



Newsletter Winter 2025

www.littlelagoon.org

**Next meeting:
Thursday,
January 16th,
2025, 5:30 PM**

Please come out to our January 16th Members Meeting, and support LLPS, have some food and refreshments at 5:30, and hear our guest speaker Jessica Sampley from our City Schools at 6:00.

2024 Oyster Gardening was a big Success ... Let's Get Ready for 2025!

The 2024 Little Lagoon Oyster Gardening Season with the [Northern Gulf Coast Reef Restoration Project](#) was another very successful year, even with the weather challenges! Our wonderful group of volunteers, including Krista Fleming's Gulf Shores high school team, raised a total of 87,180 oysters at 57 sites around Little Lagoon. We can all be proud to be part of the historic establishment of a protected Oyster Sanctuary Reef in Little Lagoon!

Printed Gardening Certificates with 2024 stats were recently prepared and mailed out by board member Lauren Thomas, so watch for your customized harvest document. Thanks so much to all involved in this worthwhile effort.

Who's ready to raise some shell in 2025?

EQUIPMENT AND SPAT MUST BE ORDERED IN ADVANCE, SO PLEASE LET US KNOW BY JANUARY 10TH TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT ON THE GARDENING TEAM.

1. Would you like to raise a garden in 2025?
2. How many usable cages do you currently have?
3. How many additional cages do you need? (A typical garden requires 4 cages)
4. Please take a good look at your ropes. Let us know if you need new ropes.

We welcome our returning gardeners and would love to have some new volunteers in 2025. A dock on Little Lagoon is required to raise a garden. If you are not a Little Lagoon dock owner, we are always in need of volunteer cage shakers! Please let us know if you are willing to join the team. (251)751-4122



Gulf Shores High School & Original Oyster House Certificates

Guest Speaker- Jessica Sampley, Academies and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Director at Gulf Shores City Schools (GSCS). “Building a Brighter Future Together: Education, Community, and Sustainability in Gulf Shores”

As Gulf Shores City Schools continues to grow and evolve, we strive to integrate academic excellence, innovative teaching methods, and sustainability into our vision for the future. In this presentation, Jessica Sampley, GSCS's Academies and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Director, will explore how the school system's overall values and Academies and CTE department's goals align with the values of the Little Lagoon Preservation Society. She will share an overview of programs, detail progress of major place-based projects (including “Sustainability: Full STEAM Ahead” and “Small Town, Big Garden”), highlight the ways GSCS students are making meaningful contributions to environmental preservation, and discuss opportunities for collaboration. Together, GSCS, LLPS, and the Gulf Shores community can nurture a generation of learners who are not only academically prepared but also deeply committed to protecting the natural beauty of our community. The unified commitment to education, sustainability, and community well-being will ensure that both our students, Little Lagoon, and our community thrive for generations to come.

Jessica Sampley is a veteran educator and author who currently serves as the Academies and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Director at Gulf Shores City Schools (GSCS). She is a National Board-Certified Teacher who previously taught English Language Arts at the secondary (grades 8-12) and post-secondary levels, coached athletics, and served as Technology Coordinator and Assistant Athletic Director. She has committed almost her entire career to serving rural schools and districts in Alabama.

Jessica holds an Ed.S. in Instructional Leadership from the University of West Alabama, as well as an MFA in Creative Writing from North Carolina State University.

Other LLPS Happenings

Thank you to RC&D!



LLPS applied for and received a grant from the Alabama Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D). We asked them for ~\$5,000 to purchase a new water quality probe and help pay for oyster gardening expenses (50 cages). We have purchased the probe and cages. We sincerely appreciate this and past help from RC&D to assist us in accomplishing our goals. We are hoping to partner with them again in 2025. Please take a moment to watch the [2024 RC&D Grant Video](#)

GSMS Outreach- G.E.M.S, “Girls Engaged in Math and Science”

The Gulf Shores Middle School G.E.M.S. Team—short for Girls Engaged in Math and Science—is a dynamic group of young scientists eager to explore the world around them. Last year, 12 girls investigated the question, "How does shoreline habitat affect biodiversity?" Using seine nets, they sampled areas in front of riprap, seagrass beds, and bulkheads. By applying Simpson's Biodiversity Index, they analyzed their findings and shared conclusions with other G.E.M.S. teams across the state.

This year, nearly 50 girls have joined the team, tackling two exciting new projects. The first project delves into the science and mathematics of making, marketing, and selling ice cream. The second investigates the question, "How many oysters would it take to filter all the water in Little Lagoon in one day?"

To answer this, the girls have been tumbling oyster baskets, counting cluster sizes, and measuring oyster growth weekly from Mr. Hatfield's pier. So far, 16 girls have actively participated in fieldwork. During team meetings, they've researched the ecological roles of oysters to prepare for their upcoming showcase event in Huntsville, where they'll present their findings to other G.E.M.S. teams from across the state.

G.E.M.S students tending Oyster Gardens



Story reported by Anthony Capps Schaff, Gulf Shores Middle School, Grade 7, Science Teacher

GSHS (Gulf Shores High School) Outreach- Oysters and Living Shoreline

Several oyster gardens raised by GSHS Environmental classes were kept at the Hatfield pier for Spring classes. The oysters are also being used by GEMS Middle School students who are learning and maintaining the oysters over the Holidays.

Aiden Holdsworth and volunteers from the GSHS Environmental Club on December 14th planted 100 “Cordgrass” plants and 100 “Needle rush” plants along the Hatfield living shoreline. Aiden raised the plants at GSHS, and the plants are part of Aiden’s STEAM project for this Spring. Dr. Ron Phelps and Dennis will serve as “mentors” for Aiden’s project.



Aiden Holdsworth and GSHS Environmental Club Students Planting Living Shoreline

WQ Monitoring, sewage spills

July 28th, Gulf Shores Utilities (GSU) reported an est. 4,000-gal sewer spill associated with main line breaks near Windmill Ridge and Hwy 59. On November 11th Ms. Rhonda Butler with GSU informed LLPS that the line break repairs had been completed and that testing during the repair indicated “non-detect” or “low” bacteria levels. The regular LLPS testing in the SE Lagoon, coincident with the repair, was a rather dramatic improvement for the 2 sampling trips immediately following the repair.

BCSS (Baldwin County Sewer Service) Treatment Facility

The COGS (City of Gulf Shores) Municipal case vs. BCSS reenforcing their cease-and-desist order, previously scheduled for Dec 16th, has been postponed again. It is currently scheduled for February 20th at 2:00 PM. There could be some Circuit Court action in February on two BCSS charges vs. COGS where COGS asked for the 2 charges to be dismissed and perhaps for a ruling on the request for an injunction against BCSS on adding new customers to their system when they do not have plant capacity.

LLPS Website Updates

A shout out to Caroline Dean who is working on formatting our website pages to improve presentation for I-phones and Androids. She is also working to resolve issues with our Domain and working on additions to our site such as a timely WQ report publication.

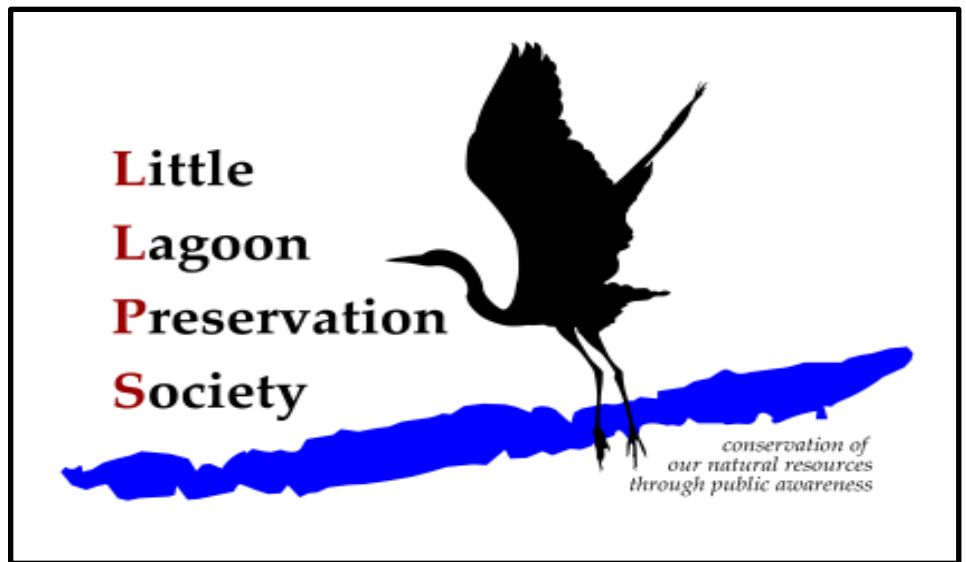
The Pass

The 4th dredging cycle for 2024 commenced on 08-26-24 and ended on 10-19-24. The city had barely gotten back to measuring the channel weekly when the pass went into trigger again due to chronic shoaling just north of the bridge. A 5th dredging cycle was triggered on November 15th. This dredge cycle was completed in late December. The dredge is now working on the shoal sands north of the bridge.

**If you have not paid your dues for 2025, please login to your account at <https://littlelagoon.wildapricot.org> and pay online or snail mail us a check at LLPS, PO Box 3193, Gulf Shores AL, 36547. **

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, <https://littlelagoon.wildapricot.org> .

Please complete this form and mail it with your check payable to LLPS.
Little Lagoon Preservation Society
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