The coastal counties of Mississippi have been subjected to numerous changes over the past several decades. The changes have involved land-use, demographics, natural habitats, and socio-economic conditions, which have all had various impacts on the area. The completion of Interstate 10 has helped to provide a pathway for the development of the area. What was once an area of small seaside communities has now become an area booming with industry and tourism. The small fishing villages now give way to large industrial ports, casinos, and densely populated urban areas.

Even with the increased development, some areas along the Mississippi gulf coast have remained in a relatively pristine state. Many of these areas are associated with environmentally sensitive sites and designated natural areas (e.g., national forest, wildlife management areas, etc.). These types of features may help direct or even contain future growth and development in some areas, as the present pathways for development reach their threshold.