



Gulf Islands Guide



Monarch butterflies arrive in Oct.-Nov. feeding on Goldenrod nectar on their migration south.

Florida District

Spend a day or week exploring nature and history on island and mainland sites. Hike the gulf beaches or the trails under the majestic trees at Naval Live Oaks. Historic Fort Pickens and Fort Barrancas offer tours daily or join a ranger on the programs listed inside.

For many reasons visitors think that the fall and winter are the best times to visit Gulf Islands National Seashore. The weather is cooler and in fall the Gulf of Mexico is clearer. Fall wildflowers bloom and migrating birds visit the islands before flying to Central and South America. The subtle seasons of fall and winter along the northern Gulf coast are the best times to visit the park. Here are a few tips to start you on your journey.



Louisiana Native Guard at Fort Massachusetts, Ship Island, MS.



Hawks, like this Kestrel, migrate through on their way to Central and South America.

Mississippi District

The ferry to West Ship Island operates Sept.-Oct. with tours of Ft. Massachusetts daily. At Davis Bayou, there is camping, fishing, cycling, or hiking. Step into the visitor center for ranger programs or a film that provides an overview of the park.

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International Visitors

Bienvenidos a Islas del Golfo Nacional.
Folletos disponibles en Centro Visitantes.

Willkommen zu den Gulf Inseln Nationale Kustenzand schafft umsetzung in Deutsch.
In den Besuch's Center.

Le Parc national de Gulf Islands renferme de nombreux habitats. Un renseignement en francais sont disponibles aux centres des visiteurs dans le parc.

Park Information

FL 850-934-2600
MS 228-875-0074
www.nps.gov/guis

EMERGENCY
DIAL 911
or Cell *55

Welcome to Gulf Islands National Seashore! The Seashore offers numerous recreational opportunities including camping, swimming, fishing, picnicking, and hiking. Educational programs for all age groups are offered throughout the year. Make your visit a safe one by following posted safety warnings. If you observe unsafe conditions, please report them to a park ranger. This is your park - help us to make it even better.

Jerry Eubanks
Superintendent



Winter sandman at Gulf Islands.

Fall/Winter Visitor Information

Visitor Centers

Florida

Naval Live Oaks Visitor Center

(850) 934-2600

Open daily . . . 8:00 am to 5:30 pm

Fort Pickens Visitor Center

(850) 934-2635

Open daily . . . March-Oct. 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Nov.-Feb. 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

Fort Barrancas Visitor Center

(850) 455-5167

Open daily . . . March-Oct. 9:30 am to 4:45 pm

Nov.-Feb. 8:30 am to 3:45 pm

Mississippi

William M. Colmer Visitor Center

(228) 875-0074

Open daily . . . Sept.-Oct. 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Nov.-Feb. 8:00 am to 4:30 pm



All Visitor Centers will be closed Christmas Day.

Entrance Fees

Single Vehicle Pass \$8.00

Valid for 7 days.

Single Person Entry \$3.00

Foot, bicycle, motorcycle for 7 days.

Gulf Islands Park Pass \$25.00

Valid 1 year from month of purchase

National Parks Pass \$50.00

Valid 1 year from month of purchase

Night Owl Permit \$30.00

Extends hour-of-access for single private vehicle.

Requires an annual pass bearing a matching signature to the permit (limit 2 signatures.)

Commercial Vehicles:

Vans and Minibuses

(7-25) passengers) \$40.00

Motor Coaches

(26+ passengers) \$100.00

Golden Age, Golden Access, Golden Eagle Pass-

ports are also valid. The National Parks Pass may be

upgraded to Golden Eagle for \$15.00.

Pets

Pets must not be left unattended in vehicles on warm days. Pets are permitted in the campgrounds, along roads, in parking areas, and must be on a leash of 6 feet or less. They are not allowed on the beaches or in historic structures. Pet owners are required to pick up after their pets and dispose of waste properly.

Hiking

Some of the most beautiful barrier island beaches and maritime forests await those who are willing to take a stroll. The park boasts numerous trails that provide opportunities from a short ten minute stroll to several weeks of foot travel. Trail maps are available at the park visitor centers.

Self-guided interpretive trails encourage hikers to experience Gulf Islands at their own pace: Mississippi Nature's Way Trail; Florida-Dune, Blackbird Marsh, Woodland, Naval Live Oaks, and the Perdido Key Discovery Trails. The Dune and Perdido Key Discovery Trails are wheelchair accessible.

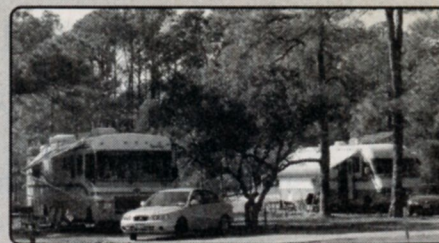


NW Florida Trail Association and Rangers celebrate a hiker beginning the 1300 mile long trail.

Camping



The Fort Pickens Campground in Florida operates primarily on a reservation system although sites may be available on a first-served basis if all sites have not been reserved for the day. To reserve a site call Spherics, Inc. at **1-800-365-2267** (enter first 3 letters of the park "GUL") or on the internet at <http://reservations.nps.gov>



Camping at Fort Pickens.

Florida - Fort Pickens Campground

\$20.00 per night - 200 sites
(\$10.00 with Golden Age or Golden Access Pass)

Mississippi - Davis Bayou Campground

\$16.00 per night (electric)
(\$8.00 with Golden Age or Golden Access Pass)
\$14.00 per night (nonelectric)
(\$7.00 with Golden Age or Golden Access Pass)

Primitive Camping

In Mississippi, primitive camping is permitted on Horn, Petit Bois, and East Ship islands. Call (228) 875-0821. In Florida, primitive camping is permitted on Perdido Key. A free permit is required. Call (850) 492-7278.

Group Camping

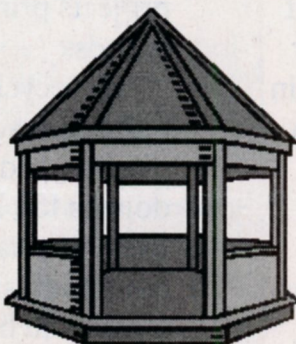
10-25 people: \$20 per night	Fort Pickens
26-40 people: \$30 per night	(800) 365-2267
Naval Live Oaks (Youth groups only)	Davis Bayou, MS
(850) 934-2622	(228) 875-3962

Pavilion Reservations

The following pavilions may be reserved for exclusive use: Groups over 100 persons or the use of special equipment such as generators, music systems, public address systems and rides require a special use permit.

Mississippi (220) 875-3962

- Davis Bayou Pavilion #1
 - Davis Bayou Pavilion #2
 - Davis Bayou Pavilion #3
- 1-99 persons: \$25
100 plus people \$100



Florida (850) 934-2622

Naval Live Oaks Group Area Pavilion \$50

Call Spherics (800) 365-2267 for:

Fort Pickens:

- Battery Langdon (sound side) \$30
- Battery Worth (A or B) \$30

Perdido Key

- East Pavilion (A or B) \$30

Santa Rosa

- Opal Beach (A or B) \$30



Biking with your friends is one of the best ways to see the park.

Bicycling

Florida law requires riders aged 16 or younger to wear a helmet. Bicycles are allowed on roadways and multi-use paths. They are not allowed on nature trails, except for the Ft. Pickens bike trail. Observe all traffic regulations. Keep to the right side of the road and ride in single file.

Fires and Firewood

Campfires are permitted in the provided grills of the campgrounds and picnic areas. Dead wood which already fallen to the ground may be collected for campfires in Davis Bayou campground, Fort Pickens campground, and Naval Live Oaks Group Use area.

Accessibility

Beach wheelchairs are available in Florida: Fort Pickens Area - Langdon Beach and the Perdido Key Area. For reservations call (850) 934-2635. In Mississippi, check in at the Concessioner on Ship Island, Sept.-Oct.



Living on a Small Planet

Gulf Islands National Seashore is working toward a goal of reducing the trash stream generated by the park that goes into landfills. It is part of a national drive by the National Park Service and other government agencies to reduce reuse and recycle. The planet is not getting any larger and there are twice as many people on it as there were forty years ago. With everyone's help the Reduce Reuse and Recycle program saves money and makes the planet a better place.

This means not just reducing the number of trashcans. It involves getting everyone in the habit of using reusable containers instead of wasting lots of paper and plastic for simple convenience. Gulf Islands is using recycled office paper, paper towels, and toilet paper. The parking stops in our lots and the asphalt in our road contain recycled tires. Wherever feasible, we are replacing wooden boardwalks with boards made of recycled plastic. We are replacing incandescent light bulbs with longer lasting compact fluorescent bulbs. When the new carpenter shop was built at Fort Pickens, all



Recycling bins are located in the campgrounds.

the metal from the old shop was recycled. The old air conditioner was replaced with a geothermal unit that uses less energy and has twice the life of the old units. We have solar projects providing power on our Mississippi islands.

We recycle paper, aluminum, fluorescent bulbs, ni-cad batteries, toner cartridges, plastics, and even old computers. We are doing a lot, but we need to do more. Everyone has a part to do. It will take some minor adjustments in our habits, but the planet will be a better place.

Battery Cooper Lives Again

In what has become an annual event, members of the Army Ground Forces Association will breathe life into the musty concrete of Battery Cooper this year on Saturday, October 12. For one day only, this group of dedicated Coast Artillery experts will demonstrate historic tools and techniques used by the

13th Coast Artillery Regiment at Fort Pickens during World War II. Using actual uniforms, weapons, and rare optical and communications equipment, these volunteers will share their knowledge of the vital role of the Coast Artillery in the defense of Pensacola Bay.

The Army Ground Forces Association will open Battery Cooper from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with programs given at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. This is an opportunity to see rare examples of the specialized equipment used by the Coast Artillery and to quiz some of the experts that park rangers turn to for help in understanding this important part of our heritage.



Shawn Welch and Andy Bennett at Battery Worth in 2001.



Winter Safety Tips

Keep pets on a 6 foot leash. Pets are not allowed on West Ship Island designated swim beach, Florida beaches, forts, or picnic areas.

Do not swim at dawn, dusk, or in murky conditions. These times are prime feeding times for sharks.

Do not swim in hazardous surf conditions.

Forts were not designed for comfort or safety. Please use caution when exploring them.

Many plants and animals have defenses you do not want to discover, and some are poisonous.

Admire plants and animals at a distance. Stay on open beaches and marked trails.

Obey the speed limits.

Do not leave anything valuable in your car.

Glass containers are not allowed on the beach.

Naturalist Field Notes

November

- *Hawks migrating through.*
- *Monarch butterflies arriving with cold fronts feeding on Goldenrod nectar on their migration south.*
- *Woody goldenrod, balduina, golden aster blooming.*

December

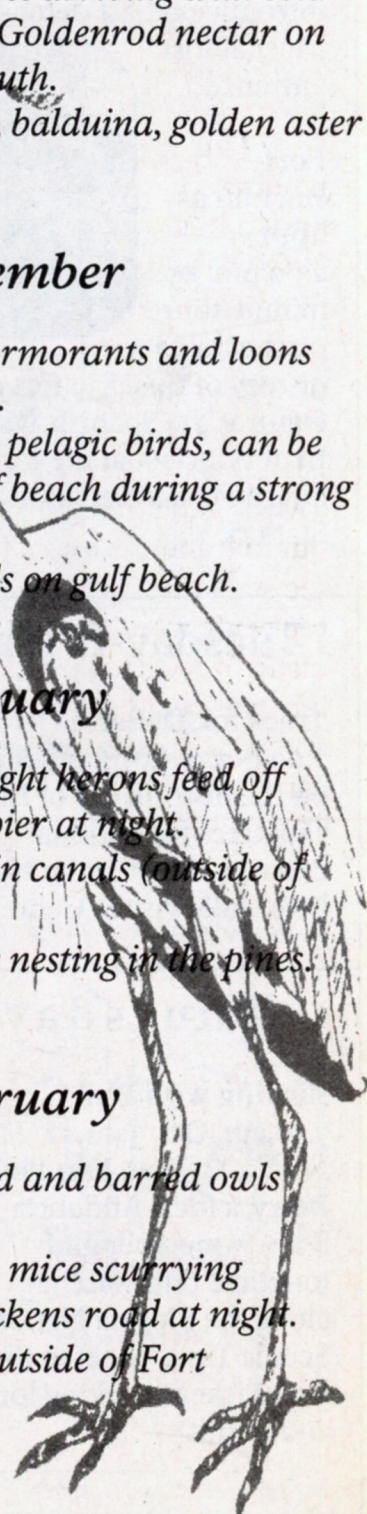
- *Double-crested cormorants and loons feeding in the bay.*
- *Gannets, offshore pelagic birds, can be seen from the gulf beach during a strong norther.*
- *Large herring gulls on gulf beach.*

January

- *Black-crowned night herons feed off the Fort Pickens pier at night.*
- *Least grebes feed in canals (outside of Fort Pickens.)*
- *Great blue herons nesting in the pines.*

February

- *Baby great horned and barred owls fledging.*
- *Santa Rosa beach mice scurrying across the Fort Pickens road at night.*
- *Soras in canals (outside of Fort Pickens.)*



Florida, Ranger-Led Programs

Sept. 1 - Feb. 28

Everyday

Fort Pickens Tour

2:00 pm. 45 minute walk introduces coast defense. Meet at fort entrance.



Fort Barrancas Tour

2:00 pm. 45 minute tour on the military history of this 1839 fort and features the Spanish Water Battery. Meet at the fort on board Pensacola Naval Air Station.

Saturday

Advanced Redoubt

11:00 am. 45 minute walk. Located onboard Pensacola Naval Air Station.

Island Treasures

10:00 am.
Sept. 7, 14, 28
Discover what washes in from the gulf. Meet at Langdon Beach pavilion, gulf side. 30 minutes.

Barrier Island Walk

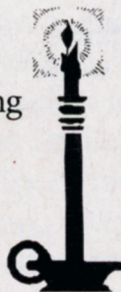
10:00 am.
Oct. 5, through Feb. 22
Discover the island's plants and animals. Meet at the Dune Nature Trail. 1 hour.

Sea Turtles

8:00 pm. Sept. 7, 14, & 28.
Battery Worth Amphitheater. Follow a sea turtle in this video, plus satellite turtle tracking. Bug spray recommended. Flashlight optional. 45 min.

Candlelight Tour of Fort Pickens

7:00 pm.
Oct. 5, 19, & 26.
Enjoy stories from the past in an evening setting. Meet at the entrance to Ft. Pickens. Flashlights optional. Bug spray recommended. 1 hour.



Special Events

International Coastal Cleanup

Saturday, Sept. 21, 8:00 am - 12. Volunteers join a global effort to clean the seashore. Call Ft. Pickens Visitor Center (850) 934-2635.



13th Coast Artillery Open House at Battery Cooper

Saturday, Oct. 12, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Tours at 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, & 3:00 pm.

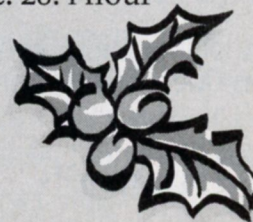
Full Moon Walks

7:00 pm, Friday, Sept. 20
Monday, Oct. 21, and
Wed., Nov. 20.
Join a Ranger for an hour of facts and folklore about our closest celestial neighbor. Meet at Langdon Beach pavilion, gulf side.



Holiday Candlelight Tours of Fort Pickens

7:00 pm, Nov. 30 and Dec. 28. 1 hour



Junior Ranger Day Camp

9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Friday, Dec. 27. Children ages 6 to 11. Call 934-2635 for reservations.

Tuesday-Friday

Trees for Defense

2:00 pm. A 30-minute talk on the historic use of Live Oak trees for national defense. Meet at the Naval Live Oaks Visitor Center.

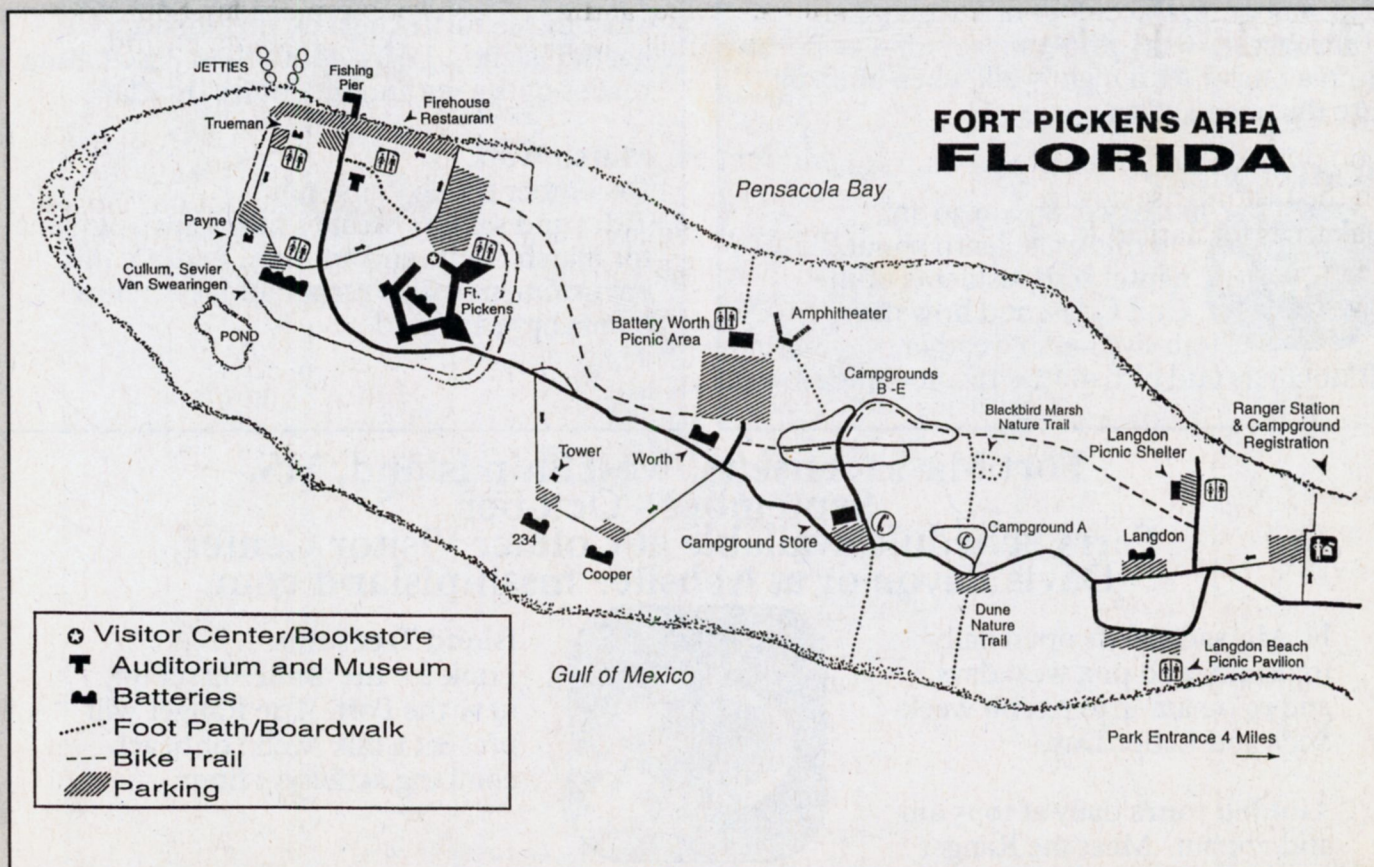
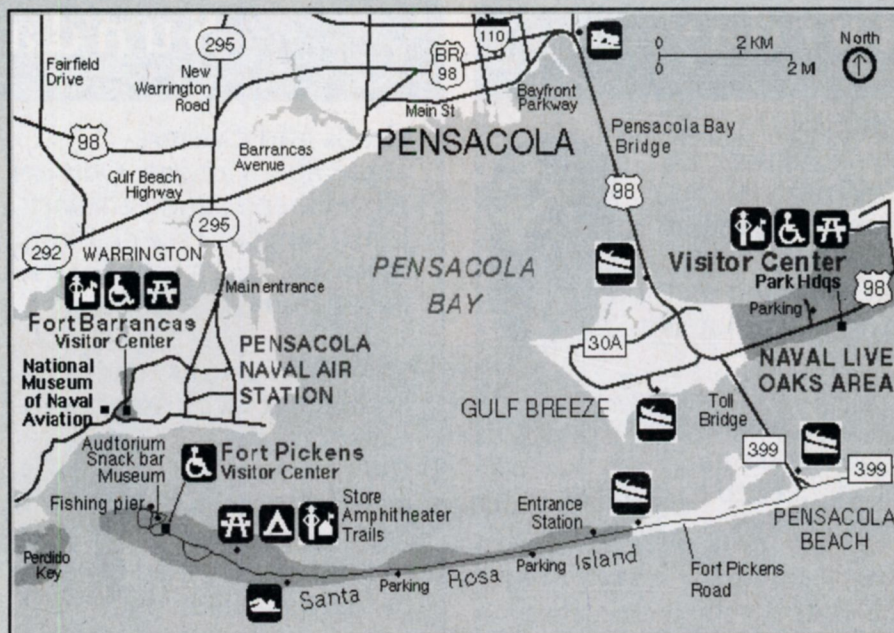
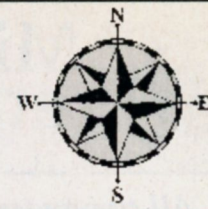
Thursday

Birding with Phil

7:30 am. Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, Nov. 7, 14, & 21. Join Phil Berry, a local Audubon Society member and longtime bird watcher, along the Florida National Scenic Trail. Meet in the Fort Pickens parking lot. 1-2 hours.



Florida District Maps



Mississippi, Ranger-Led Programs

Sept. 1 - Feb. 28

All programs meet at the William M. Colmer Visitor Center in Davis Bayou.

Saturday

Wonders of a Night Sky

September 7, 8:00 - 9:00 pm

October 5, 7:00-8:00 pm

November 2, December 7, January 4,

February 1, 6:00-7:00 pm.

Join a ranger for presentation on the night skies followed by outdoor sky viewing.



International Coastal Clean Up

September 14, 8:00 am-1:00 pm.

Groups with boats are needed to clean up sections of beaches and bayous. Call (228) 875-0074.

Night Walk,

September 21, 8:00 - 9:00 pm

October 19, 7:00-8:00 pm

November 16, December 14, January 18,

February 15, 6:00-7:00 pm.

Join a ranger for a night walk when animals are the most active.

Birds of Winter

January 11, 8:30-9:30 am.

On this walk, learn about the winter bird residents of the Gulf Coast and how they survive harsh weather.

Binoculars and bird guides recommended.



Sunday

Crabs and Critters

September 1 and 29, October 27,

November 24 and February 23, 2:00-3:00 pm

Join a ranger to see crabs and other critters up close. Learn how they adapted to their bayou homes.

Island Treasures

September 15, November 10, January 26,

2:00-3:00 pm

Ever wonder what those objects are that float ashore onto the beaches? Learn to identify what is found. Bring your own island treasures to share and identify.



Greens, Loggerheads, Kemp's and More

October 13 and February 9, 2:00 - 3:00 pm

Various sea turtles nest on the offshore barrier islands. Learn about these fascinating turtles of the sea and the future they face.

Marsh Walk

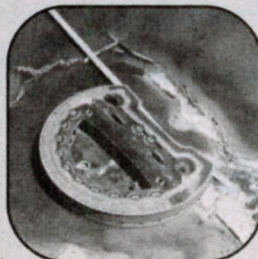
December 1, 2:00 - 3:00 pm

Tides and salinity create a harsh environment for marsh plants and animals. Explore this environment with a ranger and learn how plants have adapted.

Fort Massachusetts, West Ship Island, MS.
September - October
Ferry schedule available at Colmer Visitor Center,
Davis Bayou or at website: msshipisland.com

Ft. Massachusetts open daily
 10:00 am-2:00 pm, weekdays,
 and 10:00 am-4:30 pm on week-
 ends and Labor Day.

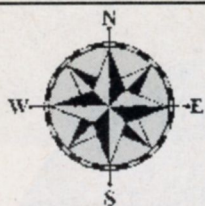
Guided tours daily at 10:15 am
and 1:15 pm. Meet the Ranger
inside the fort.



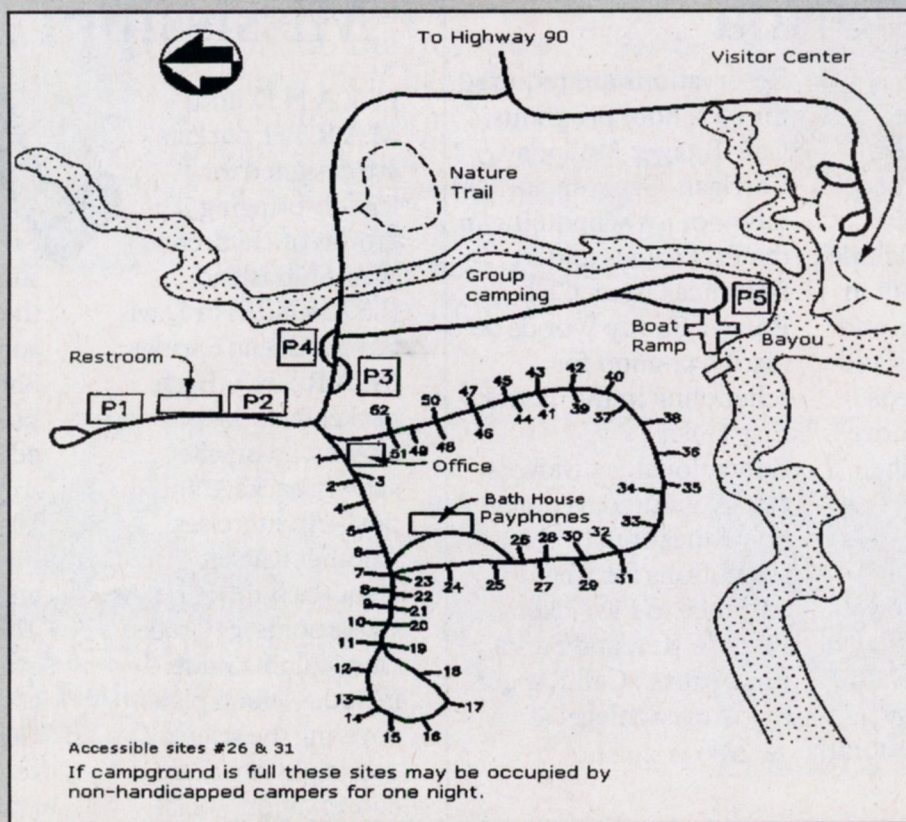
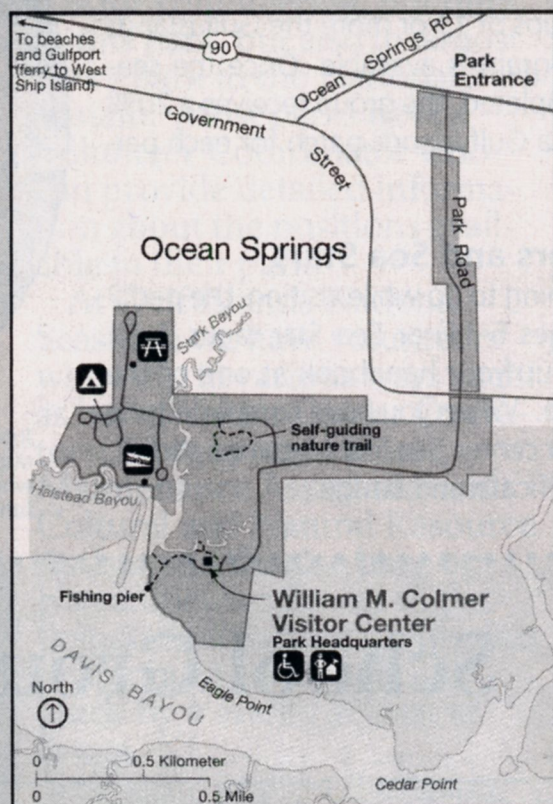
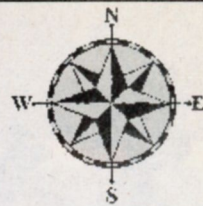
Fort Massachusetts,
Ship Island, MS.

Island Treasures

Look for the umbrella set up near the Fort. The Ranger will present a talk, walk, or beach-combing activity. 1 hour.



Mississippi District Maps





Kid's Programs

Seashore Patch Program

For organized children's groups of 11 or more the Gulf Islands National Seashore Patch Program is available. Once the seashore patch handbook is completed, the group receives a 20% discount on the purchase of a Gulf Islands patch for each participant.

Junior Rangers and Sea Stars

Hi Kids! Looking for something to do while visiting the park? Become a Junior Ranger (ages 6-11) or Sea Star (ages 3-5). It's easy, fun and free! Pick up your handbook at one of the visitor centers in the Seashore. When you have completed the handbook, return it to a visitor center. Sea Stars receive a sticker; Junior Rangers receive a certificate and badge.



Junior Rangers at Fort Pickens with shirts displaying the many National Parks where they have participated in the Junior Ranger program.



School Groups



Florida

Curriculum-based programs are offered October, November, March and April for students third-fifth grade. Programs include a Barrier Island Walk in the Ft. Pickens Area and tours of Ft. Pickens and Ft. Barrancas. Videos "Discover the Seashore" and "Pensacola in the Civil War" and traveling trunks "Coastal Critters" and "Seafaring Sailor" are also available. Naval Live Oaks features the movies "The Lorax" and "Creatures of the Deep" for kindergarten- second grade.

Reservations are required for all school programs. Call Ranger Amanda Carrigan-Grissom at (850) 916-3001 for scheduling in the Ft. Pickens and Ft. Barrancas Area. Call Ranger Buddy Woods at (850) 934-2600 for scheduling in the Naval Live Oaks. Educational fee waivers can be granted to bona-fide educational institutions for free entrance to Ft. Pickens, Perdido Key, and Santa Rosa Areas. Call Ranger Christine Schlegel at (850) 934-2624.

Mississippi

I.S.L.A.N.D. and M.A.R.S.H. packets are designed for leaders bringing groups of children to West Ship Island (I.S.L.A.N.D.) or Davis Bayou, Ocean Springs (M.A.R.S.H.). Each packet includes pre-trip lessons, an on-site activity package and post-trip exercises. Another teacher's resource is the Parks As Classrooms 4th Grade Curriculum Guide. It includes lesson plans covering the science, geography, weather, conservation, social

studies and history of the park and surrounding area. The Ship Island Teacher's packet is designed for educators planning trips to West Ship Island. It includes information on safety, and island activities. These materials are available free of charge at the Colmer Visitor Center or can be requested by calling (228) 875-9057.

Volunteers in Parks



There are many opportunities for volunteering, not only in this park, but also in almost every park in the National Park System. Most parks have a Volunteer Coordinator who can provide detailed information about the positions available in their park.

At Gulf Islands National Seashore we have volunteers who help in various ways such as being Visitor Center Operators; Campground Hosts; Maintenance Assistants; and Cultural and Natural Resource Assistants. We also have opportunities for Scouts to participate in a Service to America project and earn a special patch by working at least 12 hours.

For more information about volunteering at Gulf Islands write to the Volunteer Coordinator, Gulf Islands National Seashore, 1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway, Gulf Breeze, FL 32563 or send an e-mail message to dick_zani@nps.gov. You can also get information about volunteering in national parks on the Internet.



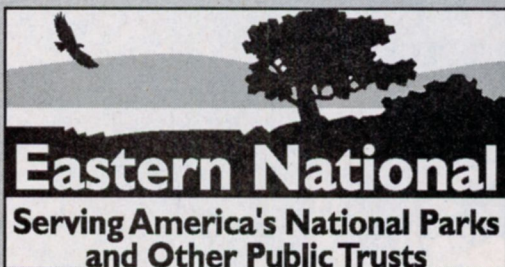
Volunteers from across the nation help with the Park's Holiday program.



Florida District VIP,
Mary Kidwell.



Florida District VIP's,
the Lee's.



Eastern National provides quality educational products and services in six areas of Gulf Islands National Seashore.



Enter the water feet first.

Green Flag: Calm water. No high surf or strong currents.

Yellow Flag: High surf and possible currents. Use caution when entering the water.

Red Flag: Dangerous surf and strong currents. Swimming is not advised.

Safety in the Water
Observe the warning flags.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Gulf Islands National Seashore
1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Gulf Breeze, Florida 32563-5000



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gulf Islands National Seashore
Park Superintendent
1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563-5000

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Editor
Beckie Breeding-Mims
Park Ranger

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



Sea Oats hold the island sand in place. Perdido Key, FL