

Prepared for Discover with Nature, TNC

# GULF COAST

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*April 25th-May 1st, 2025*

The Nature  
Conservancy



## WELCOME TO THE GULF COAST!

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Your journey from Pensacola to New Orleans is not merely a passage along the Gulf Coast; it is a pilgrimage through the heart of the American South, where the land and sea embrace in a timeless dance. As you embark, you will traverse a landscape steeped in history, culture, and natural beauty, each mile revealing the delicate balance between human endeavor and the wild, untamed spirit of the coast.

From the sugar-white sands of Pensacola to the vibrant, jazz-infused streets of New Orleans, this itinerary will guide you through a tapestry of ecosystems and communities. As you stop in Alabama and Mississippi, you will witness the resilience of coastal dunes, the serenity of estuaries teeming with life, and the haunting beauty of wetlands that stand as sentinels against the encroaching tides.

This journey is a call to stewardship, a reminder that the treasures of the Gulf Coast are not merely to be admired but to be protected and cherished. As you move from the crystal waters of Florida to the bayous of Louisiana, you will encounter the stories of those who have dedicated themselves to preserving this fragile paradise. Their passion and commitment will inspire you to become a guardian of the coast, ensuring that its wonders endure for generations to come.

## CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

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Along the Gulf of Mexico, large-scale coastal land acquisitions have preserved critical habitats, such as the Powderhorn Ranch in Texas and the Lake Wimico tract in Florida. Estuary programs and conservation efforts in places like Mobile Bay, Alabama, have strengthened the resilience of these fragile ecosystems. In Louisiana, projects have been undertaken to defend against erosion and rebuild barrier islands, while coastal features in Bayou LaBatre, Alabama, and Shamrock Island, Texas, have been fortified.

The restoration efforts extend underwater as well, with the construction of oyster reefs in various bays and estuaries, creating thriving habitats and protecting against future disturbances. The GulfCorps program, a collaboration between TNC, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and other partners, has been instrumental in providing jobs for young adults, fostering conservation and restoring critical lands and waters throughout the five Gulf states.

## CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

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It's impossible to summarize TNC's conservation work along the gulf in one page, but one example is our work in the Florida panhandle that aims to identify and promote nature-based solutions for resiliency. A multi-year effort harnesses the power of natural systems to tackle challenges such as flooding, sea-level rise, and threats to wildlife and economic development. By restoring and strengthening natural features like wetlands and oyster reefs, our projects create a regional resilience planning framework to safeguard the exceptional resources of the Gulf.

Another example is the Pascagoula River and its watershed in Mississippi. The region is home to sprawling cypress-tupelo swamps, oxbow lakes and pine ridges, and a staggering 327 species of birds, including the rare Mississippi sandhill crane. The Conservancy has played a pivotal role in preserving the landscape, making a significant land acquisition of 35,000 acres in 1974 which includes forests and coastal estuaries. The Wolf River serves as a lifeline for South Mississippi, offering not only breathtaking scenery but also invaluable resources for recreation, wildlife and for the health of St. Louis Bay.

Each state along the Gulf has its own specific partner and community projects with unique sets of challenges and successes to share with you. But prominent in these individual stories is the interconnectedness of our futures and the beauty and culture of the entire region.

## ITINERARY OVERVIEW

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### *Gulf Coast*

**Apr 25**  
FRIDAY

Welcome to the Gulf Coast! Arrive to Pensacola, Florida by no later than 3:00 PM. Upon arrival at the airport, you will be welcomed by your Iconic Trip Leader who will transfer you approximately 15 minutes to downtown Pensacola. The westernmost part of the Florida panhandle, this city is the first stop on our journey along the Gulf Coast.

On arrival, settle into your comfortable room at Hilton Garden Inn Pensacola Downtown before joining your TNC hosts and the rest of your group for a delicious welcome dinner in town.

Overnight at Hilton Garden Inn Downtown, Pensacola, FL

**Apr 26**  
SATURDAY

After enjoying breakfast, we will depart to Nichols Marina, an approximately 30-minute drive. Joined by local TNC staff and watermen, we will travel by boat to access monitoring sites and reefs within the Pensacola East Bay Oyster Habitat Restoration Project. Completed November 2022, the project aimed to boost oyster populations, and is the largest scale estuarine habitat restoration undertaken by TNC in Florida, with a total of 33 oyster reefs created. Prepare to discuss the protection of water quality and keeping rivers healthy, the restoration of seagrass and salt marshes, and habitat management plans.

We will participate in a dockside oyster tasting as a local waterman provides unique perspective as someone who grew up working and living along these waters. Partake in a tasty lunch nearby, then return to the marina where you'll meet with harvesters and aquaculture farmers to talk about the urgent need for restoration in the Bay. Return to your hotel for downtime before heading out to dinner in town.

Overnight at Hilton Garden Inn Downtown, Pensacola, FL

## ITINERARY OVERVIEW

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### *Gulf Coast*

**Apr 27**  
SUNDAY

Today, pack your bags and grab breakfast before driving approximately 1 hour northwest to the start of the day's adventure. We'll take to the water at Historic Blakeley State Park, situated amongst one of the most ecologically diverse regions of Alabama. Traveling via boat along the tranquil waterways of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, get a glimpse into the history of this critical landscape as well as TNC's efforts on land protection here.

After a picnic lunch, drive approximately 35 minutes to Splinter Hill Bog Preserve and spend time marveling at some of the largest and most visually spectacular white-topped pitcher plant bogs in the world. This preserve is managed by TNC in cooperation with Alabama's Forever Wild Program and contains some of the most intact seepage bog communities remaining on the Gulf Coast. TNC selected this site for protection given the number of rare and declining species known to occur here. In the late afternoon, we'll drive 45 minutes and check into The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa. After settling in, meet as a group for a short drive to the beautiful historic home of a local TNC Trustee for a cocktail reception followed by a delicious dinner nearby.

Overnight at The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel and Spa, Mobile, AL

**Apr 28**  
MONDAY

After breakfast, we will make our way to the Lightning Point Restoration Project, a 45-minute drive, in Bayou La Batre. One of Alabama's most iconic landscapes, the seafood capital of the state, and steeped in history, it is a landmark that is under threat. Designed to revitalize the waterfront by restoring, enhancing, and protecting shoreline habitats, the project aims to improve community access for recreation and fishing opportunities.

## ITINERARY OVERVIEW

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### *Gulf Coast*

Spend time with TNC's Marine and Freshwater Program Director, before hopping aboard boats to navigate the landscape around Coffee Island, southeast of Bayou La Batre on the Mississippi Sound. Here, the shoreline has been experiencing significant erosion since the 1950s. Hear how TNC and partners not only restored more than 1.5 acres of reef breakwater and living shoreline habitat, but created local jobs for oystermen, shrimpers, and workers. A picnic lunch will be served today, followed by a hands-on stormwater project planting activity. This evening, return to Mobile for downtime and dinner.

Overnight at The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel and Spa, Mobile, AL

### **Apr 29** TUESDAY

Eat breakfast before checking out and transferring 1.5 hours to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Walk along the waterfront and learn about TNC's oyster restoration work including the "Save our Shells," or SOS, program, an oyster shell recycling program started by TNC in 2023, with the goal of collecting oyster shells from local restaurants to use in oyster reef habitat restoration projects. Then, drive approximately 40 minutes to the Wolf River, where TNC's Mississippi Chapter staff will join for a picnic lunch and kayak and canoe adventure; hear a firsthand account of the work being done along the Wolf and Biloxi Rivers and the Pascagoula Watershed. In the early evening, check in to the Pearl Hotel, with some time to refresh before having dinner as a group in Bay St. Louis.

Overnight at Pearl Hotel, Bay St. Louis

### **Apr 30** WEDNESDAY

After breakfast, drive approximately 1 hour to our final TNC property of the week: Abita Creek Flatwoods Preserve, a nearly 1,000-acre area supporting significant longleaf pine savanna habitat. As one of the most diverse and threatened habitats in North America, this preserve supports nearly 30 rare native plants including carnivorous pitcher plants and several species of rare animals. TNC staff will be on hand to help you explore this beautiful preserve and learn about the importance of fire to the surrounding natural habitat.

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## ITINERARY OVERVIEW

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### *Gulf Coast*

Lunch today is in the town of Abita Springs, home to the well-known export, Abita beer. Enjoy a native pint over lunch before making our way to Bonnet Carre. Here, we will meet with TNC partners and talk about the partnership that allows freshwater to flow into lakes, that then lead to the ocean, affecting water and oyster quality as far as Mobile Bay. Our day ends with check-in at Hotel Provincial and a farewell dinner at a local favorite.

Overnight at Hotel Provincial, New Orleans, LA

**May 1**  
THURSDAY

After breakfast, transfers to the New Orleans International Airport will begin at 9:00 AM, with the last airport shuttle being no later than 1:00 PM.

## Costs

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**Total per person based on 13 guests in shared accommodation: \$6,760 USD**

**Notes:**

Single Occupancy Cost: \$7,730

**This cost includes:**

Accommodations

All ground transportation

All meals beginning with lunch on Day 1 and ending with breakfast on Day 7

All activities

All gratuities

All park entrance fees and permitting

All guides

Iconic Leaders

Client hosts

**This cost does not include:**

Travel to and from trip start

Travel insurance

Incidentals and spa services

Alcohol, beyond the welcome reception



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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### Payment and Cancellation Terms

As a reminder, all payment requests will be sent through Square. This may include the deposit, final payment, and any supplemental amounts for pre/post nights or extra transfers.

#### Deposit:

\$1,500 per person due at time of registration

- Cancellation within 7 days of registering: Deposit is 100% refundable
- Cancellation outside of 7-day registration window: Deposit is non-refundable

#### Full Trip Payment:

Due 150 days prior to trip start

- Cancellation 150-136 days prior to trip start: Full trip cost is 50% refundable
- Cancellation 135-0 days prior to trip start: Full trip cost is non-refundable

If you need to cancel, please contact Iconic Adventures via [concierge@iconicadventures.com](mailto:concierge@iconicadventures.com).

### Contact Information

As you plan for your journey with The Nature Conservancy and Iconic Adventures, please feel free to reach out with any questions. Our team is available to advise on paying invoices, arrival and departure details, packing lists, request mobility accommodations, and more.

You may reach us at [concierge@iconicadventures.com](mailto:concierge@iconicadventures.com). Note that emails sent over the weekend will be responded to on Monday at our earliest availability. Email is the preferred (and quickest!) way to reach us.

We are also available via phone: (877) 706-4266. Our team will respond within 24 hours during the work week. Please allow us time to respond before reaching out to The Nature Conservancy directly.

We look forward to traveling with you soon!

The Iconic Team

## OUR TRAVEL VALUES

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### Access

Travel with renowned Conservancy experts and local partners for an exclusive, on-the-ground experience. You won't just see amazing places, you'll see how you are helping save them.

### Impact

Witness how your commitment to our planet and your passion for conservation are making a difference in the wild places and communities you are impacting.

### Knowledge

Learn how we are applying the latest cutting-edge science to affect global change and drive conservation.

### Inspiration

Immerse yourself in local cultures and awe-inspiring landscapes to foster your own connection to our world.

### Globally Minded

Elevate your understanding of our work by observing first-hand how TNC and our partners act locally and how we turn local results in to global impact by scaling solutions that work.

## TNC TRAVELER EXPECTATIONS

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Group travel with The Nature Conservancy provides our donors with the opportunity to experience, alongside fellow supporters, the places TNC is working collaboratively to advance our conservation mission. Within these curated trips is the chance to engage with a community of active individuals and conservation staff who enjoy teaching and learning about the important conservation work we do and exploring the outdoors.

In order to ensure an enjoyable trip environment that supports learning and enrichment, we need your partnership. We ask that all participants review TNC's [Code of Conduct](#) prior to joining a trip. We also encourage you to carefully review all trip information to make an informed decision as to whether travel with TNC and a specific trip's characteristics and activities are right for you. Following the Code is an expectation and responsibility for everyone in the larger TNC community, including our staff, partners, vendors and supporters. **To that end, when registering for a TNC trip, you are agreeing to uphold the Code.**

## TNC TRAVELER EXPECTATIONS

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While the entire Code of Conduct is important, the tenets that are especially relevant to TNC group travel are: respect for each other, respect for the world around us and acting with integrity. The following traveler expectations are intended to provide guidance for how those tenets translate to group travel but are by no means an exhaustive list. By participating in a TNC trip, you make a commitment to act in accordance with the TNC Code of Conduct to your fellow travelers, as well as to TNC staff, partners, community members and vendors. Any violation of or disregard for the Code of Conduct may result in removal from a trip and/or denial of future TNC travel participation.

### **1) RESPECT ALL PEOPLE, PLACES AND PERSPECTIVES.**

Each participant on a trip is an integral part of the travel experience. Demonstrating respect and consideration is imperative not only for nature, local communities and cultures in the places we visit, but also for fellow travelers, staff, partners, community members and vendors. Everyone will bring different goals, backgrounds, experiences and abilities, and it is important that the group respect each individual's perspectives and needs throughout the trip. Sometimes trip participants become lifelong friends, and we encourage the camaraderie and community built through these shared experiences!

### **2) HARASSMENT IN ALL ITS FORMS, INCLUDING DISCRIMINATION AND MICROAGGRESSIONS, IS NOT TOLERATED.**

There is no place on any TNC travel experience for disrespect to or bullying or intimidation of fellow travelers, TNC staff, partners, community members or vendors. All travelers agree to support an environment free from any behavior that could make an individual feel unsafe or diminish their dignity. If you experience or observe this type of behavior on a trip, please report it to your trip host or guide.

Examples of behavior that will not be tolerated include, but are not limited, to:

- Racial discrimination in any form (jokes, comments and/or actions)
- Verbal abuse of any traveler, staff, partner, community member or vendor
- Actions or statements that exclude or divide people because of their differences or differing perspectives
- Jokes about gender or sexual orientation or that include sexual innuendo
- Discriminatory actions or statements based on gender or sexual orientation
- Unwelcome physical contact or physical intimidation of a sexual nature

## TNC TRAVELER EXPECTATIONS

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### **3) ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPLICABLE LAW OF THE LOCATION(S) OF THE TRIP.**

Your trip location(s) may have different laws from your home location. You are expected to be aware of and adhere to the trip destination's laws throughout the experience, even when locations change throughout a trip.

### **4) EMPLOY AN ATTITUDE OF FLEXIBILITY.**

At times, there may be changes in the itinerary when deemed necessary or advisable for the comfort and well-being of trip members. We appreciate your understanding, flexibility and adaptability in order to make the trip safe and enjoyable for you and everyone else.

**TNC and its tour operators reserve the right to deny registration or remove a tour participant from a trip should such person's behavior, health or mental condition impact the safe and equitable operation of the trip.**

**Thank you for your attention and understanding, and please let a TNC travel representative know if you have any questions in advance of registering at [travel@tnc.org](mailto:travel@tnc.org).**