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Pelican Paddle Canoe and Kayak Race to benefit Weeks Bay Foundation

Fairhope, AL – Get your arms ready to work! The Weeks Bay Foundation will host the 5th Annual Pelican Paddle Canoe and Kayak Race on Saturday, August 5, at the Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center on Highway 98 in Fairhope.

Pelican Paddle is a fun, family-oriented, 3.5-mile canoe and kayak race that's open to all ages and skill levels. Plus, there's a seven-mile pro option for the serious paddlers, and a non-competitive Eco-Tour of Weeks Bay, guided by Weeks Bay Foundation Executive Director Yael Girard. And this year, for the first time in its five-year history, Pelican Paddle will include live music, local beer, and local food trucks, for spectators and racers alike.

Race divisions are: Men's Kayak, Women's Kayak, Junior Kayak, Pro Kayak, Tandem Craft, Non-Traditional (single canoes, pedal kayaks, etc.), and Stand Up Paddle Board. The Eco-Tour begins shortly after the racers take off.

"Pelican Paddle is a great chance to get out on the water and increase your awareness of the area's natural resources, and our dependency on those resources," Girard said. "It's also a chance for individuals and families to engage in healthy, physical activity."

The Eco-Tour winds its way through the salt marsh edges of Weeks Bay. It's suitable for paddlers of all ages, and participants often see dolphins, Bald Eagles, and numerous shore birds. Stops will also be made along the way to discuss watersheds, estuaries, and flora and fauna.

Advance registration for Pelican Paddle is \$30 per paddler or \$70 per family. Day-of-race registration is \$35 per paddler and \$85 per family. A family can include up to two adults and up to four minors under age 18.

Loaner gear will also be available but must be reserved in advance. Fairhope Boat Company and 17 Turtles Outfitters are donating canoes and kayaks for either the race or the Eco-Tour, free of charge. They are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants interested in borrowing gear must call the Foundation at 251-990-5004 before registering for the race to ensure the boats are available.

For more information and to register for the Pelican Paddle races or the Eco-Tour, call 251-990-5004, or to register online, visit www.weeksbay.org/events. Advance registration will close August 4, at 4 p.m. Race-day registration and check-in begins at 7:30 a.m.

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Weeks Bay Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and an accredited land trust. The Foundation has been working in coastal Alabama for over 25 years to protect important wetland habitat, preserve undeveloped land, and educate the community about the importance of our bogs, swamps, and marshes.