



ECOTOURISM AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Ecotouring:

Gulf Islands National Seashore – 228.875.9057, 3500 Park Rd, Ocean Springs. Davis Bayou area.
<http://www.nps.gov/guis/miss.htm>

Congress set aside a few of the barrier islands as Gulf Islands National Seashore for recreation and preservation of natural and historical resources. Recreational activities such as camping, fishing, boating, swimming, walking, hiking and biking abound here. The park stretches from Cat Island in the Mississippi Sound 160 miles east to the Okaloosa area on Santa Rosa Island in Florida.

The Davis Bayou headquarters area of the park in Ocean Springs features the William M. Colmer Visitor Center, exhibits, boat launching, trails, pier, picnicking, and pavilions. Seasonal passenger ferry service takes visitors from the Gulfport Small Craft Harbor to day use beaches on West Ship Island. Primitive camping is available on Cat, East Ship, Horn, and Petit Bois Islands.

McCoy's River and Marsh Tours – 228.588.0356, Hwy 613 & Roberts Rd, Moss Point. Provides eco-tours of the Pascagoula River Basin. <http://rivercritters.pardue-consulting.com/index.html>. Contact: Captain Lynn McCoy (max. 24 passengers)

Let Captains Lynn or Benny McCoy take you on the Pascagoula River, one of the most pristine river swamps in America and the last waterway of its size in the United States which is unimpeded by any artificial structure. Over 74,000 acres of it is a permanently protected wildlife area. Tour on a 24-foot custom built; Coast Guard certified and approved tour boat, which holds up to 24 passengers and offers small nature tours of this unique river and marsh system and experience the harder to reach small bayous and sloughs of the swamp and marsh. This natural treasure, with its moss-draped trees, and abundant wildlife will be an unforgettable part of your trip to the beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast. McCoy's River Marsh & Tours is located off Highway 613 in Escatawpa. Senior Citizen & Military Discounts. Tours year-round.

Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge – 228.497.6322, 7200 Crane Ln, Gautier.
<http://mississippisandhillcrane.fws.gov>

This refuge is one of national wildlife refuges administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It was established in 1975 to safeguard the critically endangered Mississippi Sandhill Crane and its unique disappearing habitat. The refuge consists of more than 19,000 acres in four units and is now part of the Gulf Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Visitor's Center: Tuesday - Saturday, 9am - 3pm.

A three-quarter mile nature trail adjacent to the Visitor Center winds its way through pine savanna, tidal marsh, and pine scrub. Plant life is abundant along the trail, especially in spring when carnivorous plants and orchids are in bloom. The alert visitor can also see and hear signs of wildlife. Wading birds visit the bayou, and many songbirds, including the eastern bluebird and Bachman's sparrow, frequent the savannas.

Coastal Heritage:

Biloxi Schooners – 228.435.6320. Biloxi Schooner Pier, across from the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art Campus. www.maritimemuseum.org Contact: Robin Krohn-David, Executive Director.

The Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum has recaptured a piece of history in their two famous schooners, the "Glenn L. Swetman" and the "Mike Sekul". For a truly unique way of enjoying the Mississippi Gulf Coast step on board an authentic replica of a Biloxi oyster schooner. These "White Winged Queens" once sailed the Coast from the late 1800's to the early 1900's.

Enjoy a beautiful sail from the Schooner Pier Complex along the Biloxi Beachfront and see Biloxi's coastline and islands as you have never seen them before or just gaze into the sunset and watch for dolphins. Boarding is at the new Schooner Pier in Biloxi which is located south of Highway 90 just West of Harrah's Casino Complex and East of Kuhn Street.

Biloxi Shrimping Trip– 228.385.1182, 800.289.7908. Biloxi Small Craft Harbor, Call for tour schedule, walk-ons welcome. www.biloxishrimpingtrip.com Contact: Brandy Moore.

The Biloxi Shrimping Tour celebrates over 50 years of the Sail Fish operating as a tourist attraction. The pride and heritage of Biloxi comes alive aboard this unique and interesting cruise. Upon leaving the harbor, the shrimping net is set out with full details of how and what makes the net operate correctly. Expect to catch a variety ranging from shrimp, blue crabs, flounder, stingray, oysterfish, squid, pufferfish and numerous other species of local marine life. The entire catch will be identified and presented for your inspection by the captain. This 70 minute living marine adventure cruise is navigated in the calm protected waters between Deer Island and the Biloxi shoreline for your comfort.

Ship Island Excursions – 228.864.1014, 866.466.7386, Gulfport Small Craft Harbor. www.msshipisland.com Contact: Captain Louis Skrmetta

Relaxation, recreation and history - these are the gifts offered to you on Ship Island. Here in the north central Gulf of Mexico, about 11 miles off the Mississippi Coast, are some of the last undeveloped barrier islands in America. Part of Gulf Islands National Seashore and protected by the U.S. Park Service, these exquisite sand islands offer visitors the first high quality beaches for swimming and shelling east of New Orleans.

Travel to a special place where the main attractions are outstanding beaches, beautiful water and clean gulf air. Locals and visitors consistently rate the 22-mile round trip to Ship Island as the coast's premier waterborne experience. Watch for dolphins. Atlantic Bottle-nosed Dolphins are frequently seen playing in the wake of our boats, or feeding on mullet and menhaden near the island beaches. Visit historic Fort Massachusetts (circa 1868) on your own, or on a Park Ranger guided tour offered after the passenger ferries arrive at the island. Seasonal schedule runs from March – October and departs from the Gulfport Yacht Harbor located at Highway 49 & Highway 90 intersection. Call for departure times.

Paddling, Tubing and Sailing:

Wolf River Canoe/Natural Adventures Touring Kayaks – 228.452.7666, 21640 Tucker Rd, Long Beach. www.wolfrivercanoes.com Contact: Joe Feil

Famous for its white sand beaches and winding waterways, the Wolf River is the perfect playground for the amateur or experienced canoeist and kayaker alike. Lessons, guided trips, camping, tubing, sea kayaking adventures are available for individuals and groups.

Just minutes from the gulf beaches, the cool waters of the Wolf River flow over adventurous clay formations, twist around pristine white sand beaches, and meander through peaceful woodlands. Whether you want to swim, picnic, camp, tube, or just relax and enjoy nature, a canoe trip from Wolf River Canoes has a trip for you. *By encouraging visitors to be environmentally concerned, helping found the Wolf River Conservation Society, sponsoring river cleanups, and participating in the Adopt-A-Stream Program, I hope to see the river remain pristine for generations to come. I feel that "river-time" is a great way to bring people and nature together, combine fun and fitness, and to recharge in the midst of hectic lives* – Joe Feil.

Da Beach House - 228.547.0085, Edgewater Mall, Biloxi. **(new June 2009)** *Da Beach House* offers ECO-TOURS, FUN & ADVENTURE. Specializing in Kayak & Catamaran tours to Deer Island, Fort Bayou & Davis Bayou tours, coastal Ocean Springs tours, and fishing tours. Outer Island and overnight adventures available as well. Tours consist of 4 miles to 11 miles and tours for beginner, intermediate, and experienced paddlers. Call for details & pricing.

South Coast Paddling Company (new June 2009) - 228.872.2030, 2335 Government Street, Ocean Springs, MS 39564

Two types of kayak excursions on local waterways of South Mississippi - Guided & Self Discovery tours. Our *Guided Tours* are completely outfitted (includes experienced guide, boats, shuttle, PFDs, paddles, water, and simple boating snacks; our *Self-Discovery Tours*, unguided (includes boats, shuttle, PFDs, paddles, map of waterway, general information, and customers bring their own personal gear, snacks and water. Meals and drinks are included on full day and overnight trips. Our tours are suitable for all skill levels. Our values are clear - Safety comes first, environmental and cultural sensitivity comes second, conservation benefit for the local community is a priority, small, low-impact groups (less than 10 persons) follow "*Leave No Trace*" principals, and our *most important value* - ***Have Fun on the Water***. Call today for the adventure of a lifetime – South Mississippi Style.

North Star Sailing – 228.617.8057, Point cadet Marina, Slip D-38, www.northstarsailingcharters.com
Contact: Captain Roger Buenzow (maximum 6 passengers)

Relax and enjoy the magnificent view of the Mississippi coastline, barrier islands and marine life at its best! Day Charters, Sunset and Moonlight Cruises, Dinner Cruises, Half Day, Full Day and even Overnight Charters are offered. ASA Sailing Academy -ASA Certified sailing courses: Basic and Advanced Sailing Lessons to meet your schedule and individual needs.

Trekking:

Tuxachanie Hiking Trail, 601.528.6160, USDA Forest Service - Red Creek Wildlife Management Area Saucier, MS 39574

Jump into your sneakers and take a walk on the Tuxachanie Trail in the DeSoto National Forest. The trailhead begins at Highway 49 in north Gulfport. The first five miles of the trail follow an old abandoned railroad, which once served the saw mill of the Dantzer Lumber Company. As you hike, you will encounter a variety of environments, from savannahs to swamps with an abundance of pitcher plants and palmettos. This trail is 22 miles long (roundtrip). If you plan on walking the entire trail, bring along your water bottles. If you don't want to travel the whole route, there is a 5.5 mile pick-up point at Airey Lake.

Walk-On Fishing:

Deer Island Fishing & Tours, 228.875.3825, 228.806.8671, Ocean Springs Harbor, Ocean Springs, MS 39564 Contact: Captain Mark Compton (Maximum 25 passengers).

A 30-foot pontoon boat named "***Ms. Biggy***," offering 3 hour fishing trips departing twice daily. Captain Compton has over 35 years fishing experience. For the fisherman the "***Ms Biggy***" offers light tackle fishing within sight of the coastline. Many reefs and wrecks produce a large variety of fish to include

white trout, ground mullet, red fish, speckled trout and flounder. You never know what you might hook. All tackle, bait and fishing licenses provided. Departure Times: 8am & 1pm Daily.