



George County Board of Supervisors
Community Development Office
Ken Flanagan, Director
Office: 601-247-2104
Email: kflanagan@georgecountymms.gov

Pascagoula River Fun Day returns on Sat., Sept. 27 in Merrill

Release Date: 09/15/2014

Re-discover the adventure and natural beauty of the Pascagoula River on Sat. Sept. 27 at the fifth annual River Fun Day in George County. This year's Fun Day is at the same scenic location in Merrill at the Smith Family Sandbar (west side) to showcase the headwaters of the Pascagoula River.

Along with this ideal location there are free activities for all ages including: kayaking, live reptiles, river seining, artifact study, and a light hearted reenactment of French Canadian explorers traveling the Pascagoula River.

“We are very excited to be back at the Smith Sandbar in the historic Merrill Community. It's one of only a few places that visitors can see the Chickasawhay and Leaf Rivers coming together to form the Pascagoula River. To me, it is truly a magical place,” said Becky Stowe, The Nature Conservancy and event Co-Organizer.

Getting to the Pascagoula River Fun Day in George County is easy. Jackson County drivers should take Hwy. 57 north. Drivers from McLain should go approximately 10 miles south on Hwy. 57. All visitors turn onto Salem Road and follow the signs to the Smith Family Sandbar.

The River Fun Day Committee will provide all the essentials: kayaks, river lifeguards, restroom facilities, and all permit cost. Visitors are welcome to bring beach chairs and blankets for the sandbar. All activities start at 10 a.m. with a welcome by the Vancleave Live Oak Choctaws.

Two unique attractions are back again- the “Reenactment” and “Archaeology Road Show.” The reenactment is a fun depiction of what could have happened in the 1700's when French Canadian explorers traded with Native Americans at the north end of the Pascagoula River. The road show allows visitors to bring artifacts to be identified by renowned archeologist Read Stowe.

“The reenactment and road show is our fun way to



slip a little history and education into the day's activities. This is only our second year for the reenactment and our fourth year for the road show," Stowe said.

The Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain will hold a Blueway ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the Pascagoula River being recognized by the US Department of the Interior as one of only 100 outstanding "America's Great Outdoors" initiatives in the USA.

"Blueways' or sometimes referred to as 'Water Trails' are networks of points along the water that people can access using human-powered boats, but they are more than that," says Liz Smith-Incer of the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, "if you bring people to the edge of the river, you'll create a new generation of stewards for the rich environmental and cultural importance of the Pascagoula River."



Pascagoula River Blueway will promote public use and enjoyment of the entire Pascagoula River and its natural resources, which is widely recognized as the last large unimpeded river system in the contiguous United States. As part of the larger Pascagoula River Blueway System, this 22-mile-long segment will provide opportunities for people to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Pascagoula River watershed through a system of trails connected via Blueway launch points from Merrill to Josephine Sandbar.

A core group of outstanding sponsors are making the Pascagoula River Fun Day possible for the fifth straight year including: The Nature Conservancy, Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, Pascagoula River Basin Alliance, National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Program, George County Board of Supervisors, City of Lucedale, GC Chamber of Commerce and many dedicated volunteers.

A special sponsor thanks goes to Phillip and Mary Smith for the use of their beautiful sandbar. For more information about the Pascagoula River Fun Day call 601-947-2755.

Photo Cutlines:

- **The Pascagoula River Fun Day returns Sept. 27 in George County with kayak tours and river seining research for visitors.**
- **The "Almost Factual Reenactment" of French Canadians exploring the Pascagoula River returns to River Fun Day on Sept. 27 in George County.**
- **Live reptile displays and educational booths will be at the 5th annual Pascagoula River Fun Day on Sept. 27 in George County.**

###