

MISSISSIPPI

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The Nature
Conservancy 
Southern Deltas



© Mitch Reid

The Nature Conservancy marks 75 years of protecting nature for all generations.

As TNC celebrates its 75th anniversary, we want to recognize the conservation work that is happening across the lands and waters of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Throughout this region, TNC has protected hundreds of thousands of acres of land, used prescribed fire to improve the health of forest habitat, and built barrier islands and oyster reefs to complete more than 100 coastal restoration projects. TNC believes in the conservation potential and opportunities in these states, and together with our partners and supporters, is committed to ensuring that our human and natural communities can prosper and thrive for generations to come. Thank you for your continued support.



Mitch Reid
TNC's executive director in
Louisiana, Mississippi and
Alabama



Boneyard Lake is an oxbow lake and rookery located in the Pascagoula River WMA. © Becky Stowe/TNC

Legacy Win

From the Mississippi Delta to the Pascagoula River, TNC actively conserves and connects crucial natural treasures in Mississippi.

Over the past 50 years, The Nature Conservancy and the State of Mississippi have teamed up multiple times to conserve and protect critical landscapes within the Magnolia State. The partnership really kicked off in 1974, when TNC made its then-largest land purchase of 35,000 acres along the Pascagoula River. All of that land eventually created the Pascagoula Wildlife Management Area (WMA), which is now managed by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

Today, the WMA is buffered by almost 70,000 additional acres of public and private protected lands and waters.

“TNC has also taken this large-scale land protection regimen to other parts of the state, including for the purchase of 18,000 acres to protect and connect part of the Mississippi Delta at the end of 2018.”

Mitch Reid, TNC's executive director in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama

TNC played a key role in acquiring these additional properties, including 2,100 acres along the Leaf and Pascagoula

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rivers in the George and Greene County region in 2016, and another 1,232 acres along the Pascagoula River in 2018. The 2016 acquisition connected more than 450,000 contiguous acres between the De Soto National Forest and the Pascagoula WMA, making it the largest tract of contiguous protected lands in Mississippi. Acquiring these and other conservation properties involved many partners, including the Mississippi Forestry Commission, USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries

and Parks, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Gulf Restoration Benefit Fund, and the Secretary of State's office.

The Pascagoula River, also known as the "Singing River," is one of the largest undammed rivers in the contiguous United States. It is utterly free-flowing—something that can't be said about too many rivers. The surrounding watershed is home to at least 327 species of birds, as well as a multitude of reptiles, including the yellow-blotched sawback turtle, which is exclusive to the area.



The Pascagoula map turtle (*Graptemys gibbonsi*) is restricted to the Pascagoula River system in Mississippi.
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BEYOND OUR BORDERS

TNC leverages public and private support around the region.

Louisiana Legacy In the 1990s, a landowner was interested in selling a 10,000-acre property harboring an old-growth forest to become a wildlife refuge. When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wasn't positioned to act quickly on the offer, TNC purchased the property. With support from Louisiana's congressional delegation, TNC transferred the property to USFWS to become the Cat Island NWR, which features one of the highest densities of old-growth bald cypress trees in the Mississippi River valley.



A group of TNC staff and supporters visit an old-growth bald cypress tree at Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge. © TNC

Amazing Alabama When a local botanist discovered a handful of new species along a stretch of the Lower Cahaba River, TNC and Alabama's congressional delegation took notice, eventually establishing a new national wildlife refuge that encompassed the 480-acre "biological wonderland" and connected with TNC's Kathy Stiles Freeland Bibb County Glades Preserve.



The Cahaba lily (*Hymenocallis coronaria*) only grows in Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.
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