

# Chapter 8. Tourism

## INTRODUCTION

The Mississippi Gulf Coast, including Harrison County, has been a long-standing vacation destination. The presence of a 26-mile sand beach and a thriving local gaming industry are the prime draws millions of tourists each year. According to the Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, 50 percent of visitors to Gulfport/Biloxi participated in gaming in 2007, making it the most popular activity among tourists.<sup>1</sup> In addition to gaming and the beach, tourists have historically come to Harrison County to experience golfing and fishing. With its abundance of natural resources, there are untapped opportunities for ecotourism in Harrison County. The many rivers and bayous of the county offer opportunities for activities like canoeing, kayaking, hiking, and birding, to name just a few. The De Soto National Forest offers trails for hiking, biking, horse-back riding, and ATV riding. Sand Beach and the Gulf Islands National Seashore are also attractions for recreation opportunities like fishing, shrimping, and sailing. All of these nature-based recreation opportunities can be categorized as ecotourism. The commonly accepted definition of ecotourism is “environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact, and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples.”<sup>2</sup> The overarching vision for this element of the *Comprehensive Plan* is to build upon the current tourism industry by integrating ecotourism activities to provide unique vacation experiences for visitors. More information on tourism can be found in the Background Assessment chapter.

## PURPOSE

This chapter identifies goals, strategies, and actions to guide the development of a dynamic, regionally competitive, and sustainable tourism industry that makes use of Harrison County’s abundant supply of natural resources while augmenting and supporting the flagship tourism experiences: gaming and the sand beach. Success of the tourism industry in Harrison County will depend upon the provision of a variety of unique experiences for its visitors, and the coordination of activities throughout the entire county. Harrison County strives to become a premier destination for nature-based tourism by creating exceptional experiences for all visitors.

## STAKEHOLDERS

The contents of this chapter incorporate stakeholder input representing various organizations during an outdoor recreation stakeholder meeting held March 17, 2008. Contributors included the Harrison County Engineer’s Office, the Nature Conservancy, the Gulf Coast Bicycle Club, Natural Capital Development, the National Park Service, the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, the Gulf Regional Planning Commission, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR), the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Gulf Coast Business Council, and the Gulf Coast Heritage Trails for Harrison County. The Harrison County Tourism Commission has also been engaged in the comprehensive planning process.

## SURVEY RESULTS

Opinions were collected from the residents of Harrison County through written and electronic surveys, comment cards passed out at two separate Ideas Forum meetings, a mapping table activity, and a 1-800 number. A majority of

## KEY ISSUES

How can Harrison County successfully become a premier destination for tourism? What should the County do to:

- Continue to be competitive in the regional market and strive to attract tourists from the national and international market?
- Increase the average length of stay for tourists to meet the national average of 3.4 nights?
- Provide high quality amenities and services to expand above the current 16 percent level of participation in ecotourism activities?
- Provide a variety of tourism activities that cater to all users?
- Increase the awareness of locals and tourists about existing tourism activities?

Figure 8-1. Harrison County offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities for tourists.



Source: Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, Sarah Landers, Neetika Wahi, Amber Cackler

respondents identified clean beaches as the natural amenity that is most likely to attract tourists. This was followed by responses involving fishing, boating, and other water-based activities. Respondents indicated that the following natural amenities could also be marketed better for tourism: sand beach, fishing areas, forests, and water-based recreation amenities. Harrison County residents indicated that they would like fishing, hiking/biking, and canoeing/kayaking enhanced for both residents and tourists. Residents expressed a desire for more parks and playgrounds, biking and hiking trails, and public water access points, among other suggestions.

## BACKGROUND/ORIENTATION

The recommendations in this chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* incorporate recommendations from each of the six previous community plans for DeLisle, Eastern Harrison County, Henderson Point-Pass Christian Isles, Pineville, Saucier, and Western Harrison County. Recommendations from previous community plans were integrated in the results of community input, specifically focusing on outdoor recreation and tourism in Harrison County. Development of a sustainable tourism industry that integrates ecotourism activities will be coordinated between Harrison County, stakeholder groups, and residents. The ideas generated by these groups have been used to develop concepts and actions to allow Harrison County to reach its goals related to tourism.

## GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

### GOAL 1. PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY AMENITIES AND FACILITIES.

**STRATEGY A.** Develop policies to provide support facilities for visitors at access points to nature-based activities.

*Action 1.* Develop a certification system through the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau to acknowledge tourism businesses that provide superior amenities to enhance the visitor experience.

**STRATEGY B.** Maintain scenic character around nature-based recreation activities.

*Action 1.* Encourage the adoption of roadway segments in the vicinity of high tourist activity areas in the county.

*Action 2.* Develop an “adopt-a-waterway” program for clean-ups on waterways.

*Action 3.* Partner with the Coast Guard to continue to clean and maintain the bayous and bay.

**STRATEGY C.** Develop a comprehensive network of greenways and blueways in Harrison County.

*Action 1.* Support the efforts of the Gulf Coast Heritage Trails working group in the development of a comprehensive trails plan, as described in the Healthy Communities chapter.

*Action 2.* Coordinate with the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, the Wolf River Conservation

Figure 8-2. Casinos are the number one attraction for tourists visiting the Mississippi Gulf Coast.



Source: Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau

Society, and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) to obtain conservation easements along local waterways.

**STRATEGY D.** Support efforts to develop additional water-based recreation facilities.

*Action 1.* Provide facilities such as bird-watching towers, boardwalks, and fishing piers at appropriate locations.

*Action 2.* Coordinate with agencies such as MDMR and the Land and Water Conservation Fund of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, and private businesses to obtain funding for enhancement of water-based activities.

*Action 3.* Identify potential locations and funding opportunities to install floating docks along waterways for visitors arriving by boat.

**STRATEGY E.** Support efforts to develop ecotourism facilities and tourist housing.

*Action 1.* Support the development of Green Casinos and resorts with integrated nature-based activities (refer to concepts section for further detail).

*Action 2.* Partner with tourism and economic development organizations to expose potential developers to examples of unique concepts for tourist accommodation, such as tree-house resorts, through literature, web resources, and seminars.

*Action 3.* Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow summer camps as a conditional use.

*Action 4.* Encourage the development of RV parks in the A-1 General Agriculture District in close proximity to state and interstate highways with design standards that ensure a high quality experience for visitors.

*Action 5.* Support the Harrison County School District in identifying a site for an outdoor nature education facility for students.

**STRATEGY F.** Create diverse destinations along the beach.

*Action 1.* Develop new landmarks along the beach.

*Action 2.* Add picnic areas, pavilions, and playgrounds at designated points along the beach.

## **GOAL 2. CREATE EASY AND ATTRACTIVE ACCESS TO NATURE-BASED ACTIVITIES.**

**STRATEGY A.** Create public access points to nature-based activities that cater to various users.

*Action 1.* Coordinate with the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, the Wolf River Conservation Society, and MDMR to acquire conservation easements to provide public access to waterways as part of a regional blueway system.

*Action 2.* Create a sponsorship program allowing county businesses and industries to sponsor public access points to area rivers and beaches.

*Action 3.* Utilize the MDMR Boat Access program to fund public boat access points.

*Action 4.* Work with the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, the Wolf River Conservation Society, and MDMR to explore possibilities of providing public access points on county waterways and the placement of structures, such as bird-watching towers, boardwalks, and fishing piers.

*Action 5.* Create accessible fishing piers, boardwalks, and canoe launch points to allow all residents and visitors to access the county's waterways.

*Action 6.* Ensure trails in Harrison County are accessible for all users.

**STRATEGY B.** Establish an attractive and uniform signage system for nature-based activities.

*Action 1.* Place directional signage along access roads to guide visitors to nature-based activities.

*Action 2.* Place information and way-finding markers at access points to nature-based activities.

*Action 3.* Develop interpretative signage to educate users of nature-based activities about sites and their unique features.

**STRATEGY C.** Create a distinct identity for Harrison County communities.

*Action 1.* Support individual community efforts to site and place community entrance signs.

*Action 2.* Enhance community entrance gateways with attractive landscaping.

*Action 3.* Develop signature gateways welcoming visitors to major activity nodes along the beach and major highways that creates consistency in appearance.

**STRATEGY D.** Support improved beach access for residents and tourists.

*Action 1.* Support the development of additional parking spaces in parking lots south of the seawall and north of US Highway 90.

*Action 2.* Expand the boardwalk to provide improved access for pedestrians.

*Action 3.* Create accessible points along the beach that can be used by various users.

*Action 4.* Create pedestrian and bicycle paths along the beach that connect major activity centers.

## **GOAL 3. EDUCATE TOURISTS AND RESIDENTS ON THE AVAILABILITY OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES.**

**STRATEGY A.** Market tourism activities in Harrison County.

*Action 1.* Partner with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Harrison County Tourism Commission and other regional tourism organizations to develop print media, radio and television advertising to market available tourism activities.

*Action 2.* Expand advertising of activities on existing web sites, such as the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau.

**STRATEGY B.** Increase awareness among residents about existing tourist attractions, including nature-based recreation.

*Action 1.* Advertise through direct mailing in utility bills and community newspapers to inform residents about tourist attractions.

*Action 2.* Partner with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Harrison County Tourism Commission and the Chamber's of Commerce to encourage private businesses to sponsor annual free or discount days for Harrison County residents to visit local tourism attractions.

*Action 3.* Promote the development of outdoor education programs in Harrison County schools.

*Action 4.* Encourage the Mississippi State University Extension Service to establish outdoor research laboratories that will also be used as nature centers to educate the public.

*Action 5.* Work with the Mississippi State University Extension Service to provide a naturalist to develop educational hikes at nature centers in Harrison County.

*Action 6.* Partner with the Nature Conservancy and other land-holding conservation organizations to utilize land for outdoor environmental education programming.

**GOAL 4. ENCOURAGE TOURISM THAT SUPPORTS THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.**

**STRATEGY A.** Promote site planning and building practices that are sensitive to the surrounding natural environment.

*Action 1.* Create a site planning and management guide for the integration of opportunities to expose tourists to nature-based activities without degradation of the natural environment.

*Action 2.* Provide handouts for resort developers with information on best practices in siting and building to mitigate adverse effects on the natural environment.

*Action 3.* Use the Harrison County website to make information available to developers on site planning and best building practices in sensitive environments.

*Action 4.* Encourage the use of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques as mentioned in the Safe Communities chapter for the construction of tourism facilities.

**STRATEGY B.** Create site planning guidelines for the development of Resort Commercial Districts.

*Action 1.* Amend the Zoning Ordinance for the C-3 Resort Commercial District to encourage developers

to explain how they plan to integrate nature-based recreational amenities in their site plans.

*Action 2.* Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require developer agreements for the provision of infrastructure and public facilities to mitigate their impact.

**STRATEGY C.** Protect and conserve the coastline.

*Action 1.* Enact measures that will minimize wind-blown erosion of the beach.

*Action 2.* Partner with MDMR and Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to improve water quality of the Mississippi Sound.

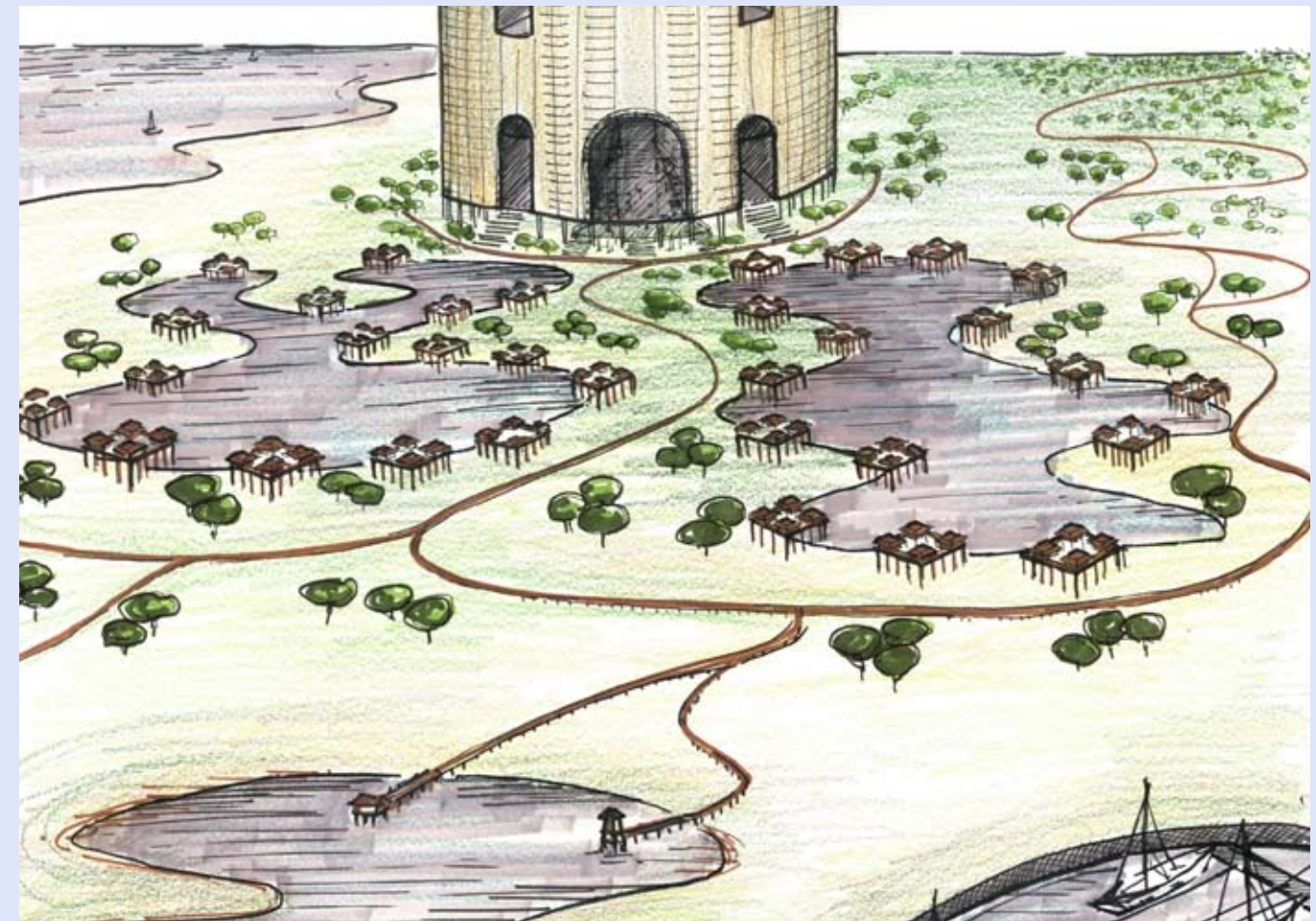
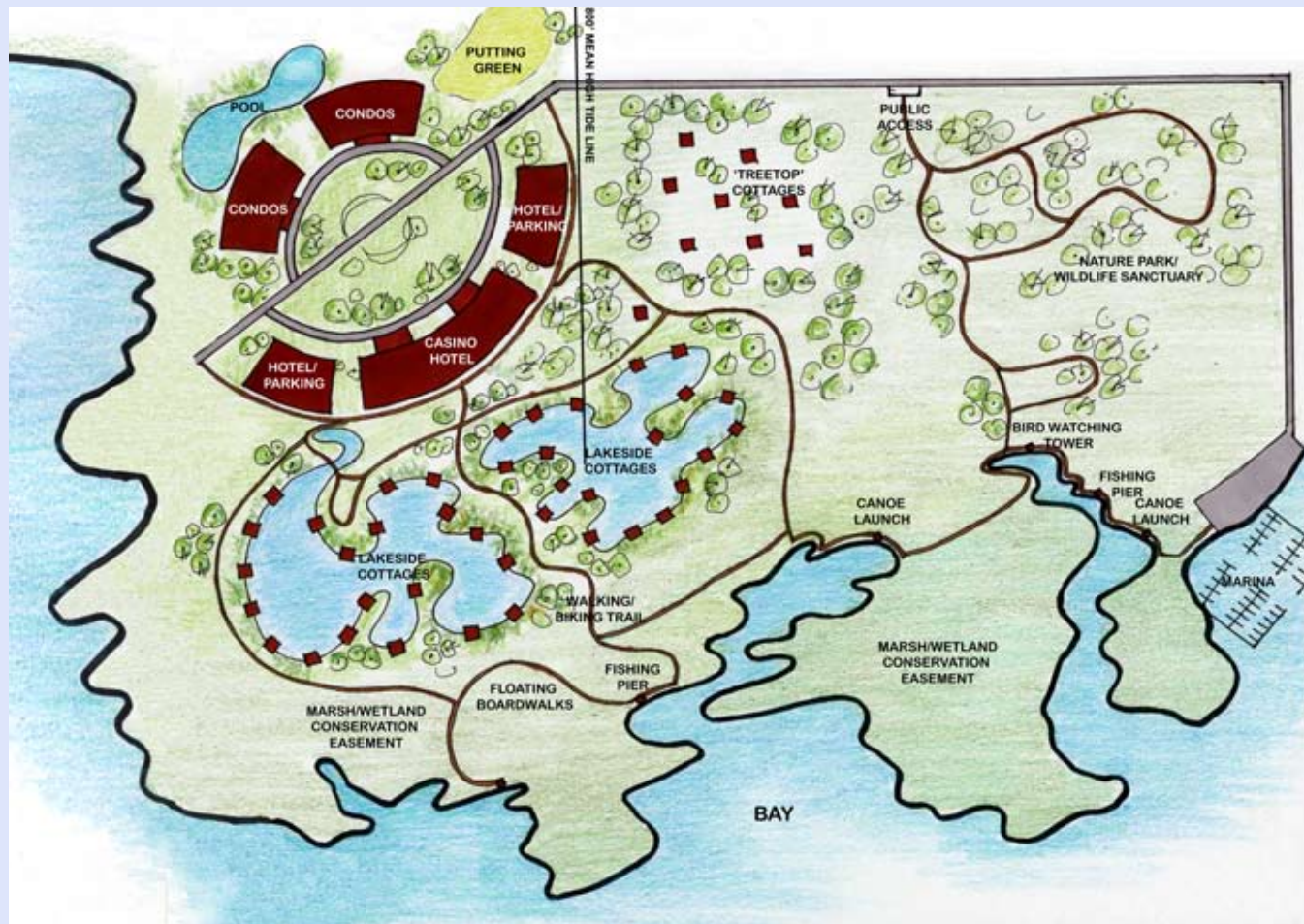
*Action 3.* Protect wildlife along the beach, through designation of and signage for wildlife areas.

**Figure 8-3.** Protecting and conserving the coastline is an important strategy of the comprehensive plan.



Source: Remya Kumar

Figure 8-4. The casino sites in Harrison County can minimize their impact on the surrounding natural environment by using Low Impact Development techniques and green building technologies. There are also opportunities to allow visitors to interact with the natural environment.



Source: Remya Kumar

## CONCEPTS

### Green Casinos

Harrison County has been a popular tourism destination, with its abundant natural resources and gaming opportunities. According to the Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, 50 percent of visitors to Gulfport/Biloxi participate in gaming, making it the most popular activity among tourists.<sup>3</sup> However, the average length of stay of visitors is one to three nights,<sup>4</sup> which is less than the national average. The Green Casinos concept provides unique experiences to tourists, encouraging them to extend their stay from a weekend visit to a week-long stay.

The two sites zoned for casino/resort development are located along the Bay of St. Louis, and they are located in areas with a rich diversity of natural resources. The concept of Green Casinos provides a unique opportunity to integrate these two significant tourist attractions by expanding casino and resort sites to include nature-based recreation

activities. Also, the concept establishes a relationship between the built and the natural environment by incorporating a variety of nature-based tourist activities on both land and water apart from the casino and resort buildings. The proximity of the casino sites to natural resources like water bodies and forests in the county presents an opportunity to promote nature-based tourism while expanding the type of tourists that visit the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The Green Casino concept has been illustrated in Figure 8-4.

Water-based recreation activities that could be incorporated on site include fishing, canoeing, and kayaking, all of which could sensitively utilize the natural bodies of water on the sites of the proposed development. Attractive views of water bodies could be provided through boardwalks, as shown in Figure 8-6. Birding is a popular activity in Harrison County, and it could be facilitated through placing bird-watching towers on site at suitable locations. Additionally, the sites could provide land-based amenities such as walking trails, and wildlife sanctuaries. The site concept could include innovative accommodations, such as tree-house resorts (see Figure 8-5). A combination of activities would allow tourists

Figure 8-5. Casinos need to provide tourists with unique and new experiences to compete with the established, regional competition. This illustration of a ‘treehouse’ resort as part of a casino complex shows tourists enjoying the panoramic views of the bay and wetlands, enjoying boating across the water bodies, and taking nature walks in the background. The schematic conceptual plan shows the layout of a set of cottages.



Source: Remya Kumar



to enjoy gaming while also experiencing the natural environment surrounding the gaming sites.

### Signage for Outdoor Recreation in Harrison County

One of the goals of the *Comprehensive Plan* is to ensure a hospitable environment for tourists by providing easy and attractive access to nature-based activities. One means of doing this is by providing a comprehensive signage system informing tourists of available amenities and resources for outdoor recreation. The concept is for the signage to be attractive and easily recognizable, and for it to be placed at strategic locations to eliminate many of the way-finding challenges that tourists face today. A uniform visual communication system will also serve as a means to create a distinct

image for the county, which is always beneficial for tourism.

The system of signage will include directional signage along access roads to guide visitors to sites of nature-based recreation. Access points for recreational activities will require signage to correctly orient users to make them feel sufficiently prepared for their activities. Signs at such access points will indicate what kind of activities visitors can participate in. For example, at water-based recreation sites, appropriate symbols for boating, canoeing or kayaking and, fishing could indicate the kind of activities in which visitors can participate. At trailheads, symbols for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and ATV riding could be used. Access points will also require signage indicating available amenities, such as parking and restrooms, and indicating whether they are ADA accessible and baby stroller friendly. All access points will also have maps in display boxes indicating the current location of the visitor, the layout of various trails, and

Figure 8-6. By providing bird-watching towers, and floating boardwalks residents and tourists can experience the natural environment that Harrison County has to offer.



Source: Remya Kumar

the locations of pertinent amenities and facilities along trails.

Trails will require a signage system to allow visitors to feel safe and in control of their recreational experience. Different types of trails will have unique sets of signage that will be easily identifiable based on the color and symbols used. An example of signs used for a canoe trail and bridle trail is provided in Figure 8-7. Trails will have numbered markers and maps along the way, thus orienting visitors appropriately. Signage will also inform visitors of facilities and attractions along trails, such as campgrounds, bird-watching towers, view sheds, boardwalks, put-in and take-put points, and other pertinent details.

Interpretive signage along trails and at access points could be used to educate visitors about the unique features

and natural resources that surround them. For example, in wetland areas, information signs could be posted to point out the environmental benefits of wetlands, types of birds that visit, and pictures of the wetlands during different seasons.

Figure 8-7. Signage provides visual cues to tourists and residents about the location of activities. The example signs below illustrate a canoe drop-in point, a horse riding trail, the sand beach, and a working waterfront along the beach. The numbers can be tied to a destination map provided to tourists and trail names can be included where appropriate.



Source: Remya Kumar and Ryan Pilewski



Strategy	Goal 1: Enhance nature-based tourism through high quality amenities and facilities.		Responsible Parties	Grant Funding	Immediate Year 1	Short-term Year 2-5	Mid-term Year 6-10	Long-term Year 11-20
1A	Action 1	Develop a certification system through the MGCCVB to acknowledge tourism businesses that provide superior amenities.	Harrison County, MGCCVB					
1B	Action 1	Encourage the adoption of roadway segments in the vicinity of high tourist activity.	Harrison County , Land Trust, MDOT					
	Action 2	Develop an “adopt-a–waterway” program for clean-ups on waterways.	Harrison County, Coast Guard, MDMR, Land Trust					
	Action 3	Partner with the Coast Guard to clean and maintain the bayous and bay.	Harrison County, Coast Guard	Land and Water Conservation Fund				
1C	Action 1	Support the efforts of the Gulf Coast Heritage Trails working group (GCHTWG) in their formulation of a comprehensive trails plan.	Harrison County, GCHTWG	Recreational trails Program,Conservation Fund				
	Action 2	Coordinate with agencies to obtain conservation easements along the rivers publicly accessible from recreational trails.	Harrison County, Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain (LTMCP), MDMR, Wolf River Conservation Society (WRCS).	Outdoor Recreation-Acquisition, Development and Planning				
1D	Action 1	Provide facilities such as bird- watching towers, boardwalks, and fishing piers at appropriate identified locations.	Harrison County	Outdoor Recreation-Acquisition, Development and Planning				
	Action 2	Coordinate with agencies to obtain funding for enhancement of water-based activities.	Harrison County , MDMR, Land and Water Conservation Fund of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (LWCF-MDWFP)	Boat Access Program				
	Action 3	Identify locations and funding opportunities to install floating docks along waterways	Harrison County	Boat Access Program				
1E	Action 1	Support the development of green casinos and resorts with integrated nature-based activities.	Harrison County	Mississippi Tourism Incentive/Rebate Program, Mississippi Tourism Matching Grants Program				
	Action 2	Expose potential developers to examples of unique concepts for tourist accommodation.	Harrison County Tourism Commission (HCTC),Mississippi Tourism Incentive/Rebate Program, MGCCVB	Mississippi Tourism Incentive/Rebate Program, Mississippi Tourism Matching Grants Program				
	Action 3	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow summer camps as a conditional use.	Harrison County Zoning Office, Harrison County Board of Supervisors					
	Action 4	Encourage the development of RV parks in A-1 Districts with design standards that ensure a high quality experience for visitors.	Harrison County , MDOT	Outdoor Recreation-Acquisition, Development and Planning				
	Action 5	Support the Harrison County School District in identifying a site for an outdoor nature education facility.	Harrison County School District	Outdoor Recreation-Acquisition, Development and Planning, Land and Water Conservation Fund				
1 F	Action 1	Develop new landmarks along the beach.	MDMR, Harrison County, MGCCVB					
	Action 2	Add picnic areas, pavilions, and playgrounds at designated points along the beach.	MDMR, Harrison County, MGCCVB					

Strategy	Goal 2. Ensure a visitable environment for tourists by providing easy and attractive access to nature-based activities.	Responsible Parties	Grant Funding	Immediate Year 1	Short-term Year 2-5	Mid-term Year 6-10	Long-term Year 11-20
2A	Action 1	Coordinate with agencies to acquire conservation easements to provide public access to waterways.	Harrison County, LTMCP, WRCS, and MDMR	American Waterfront Revitalization Coalition			
	Action 2	Create a sponsorship program allowing county businesses and industries to sponsor public access points to area rivers and beaches.	Harrison County				
	Action 3	Utilize the MDMR Boat Access program to fund public boat access points on county waterways.	Harrison County	MDMR Boat Access program fund			
	Action 4	Work with agencies to explore the provision of public access points along waterways, and structures, such as bird-watching towers, boardwalks, and fishing piers.	Harrison County, LTMCP, the WRCS, and MDMR	MDMR Boat Access program fund			
	Action 5	Create accessible fishing piers, boardwalks, and canoe launch points.	Harrison County, LTMCP, the Wolf River Conservation Society, and Mississippi Department of Marine Resources	American Waterfront Revitalization Coalition			
	Action 6	Ensure trails in Harrison County are accessible for all users.	GCHTWG, Harrison County	Recreational trails Program, Conservation Fund			
2B	Action 1	Place directional signage along access roads to guide visitors to nature-based activities.	Harrison County	South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program(Advertising, Promotion and Events Marketing)			
	Action 2	Place information and way-finding markers at access points to nature-based activities.	Harrison County	South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program(Advertising, Promotion and Events Marketing)			
	Action 3	Develop interpretative signage to educate users about sites of nature-based activities.	Harrison County, MGCCVB	South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program(Advertising, Promotion and Events Marketing)			
2C	Action 1	Support individual community efforts to site and place community entrance signs.	Harrison County, MGCCVB				
	Action 2	Enhance community entrance gateways with attractive landscaping.	Harrison County, MGCCVB				
	Action 3	Develop signature gateways welcoming visitors to major activity nodes along the beach.	Harrison County, MGCCVB				
2D	Action 1	Support the development of additional parking spaces south of the seawall and north of US Highway 90	MDOT, Harrison County				
	Action 2	Expand the boardwalk to provide improved access for pedestrians.	MDMR, Harrison County, MGCCVB				
	Action 3	Create accessible points along the beach that can be reached by all users.	MDMR, Harrison County, MGCCVB				
	Action 4	Create pedestrian and bicycle paths along the beach that connect major activity centers.	MDMR, Harrison County, MGCCVB				

Strategy	Goal 3. Develop resources to educate tourists and residents about the availability of tourism activities.	Responsible Parties	Grant Funding	Immediate Year 1	Short-term Year 2-5	Mid-term Year 6-10	Long-term Year 11-20
3A	Action 1	Partner to develop print media, and television advertising to market available tourism activities.	MGCCVB, HCTC	South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program(Advertising, Promotion and Events Marketing )			
	Action 2	Expand advertising of tourism activities on existing web resources.	Harrison County, MGCCVB, HCTC	South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program(Advertising, Promotion and Events Marketing )			
3B	Action 1	Advertise through direct mailing in utility bills and community newspapers to inform residents about tourist attractions.	Harrison County	South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program(Advertising, Promotion and Events Marketing )			
	Action 2	Partner to encourage private businesses to sponsor annual free or discount days for Harrison County residents to visit local tourism attractions.	MGCCVB, HCTC, the Chamber of Commerce	Private Businesses in Harrison County			
	Action 3	Promote the development of outdoor education programs in Harrison County schools.	Harrison County , Harrison County School District	South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program(Advertising, Promotion and Events Marketing )			
	Action 4	Approach the Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Service to establish outdoor research laboratories that will also be used as nature centers.	Harrison County , MSU				
	Action 5	Work with the MSU Extension Service to provide a naturalist at nature centers.	Harrison County , MSU				
	Action 6	Partner with organizations to utilize land for outdoor environmental education programming.	Nature Conservancy	South Mississippi Tourism Industry Restoration Grant Program(Advertising, Promotion and Events Marketing ), National Geographic Conservaion Fund			

**Figure 8-8. The Gulfport Sportsplex attracts tourists from across the state who come to watch baseball and other sports tournaments.**



Source: Eric Lowry

(Endnotes)

- 1 TNS. (2007). *Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi travels America visitor profile report., November 2007.* Retrieved April 6, 2008
- 2 The Nature Conservancy. (2008). What is Ecotourism, 2008. Retrieved February 7, 2008 from <http://www.nature.org/aboutus/travel/ecotourism/about/art667.html>
- 3 TNS. (2007). *Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi travels America visitor profile report., November 2007.* Retrieved April 6, 2008
- 4 Ibid

Strategy	Goal 4. Encourage tourism that supports the natural environment and enhances the health of natural resources.	Responsible Parties	Grant Funding	Immediate Year 1	Short-term Year 2-5	Mid-term Year 6-10	Long-term Year 11-20
4A	Action 1. Create a site planning and management guide for the integration nature-based activities without degrading the natural environment.	Harrison County	Land and Water Conservation Fund				
	Action 2. Provide handouts on best practices in siting and building to mitigate adverse effects on the natural environment.	Harrison County	Land and Water Conservation Fund				
	Action 3. Use the Harrison County website to make information available on site planning and best building practices in sensitive environments.	Harrison County	Land and Water Conservation Fund				
	Action 4. Encourage the use of Low Impact Development techniques the construction of tourism facilities.	Harrison County Zoning Office, Harrison County Board of Supervisors					
4B	Action 1. Amend the Zoning Code for resort commercial districts to encourage developers to integrate nature-based recreational amenities in their site plans.	Harrison County Zoning Office, Harrison County Board of Supervisors					
	Action 2. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require developer agreements for the provision of infrastructure and public facilities to mitigate their impact.	Harrison County Zoning Office, Harrison County Board of Supervisors					
4C	Action 1. Enact measures that will minimize wind-blown erosion of the beach.	Harrison County	Land and Water Conservation Fund				
	Action 2. Partner with MDMR and MDEQ to improve water quality of the Mississippi Sound.	MDMR, MDEQ	Land and Water Conservation Fund, National Geographic Conservaion Fund				
	Action 3. Protect wildlife along the beach, through designation and signage of wildlife areas.	Harrison County , MDMR	Land and Water Conservation Fund, National Geographic Conservaion Fund				

**Figure 8-9. Visitors to Harrison County often travel using US Highway 90, crossing the Bay of St. Louis bridge. The new bridge has a bicycle lane and has led to many visitors choosing to ride their bike along the bridge, beach and scenic roadways.**



Source: Eric Lowry