



# NEWS STORY

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:  
November 26, 2019

**Contact:**  
Public Affairs  
USACE Mobile District  
CESAM-PA@usace.army.mil  
(251) 690-2505

## USACE MOBILE DISTRICT COMPLETES SHIP ISLAND RESTORATION

by Chuck Walker

**MOBILE, Ala.** – As the second largest restoration project in the history of the National Park Service, the Mobile District’s restoration of Ship Island in the western region of Gulf Islands National Seashore is an important contribution to the preservation of the Nation’s precious natural resources.

Completed on November 21, 2019, the approximately \$130 million Ship Island Phase 2 restoration project is part of an ongoing five-phase effort to not only restore and protect the valuable habitats of the island but enhance the resiliency of the Mississippi Sound and the nearby Mississippi coastline.

During Phase 1 of the project, the Mobile District filled a 3½-mile wide breach splitting the island caused by Hurricane Camille in 1969, which had nearly healed itself naturally over time before Hurricane Katrina reopened the breach in 2005. In addition to closing the breach, Phase 1 of the project also reinforced the island by raising to an elevation of approximately five feet above sea level. With the completion of Phase 2, the impacted site has been raised an additional two feet and widened an additional 500 feet to further strengthen it in the face of future storm activity.

“Completion of Phase 2 under budget is a huge accomplishment that enables the USACE and Mississippi to address additional requirements in the region,” said Col. Sebastien P. Joly, USACE Mobile District commander. “We’re excited to move into the final phases.”

A project whose size and scope is second only to the Corps’ ongoing restoration project in the Florida Everglades, the Ship Island project is a critical effort by the Mobile District team of engineering and environmental professionals. The successful results of the project are also an invaluable resource to the state of Mississippi, as Ship Island and the other barrier islands in the region are the first line of defense on the Mississippi coastline against incoming hurricanes and tropical storms.

Justin McDonald, Mississippi Coastal Program Manager, said the project means a lot for everyone involved.

“This is one of the biggest Civil Works projects in the Corps and one of the largest restoration project in the history of the National Park Service,” McDonald said. “So, it is a big deal for us, a big deal for the Park Service and a big deal for the state of Mississippi.”

The National Park Service said it is pleased with its partnership with the Corps.

“The National Park Service is proud to work side-by-side with the professionals at the Army Corps of Engineers to mitigate disturbance caused by past human effects to enhance natural and preserve cultural resources on Ship Island,” said Deputy Superintendent Steve McCoy. “We’re delighted by the work completed by the Corps and we look forward to our continuing partnership on Ship Island which will benefit our community, visitors, and the island’s natural inhabitants.”

Having closed Phase 2, the Ship Island project is now 80% complete.

The Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (MsCIP) was launched by the Mobile District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in December 2005, in response to the major environmental damage to the Mississippi coastline and its barrier islands caused by Hurricane Katrina. The MsCIP mission is to build a more resilient coastal Mississippi through water resources related projects throughout the state's three coastal counties, addressing hurricane and storm damage reduction, salt water intrusion, shoreline erosion, and fish and wildlife preservation.

Possible infographics & photos:





