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Welcome to Gulf Islands National Seashore!

Gulf Islands National Seashore evokes images of beaches, forts, and sea turtles. Scratch the surface and you also find fascinating stories of boats, roads, and disappearing islands. Fort Pickens has stood as sentinel, guarding the entrance to Pensacola Bay since before the Civil War. The military accessed the fort for nearly 120 years entirely by boat. Decommissioned after World War II, it reopened as Fort Pickens State Park in 1949 – and the very first road was built so visitors could drive along the narrow, low lying island to the fort. Early predictions that the road would be “...an extremely expensive road to build and maintain and would seriously affect the dunes and dunes vegetation…” have proven true. Nearly $50 million has been spent to build, repair, and rebuild the seven mile road after hurricanes, and another $11 million is being spent to remove broken asphalt and road debris scattered throughout the sand. Beautiful new 150 passenger boats are on their way for a planned ferry service, and the boat connection started by the military will have come full circle.

Barrier islands are some of our most dynamic, ever changing natural environments. Nowhere is this more obvious than Petit Bois Island off the Mississippi coast. Gulf currents move the island westward at a rate of 178 feet per year, its west end disappearing into the Pascagoula shipping channel. This sand “reappears” west of the channel as Sand Island through regular channel dredging. Further west, Ship Island was sliced in two by Hurricane Camille in 1969 creating East and West Ship Islands. This year the Army Corps of Engineers begins a three year project to restore 19 million cubic yards of sand and rejoin them as Ship Island once again.

There’s more to Gulf Islands than first glance reveals. Explore, relax, learn.

Dan Brown
Superintendent

Help preserve and protect Gulf Islands National Seashore by joining our volunteer corps!

Volunteers assist the park in all areas:

- Black Powder Demonstrations
- Living History Demonstrations
- Campground Hosts
- Site Hosts
- Guided Programs
- Staffing Visitor Centers
- Historic Preservation
- Turtle Patrol
- Librarian
- Turtle T.H.i.S

To learn about current volunteer opportunities visit www.nps.gov/guis/getinvolved/volunteer.htm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things to Do</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beach-combing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quartz sand beaches of Gulf Islands National Seashore are some of the best in the United States. Whether you’re taking in the sun, throwing the Frisbee, or searching the sand for wildlife and seashells, the park’s beaches offer endless fun for the whole family. Please remember to leave what you find and take what you bring to the beach, including trash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bird Watching</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many different birds call Gulf Islands home. From herons to plovers, you’re bound to see a wide variety while visiting the national seashore. If you’re interested in tracking the birds you see, stop in at any one of the park’s visitor centers or headquarters to pick up a copy of the Bird Checklist site bulletin, or download it from the park’s website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boating</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you know that over 80% of the park is located in the water? Boating can be a great way to experience the blue-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the many sounds, bayous, and bays in the area. Don’t have your own boat? Check the calendar section of our website for ranger-led kayak or small skiff programs. Check weather and sea reports before heading out on the water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Camping</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A popular activity at the national seashore, there are two campgrounds offering RV and tent camping with modern amenities. Looking for a wilder experience? Primitive camping is permitted in areas of the park as well. Go to the back page of this newspaper for more information on camping in the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fishing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are plenty of opportunities to catch the big one. Whether you’re on the beach, a pier, or a boat, you’ll probably see visitors casting a line. Keep in mind that park regulations regarding fishing correspond to the state fishing regulations of Florida and Mississippi when you’re fishing in those states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hiking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughout each area of the national seashore there are many hiking trails to explore. In Florida, you’ll find over 15 miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail. Always be prepared for inclement weather, including thunderstorms. Check weather reports before hiking in the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Picnicking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are many picnic areas throughout the national seashore, as well as picnic pavilions. Some of the pavilions may be reserved ahead of your visit; please see the back page of this newspaper for more information about reserving a pavilion. Please remember to practice Leave No Trace principles and Pack It In, Pack It Out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ranger Programs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience the national seashore with a ranger or volunteer. Programs vary in topic from the historic forts to the unique environment of barrier islands, and even under the water of the Gulf of Mexico. Visit page ten of this newspaper to see some of the park’s regular programs or check the calendar section of our website for ranger-led programs and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-guiding Tours</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to explore the historic structures preserved at Gulf Islands National Seashore at your own pace? Stop by one of the park’s visitor centers or headquarters building to pick up a self-guiding tours for historic forts and batteries preserved in the park. Informative signs throughout each area are also full of stories and facts about the structures and places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swimming</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Swim beaches are located on the gulf and soundside of many of the park’s areas and islands. Be mindful of surf conditions. In some areas, flags are used to show current conditions. Remember rip currents can happen at any time. Know what to do if you get caught in a rip current before entering the water and never swim alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitor Centers &amp; Museum</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take an in-depth look into the things that make Gulf Islands National Seashore so special. The park’s visitor centers, headquarters building, and museum are full of hands-on, interactive, and audio-visual exhibits for visitors to enjoy and learn more about the park’s incredible history and spectacular ecology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wildlife Viewing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From alligators to the Perdido Key Beach Mouse, Gulf Islands is teeming with wildlife. An exciting experience for any visitor, please remember to keep your distance and do not disturb the wildlife. If you’re interested in tracking the animals you see while you’re in the park, stop by one of the park’s visitor centers or contact stations for an Animal Checklist site bulletin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plan Your Visit

Florida

One Hour: Visit one of the park’s historic forts and take a guided or self-guiding tour. Take a hike along one of the park’s many nature trails. Explore the exhibits at park headquarters, the visitor center at Fort Barrancas, or the museum at Fort Pickens. Go for a ride in your car or on a bike down one of the park’s scenic drives in Santa Rosa or Fort Pickens Areas.

Three Hours: Sit back, relax, and take in the sun at one of the park’s many beach access points. Be sure to bring plenty of sunblock and water. Take a break from the sun by exploring one of the indoor exhibit facilities or have a picnic lunch at one of the many park picnic shelters. Cast your line at the Fort Pickens Fishing Pier or in the surf.

One Day: With a whole day in the park, explore multiple areas, and learn about how the different fortifications around Pensacola Bay worked together to defend the deep water harbor and the old Pensacola Navy Yard. If you’re in the park on a weekday, stop by park headquarters and learn about the first federal tree farm at Naval Live Oaks Area.

Three Days or more: If you’re planning to stay in the park for three days or more, consider camping at Fort Pickens Campground, a beautiful campground within walking distance of some of the best beaches on the gulf coast. Explore more of the far reaches of the park including Opal Beach, the Okaloosa Area, or the Mississippi Area of the national seashore.

Mississippi

One Hour: Stop by the William M. Colmer Visitor Center in the Davis Bayou Area to learn about the spectacular natural and cultural features of Gulf Islands National Seashore in Mississippi. Take a quick walk through the Nature Loop Trail and see what wildlife you can spot in the bayou.

Three Hours: Take in one of the park’s many ranger-led programs. A full list is always posted on the park’s website. During the summer months skiff boat and kayak tours of the bayou are offered multiple days a week. Go for a hike by traveling the Davis Bayou Trail, the CCC Overlook Trail, or the Nature Loop Trail.

One Day: If you’re at the park during the summer season, take the ferry to West Ship Island. Enjoy the gulf from this barrier island where there are plenty of opportunities to beach comb, explore, swim, picnic, and take a tour of historic Fort Massachusetts. See page five for more information on visiting West Ship Island.

Three Days or more: The Davis Bayou Campground is a very popular location for campers, especially during the cooler season. If you’re feeling adventurous take a boat ride to one of the park’s barrier islands like Horn Island or Petit Bois Island. See page five to find a list of authorized charter boats. Consider heading over to the Florida Areas of the seashore.

2016 In Review

Thank you to everyone who made our centennial year unforgettable!!
Cat, East Ship, Horn, West Petit Bois, and Petit Bois Islands are accessible by private boat only. You can find a list of licensed charter private boat operators for transportation to these islands on our website: www.nps.gov/guis/boat-charters-in-mississippi.htm

National Seashore Boundary

Park Headquarters

Halstead Bayou

Stark Bayou

DAVIS BAYOU

To beaches and Gulfport (ferry to West Ship Island)

Nature’s Way Trail Loop

Davis Bayou Trail

Live Oaks Bicycle Route

CCC Spur Trail

Park Entrance

Fishing Pier

Pavilion 1

Pavilion 4

Pavilion 3

Pavilion 5

Campground

Ocean Springs 90

Ocean Springs Rd

Government Street

Park Road

Hanley Road

Ranger station

Wheelchair-accessible Restrooms

Parking

Picnic area

Boat launch

William M. Colmer Visitor Center

3500 Park Road

Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564

From I-10 East take Exit 50 toward Ocean Springs. Continue on MS-609 South for 2.8 miles. Turn left onto Bienville Blvd. The park entrance will be approximately 2.9 miles ahead on your right.

From I-10 West take Exit 57 toward Ocean Springs. Turn right onto Ocean Springs Road for 12 miles. At the intersection continue straight onto Park Road.

William M. Colmer Visitor Center

3500 Park Road

Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564

From I-10 East take Exit 50 toward Ocean Springs. Continue on MS-609 South for 2.8 miles. Turn left onto Bienville Blvd. The park entrance will be approximately 2.9 miles ahead on your right.

From I-10 West take Exit 57 toward Ocean Springs. Turn right onto Ocean Springs Road for 12 miles. At the intersection continue straight onto Park Road.

West Ship Island

West Ship Island is located 12 miles from mainland Mississippi, and features the masonry fortification, Fort Massachusetts. Visitor facilities including restrooms, picnic pavilions, a snack bar, beach equipment rentals, and tours of the historic fort are available between mid-March and October each year. A commercial ferry runs to West Ship Island during this same season, depending on weather conditions.

For more information about the West Ship Island ferry schedule and pricing, please visit www.msshipisland.com

Ferry to West Ship Island

1040 23rd Avenue

Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

From Ocean Springs follow U.S. Hwy. 90 to the west for 14 miles. Turn left onto 20th Avenue and then left onto Jones Park Drive.

Mississippi Islands

Cat, East Ship, Horn, West Petit Bois, and Petit Bois Islands are accessible by private boat only. You can find a list of licensed charter private boat operators for transportation to these islands on our website:

www.nps.gov/guis/boat-charters-in-mississippi.htm
Visit page five for information on how to visit Mississippi’s barrier islands.
Fort Barrancas Area

The Fort Barrancas Area preserves two historic forts built during the mid-1800s, as well as a Spanish battery built during the late 1700s. Start your visit at the area’s visitor center and then take a self-guiding or guided tour of the structures. There are also two trails if you’d like to take a short walk. Watch your step as you walk through the area, many surfaces are uneven and sandy. There is an entrance fee for the Fort Barrancas Area. See page 12 for information of park fees.

Fort Barrancas Visitor Center - On board the Pensacola Naval Air Station
(Visitors must use the West Gate - Photo ID required for all visitors.)
From I-10 take Exit 7A onto Pine Forest Road. Turn right onto Blue Angel Parkway and continue for 13 miles. After entering the Air Station, continue on Blue Angel Parkway toward the Naval Aviation Museum. Just past the museum entrance turn left onto Taylor Road. The entrance to Fort Barrancas will be on your right off Taylor Road.

Naval Live Oaks Area

The Naval Live Oaks Area preserves the oldest federal tree reserve. This area is great for picnicking, fishing, hiking, and more. Exhibits about the area are located inside Park Headquarters which is open to visitors Monday through Friday.

Park Headquarters
1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Gulf Breeze, Florida 32563
From I-10 East or West take Exit 12 toward Pensacola Beach. Continue on I-110 South for 5.5 miles and follow signs to Gulf Breeze/Gregory Street East. Continue onto U.S. Hwy. 98/Pensacola Bay Bridge. After reaching Gulf Breeze, stay on U.S. Hwy. 98 for 4.1 miles. Park Headquarters will be on your right.

Okaloosa Area

The Okaloosa Area features an excellent opportunity for swimming in the calm waters of Choctawhatchee Bay. There are restrooms and a boat launch in this area. Be sure to check weather and surf conditions before visiting. Visitors to this area must have a park pass or pay the entrance fee, there is also a fee to use the boat launch in this area, please see page 12 for more information regarding park fees.

Okaloosa Area

From downtown Pensacola, Florida follow U.S. 98 across the Pensacola Bay Bridge. After reaching Gulf Breeze, stay on U.S. 98 for 38.1 miles. The Okaloosa Day Use Area is just east of Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

Santa Rosa Area

The Santa Rosa Area features one of the most beautiful scenic drives along the Gulf of Mexico and some excellent beach access points. There are picnic pavilions and restrooms at Opal Beach within this area, see page 12 to learn how to reserve a pavilion for a special event or activity. Beach combing, fishing, picnicking, and swimming are the major highlights of this area. Be sure to check weather and surf conditions before visiting. Visitors to Opal Beach must have a park pass or pay the entrance fee. Camping is not permitted in this area of the park.

Opal Beach

To access Opal Beach and the Santa Rosa Area. From Interstate 10, take Exit 12 for I-110 South, exit 1B Gregory Street East, merge onto 30 E Chase Street, turn left onto Bayfront Parkway /Hwy 98 East, merge onto Hwy 399 to beaches, cross toll bridge ($1.00), continue as the road curves to the left through Pensacola Beach Area.
The Fort Pickens Area is located on the western end of Santa Rosa Island and preserves over a century of American coastal defensive structures. The Fort Pickens Museum offers fun interactive exhibits for all ages about the history of the site as well as its natural wonders. Take a hike on one of the many trails through the area, including the Florida National Scenic Trail. There’s a bookstore open year round at historic Fort Pickens and a snack bar open during the summer near the museum. Visit the incredible white-sand beaches and enjoy the blue-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico at one of the many beach access points. The Fort Pickens Campground is ideal for those looking to spend an extended vacation at the park.

Visitors can explore the historic fortifications with a ranger or with one of the self-guiding tour site bulletins. Check out our website or the bulletin boards posted throughout the area for ranger programs. There are opportunities throughout the year to learn about the area’s natural and cultural features with a ranger. Program schedules are posted monthly at the beginning of each month. Watch your step as you walk through the area, many surfaces are uneven and sandy. There is an entrance fee for the Fort Pickens Area. See page 12 for information of park fees and more information on the seashore’s campgrounds.

Historic Fort Pickens
1400 Fort Pickens Road, Pensacola, Florida 32561

From I-10 East or West take Exit 12 toward Pensacola Beach. Continue on I-110 South for 5.5 miles and follow signs to Gulf Breeze/Gregory Street East. Continue onto U.S. Hwy 98/Pensacola Bay Bridge for 4.6 miles. Use the right two lanes to turn right onto Pensacola Beach Road. After the toll both, turn right at the light onto Fort Pickens Road. Continue straight for 3.5 miles.

The Perdido Key Area is often called the hidden gem of Northwest Florida. In addition to spectacular beach access points, this area has several picnic pavilions and hiking opportunities. Be sure to check weather and surf conditions before visiting. There is an entrance fee for the Perdido Key Area, see page 12 for information of park fees.

Johnson Beach
Perdido Key Area is off Florida Route 292, southwest from Pensacola; turn east on Johnson Beach Road. When heading south on 292, just after going over the bridge, turn left onto Johnson Beach Road, where road curves to the right. When heading north on Florida Route 292, take a right turn onto Johnson Beach Road, as the road curves to the left, before you reach the bridge.
Ranger programs vary; below are a few of our regular programs. For the current schedule of programs visit our website www.nps.gov/guis/calendar.htm or call (850) 934-2600.

**Florida**

**Fort Pickens Area**

Fort Pickens: Garrison for Freedom*
Discover the importance of this coastal fortification and those who served here in American history.

- **Life on a Barrier Island**
  Learn more about what makes barrier islands special places to plants, animals, and people.

- **Totally Turtles!**
  Explore the challenges baby sea turtles face and ways that you can help protect them.

**Fort Barrancas Area**

Advanced Redoubt: Legacy of Brick & Mortar*
Explore the brick arches and whitewashed casemates of the Advanced Redoubt.

Fort Barrancas: Guardian of the Gulf*
Learn more about Fort Barrancas, the impressive brick structure with a commanding view of Pensacola Bay.

**Davis Bayou Area**

- **All About Amazing Alligators**
  Learn fun facts about these large armored reptiles, and maybe even get to see an alligator in the wild.

- **Bayou Nature Walk**
  Learn more about the importance of this area, and see some of the plants & animals that call it home.

- **The Live Oak Tree: A Naval Icon**
  Explore why the live oak tree was the United States’ answer to the need of strong ships of war.

**West Ship Island**

Programs are available on West Ship Island during the summer season, mid-March through October.

Fort Massachusetts: Silent Sentinel
Walk in the footsteps of engineers, workers, and soldiers of long ago within the echoing brick casemates.

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**For Your Safety:**

- The sun can be intense. Wear sunblock.
- Be mindful of uneven surfaces.
- Closed areas protect you and wildlife.
- Extreme weather possible.
- In Case of an Emergency Call 911.

**Important Park Regulations:**

- Glass not permitted on beaches.
- Birds are not permitted on beaches.
- Metal detectors are not permitted.
- Off road driving prohibited in all areas.
- Unmanned Aircraft are not permitted.

Learn more and get a complete list of park regulations on our website www.nps.gov/GulfIslands.
For Kids

Become a Junior Ranger at Gulf Islands National Seashore!

Investigate the Arrowhead

The arrowhead is the symbol of the National Park Service.

You will see this arrowhead in every National Park Service site you visit. It is found on park ranger uniforms, on signs, in visitor centers, and lots of other places.

Test your investigation skills!

Step 1. Find an arrowhead symbol in the park.

Step 2. Where did you find it?

Step 3. Look carefully at the arrowhead symbol. Every object in the arrowhead represents a feature protected within all National Park sites. Take a close look at the arrowhead and see if you can figure out the answers to the following questions.

1. The __________________________ represents all plants.

2. The __________________________ represents all animals.

3. The __________________________ represents land formations.

4. The __________________________ represents history.

Island Treasures

Circle the items you see on the island.

Continue your quest to become a Gulf Islands National Seashore Junior Ranger by picking up a Junior Ranger booklet at any of the park’s visitor centers.
Camping

The Fort Pickens Campground is located on Santa Rosa Island offering 180 campsites up to 50 feet in length. Each site has water and electric hookups. ($26 per night)

Amenities include flush toilets, showers, drinking water, and a dump station.

A group site is also available at the Fort Pickens Campground.

All sites can be reserved online at www.recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777.

The Davis Bayou Campground is located on the banks of the bayou and offers 51 campsites up to 45 feet in length. Each site has water and electric hookups. ($22 per night)

Amenities include flush toilets, showers, drinking water, and a dump station.

A group site is also available at the Davis Bayou Campground.

All sites can be reserved online at www.recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777.

Visitors may primitive camp in Mississippi at Petit Bois, West Petit Bois, Horn, and East Ship Islands, and the NPS portion of Cat Island.

Groups of ten or more must register regardless of where they are camping. All Perdido Key campers must register at the entrance station upon arrival.

All campers should review and comply with the primitive camping regulations posted on the park’s website at www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/primitive-camping.htm

Permits & Reservations

Special Use Permits

Special use permits are needed for activities not normally associated with visiting the national seashore.

Activities include but are not limited to:
- Weddings and sporting events
- Public assemblies and commercial filming
- Research and collection activities
- Scattering cremated remains

For more information on special use permits please call the Permits Office at (850) 934-2605.

Pavilion Reservations

Several pavilions throughout the national seashore may be reserved in advance by the public. Seven sites in the Florida areas and three at the Davis Bayou Area in Mississippi can be reserved.

Pavilion reservation permits cost $70. This includes a non-refundable administration fee of $50.

For more information on reserving a pavilion for your picnic activity, please call the Permits Office at (850) 934-2605

Waterfowl Hunting

Between September and February each year, in accordance with state and federal regulations, waterfowl hunting is permitted within the boundaries of the park.

Permits must be acquired prior to any hunting activities and collection reports must be returned to the park at the end of the season.

For more information on hunting permits in the national seashore please call the Permits Office at (850) 934-2605.

Fees & Passes

Seven Day Entrance Pass:
Covers the entrance fee for all areas of Gulf Islands National Seashore for 1 to 7 days.
Per Person $7
Per Motorcycle $10
Private Vehicle (less than 15 passenger capacity) $15
Per Person (private vehicle with more than 15 passenger capacity) $7 (limited to $25)

Park and Interagency Passes:
Gulf Islands National Seashore Annual Pass $30
Davis Bayou Boat Launch Annual Pass $20
America the Beautiful Annual Pass $80
America the Beautiful Senior Pass (US Citizens 62 years and older) $10
America the Beautiful Military Pass (Active Duty Military ID required) Free
America the Beautiful Access Pass (Restrictions apply) Free

Contact Us:

Phone:
Park Headquarters: (850) 934-2600
William M. Colmer VC (MS): (228) 230-4100
Campground Reservations: 1-877-444-6777

Email:
guis_information@nps.gov

Mail:
1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563

On The Web

Website: www.nps.gov/GulfIslands
Instagram: @GulfIslandsNPS
Facebook: /GulfIslandsNPS
YouTube: Subscribe to GulfIslandsNPS
Twitter: @GulfIslands_NPS

Fees collected at national parks are used by the National Park Service for improvement and maintenance of park facilities and programming. Park entrance fees are separate from camping or permit fees.

For more information on entrance, camping, and facilities fees please visit our website www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/fees.htm