

# Alabama Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau



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## **Nature Tourism Businesses Invited to Two Upcoming Workshops**

**Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, AL**—As the nature tourism industry continues to expand along Alabama’s Gulf Coast, tour operators are invited to attend the free “Business of Nature” workshops, which are designed to improve business operations while promoting environmental stewardship.

Set for Monday February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the first workshop focuses on the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem, including a presentation about resident Killer Whales in the Gulf, and will be held at Weeks Bay Reserve in Fairhope, AL, from 8:30 a.m. until noon.

The second workshop on Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup> explores the Mobile-Tensaw Delta ecosystem. This session spans from 9:30 a.m. to noon at the Five Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort, AL.

Although the workshop content varies slightly, both events will include an economic update from the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), a session on native and invasive plants, a recap of U.S. Coast Guard vessel requirements and an update on the [Dolphin SMART](#) program.

“Nature tourism has moved beyond mere recreation and become a catalyst of economic growth,” said Joanne McDonough, nature tourism specialist for the CVB. “Our vast natural diversity, in Baldwin and Mobile County, spans wetland and earthy habitats from the Gulf beaches to the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, which is known as one of the most significant and valuable delta complexes in the nation. Well planned and managed nature tourism businesses can provide income to local people, and by its reliance on healthy ecosystems, offer powerful incentives to conserve and protect biodiversity.”

These workshops are made possible through the support of [Weeks Bay Reserve](#), the [Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau](#) (CVB), the [Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources \(Coastal Section\)](#), the [Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium](#), the [Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center](#) and [NOAA](#).

While there is no cost for a nature tourism business to attend these morning sessions, reservations are required and can be made by contacting McDonough at 251-974-4635 or [jmcdonough@gulfshores.com](mailto:jmcdonough@gulfshores.com).

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### **About the Nature Tourism Initiative**

The Nature Tourism Initiative is a partnership among the [Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau](#), [Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center](#) and [Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium](#).



*The Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) serves as the official destination marketing organization for the cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach in addition to the unincorporated area of Fort Morgan. To learn more about Alabama's 32 miles of sugar white sand, visit either [www.gulfshores.com](http://www.gulfshores.com) or [www.orangebeach.com](http://www.orangebeach.com). The CVB is an accredited Destination Marketing Organization, 2008-2012.*