Welcome to Gulf Islands National Seashore!

Welcome to Gulf Islands National Seashore! A visit to the country’s largest national seashore has something for everyone - building sand castles and sunbathing on sugar white beaches, camping out under the stars and watching eagles & osprey overhead by day, exploring forts with cannons, tunnels, and draw bridges. With all there is to see and do on land, visitors are often surprised to find that a majority of the park - over 80% - is marine, with park waters extending a mile into the Gulf of Mexico and into the quieter waters of the Santa Rosa and Mississippi sounds. Passengers aboard the West Ship Island ferry in Mississippi are often treated to pods of dolphins and diving pelicans. This year visitors will have a choice of departing from either Gulfport or Biloxi for their 11 mile voyage to the island. And for the very first time, in 2018 visitors will also be able to venture between Pensacola, Pensacola Beach, and Fort Pickens aboard ferry boats operated by a park concessioner. Park rangers will be aboard during the summer to point out wildlife and bring the rich history of Pensacola Bay to life. Be sure to ask the ranger about the only underwater fort (Fort McRee), a casualty of our ever-migrating barrier islands. Tickets will include “hop-on, hop-off” privileges so passengers can visit different destinations throughout the day. Park entrance fees are waived for ferry passengers, and free tram service will connect Fort Pickens and Langdon Beach. Relax, enjoy, explore!

Dan Brown
Superintendent

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

To learn about current volunteer opportunities visit www.nps.gov/guis/getinvolved/volunteer.htm

- Black Powder Demonstrations
- Campground Hosts
- Guided Programs
- Historic Preservation
- Librarian
- Living History Demonstrations
- Site Hosts
- Guest Services
- Staffing Visitor Facilities

To inquire about additional opportunities, group opportunities, or ask general questions; email guis_volunteers@nps.gov
<table>
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<th>Things to Do</th>
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<td><strong>Visitor Centers &amp; Discovery Center</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wildlife Viewing</strong></td>
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**Notes:**
- Please remember to leave what you find and take what you bring to the beach, including trash.
- 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.
- Always be prepared for inclement weather, including thunderstorms. Check weather reports before hiking in the park.
- Be mindful of surf conditions. 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.
- For wildlife viewing, use caution and do not disturb the wildlife.
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 discovery center 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 Naval Live Oaks Area and learn about the first federal tree farm.

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 Perdido Key, the Okaloosa Area, or the Mississippi Areas 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. 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.

Safety Reminders & Important Park Regulations

For Your Safety:

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

Important Park Regulations:

- Glass not permitted on beaches.
- Pets 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

Shorebird Closures

When walking on the beaches of the national seashore between February and September, be sure to keep a keen eye out for signs and posts marking shorebird nesting areas. These areas are closed to all visitor use, as nesting shorebirds are easily spooked leading to nest abandonment and death of young birds. If you come across a closure, be sure to keep your distance and find an alternate route around the closed area.

The national seashore provides nesting habitat for several species of ground nesting shorebirds including least terns, snowy plovers, Wilson's plovers, and black skimmers. Least terns come from as far away as Central and South America to raise their young on these beaches. Many shorebirds are listed by the states of Florida and Mississippi as threatened or endangered, and all are protected by state and federal laws.
The Davis Bayou Area is the only mainland area of the national seashore in Mississippi. The area offers incredible views of the bayou and the Mississippi Sound. The William M. Colmer Visitor Center offers many interactive exhibits about the bayou and the barrier islands for all ages. There are several hiking trails and picnic pavilions for visitors to enjoy while in the area.

Visitors can explore the bayou with a ranger on foot or by boat during the summer season. Visit 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 at the visitor center and campground.

For visitors interested in staying at the park overnight, the Davis Bayou Campground offers several sites for recreational vehicles and tent camping. In addition to the campground, there is also a boat launch in the Davis Bayou Area. See page 10 for more information on the seashore’s campgrounds and facility fees.

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

For ferry schedule and pricing, please visit www.msshipisland.com

Ferry to West Ship Island
1040 23rd Avenue
Gulfport, Mississippi 39501
From Ocean Springs follow Hwy. 90 to the west for 14 miles. Turn left onto 20th Avenue and then left onto Jones Park Drive.

195 Beach Boulevard
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530
From Ocean Springs follow Hwy. 90 to the west for 3 miles. The parking is on the left.

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/getinvolved/cua_holders.htm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miles</th>
<th>Fort Pickens Area</th>
<th>Fort Barrancas Area</th>
<th>Santa Rosa Day Use Area</th>
<th>Okaloosa Day Use Area</th>
<th>Perdido Key Area</th>
<th>Naval Live Oaks Area</th>
<th>Davis Bayou Area</th>
<th>Fort Massachusetts Ferry</th>
<th>Mississippi Islands</th>
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<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Visit page five for information on how to visit Mississippi’s barrier islands.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fort Massachusetts Ferry</td>
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<td>137</td>
<td>139</td>
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**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.)

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. Picnicking and swimming are the major highlights of 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.
Fort Pickens 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 Discovery Center 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. 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 booth, turn right at the light onto Fort Pickens Road. Continue straight for 3.5 miles.

Perdido Key Area

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.
Developed Campgrounds

All reservations for developed campgrounds must be made by visiting www.recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777.

**Fort Pickens Campground**

Situated on Santa Rosa Island, visitors enjoy the seashore for its great recreational activities, historic sites and unique white sand beaches. The campground is located on a barrier island between the Gulf of Mexico and Pensacola Bay. Groves of live oak trees are scattered across the island, providing shelter for resident and migrating bird populations, as well as shade for park visitors.

**Facilities:**
This large campground is open for reservations year-round. It contains 180 family sites with electric and water hookups. A group site with water hookup is also available. Amenities include flush toilets, showers, drinking water and a dump station. There are no boat ramps in the Fort Pickens area.

**Know Before You Go:**
- Gates close at 6:00 p.m. during the winter and 8:00 p.m. during the summer; non-registered campers must arrive prior to closing.
- Gulf Islands National Seashore charges an entrance fee; see the back page for details.
- Loops A, C, & E permit two tents or one tent and one RV (motorhome/pop-up/trailer).
- Loops B & D permit up to two tents only.
- All sites allow a maximum of eight occupants and two vehicles per site.
- Hot tubs and other non-camping equipment is not allowed.
- Campers can stay a maximum of 14 nights from March 1 through Labor Day. Campers are limited to 42 nights in a calendar year.
- No tree hammocks allowed; only free standing hammocks.

**Davis Bayou Campground**

Located east of downtown Ocean Springs, Mississippi, visitors enjoy the campground for its easy access to boating, fishing, biking and hiking trails. The campground is nestled among live oaks and pine trees and is adjacent to a saltwater marsh. Most campsites offer some shade throughout the day and all offer a tranquil setting for migratory bird watching and picnicking.

**Facilities:**
This small, yet quaint, campground is open for reservations year-round. It contains 52 sites with electric and water hookups. Sites can accommodate tents and RVs, big or small. The majority of the sites are 40+ feet in length.

**Know Before You Go:**
Between the busy season of January 1 through March 31, campers may stay a maximum of 14 consecutive days. Between April 1 through December 31, campers may stay a maximum of 28 days total, in two 14 day increments. Campers are limited to 42 nights in a calendar year.

- All sites permit two tents in addition to one RV (motorhome/fifth-wheel/pop-up trailer).
- All sites allow a maximum of eight occupants and two vehicles per site.
- Generators are not permitted at any time in the campground.
- The operating hours for the Davis Bayou Campground are from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Check-in/Registrations is located within the William M. Colmer Visitor Center.

**Backcountry Camping**

Boat-In Backcountry camping is open in Florida at Perdido Key and in Mississippi at Petit Bois, West Petit Bois, Horn, and East Ship Islands, as well as the NPS portion of Cat Island. All campers must review and comply with the primitive camping regulations posted on the park’s website at www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/backcountrycamping.htm.

**Ranger Programs**

Guided ranger programs offer one of the best ways to explore the cultural and natural stories of the national seashore. Programs are offered year-round at Fort Pickens, Fort Barrancas, and Davis Bayou Areas. Seasonally, programs are also available at West Ship Islands and the Naval Live Oaks Area.

For the current schedule of programs visit our website www.nps.gov/guis/calendar.htm.
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.

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.
Entrance fees are charged for most of the Florida areas of the national seashore. 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

Fees & Passes

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<th>Entrance Fee (Valid for 1-7 Days)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Private Vehicle</td>
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<td>Motorcycle</td>
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<td>Pedestrians &amp; Bicyclists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interagency Access Pass</td>
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Commercial tours and educational institutions may also find fee information on the park’s website.

Permits & Reservations

Special Use Permits

A special park use is a short-term activity that takes place in a park area and typically provides a benefit to an individual, group or organization, or a First Amendment cause, rather than the public at large. The National Park Service may permit a special park use providing the activity will not cause derogation of the park’s resources or values, visitor experiences, or the purpose for which the park was established. Primarily reviews focus on any potential damage to natural or cultural resources and anticipated disruption of normal public use.

Activities include but are not limited to:
- Weddings
- Sporting events, races, & festivals
- Public assemblies and commercial filming
- Research and collection activities
- Scattering cremated remains

For more information on special use permits please visit: www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/permits.htm

Commercial activities may also be permitted, through Commercial Use Authorizations. Learn more at: www.nps.gov/guis/getinvolved/business

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 $100. This fee is non-refundable.

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 designated areas 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 visit: www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/waterfowl-hunting-regulations.htm

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

Website:
www.nps.gov/GulfIslands

Instagram: @GulfIslandsNPS

Facebook: /GulfIslandsNPS

YouTube: Subscribe to GulfIslandsNPS

Twitter: @GulfIslandsNPS