



Nature Tourism Initiative

Along Alabama's Gulf Coast

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For nature inquiries, contact Joanne McDonough via jmcdonough@gulfshores.com or 251-974-4634.

For media inquiries, contact Kim Chapman via kchapman@gulfshores.com or 251-974-4625.

Registration Opens for October 22nd Business of Nature Workshop

GULF SHORES and ORANGE BEACH, Ala. – The Nature Tourism Initiative along the Alabama Gulf Coast, under the leadership of Joanne McDonough, will host a three-hour Business of Nature workshop starting at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 22nd at the Orange Beach Welcome Center (23685 Perdido Beach Blvd.). The day will include educational training, informative discussions and a preview of the new Coastal Nature Tour Guide Certification Program.

“We designed the workshop to help businesses improve their nature-based business by providing more information about the area’s tourism industry and the guests who come to the Alabama Gulf Coast,” McDonough said. “Leading experts in the fields of marketing, promotion and business will present tips and strategies on how to improve your nature tour business and enhance your customer's tour experience.”

Session topics will include:

- Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium projects update
- Economic overview of nature tourism along Alabama's Gulf Coast
- Coastal Nature Tour Guide Certification Program
- Coastal Scenic Byway update
- Theme-based destination packaging
- U.S. Coast Guard vessel requirements

This workshop is funded by Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Nature tourism business owners who would like to register for the October 22nd workshop may contact Joanne McDonough at 251-974-4634 or jmcdonough@gulfshores.com. Additional online resources may be found at www.agccvb.org/business-of-nature.

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About the Nature Tourism Initiative:

In 2007, the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium and the Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center joined forces to oversee the development of the Nature Tourism Initiative. This project is designed to evaluate the nature-based businesses in Baldwin and Mobile Counties (in Alabama) and provide resources to meet their needs. Charged with this mission, Joanne McDonough's task is two-fold: (1) to work with local businesses and communities to provide a quality nature experience for the guests (2) while also encouraging good stewardship and sustainability of the area's natural resources. Current partners include the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau and the National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration. For more information, visit www.agccvb.org/business-of-nature.