



Happy fall, y'all!

As much as I love summer sailing and paddling, I am thankful for the opportunity that fall and winter bring for more reflective and community-building tasks like curriculum planning, citizen science efforts, fleet and facility maintenance, and program goal setting for the year ahead.

Chilly temperatures and gusty winds have indeed slowed our on-the-water programming. But we've kept busy! Thanks to some help from our community partners, Saunders Yachtworks and SafeFloor, LLC., W&WLC is repowering and refitting the Sail Camp support skiff and updating our Sunfish fleet. We're working on some much-needed fiberglass repairs, brushing on new coats of paint, and upgrading rigging. Heck, I might even name the boats once it's all said and done.

A friendly reminder, too: fall and winter offer more availability for facility rentals! The W&WLC Sail Loft is the newest waterfront spot available to the community. We've hosted birthday parties, a bridal shower, and fundraiser events to date. If you're looking for a unique indoor/outdoor space for your holiday gathering or fundraiser, I would be happy to reserve your date!



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Step 1: No more bottom fouling on the skiff!



Step 2: Taped, sanded, and primed...



Step 3: And a couple coats of new bottom paint :)



Switching out old sails for new



152 new sail rings. Thank goodness for needle nose pliers!

Fall 2022 Recap

Bird Island Kayak + Sea Oat Planting Day



20 volunteers and Coastal Resources staff paddled to Bird Island and spent a beautiful September morning planting 2,000+ sea oats. Thank you to CoastAL Orange Beach for donating the plants!



35th Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup

The W&WLC is now listed as an official site for the Alabama Coastal Cleanup. I'm happy to report that our volunteer team found very little litter as they paddled along the south shore of Wolf Bay.

24 lbs of litter removed:

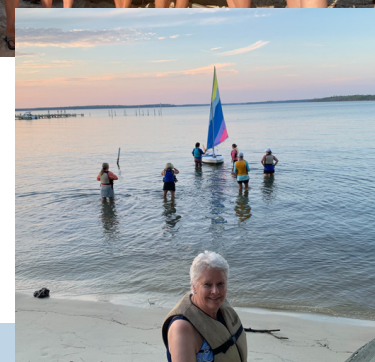
- fishing tackle + rope
- construction debris
- plastic shopping and ice bags
- food packaging + single-use takeout items
- 5 gallon bucket

"Never doubt that a small, thoughtful group of citizens can change the world; indeed; it's the only thing that has."

-Margaret Mead



Women's Sailing Workshop Series



We hosted two more sailing workshop weekends for great groups of women. These ladies learned the basics of small boat sailing in our Sunfish fleet. The all-female workshops will be led again in the Spring. Keep an eye out for registration! If you can't wait until Spring to get out on the water, call or email about private or small group lessons (just make sure you have a wetsuit + cold water gear!).

Paddle & Paint Kayak Excursions

We kicked off a new program combining kayaking and watercolor skills. Participants learned about estuarian ecology, the long history of pairing art with field observation, and they learned how to create beautiful works of art while afloat in kayaks right on the waters of Wolf Bay. These excursions are offered seasonally or can be booked privately for small groups (2-6 participants).





Inaugural Pumpkin Paddle



We led our first costumed Halloween-themed Pumpkin Paddle on Wolf Bay. Kayakers were treated to a phenomenal October sunset and even had dolphins swim alongside. A big thank you to Spicy Danger for the fun music and to all of the volunteers that made the W&WLC spooky and festive! We also thank Oso Early, Buzzcatz Coffee & Sweets, Cosmo's, Luna's, Cobalt, and Cetacean Cruises for donating great costume contest prizes!

And a letter to you...

Each year as Thanksgiving and the winter holiday season draw near, I start to think about what I'm thankful for. This year, a lot of my gratitude centers around my career and all the factors that make my work possible.

I'm thankful to be part of the City of Orange Beach's Coastal Resources Department: a team of dedicated people who are passionate about protecting natural resources. They're willing to make time for educating locals and tourists alike about the unique ecosystems we live and play in. I'm thankful to work for a municipality that values the coastal environment, and that the City invests in human talent to help safeguard it and in infrastructure to give our community free access to it.

I'm so appreciative to have wonderful educational partners (Orange Beach City Schools, Dune Doctors, Alabama Gulf State Park, Alabama Cooperative Extension Office, and Alabama Water Watch) that are helping us develop amazing field trip opportunities at coastal access points throughout Orange Beach. I'm thankful for our marine industry partners (Saunders Yachtworks and SafeFloor) that are generously advising, donating to, and assisting us in improving our sailing fleet for youth and adults to better learn on.

And I have so much gratitude for you! Without you and a community that values our waterways and outdoor learning opportunities, there would be no Wind & Water Learning Center. I'm thankful each week to have a community asking for sailing opportunities. Requesting kayaking programs. Showing up to new events. Offering to volunteer. One of the hardest things about developing new programming is building interest. I'm thankful that you and my community already have it and express their love for the back bays and shorelines our programming takes place on...it makes my work feel so worthwhile! Thank you, truly.

Jackie McGonigal