation is. Coastal wetlands affect me. They affect my fellow citizens.”



In addition to becoming a Foundation member, John also attended a course on bacterial contamination of water, led by the Weeks Bay Reserve’s Coastal Training Coordinator, **Mike Shelton**, in conjunction with Alabama Water Watch.

“Again, this day-long course articulated to me the need for non-profits, for non-regulatory bodies, to help educate the public,” the retiree and former surfer said. “We take for granted that things are being protected by regulatory agencies, but they’re not.”

John and Fairhope Paddleboard also participated in the Foundation’s recent Pelican Paddle. During the event, John gave a paddleboard demonstration, and donated two paddleboard lessons, with use of boards, as door prizes.

“My paddleboard business is involved in the (Mobile) Bay daily,” John said. “I see what’s in the Bay, what surrounds the Bay. There’s no one that doesn’t love Mobile Bay.”

And that, he said, is reason enough to support the work of the Weeks Bay Foundation.

## Give Us Your Best Shot!

by Diana Brewer, Development and Communications Coordinator

We are surrounded by beauty here along the Gulf Coast, and sometimes, we can capture that beauty with a single, well-timed shot.

The Weeks Bay Photo Contest is the perfect way to display those moments, and share them throughout the year via the Weeks Bay Foundation’s print and digital publications. The deadline for submissions for the 2017 contest is October 16 at 5 p.m.

As in previous years, there are four categories in both Adult and Junior divisions:

Flora—plants, trees, shrubs, flowers, etc.

Fauna—animals, insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, etc.

Habitat—outdoor scene or landscape

People in Nature—people enjoying their coastal resources



Karen Chiasson

Photos can be color or black and white, and must be taken in an Alabama Gulf Coast watershed or coastal waters between October 25, 2016 and October 16, 2017. Winners will need to provide a high-resolution version of their winning shot so that the Foundation can use the winning photos throughout the year, including on the cover of *The Pelican Post*.

Photographers may submit up to two photos in each category. There is a \$5 fee per entry for adults. Entries from children 16 and under are free.

To learn more about the Weeks Bay Photo Contest and submit photos, go to [weeksbay.org/events/photo-contest](http://weeksbay.org/events/photo-contest), or on Facebook at [facebook.com/WeeksBayFoundation](https://facebook.com/WeeksBayFoundation).

For more information, call the Foundation office at (251) 990-5004, or email [weeksbayphotocontest@gmail.com](mailto:weeksbayphotocontest@gmail.com).





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Pelican Paddle Sponsors**



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Big Beach Brewing  
Marcie Kinsey  
Colin McBrearty



Photos by Diana Brewer, Veronica Herndon, Christopher Singleton, and Rick Wallace



## Pelican Paddle Canoe and Kayak Race Winners Announced

by Diana Brewer, Development and Communications Coordinator

Despite predictions for threatening weather, the fifth annual Pelican Paddle Canoe and Kayak Race on August 5 enjoyed its largest crowd to date, as well as a big increase in the number of stand-up paddleboard (SUP) participants. With 24 SUP racers, compared to six to eight in years past, some commented that it might be time to change the name of the event to include this fast-growing pastime and sport.

In addition to the record number of SUP racers, there was also great excitement around the raffles for a custom-built stand-up paddleboard, designed and built by Dirk McCall, and a Yeti Tundra 65 cooler, made possible by Red Beard's Outfitter. **Ashley** and **Michele Coleman** of Jackson, Alabama, and part-time Fairhope residents won the paddleboard. **Robert Janus** won the Yeti cooler.

More than 170 paddlers participated in the 3.5-mile race, the seven-mile pro option, or the Eco-tour, guided by Yael Girard, Weeks Bay Foundation executive director.

Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals were awarded for each division:

Non-traditional Craft	Mike Abeln, Daphne, AL	Gold
Pro-solo Kayak	Ryan Gillikin, Bay Minette, AL	Gold
Stand-up Paddleboard	Gabriel Pereira, Orange Beach, AL	Gold
	Hank Hodde, Mobile, AL	Silver
	Joe Babington, Mobile, AL	Bronze
Tandem Craft	Beau Risner, Brandon, MS	Gold
	Clint Dossett, Picayune, MS	Gold
	Christopher Frederick, Fairhope, AL	Silver
	James Frederick, Fairhope, AL	Silver
	Tara Baxley Nguyen, Mobile, AL	Bronze
Women's Solo Kayak	Michael Blackwell, New Orleans, LA	Bronze
	Pamela Kupersmith, Mobile, AL	Gold
	Mo Fitzgerald, Summerdale, AL	Silver
Men's Solo Kayak	Terri Abeln, Daphne, AL	Bronze
	Portland Janus, Foley, AL	Gold
	Neil Armentrout, Bay Minette, AL	Silver
Junior Solo Kayak	Scott Cox, Mobile, AL	Bronze
	Allison Siggers, Bay Minette, AL	Gold
	Huff Friedman, Fairhope, AL	Silver
	Jerry Bowman, Milton, FL	Bronze

"We were pretty nervous about the weather leading up to the event, but it turned out to be a perfect day," Girard said. "I know we had a lot of first-time racers, so it was fun and rewarding to see so many people of all ages, out and enjoying nature."

In addition to the race and raffles, the Pelican Paddle included live music by local singer/songwriter **Randy Branch**, food by Daphne Utilities and Ben's Burga Kaboose, craft beer, a glass blowing demonstration by Muffinjaw Designs, and a paddleboard demonstration by Fairhope Paddleboard.

This event would not be possible without our wonderful sponsors and volunteers. A special thank you to our Associate Board, who spearheaded the planning and sponsor recruitment.



# Alabama Coastal BirdFest Registration Well Underway

by D. Fran Morley, BirdFest Nestkeeper



Registration is up and running for the 14th annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest, which will be held October 4-7. BirdFest invites birders from across the U.S., Canada, and abroad to enjoy prime bird- and wildlife-watching opportunities on the Alabama Gulf Coast during fall migration.

“The birding potential on the Alabama Gulf Coast is phenomenal and fall migration is the best time to enjoy it,” said **John Borom**, event founder. “We have boat and walking trips every day to prime spots, including the Mobile-Tensaw Delta and Forever Wild Grand Bay Savanna, both of which are recognized for amazing biological diversity. Dauphin Island is considered one of the nation’s top destinations for seeing migrations. More than 370 bird species have been counted along the Alabama coast.”



Eager bird watchers scan the shoreline for birds

This year’s BirdFest also includes trips focused on seeing alligators, dolphins, wildflowers, and more. There are 36 expertly guided trips—including several new trips—two evening speaker events, workshops, and a free, family-friendly Bird & Conservation Expo on the Coastal Alabama Community College campus in Fairhope on Saturday, October 7.



Black-necked Stilt by featured artist “Brody” Joe Thomassen

Trip, evening event, and workshop fees range from \$15 to \$80, and require advance registration. Popular trips sell out early. Visit [alabamacoastalbirdfest.com](http://alabamacoastalbirdfest.com) to register. Registration is open through Friday, September 22.

Since 2004, Alabama Coastal BirdFest has raised more than \$100,000 to help preserve and protect vital coastal wildlife habitat and raise awareness about the great biological diversity of the Alabama Gulf Coast.



Keynote speaker for this year’s Alabama Coastal BirdFest is Greg Harber, past president of Birmingham Audubon and Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries.



Sponsors, to date, are



- Fairhope Single Tax Corporation
- Alabama Tourism Department
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- Mobile Bay Audubon Society
- Birmingham Audubon
- Mobile Bay National Estuarine Program
- Coastal Alabama Community College
- Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Alabama Coastal Heritage Trust
- Dauphin Island Sea Lab
- Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries



# FALL 2017 CALENDAR

## September

- 4 Labor Day.\***
- 12 Guest Lecture Series. “Gamboa, Panama”** presented by **Patsy Russo**. 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7 p.m. Bring a friend.
- 13 Weeks Bay Advisory Committee Meeting.** Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, 2 p.m.
- 16 30th Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup.** Fish River Marina, 8 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact the Reserve at (251) 928-9792.
- 23 National Estuaries Day.** Visit the Weeks Bay Reserve.
- 23 Kids Fishing Day.** A joint project of the Foundation, the Reserve, and ADCNR State Lands Division, Coastal Section and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division. Safe Harbor pond, across U.S. Highway 98 from the Reserve Visitor Center, 8 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact the Foundation office at (251) 990-5004.

## October

- 4-7 14th Annual John L. Borom Alabama Coastal BirdFest.** For more information about tours and events, go to [weeksbay.org](http://weeksbay.org) and click on the Alabama Coastal BirdFest button or go to [alabamacoastalbirdfest.com](http://alabamacoastalbirdfest.com).
- 7 Alabama Coastal BirdFest Bird & Conservation Expo.** Coastal Alabama Community College Fairhope Campus, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free admission.
- 7-9 Columbus Day / Fraternal Day / American Indian Heritage Day.\***
- 10 Guest Lecture Series. “Bird Strikes”** presented by **Emma Rhodes**. 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7 p.m. Bring a friend.

## October (continued)

- 12-15 Weeks Bay Native Plant Sale.** Safe Harbor at Weeks Bay, across U.S. Highway 98 from the Reserve Visitor Center, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- 16 Weeks Bay Photography Contest Deadline: 5 p.m.** Entry and submission of photos will be online only at [weeksbay.org](http://weeksbay.org). For more information, call (251) 990-5004.
- 27 Eastern Shore Institute of Lifelong Learning class: Bogs and Branches, Habitats of Weeks Bay Reserve (Session 1).** Weeks Bay Visitor Center Auditorium, 9 to 11 a.m. For more information, contact **Mike Shelton** at (251) 928-9792.

## November

- 3 Eastern Shore Institute of Lifelong Learning class: Bogs and Branches, Habitats of Weeks Bay Reserve (Session 2).** See October 27.
- 8 Guest Lecture Series. “Nature Photography”** presented by **Susan Rouillier**. 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 7 p.m. Bring a friend.
- 10 Eastern Shore Institute of Lifelong Learning class: Bogs and Branches, Habitats of Weeks Bay Reserve (Session 3).** See October 27.
- 10-11 Veteran’s Day.\***
- 12-17 NERRS National Meeting.** Coordination meeting of 28 Reserves in Corpus Christi, Texas.
- 23 Thanksgiving.\***

*\*The Visitor Center will be closed. All trails and boardwalks will remain open for your walking and sightseeing pleasure.*



Azalea Caterpillars by 2017 featured BirdFest artist “Brody” Joe Thomassen



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*In memory of Tres Costa  
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### **PELICAN PADDLE CANOE AND KAYAK RACE**

Fairhope Physical Therapy Services  
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## Become a part of the Weeks Bay Foundation!

### Giving Levels

Legacy Circle	\$5,000 and up
Sustainer	\$1,000 - \$4,999
Steward	\$500 - \$999
Supporter	\$250 - \$499
Friend	\$100 - \$249
Member	\$35 - \$99

Join us by returning the enclosed  
envelope or look for the link on  
our home page at  
[www.weeksbay.org](http://www.weeksbay.org).

## Internship Reflections

by Yael Girard, Executive Director

Each summer, the Weeks Bay Foundation hosts two paid interns to help with stewardship and restoration projects on the Foundation's protected lands. This year, **Jack Jones** and **Andrew Robertson** joined the Weeks Bay team for eight weeks. Throughout their service, the interns learned new skills and tested themselves as they worked in challenging environments.

Andrew, an environmental biology major at the University of Southern Mississippi said, "This internship has given insight into nearly every facet of the Weeks Bay Foundation. Each day was different than the one before. We might be removing invasive species on new properties one week, then building gates and taking water chemistry courses the next." Both interns became Alabama Water Watch certified in bacteria and water chemistry monitoring. They can now collect water samples and test for *E. coli*, dissolved oxygen, pH, and other water-quality indicators.



Andrew Robertson testing water

The interns spent many hours working on the Foundation's new Rio Vista and McPherron properties. Jack, a sophomore at the University of Alabama added, "Working outside was often hot and buggy, but at the end of the day it made you feel accomplished and you could definitely see the impact that we made on the properties. This has really made me think about doing something with the environment in the future. I am considering a minor in environmental science to go along with my business major."



Jack Jones marking boundaries

Jack and Andrew also designed and completed an independent project. "We decided to investigate two sites, one at Fish River and another at Magnolia River. We measured water quality through pH, dissolved oxygen, and *E. coli* presence. We also looked at the dominant plants and fish species," Andrew said. Both interns said the independent project was their favorite experience during the summer.

The summer interns are integral to completing important projects throughout the Foundation's protected properties. These two positions would not have been possible without the generous support of our community partners, ExxonMobil Community Summer Jobs Program and the Mapp Family Foundation.

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Photo by John Borom

Brown Pelican

"To the dull mind nature is leaden. To the illumined mind the whole world burns and sparkles with light." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

## KIDS FISHING DAY FREE!

**Saturday, Sept. 23**  
8 a.m. to noon

Safe Harbor at Weeks Bay  
across U.S. Highway 98  
from Weeks Bay Reserve

Join the Weeks Bay Foundation for a  
day of **free fishing just for kids.**  
The pond is stocked full!

For more information, call 990-5004 or visit  
[weeksbay.org/events/kids-fishing-day](http://weeksbay.org/events/kids-fishing-day).



## TWENTY FIFTH ANNUAL WEEKS BAY NATIVE PLANT SALE!

THU, FRI, SAT & SUN  
OCTOBER 12, 13, 14, 15,  
9 AM - 4 PM

SAFE HARBOR AT WEEKS BAY  
ACROSS U. S. HIGHWAY 98  
FROM WEEKS BAY RESERVE

- SHRUBS
- PERENNIALS
- BUTTERFLY PLANTS
- TREES
- HUMMINGBIRD PLANTS
- WETLAND PLANTS
- DUNE PLANTS

Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve  
11200 U.S. Highway 98  
Fairhope, AL 36532  
Phone: (251) 990-5790 FAX: (251) 990-1792