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For Immediate Release: September 20, 2003

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Coastal Cleanup Nets 4,004 Bags of Trash

Boaters and land-based volunteers flocked to Mississippi's beaches, islands and waterways in record numbers today to pick up marine debris at **56** designated cleanup sites during the 15th annual Mississippi Coastal Cleanup, part of the International Coastal Cleanup—the world's largest single-day volunteer effort to clean up the marine environment. About **4,280** volunteers—800 more than last year—picked up **4,004** bags of trash along **239** miles of Coastal waterways in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties and the Barrier Islands during the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup.

Volunteers collected **67,423** pounds of trash—that's *more than 33.7 tons* of marine debris—including **3,000** pounds of appliances and **7** dump truck loads of large marine debris, such as a couch found partially buried in the sand at Deer Island, which Harrison Central High School ROTC students together with members of the Edgewater Sunrises Rotary Club of Biloxi dug out and hauled off the island and a 17-foot boat hull found in Keegan Bayou by students with the Naval Construction Training Center. Other items collected were: light bulbs, a plastic sewer pipe, an inflatable bed, antifreeze bottles, an aircraft tire, a chaise lounge, toilet, pool cue, hair dryer, televisions, car parts, shotgun shells, microwave oven, computer printer, bag of chicken feet, and rope. There were **6** bird entanglements reported, one dead sea turtle, and an injured seagull and an injured egret caught in fishing line that were both taken to WRANPS Wildlife Center. The most peculiar item reported was a voodoo doll with a pin stuck in it found at Bayou Heron in Jackson County.

The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup—in conjunction with the International Coastal Cleanup—takes place each year on the third Saturday in September. Hundreds of thousands of people across the world spend three hours combing the beaches and waterways to pick up trash that pollutes our waters, harms marine life, hampers tourism and poses health risks to beach-goers. During last year's International Coastal Cleanup about 400,000 volunteers worldwide removed debris from 12,400 miles of shorelines and waterways. They collected 8.2 million pounds of debris, including enough picnic supplies for a family of four to have a picnic every day for the next 60 years.

Almost 53 percent of the debris found during last year's Mississippi Coastal Cleanup came from land-based sources such as beach picnics, inappropriate or illegal dumping and general littering. The source of all debris is human activity. "People need to realize that trash travels," said William Walker, executive director of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR). "A piece of trash thrown out of a car window washes into a storm drain and eventually winds up in the Gulf."

The mission of the international cleanup is to remove debris from shorelines, bayous, bays, rivers, waterways and beaches; collect valuable information on the amount and types of debris collected; educate people on the issue of marine debris; and use the data collected to affect positive change. Volunteers clean beaches and collect information on what they find, using the International Coastal Cleanup Data Card, so that sources of marine debris can be targeted for education or pollution prevention campaigns. State coordinators mail the data cards to the Ocean Conservancy in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where the data is tabulated. Over the years, data from the cleanups have been used to enact local, state, national, and even international legislation and agreements.

—MORE—

MS Coastal Cleanup Results--page 2 of 3

After the cleanup, Bob Taylor of Outback Steakhouse in Gulfport and his staff provided a free lunch of hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, chips, fruit and drinks to **1,500** volunteers between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College provided food and drinks to volunteers at Belle Fontaine Beach in Ocean Springs. Earthgrains Bakery, Rainbow Water, and Jackson County Adult Detention Center and ChevronTexaco donated food and drinks to volunteers for a cookout held at Shepard State Park in Gautier and the Office of Congressman Gene Taylor and Da Beach House supplied hotdogs and drinks at a cookout at the foot of Washington Street at the beach in Bay St. Louis.

“Mississippi’s cleanup effort would not be a success if it weren’t for the devoted sponsors and coordinators as well as the dedicated volunteers who come out each year to clean up their communities,” said Lauren Thompson, the DMR’s public relations director and state coordinator of the Mississippi Coastal Cleanup.

The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup is sponsored by the Mississippi Marine Debris Task Force, which is made up of representatives from BFI; Chevron Pascagoula Refinery; Disposall Inc.; Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve; Gulf Islands National Seashore; Hancock County Chamber of Commerce; Hancock Insurance; Harrison County Sand Beach Department; Jackson County Solid Waste; Keesler Air Force Base; Mississippi Air National Guard; Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium; Mississippi Department of Marine Resources; Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College; Mississippi State University Coastal Research & Extension Center; National Marine Fisheries Service; Naval Construction Battalion Center; Naval Station Pascagoula; Office of Congressman Gene Taylor; Office of Mississippi Secretary of State; Outback Steakhouse; and Sea Coast Echo.

Co-sponsors (in-kind donations) include: BP; Cellular South; City of Biloxi, Club Caribbean Divers, Da Beach House, Earthgrains Bakery, Jackson County Adult Detention Center, K99FM, Magic 93.7, 92.5 KISS FM, and V104.9, Knight-Abbey Commercial Printing & Direct Mail, Lamar Advertising of South Mississippi, Memorial Hospital at Gulfport, Mississippi Soft Drink Association, Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce; PEPCO, Rainbow Water, Ship Island Excursions, The Ocean Conservancy, The Sun Herald, Triad Broadcasting Company, and WLOX-TV 13.

The cleanup site statistics are as follows:

Hancock County: 570 volunteers collected 501 bags of trash

Bayou La Croix	13 volunteers and 15 bags
Ansley/Heron Bay	18 volunteers and 36 bags
Clermont/Lakeshore	17 volunteers and 50 bags
Coleman Avenue (Waveland)	98 volunteers and 55 bags
Diamondhead	7 volunteers and 20 bags
Garden Isle Community	17 volunteers and 19 bags
Bay/Waveland Beaches	365 volunteers and 229 bags
Kiln	6 volunteers and 3 bags
Lazy River Road	5 volunteers and 8 bags
Shoreline Park North East/South East	24 volunteers and 66 bags

Harrison County: 2,095 volunteers collected 2,089 bags of trash

Coast Coliseum	168 volunteers and 112 bags
Courthouse Road	408 volunteers and 238 bags
Deer Island	106 volunteers and 120 bags
D’Iberville Boat Launch	63 volunteers and 60 bags
Fountain Pier	50 volunteers and 35 bags
KAFB Marina	156 volunteers and 88 bags
Forrest Avenue Pier	94 volunteers and 64 bags
Gulfport Harbor	316 volunteers and 204 bags
Keegan Bayou (Back Bay)	150 volunteers and 150 bags
Biloxi Lighthouse	312 volunteers and 176 bags
Long Beach Harbor	160 volunteers and 422 bags
Pass Christian Harbor	100 volunteers and 400 bags
Point Cadet	12 volunteers and 20 bags

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MS Coastal Cleanup Results--page 3 of 3

Jackson County: 1,263 volunteers collected 940 bags of trash

Bluff Creek	3 volunteers and 10 bags
Point Clear	5 volunteers and 5 bags
Graveline Road Bridge	48 volunteers and 30 bags
Gautier City Park	56 volunteers and 36 bags
Pine Island (West Pascagoula River)	6 volunteers and 25 bags
Swetman Beach	2 volunteers and 6 bags
Old Spanish Fort	8 volunteers and 10 bags
The River Park (Pascagoula)	25 volunteers and 18 bags
Shepard State Park	9 volunteers and 9 bags
Shell Landing	2 volunteers and 2 bags
I-10 Boat Launch	134 volunteers and 120 bags
Seacliff Bayou	16 volunteers and 16 bags
Front Beach	191 volunteers and 74 bags
East Beach	81 volunteers and 47 bags
Fort Bayou Apartments Boat Launch	5 volunteers and 3 bags
Davis Bayou	80 volunteers and 19 bags
Ocean Springs Fishing Bridge	42 volunteers and 92 bags
Gulf Park Estates Public Pier	90 volunteers and 55 bags
Belle Fontaine Beach	126 volunteers and 60 bags
I.G. Levy Park	22 volunteers and 23 bags
Inner Harbor	4 volunteers and 2 bags
Pascagoula Beach Park	55 volunteers and 55 bags
Pascagoula Point	55 volunteers and 54 bags
Graveline Point	2 volunteers and 1 bag
The River Front (Moss Point)	156 volunteers and 98 bags
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (Bayou Heron)	21 volunteers and 25 bags
Singing River Island	Not reported
Pollock Ferry Landing	19 volunteers and 45 bags

Barrier Islands: 359 volunteers collected 474 bags of trash

Horn Island	137 volunteers and 191 bags
Petit Bois Island	12 volunteers and 26 bags
West Ship Island	138 volunteers and 153 bags
East Ship Island	22 volunteers and 47 bags
Cat Island	50 volunteers and 57 bags

PHOTO CREDIT: Photo courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.



LST-03-129A.jpg: The most peculiar item collected during the 15th annual Mississippi Coastal Cleanup was found by a volunteer at Bayou Heron in Jackson County—a voodoo doll with a pin stuck in it.



LST-03-129B.jpg: Members of the Boys & Girls Club of Gulfport Forest Heights unit collect trash on the beach at Courthouse Road in Gulfport and record items collected during the 15th Annual Mississippi Coastal Cleanup held Sept. 20.