

*Alabama Department of*  
Conservation & Natural Resources  
**PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **5 Rivers opening provides gateway to Mobile-Tensaw Delta**

SPANISH FORT – Unprecedented access to the magnificent Mobile-Tensaw Delta became a reality Friday at the ribbon-cutting ceremony at 5 Rivers – Alabama’s Delta Resource Center.

The 5 Rivers Delta Center, an 80-acre site located north of Battleship Parkway, provides a single point of contact for outdoor recreation, conservation education and land stewardship in the Delta. 5 Rivers offers visitors a gateway into this national treasure at Bartram Landing, the terminus of the Bartram Canoe Trail. The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources’ State Lands Division facility features educational opportunities at the Appalachian Exhibit Hall,

the Tensaw Theatre and the Blakeley Hall classroom facility. Visitors can spend an entire day at 5 Rivers, walking the trails, having a picnic, touring the Delta by boat and viewing the extensive exhibits on site.

The Mobile-Tensaw Delta is one of few areas in the nation designated as a National Natural Landmark, the largest area in the state with that designation. Fortunately for Alabamians, more than 107,000 acres of the approximately 235,000 acres of wetlands in the Delta are public land, thanks in part to the Forever Wild Program.

“Alabama has the second largest river delta system in the United States, but I can assure you that nobody has a welcome center like this in the United States,” said Barnett Lawley, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, who unveiled the renaming of one of the center’s buildings as the James Hamlin Griggs Delta Hall in honor of the current State Lands Division Director. “We’re so proud of this. We started a program four years ago to promote our natural resources, to teach people to enjoy what we have. We want to educate them, especially our kids, and teach them to be good stewards of our natural resources. Everything we try to do through the Department is here at 5 Rivers. You can learn the natural history. You can just sit and look at the beautiful delta. We have classrooms fully equipped with Internet connections. We have great places to have meetings. We have something for everybody. And we’re awfully proud of it.”

The 5 Rivers facilities highlight the fact that Alabama has the fourth highest plant and animal diversity in the U.S. From the American alligator to the rare Alabama red-bellied turtle, much of this animal diversity is found in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta.

The productive river systems provide a wide array of fish species for the angling public, while soaring cypress trees draped with tongues of Spanish moss provide homes for nesting bald eagles and osprey, making the Delta and Alabama a true nature-lover’s paradise.

“Having an attraction like this so close to the battleship (U.S.S. Alabama) really gives people a great sense of Mobile’s location and what water and the bay

mean to this area,” said Lee Sentell, Director of the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel. “The tourism department is really proud to welcome this spectacular new facility into the state’s inventory of tourist destinations.”

The 5 Rivers facilities were built with combination of state and federal funds. The federal funds were committed through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

“5 Rivers is truly a gateway to adventure with outdoor recreation, educational and stewardship activities all set within the beautiful backdrop of the Delta and coastal Alabama,” said Timothy Keeney, deputy assistant secretary at NOAA. “Through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program, NOAA’s Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management has been able to fund more than 600 projects including habitat protection and restoration, land acquisition, and water quality improvement projects.

“The work that the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has done, and continues to do, is extraordinary. NOAA is proud to be a part of this venture.”

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources promotes wise stewardship, management and enjoyment of Alabama’s natural resources through five divisions: Marine Police, Marine Resources, State Parks, State Lands, and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. To learn more about ADCNR visit [www.outdooralabama.com](http://www.outdooralabama.com) <<http://www.outdooralabama.com/>> .

## CUTLINE INFORMATION

Ribbon-cutting identification: left to right, Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley, State Lands Director Jim Griggs, Timothy Keeney of NOAA, Rep. Jamie Ison, Rep. Alan Baker, Rep. Harry Shiver, Rep. Joe Faust, Tourism Director Lee Sentell and Baldwin County District Attorney Judy Newcomb.

Dedication identification: Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley, left, and State Lands Director Jim Griggs flank the plaque commemorating the renaming of the Delta Hall at 5 Rivers.

