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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***DMR Reminds Boaters that Motorized Vehicles Are Prohibited
by Law in Mississippi Coastal Preserves***

BILOXI, Miss. – The precautionary closure of the Mississippi Sound to commercial and recreational fishing has resulted in increased boat traffic in Mississippi's bays, rivers and bayous, which are home to many of Mississippi's Coastal Preserves. To protect Mississippi's coastal wetlands and their ecosystems, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) has stepped up patrols and enforcement in these sensitive areas.

Airboats and other non-permitted vehicular activity pose a substantial threat to the flora and fauna of the Coastal Preserves and a threat to the safety of other vessels in those marine waters. MDMR wants to remind boaters of the rules and regulations governing the use of vehicles and vessels in Mississippi Coastal Preserves.

Per Title 22, Part 19, "All motorized vehicles, motorcycles, personal water craft, airboats, hovercrafts, vessels and aircraft or aquaplanes are prohibited in publicly owned Mississippi Coastal Preserves emergent vegetation and adjoining surrounding land areas, except those vehicles and vessels operated by the MDMR or as otherwise permitted pursuant to this Part."

Killing or materially damaging any flora or fauna on or in any coastal wetland is subject to regulation and fines.

The public is asked to help protect and preserve these vital and important nursery areas by reporting all violations; please contact DMR's Marine Patrol at 228-523-4134.

The MDMR's Coastal Preserves Program was developed in 1992 by authority of the Wetlands Protection Act. The Coastal Preserves Program's objective is to acquire, protect, and manage sensitive coastal wetland habitats along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, therefore ensuring the ecological health of Mississippi's coastal wetland ecosystems. The state currently has title to approximately 30,000 acres of the designated 72,000 acres of crucial coastal wetland habitat within Mississippi's 20 coastal preserve sites.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

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