

# Gulf Islands National Seashore


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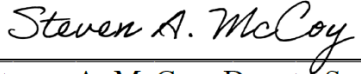
Prepared by


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Interpretive Planning

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## **About Interpretive Planning**

Planning is organized decision-making. Gulf Islands National Seashore (GUIS) staff and partners work in collaboration to determine direction, think through parameters and mutually agreed-upon criteria, and use data to make informed, strategic, and realistic decisions about future actions. The goal of visitor experience planning is to make decisions and set priorities that help to strategically apportion limited NPS resources to their best advantage to do the most good in service to a park's resources and the public.

A good interpretive plan has focus, provides direction, and reflects informed choices to move an organization forward. Good plans don't overwhelm or promise to do too many things. Good plans also experiment and stretch organizations and challenge their individual members to experiment to meet current and future audience needs and expectations.

Interpretation planning is built on data, regular reviews and analysis, and annual adjustments to the action plan. With attention to annual reviews and incremental adjustments, large-scale, "one-and-done" planning efforts become less necessary, and incremental iterative planning becomes more effective, tailored, flexible, and responsive to current audiences, needs, and circumstances. These shorter cycles have the added benefit of better matching the strategic planning cycles of partners and philanthropies.

## **The Measure of a Good Plan**

A primary measure of a good plan is one that is implemented; where actions are systematically accomplished and periodically examined for relevance and adjusted accordingly. A plan that looks pretty but isn't used to guide an organization isn't a real plan. Another measure of success for a planning process is at the end, participants should feel in control (not overwhelmed), confident, connected, and energized. There should be a clear understanding of common direction. Stronger personal and professional relationships, shared responsibilities, and a realistic perspective that looks forward to the challenges will grow and stretch both organizations and individuals.

## **The Planning Process**

The collaborative process used in planning helps to establish common understanding, direction, and priorities for Seashore staff and partners. Planning helps position a national park service unit to be the strongest park it can be, given its strengths, niche, and capacity. It doesn't try to make a park into something that can never realistically be achieved or attempt to recreate how a park may have functioned in the past. A good plan balances aspiration with the will and capacity to carry out the actions.

This plan was built on the Seashore's Foundation Document and other plans and follows National Park Service (NPS) requirements for interpretation planning in [Director's Order #6](#). To develop this plan GUIS staff attended workshops including the foundation workshop on March 14, 2019, recommendations workshop on August 7-8, 2019, and an Implementation Strategy meeting on November 8, 2019. Appendix A includes a listing of all workshop participants.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>About Interpretive Planning</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Foundation for Planning</b>	<b>4</b>
Brief Description	4
Statements of Significance	5
Fundamental Resources and Values	5
Interpretive Themes	7
Essential Questions	8
Challenges and Opportunities Affecting Interpretation	11
<b>Vision for the Future of Gulf Islands National Seashore</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>13</b>
Goals for Interpretation and Education	14
Future Visitor Experiences	15
Implementation Plan	20
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>24</b>
Appendix A: The Planning Team	24
Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines	25
Appendix C: Desired Visitor Experiences	26
Appendix D: Audiences	27
Appendix E: Existing Conditions	31
Appendix F: Education Standards and School District Goals	40
Appendix G: Implementation Chart	44

## **Foundation for Planning**

### Brief Description

Gulf Islands National Seashore (GUIS) was established by the U.S. Congress on January 8, 1971. The national seashore encompasses barrier islands, coastal mainland, and surrounding waters in Mississippi and Florida and extends for 160 miles from Cat Island in Mississippi to the eastern end of Santa Rosa Island in the northwest section of Florida's panhandle. The national seashore was set aside for the purpose of preserving areas possessing outstanding natural, historic, and recreational values for public use and enjoyment. The current authorized acreage of the national seashore is 139,175 acres. Annual average visitation is over 8 million visitors.

The resources of the seashore range from remote wilderness islands with few visitors to publicly accessible white sand beaches and historic sites visited by several million people each year. It also includes bayous, salt marshes, live oaks, maritime forests, and 120,000 acres of marine habitat. The natural environment provides support for complex plant and animal communities, both terrestrial and aquatic, that characterize the northern Gulf Coast. More than 80% of Gulf Islands National Seashore is marine habitat and open water. Hurricanes, tropical storms, sea level rise, climate change, and natural sand transport caused by oceanic currents, water density differences, tides, and winds are important drivers of change at the national seashore. Both Horn and Petit Bois Islands in Mississippi are federally designated wilderness areas.

Gulf Islands National Seashore contains a number of 19th century forts built as part of the "Third System" of national defense. Construction of Fort Pickens, the largest, was initiated in 1829 and completed in 1834. Two forts on the mainland, Fort Barrancas and Advanced Redoubt, are on Naval Air Station Pensacola. Fort Barrancas includes the 18th century Spanish Bateria de San Antonio, a national historic landmark. Other Third System forts include Fort McRee in Florida, which is now an archeological site, and Fort Massachusetts in Mississippi on the northwestern shore of Ship Island. These forts were built as part of a fortification effort to protect all major U.S. harbors after the War of 1812. Many of the extant cultural resources on Santa Rosa Island were part of the 13th Coast Artillery Regiment of the U.S. Army Coast Artillery Corps. In addition to the coastal defense forts, numerous artillery batteries can be found that span the time from the Civil War to the end of World War II.

*2016 Foundation Document*

### Purpose

Gulf Islands National Seashore preserves and interprets an interconnected system of coastal defense fortifications, barrier islands, wilderness, and coastal and marine ecosystems in Mississippi and northwest Florida, while providing for public use and enjoyment.

*2016 Foundation Document*

## Statements of Significance

Significance statements are important for identifying resource management and interpretation priorities, and in defining the kinds of visitor experiences most appropriate for Gulf Islands National Seashore. (Please note that the sequence of the statements does not reflect the level of significance.)

1. Gulf Islands National Seashore possesses dynamic beach ecosystems, a diversity of wildlife, and scenic character that are publicly accessible and provide a striking contrast to the surrounding urban development of the northern Gulf Coast.
2. Gulf Islands National Seashore exhibits the natural biologic and geologic processes of the dynamic and rapidly changing barrier islands, which are interconnected along 160 miles of the northern Gulf Coast.
3. Horn and Petit Bois Islands, the only nationally designated barrier island wilderness areas on the Gulf Coast protected by the National Park Service, provide opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation.
4. Gulf Islands National Seashore contains one of the most complete collections of forts and structures relating to the evolution of seacoast defense in the United States. Publicly accessible sites represent a continuum of development from the Spanish colonization of the 18th century through World War II.
5. Gulf Islands National Seashore contains more than 120,000 acres of submerged land and open water, protects marine processes and ecosystems, and provides opportunities for water-based recreation.

*2016 Foundation Document*

## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are the features, systems, processes, experiences, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes tied to legislation and significance that are essential to achieve the purpose of the park and maintain its significance. If any of these are allowed to deteriorate, the park purpose and/or significance could be jeopardized.

**Terrestrial and Marine Ecosystems.** Terrestrial and marine ecosystems in Gulf Islands National Seashore are extremely diverse. More than 80% of the national seashore is marine or open-water habitat, including seagrass beds, tidal salt marshes, bayous, and deeper open-water areas. The seashore supports habitat for more than 400 fish species and provides essential fish habitat and important nursery habitat. Terrestrial habitats include newly formed and relict sand dunes, live oak forests, wet pine flatwoods, and maritime forests. More than a dozen federally listed threatened and endangered species are present in the national seashore. Wildlife species of special concern include four sea turtles, the Gulf sturgeon, the eastern indigo snake, the piping plover, the red knot, the Perdido Key beach mouse, and the West Indian manatee. State-listed species include the diamondback terrapin in Mississippi and the snowy plover and least tern in Florida.

**Coastal Fortifications.** The coastal fortifications in Gulf Islands National Seashore represent a continuum of seacoast defense systems that span almost 150 years from the Spanish colonial era

through World War II. Fort Pickens, Fort Barrancas, Advanced Redoubt, Fort McRee, Fort Massachusetts, 13 concrete gun batteries and numerous barracks, support structures, and ruins at Fort McRee and Fort Pickens illustrate the evolution of harbor defenses in response to changes in weapons technology. The national seashore also maintains collections of artifacts, documents, and archives associated with the fortifications' architecture, weaponry, and histories.

**Barrier Islands.** The barrier islands of the national seashore extend for 160 miles along the northern Gulf Coast and include Santa Rosa Island and Perdido Key in Florida and Petit Bois, West Petit Bois, Horn, Ship, and Cat Islands in Mississippi. The natural processes of waves, sand deposition, storms, and currents are still evident in the migration of these islands. However, human activities such as dredging operations in several shipping and navigational channels, beach renourishment, and changes in the amount of sediment moving within the Mississippi Sound and Gulf of Mexico waters have caused significant effects on the natural barrier island processes. The islands support a range of visitor opportunities and amenities from isolated backcountry locations to popular traditional beach activities.

**Visitor Opportunities.** Gulf Islands National Seashore supports a wide variety of recreational, educational, and scenic opportunities for visitor enjoyment, including both land-based and water-based activities. Opportunities include water sports, visiting historic sites, wildlife viewing, boating, hunting and fishing, and traditional recreational activities on pristine white sand beaches. The seashore invites visitors to enjoy themselves on isolated wilderness islands or popular white sand beaches near Pensacola and Navarre.

**Gulf Islands Wilderness.** The Gulf Islands Wilderness was established as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System by the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, Public Law (PL) 95-625, on November 10, 1978. This legislation designated approximately 1,800 acres of the seashore as wilderness and an additional 2,800 acres as potential wilderness, for a total of approximately 4,600 acres. The Gulf Islands Wilderness consists of lands on Horn and Petit Bois Islands off the coast of Mississippi; it is the only designated wilderness area on the Gulf Coast protected by the National Park Service. The wilderness boundary includes all of Petit Bois Island and most of Horn Island. Scenic views, night skies, and natural sounds are important components of the wilderness character, though they are being degraded by oil and gas development in the viewshed.

*2016 Foundation Document*

## Interpretive Themes (planned to update FY 2024 with larger park contributions)

Interpretive themes are organizational tools that provide a conceptual framework for visitor experience planning and programming. Themes are derived from and capture the essence of Seashore purpose, significance, resources, and values. While themes are important as a framework to help guide and focus development of visitor experience, services, and programming, *interpretive themes are not intended for public use.*

### **Coastal Ecosystems**

Gulf Islands National Seashore protects opportunities for life to flourish in the dynamic coastal ecosystems which exhibit diverse biological and geological processes. The natural mainland areas and barrier islands reflect the changing relationship between the sea, sand, and weather.

### **Marine Ecosystems**

The seashore preserves marine and estuarine ecosystems which support a unique diversity of life.

### **Forts and Fire Power**

Within the seashore is a collection of brick and concrete military strongholds that together, illustrate the evolution of coastal defenses. They convey the fragile line between peace and conflict, while preserving stories of mankind's desire for sovereignty.

### **Visitor Enjoyment**

Emerald waters, scenic beaches, maritime forests, and cultural treasures within Gulf Islands National Seashore provide opportunities for nurturing the human body, mind, and soul.

### **Wilderness Islands**

Wilderness islands are places with minimal human impact, which offer visitors the freedom to experience nature unconfined and wild; where recreation, inspiration, reflection, and solitude, can be enjoyed free from the distractions of modern life.

### **Location and Legacy**

Maritime landscapes along the northern Gulf Coast lay the foundations of historic events and rich cultural legacy, chronicling the complex relationships of people with one another and with nature.

## **Inclusive Stories**

### Women

- Indigenous
- Inclusive - People of Color
- LGBTQIA+

### Essential Questions

Effective interpretation explores controversial and complex issues as a means of finding natural and cultural resources' evolving relevance in today's community. Interpretation honors and incorporates different types of truth – forensic/academic, personal, societal, and reconciliatory – and uses essential questions to invite dialogue, foster awareness, probe truths, and encourage collaborative solutions.

Audience-centered programs and media must be dynamic and flexible, with intentional design and clear purpose. Exploring an essential question or relevant idea supported by a purposeful interpretive framework creates a cohesive experience for the audience. Understanding the resource, audience, and the broader social context are all important factors to consider when creating essential questions.

*Foundations of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Interpretation, Version 2017*

These essential questions were developed during the 2019 LRIP workshop and may be used by interpretive staff to “invite dialogue, foster awareness, probe truths, and encourage collaborative solutions.”

### **Coastal Ecosystems**

- How does nature inspire the human imagination?
- How can something small make a big difference?
- What is diversity?
- What can nature teach us about survival?
- Who loses when a plant or animal becomes extinct? Who wins?
- Why is it important for us to protect nature?
- What legal rights should nature have?
- What lessons can nature teach us about life?
- How can we ensure our world is preserved for future generations?

### **Marine Ecosystems**

- How do the world's water systems impact you in your daily life?
- What is the power of water?
- When and how do we allow natural processes to develop?
- When and how should we share nature?
- When and how should people provide balance to nature?
- What can nature teach us about time?
- Why is it important to study changes in nature?



- How does nature balance itself?
- How do we talk about climate change in a society that is skeptical of science-based research?
- What causes climate change?

### **Forts and Fire Power**

- How do you protect something you can't see?
- Why do people feel they need to construct a world that protects them?
- What does safety look like?
- What is an enemy?
- What is the source of a country's strength?
- How does technology influence conflict?
- How do we study history without romanticizing the past?
- What is the price of freedom?
- How can the world live in harmony?
- When is it necessary to save important places? Who decides what places to save?
- How do we prioritize the preservation of historic structures or resources?
- How is the appropriate level of protection determined?
- How do we honor soldiers/sailors service and sacrifice while remaining objective when interpreting historical conflicts? How do we remain unbiased when interpreting historical conflicts?
- How does conflict change society?
- What are the characteristics of heroism and how can they change?
- Is there a "just" war?
- How do we balance powerful technologies and public liberties?

### **Visitor Enjoyment**

- How do you balance activities in public spaces?
- How does a global community establish a shared vision for using natural resources?
- How does technology change the ways people engage with nature?
- How will advancement in technology alter our perception of nature?
- Who chooses what we should care about it?
- What does recreation mean to you?
- What are the long-term costs of recreational use on land and water?
- How do we balance the impacts large numbers of people have on nature?
- How do we balance recreation, preservation, and conservation?
- Who should be able to use public lands and waters?
- How do we balance powerful technologies and public liberties?

### **Wilderness Islands**

- What is wilderness?
- Does true wilderness still exist?
- Can wilderness exist in our modern society?
- Why should someone care about something they don't know exists?
- How do we promote visitor use and access while preserving wilderness qualities and character?
- Does wilderness have a place in the modern world? Have we outgrown the need for it?
- How do everyday activities impact wilderness character on an island miles away?

- What is the value of wilderness?
- How does nature and the well-being of people relate to one another?
- What does it mean to be isolated?
- How can we make our wilderness islands more accessible and relevant without negatively affecting the wilderness experience?

### **Location and Legacy**

- When is exploiting minority groups for the benefit of majority groups justified?
- What does freedom feel like?
- When do laws begin to inhibit freedoms? When are those freedoms worth fighting for?
- At what cost do we preserve the past?
- How does one generation come to view the past differently than the generations before?
- When is segregation acceptable?
- What does freedom mean to you?
- Why is history important?
- How can people celebrate their nation's accomplishments while acknowledging its flaws?
- How can society compensate for past wrongs?
- How do you want to be remembered?
- Who deserves the right to write history?
- What makes an American?
- How do you solve a problem that is politically polarizing?

## **Challenges and Opportunities Affecting Interpretation**

Gulf Islands National Seashore has many assets upon which to build an effective interpretive program, including evocative and compelling stories, outstanding natural and cultural resources, ongoing research, and engaged, enthusiastic partners. It also faces many challenges. Well-designed programs can build on interpretive strengths to help overcome these challenges.

- Resources are always limited, but park priorities change and the impacts of reduced Resource Education funding and lost positions have severely impacted the park's ability to provide interpretive services. Even with the addition of partners and volunteers, staffing is not sufficient to meet operational needs and services the public has come to expect. Parks all over the country are making decisions about how to reallocate their time and effort to maximize impact. Limited resources provide an opportunity for imaginative problem solving and re-thinking the way things have always been done.
- In times of resource scarcity, it is necessary to be strategic and purposeful in the choices we make, and also to communicate clearly about why we have made the decisions. Managing the expectation that we will "always be able to do what we have always done" is difficult. Accepting and understanding that we can't do it all (we never could) is important, as is creating clear communication about boundaries. Creating and communicating clear and reasonable expectations will be important in the life of this plan.
- Storm closures and damage directly impact the national seashore's ability to provide interpretive and educational programs and services. Priorities shift and visitor access to areas is limited or not permitted. Some closures are for short periods of time; others may last for months. Advance preparation and flexibility allow staff to safely, efficiently, and effectively implement closure procedures, protecting park resources and visitors.
- The physical distance between areas within the Seashore presents challenges to both visitors and staff. It limits staff ability to work collaboratively and makes sharing resources difficult. For some visitors, the distance may mean that they will not have the ability to go to some areas. Determining alternative ways of experiencing the national seashore, as well as managing it, will be required.
- Visitor motivations for spending their leisure time are changing. As more demands are being placed on free time there is a limited amount of time available to participate in interpretive and educational activities and programs. Offering a range of options as well as consolidating events should be considered.
- Due to budget shortfalls, reduced staffing, curriculum mandates, and limited available time, schools may not be able to come to the Seashore so teacher led alternatives will need to be identified. For example, the national seashore may offer teacher led distance education programs or provide lesson plans teachers can utilize on their own in the classroom.

- As fiscal budgets tighten, Seashore staff and partners will need to develop business strategies and consider new, different, perhaps entrepreneurial fee-based ways to provide interpretive and educational services.
- 
- With more and more partners and volunteers involved in providing high quality interpretation for visitors, communicating consistent and timely messages is difficult. A mix of systems, compatibility issues, and firewalls further complicates effective communication. Keeping both staff and partners informed is a huge effort and needs a clever solution. Internal communication among Seashore staff is a concern, and communication between divisions is essential to effectively interpret and protect cultural and natural resources.
- Future audiences may have different expectations and needs for media and technology to better understand area stories and to make connections with area resources. New technologies open up possibilities that were never before available to interpreters, without significant resource impact. Because technology changes so quickly and staying relevant is a concern, ensuring the Seashore has a strong digital presence through web and social media, current multimedia content, and a variety of working exhibits requires sufficient time for trained and skilled staff including a Visual Information Specialist.
- Partnerships are a challenge for both the Seashore and its partners. From the onerous agreement process, through the frustration with the bureaucracy of federal systems, challenges and roadblocks abound. But the benefits of working together in a true partnership outweigh the hassle. Maintaining existing partnerships also takes time and energy, both from the national seashore and from the partner. Finding time for the care and feeding of partnerships is something all will have to consider carefully as trust, respect, and clear communication networks are built between park units, partners, and gateway communities. Partnerships will be the backbone for implementing this interpretive plan. Existing partnerships will need to be strengthened and maintained. New partnerships will need to be identified and established. Seashore staff and partners will need to collaborate and work together to provide interpretive programs and services.
- Social media allows for the Seashore to reach a wide audience, including those that do not visit the park. While social media can be a useful tool, it can also be detrimental when used improperly. Social media can be used to quickly spread sensitive information, showcase improper practices, and create a negative stigma. Photos documenting bad behavior posted through social media outlets with large followings often inspire copycats. It is important that the Seashore continues to educate visitors on how to explore the national seashore safely and responsibly.

## **Vision for the Future of Gulf Islands National Seashore**

Visitors (virtual and on-site) to Gulf Islands National Seashore will engage in relevant, inclusive experiences. A proactive, innovative, and dynamic team of park staff, volunteers, and partners will work together to deliver interpretive and educational programs and services that encourage stewardship, enable renewal and recreation, and preserve and protect Gulf Islands' natural and cultural resources.

## **Recommendations**

Interpretive planning assesses current conditions and formulates recommendations that will provide direction and focus to achieve the desired future interpretive program. A long-range interpretive plan analyzes all needs and outlines specific goals, tasks, and desired outcomes, facilities, programs, and opportunities for partnerships to communicate the Seashore's purpose and significance in the most efficient and effective way.

The Goals for Interpretive Programming are designed to realize the vision, objectives, themes, and visitor experiences described in the Foundation for Planning section. The following principles will apply to all interpretation at Gulf Islands National Seashore:

- All interpretation will address physical and programmatic accessibility.
- Where possible, interpretation will use reproduction objects, documented personal stories, and other interpretive methods to bring the story alive for visitors.
- Where possible, the Seashore will partner with neighboring institutions to develop programs, media, and consistent messaging, and share research.
- The Seashore will follow the standards of the National Park Service Graphic Identity Program as signs and interpretive media are upgraded.
- Interpretation will include examples and perspectives from diverse points of view. It will respond to diverse audiences, varying levels of interest, and different visit lengths.
- Where possible, "virtual visitors" will have opportunities to view key Seashore vistas and access to new research, studies, management plans, and historical information.

## **Goals for Interpretation and Education**

Workshop participants identified goals to enhance the effectiveness of the interpretive services within Gulf Islands National Seashore. These goals and associated actions are representative of many ideas generated during the workshop. Action items are listed below each goal and were used to create the Implementation Plan located in the next section of this document. Over the next five to seven years Gulf Islands National Seashore will focus on the following goals:

- 
- Ensure Resource, Visitor, and Employee Health, Wellness, and Safety
- Diversify and Offer Thematically Relevant Interpretive Programs
- Consider innovative ways to Foster Volunteer and Youth Internship Programs
- Continue Collaboration with Existing and Foster New Partnerships
- Strengthen America's National Parks/Eastern National Relationship and Sales
- Maintain, Upgrade, and Integrate Innovative Interpretive Media and Technology
- Maintain oversight of the National Park Service brand identity and visual content creation quality assurance
- Organize and Host Special Events
- Engage Existing Community Summer Camps and Pilot New Summer Youth Activities

## **Future Visitor Experiences**

### Overview

An immersive, relevant, future visitor experience at Gulf Islands National Seashore will include a balance of interpretive and educational media, programs, and services. Encouraging visitors to get out onto the water, islands, and seashore and find themselves within the scenic and historic landscape will require stronger partner and community relationships; more integration of science and research; and some changes to the current interpretive and educational programs.

Visitors will discover a range of options along the seashore that allows them to experience Gulf Islands at their own pace. There will be an increased emphasis on interpreting the marine resources and barrier island ecology. The wilderness islands will offer a slower-paced, self-directed natural and scenic experience that requires no staffing. In both Mississippi (Davis Bayou) and Florida (Fort Pickens), highly developed areas will be staffed year-round and feature limited ranger-led immersive experiences so that visitors may engage in more cultural and natural activities along with more active, adventurous, and recreational experiences.

Accurate, appropriate, and consistent terminology will be used by park staff and volunteers when sharing messages and stories. Safety and resource protection will be integral to future programs and services.

There are many different seasonal variations to the interpretive and education program. The NPS will continue to offer seasonal access to Ship Island and Fort Massachusetts. An enhanced park website, wayside exhibits, and digital media will be the primary sources for 24/7 independent, on demand access to park stories that emphasize the unique characteristics of each area. Self-guided tours based on location and theme have been developed. Virtual site tours, short videos, and/or oral history interviews may be created.

During the next 5-7 years, Gulf Islands National Seashore will focus on the unique characteristics and stories on each island/site. The interpretive programs, media, and services will have thematic connections and promote a respect for multiple points of view from a variety of subject matter experts. Because funding and staffing levels continue to decrease, alternative staffing options, volunteers, and interns will be required to support future interpretive and education operations.

These conditions helped guide the workshop participants as they described the future visitor experience for locations within the Seashore and some of the specific program areas:

### **FLORIDA**

#### **Fort Pickens**

As the most visited park area, a significant percentage of staff support and resources will be invested at Fort Pickens. A variety of living history, recreation, and natural history programs and services from self-discovery walks to ranger-led activities will continue to be offered. The Fort Pickens Visitor Center will remain open as a self-service facility, while Fort Pickens is the primary location for visitor contacts. The Santa Rosa Life Saving Station, Battery Cooper, Mine Storeroom, smaller assets, and Mine Loading Building will also serve as self-guided locations for visitors to learn about resources through a variety of exhibits and waysides. There are restrooms near the Ferry Plaza. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets

brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate messages are being disseminated.

### **Fort Barrancas and Advanced Redoubt**

In the future, these areas will continue to be opened; however, may only be staffed and ranger-led activities offered on a limited, as staff available seasonal basis and potentially during special events such as the Blue Angels flyover. As funding/staffing allows, options will need to be identified to overcome the challenge of the limited available parking. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate messages are being disseminated.

### **Naval Live Oaks**

The Naval Live Oaks (NLO) provides self-guided interpretive exhibits outside along the trails and behind the headquarters building. This area is considered an alternate location for ranger programs. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate messages are being disseminated.

### **Perdido Key, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa Area**

Out of the three, Perdido Key is the park's second most heavily visited area. Compared to other areas, these are used, primarily by residents. Making stronger connections to the local communities will be a high priority. The Park will continue to strengthen relationships with the local African American community on Perdido Key by collaboratively sharing the Rosamond Johnson story through an annual memorial event and interpretive media. An important reason that locals come is to enjoy the clean, unspoiled beaches and create their own personal recreational experiences. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate messages are being disseminated.

These areas will remain unstaffed by interpretation; however, the park team will evaluate the potential to provide informal interpretation with a mobile, portable visitor center. Perdido Key will be the first location to test this idea, and if successful, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa will be considered in that order. RET staff will rove these areas when staff are available. Resource stewardship messages and strategies will be employed to encourage the local communities to become advocates for the protection of the Perdido Key beach mouse, sea turtle, and shore bird habitats. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate messages are being disseminated.

### **Santa Rosa Area**

RET staff will rove these areas when staff are available. Resource stewardship messages and strategies will be employed to encourage the local communities to become advocates for the protection of the Santa Rosa beach mouse, sea turtle, and shore bird habitats. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate messages are being disseminated.

Resource stewardship messages and strategies will be employed to encourage the local communities to become advocates for the protection of the Santa Rosa beach mouse (endemic), sea turtle and shore bird habitats. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets



brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate messages are being disseminated.

## **MISSISSIPPI**

### **Davis Bayou**

Keeping the William M. Colmer visitor center open daily requires dedicated staff time and resources and may no longer be the highest priority in the Mississippi District., Visitor statistics document a higher number of annual visitors at Ship Island than at the Visitor center. A variety of recreational and natural history programs and services from self-discovery walks to ranger-led activities will continue to be offered. Due to funding and staffing limitations, to maintain this level of effort, decisions will need to be made about the coverage and support required at Davis Bayou especially during the peak summer season when staff must go to Ship Island. Dependent upon the outcome of this assessment or perhaps during the winter season, an assessment will be made to determine if there is a demand to offer living history and or kayak/skiff programs. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate messages are being disseminated.

### **Ship Island**

The high seasonal visitation requires an investment of staff time and resources primarily at Fort Massachusetts. A temporary contact station is present when applicable. A variety of daily ranger-led and living history programs will continue to be offered. While most of the visitors are there for personal, recreational experiences, an assessment will be made to determine if there is a demand for natural history programs on the island. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate messages are being disseminated.

### **Cat, and West Petit Bois Islands**

The park's long-term goal for these islands is to provide opportunities for responsible, dispersed recreation. Visitors will create their own personal, primarily recreational, experiences; however, improved signs and wayfinding will feature the NPS arrowhead to indicate that they are in a unit of the National Park Service. Each island will have a different thematic and resource focus. Cat Island will use interpretive media to emphasize the area's cultural history. On West Petit Bois, interpretive media, a mobile application and social media will be used to emphasize the human effects on barrier island ecology. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate messages are being disseminated.

### **Horn and Petit Bois Islands**

As designated wilderness, the management and visitor experience on these islands is different from the other areas. Responsible, dispersed recreation will be permitted using the regulations governing these areas. These islands will be unstaffed. Wilderness messaging will be incorporated into required boat registration and camp permits. A mobile application featuring the NPS arrowhead will indicate that visitors are in a unit of the National Park System. Existing interpretive media including Junior Ranger booklets brochures, website, and YouTube videos will be offered so that appropriate wilderness messages are being disseminated.

## **PARKWIDE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Each ferry provides a visitor service with the ultimate goal of creating opportunities for visitors to recognize that they are within Gulf Islands National Seashore and to explore natural and cultural resources of the park.

### **Ship Island Excursions**

The Ship Island ferry service is primarily for transportation from the Mississippi Gulf Coast to Ship Island and Fort Massachusetts. Due to the loud engines and environmental conditions on the Ship Island ferry, neither an audio nor video component can be used.

### **Pensacola Bay City Ferries**

. The Pensacola ferry service, established in 2018, provides alternative access to the Fort Pickens area (as well as continuity of access due to the tenuous nature of the Fort Pickens Road); reduces traffic congestion; and offers visitors an opportunity to experience the park's marine resources which comprise 82% of the park. Three videos are provided to the concessioner to be played on the Pensacola Bay City Ferry, at the discretion of the concession. on the Pensacola Bay City Ferry, making the use of onboard videos impractical.

On the Pensacola Bay City Ferry, during these first three years of operation, it has been important to have uniformed NPS interpreters on board during peak days (Friday through Sunday) and peak times (usually mid-day), when staff is available. As the ferry service is established and builds a ridership, the uniformed NPS interpreters could be supplemented, if not replaced, by interpreters hired by the ferry or by the concessionaire or by a cadre of carefully selected and well-trained interns and volunteers, also managed by the concessionaire. Another option, recommended in the *2014 Gulf Islands National Seashore Ferry and Shuttle Transportation Feasibility Study*, is for the concessioner to provide narration (under the training, review, and oversight of the park's interpretive staff).

### **Education**

An immersive, relevant curriculum-based education program that meets the needs of local primary and secondary students and educators is no longer a park priority. In order to bring as many students as possible to the park, a reservation system must be developed, transportation options must be identified, and partnerships must be established with local school districts. Long-term staffing to include an education specialist and education technician (potentially seasonal) and funding strategies will be required. As new programs are established, the staff will need to evaluate the most recently developed programs. If Naval Live Oaks becomes an education center, there may be opportunities to add distance learning components to the curriculum. In the meantime, the park will develop self-guided educational activities for teachers to access on-line. Educational field trips will be self-guided, with teachers leading their students. Limited, or staff available ranger led tours of Fort Pickens, Fort Massachusetts, or Naval Live Oaks may be offered.

### **Summer Camps**

Resource Education Division (RED) Educational Specialist will partner with local organizations already providing summer camps to provide educational activities for children while they are visiting the seashore. The park does not currently have air-conditioned facilities in FL or MS that could provide space to offer and run summer camps. If, and when, the NLO headquarters building is converted into an education center, this space could be used for summer camps.



## **Implementation Plan**

The measure of success of any plan is the extent to which it is implemented. Initial implementation of strategies needs to be both realistic and flexible. Because funding opportunities and priorities often change, management may need to adjust the implementation strategies to adapt to changing conditions. The interpretive staff and key partners should meet each year to draft an Annual Implementation Plan for each new fiscal year based on funding opportunities and coordination with other projects. Flexibility is extremely important to allow staff and partners the opportunity to try new and different interpretive ideas and make adjustments as necessary.

During the planning workshops, the participants agreed to divide the actions necessary to implement the recommendations into one, two, three, four, and five+ year goals. Some recommended actions for curriculum-based education programs and personal services are dependent on the hiring of staff. Other action items can be implemented immediately, within existing funding and staffing levels. Appendix G outlines the support required and the timeline for action.

**Establish and Evaluate Parkwide Curriculum-based Education Program** (dependent on staffing of an Education Specialist and Education techs – positions which have remained vacant since this plan was finalized.)

- Build relationships and collaborate with local schools in 5 different counties (2 FL and 3 MS) to develop curriculum-based programs
- Develop 4th-grade curriculum-based program
- Coordinate with Santa Rosa and Escambia County Schools to use ferry for curriculum-based education programs going to Fort Pickens. Conduct needs assessment to identify area of emphasis based on FL and MS standards of learning
- Train staff/NPS to present program
- Offer teacher workshops to identify schools to pilot program
- Conduct evaluation
- Develop and implement online reservation system
- Coordinate transportation via bus and/or ferry
- Present programs, including “Turtle Turtle Watch Out!”
- Following 4th-grade model, in priority order: develop grades 6 and 8; grades 5 and 7; grades 9-12; grades K-3
- Continue to support existing programs as new programs are developed
- Populate the park's website education portal
- Coordinate and promote Every Kid Outdoors program
- Recruit and hire seasonal education tech positions
- Recruit and hire FL career seasonal education tech positions
- Provide virtual programs and curriculum resources
- 

**Ensure Resource, Visitor, and Employee Health, Wellness, and Safety**

- Continue participation in parkwide Safety Employee Wellness Committee (SEWC)
- Continue roles on parkwide Incident Command System (ICS)

- Continue to maintain Historic Weapons certification and provide training
- Continue to provide safety and resource protection messaging and delivery
- Review existing and maintain SOPs and JHAs
- Establish and implement RED Service Standards
- Design, fabricate,= safety messaging on Interp signs and media
- Maitain safety information on the park’s website and social media
- 

**Diversify and Offer Thematically Relevant Interpretive Programs**

- Offer seasonal historic weapons program (Fort Pickens), when staffing allows
- Ensure interpretive programs and services align with and accurately communicate parkwide initiatives’ primary messages
- Diversify the stories to describe how coastal defenses changed over time
- Evaluate best ways to connect to visitors – short duration formal programs vs. longer regularly scheduled programs
- Pilot ideas for wildlife activities and programs (Fort Pickens, Ship Island)
- 
- Continue to staff VC at Davis Bayou (7 days), Fort Pickens (7 days), and Fort Barrancas (2 days- Saturday and Sunday), as staffing allows.
- Evaluate potential for providing informal interpretation and mobile VC (Perdido Key, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa)
- Interface with Camp Happy Sands during summer season, as staffing allows
- Continue to offer evening programs, gator pond walks (Davis Bayou) if staff available
- Refine and evaluate interpretive program and opportunities on Pensacola Ferry.
- Provide occasional interpretation (Ship Island) if staff available
- Finalize Captain's announcement for FL ferries = Completed 2020, concessionaire declined to implement.

**Expand RET Volunteer and Youth Internship Programs** (dependent on funding available for housing and background checks)

- Assess RET needs, continue targeted recruitment, and hire volunteers
- Provide training and maintain Historic Weapons certification
- Establish parkwide ferry corps (staff/intern/volunteer) only for peak days and hours
- Continue youth internship programs to augment staffing using a variety of funding sources

**Continue Collaboration with Existing and Establish New Partnerships**

- Collaborate with GIREC on work-study program and service learning
- Continue to work with GIREC on issue-based interpretation
- Continue to support Artist in Residence program
- Establish relationship with new MS Aquarium
- Establish relationship with YMCA (MS)
- Maintain a relationship with the Walter Anderson Museum (MS)
- Maintain a relationship with the Pensacola Historic Trust for temporary exhibits, talks etc.
- Explore a partnership with Gulf Breeze Rec Center so they can provide kayaking and nature-based programs for scouts and youth groups

- Improve partnership with Naval Aviation Museum
- Explore the opportunity to offer new living history programs in cooperation with Naval Aviation Museum or NAS Pensacola
- Integrate person/non-personal services/programs/media with SRS/issue-based subjects
- In cooperation with SRS, offer public programs (Naval Live Oaks, Davis Bayou)
- Explore potential resource campaign (collaboration between GUIs and other agencies): sea grass awareness, rip currents and protection and restoration, if staff available
- 
- Interface with Camp Happy Sands at PK during summer months, if staff available
- Work with Alternative Break student groups
- Work with SRS on outreach communication for Marine Reserve Plan and other plans

### **Strengthen America's National Parks/Eastern National Relationship and Sales**

- Update eparks (online store) to offer GUIs merchandise
- Complete Annual Aid to Parks, Operations Plans, and other reports
- Add new items to keep stores current and relevant
- Produce new GUIs-specific sales items
- Diversify and increase sales of children's items
- Continue agreement for personal services
- Update Scope of Sales
- Update and refresh sales area to include interpretive props at Fort Barrancas, Davis Bayou
- Continue to incorporate interpretation and book reviews in sales area
- Continue staffing support at VCs, dependent on staffing
- Continue bookstore operation at Fort Pickens,

### **Maintain, Upgrade, and Integrate Innovative Interpretive Media and Technology**

- Maintain a GUIs wayside plan in partnership with Harper's Ferry Center
- Consistently update digital application resources on web and mobile application
- Creates organic content and visuals for GUIs staff and reviews content for brand identity adherence to include presentations, publications, signs and all messaging
- Maintain parkwide social media presence (Facebook/Instagram)
- Design, maintain, and update exhibit interpretive media to include cyclic
- Manage accountability of exhibits in FMSS
- Update multimedia content as needed
- Plan, fabricate, and install waysides to include cyclic maintenance throughout the park
- Design/update, orders and distributes publications annually. esse
- Maintains GUIs Publication Strategy
- Maintains GUIs Social Media Strategy
- Review all interpretive media for accessibility, accountability, and maintenance.
- Works with Eastern national to promote special events, new products and create new visuals.
- Continue to hone Public Information Officer role and maintain relationship with tourism and media partners; Maintain visuals used for public to identify with the park;
- **Establish a relationship with the GUIs affiliated tribes to gather pertinent and accurate information to provide to the public through digital media and exhibits.**

- Design new waysides in accordance with accessibility and Harpers Ferry Center standards

### **Organize and Host Special Events**

- Continue to work with partner to offer annual memorial Rosamond Johnson special event
- Continue to offer special events parkwide.
- Establish special living history/black powder programs (Ship Island)
- Continue to establish and maintain park's artist in no-residence program

### **Engage Existing Community Summer Camps and Pilot New Summer Youth Activities**

(based on staff available -Education Specialist and Education Technicians)

- Provide fun learning activities (curriculum-based education or similar) for summer camps visiting the park
- Develop NPS-GCRL cooperative summer youth camp activities/program including learning outcomes

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: The Planning Team**

#### Gulf Islands National Seashore

John Bernstiel, Park Ranger  
Christopher P. Bramblett, Park Guide  
Dan Brown, Superintendent  
Brent Everitt, Chief of Communications  
Matthew Hall, Park Ranger  
Sarah Holman, Education Specialist  
Edward Kahle, Park Guide  
Steven A. McCoy, Deputy Superintendent  
Dede Mladucky, Chief Ranger  
Casimer Rosiecki, Park Ranger  
Dana Shanaghan, Community Volunteer Ambassador  
Donald R. Stephens, Maintenance Mechanic  
Sandra Tennyson, Supervisory Park Ranger (transferred)  
Susan Teel, Chief of Resource Education

#### National Park Service

Toni Dufficy, Interpretive Planner, Harpers Ferry Center

#### Partners

Gwen Hicks, Store Manager, Eastern National  
Cherie Arnette, Social Studies Curriculum Specialist K-12, Escambia County School District  
Anna Barry, Social Studies Instructional Coach, Escambia County School District  
Marcie Van Vleck-Bell, Citizen Advocate, Destin Sea Turtle Alliance



## Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines

Parks are required by law to make all interpretive products and programming fully accessible. Visitors who have physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities have legally established civil rights to receive the same information and context that NPS interpretive media products provide to their fellow citizens. Accessibility falls into two categories:

**Physical Accessibility** - Assess initial physical accessibility needs. Prioritize physical accessibility mitigations or accommodations then create PMIS for accessibility projects.

**Programmatic Accessibility** - Ensure that all interpretive services have programmatic accessibility. When getting independent government estimates for new media or products from HFC, include estimates for full accessibility. Never get estimates for new media without accessibility mitigations with a plan to add them later.

### Resources

- [Directors Order #42 Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities](#)
- [NPS Accessibility Guidelines](#)
- [Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media](#)

## Appendix C: Desired Visitor Experiences

Desired visitor experiences describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available for visitors to Gulf Islands National Seashore. These experiences will be available to the degree possible to visitors of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility, or cognitive impairments.

Before they arrive, visitors will have an opportunity to use:

- Use a comprehensive website to receive helpful trip planning information and downloadable park-specific publications.

During their visit, visitors will be able to:

- Easily use directional signs to get to and around the seashore.
- Engage in a variety of outdoor recreational experiences.
- Discover the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the Seashore to encourage a connection with their own lives and experiences.
- Self-guide through the area using a well-designed system of waysides with tactile elements enhanced by a mobile website and audio tours.
- Have meaningful and thoughtful conversations with staff, partners, and others or enjoy the resource on their own.
- Have access to a variety of park-specific publications both hard copy and downloadable.
- Purchase appropriate books and sales items.
- Have a meaningful, memorable, and safe experience.

After their visit, visitors will be able to continue their connection to the Seashore by:

- Share their experiences and memories, advocate and/or change their behavior in support of park and resources.
- Demonstrate stewardship of the seashore and its resources.
- Visit nearby, related sites.
- Obtain information about other related sites in the area so that they can extend their visit.
- Participate in the social media offerings.
- Become a volunteer.
- Participate in distance learning programs.

Virtual visitors will be able to:

- Explore the seashore using a variety of accessible, online, digital resources.

## Appendix D: Audiences

In order to design the most effective interpretive and educational programming as well as employ the most effective techniques, parks must identify intended audiences, both existing audiences who actively visit the Seashore (onsite and virtually) and potential new audiences that well-planned services may attract. Because different audiences have varied needs and expectations, specific interpretive and educational strategies and methods should be developed to meet the needs of each particular audience.

### Current Audiences:

In 2019, approximately 5.7 million people visited the seashore using both vehicles and boats. Unless the park is impacted by tropical weather events that cause extended road/facility closures, future visitation is anticipated to continue to average 5.5-6 million annually. To calculate boater visitation, aerial photographs, on-site visual surveys of boat counts, and surveys that derived multipliers of number of people per boat were used. That data was then correlated with visitor counts of people entering the park by vehicle (data collected from traffic counters) and people/vehicle multipliers. This analysis revealed that boater visitation represents approximately 10% of visitors arriving in the park by vehicle. It also indicated that Florida areas have more boaters than Mississippi areas. Perdido Key and Fort Pickens have more private boaters than Ship Island and Horn Island.

In 2018, 212,842 people were contacted through interpretation programs and services. This is a 13% increase over 2017 (186,130) despite reduced staffing levels and a 17% overall reduction in visitation to the Fort Pickens Area. Through informal contacts and a continuous play video, approximately 11,000 passengers were contacted on the newly established Pensacola Bay Cruises.

Each area of the Seashore seems to have a different visitor base. Anecdotal data suggests that most seasonal visitors are over 62, white, and retired. Visitation also includes college students and families.

**MS Gulf Coast** – (Mississippi Gulf Coast 2017 Visitor Research by Longwoods International - [https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/gulfcoast/Rick\\_Cain\\_Mississippi\\_Gulf\\_Coast\\_2017\\_Visitor\\_Research\\_d828bc9d-4509-4235-8be6-607962a37222.pdf](https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/gulfcoast/Rick_Cain_Mississippi_Gulf_Coast_2017_Visitor_Research_d828bc9d-4509-4235-8be6-607962a37222.pdf) )

- 13.5 million annual visitors
- 57% day trips
- 43 % overnight trips
- State of origin for overnight trips coming from- LA-24%, MS-24%, FL-14%, AL-8%, and TX - 8, GA - 5%, and TN-4%.
- 79% drive
- Beach, swimming popular attractions – 6% going to NP/SP
- 83% plan trip by internet
- 59% use social media
- 50-50 men/women
- Avg age is 48
- 53% - no children
- 33% college graduates
- 80% white, 15% African American 7 % Hispanic

- 52% less than \$50K income

**FL – Escambia Tourism Trends Relevant to Escambia County - Visit Pensacola**

([https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/pensacola/Visit\\_Pensacola\\_Tourism\\_Week\\_Research\\_Presentation\\_2\\_13221128-20d2-47cd-a359-6481cadae81a.pdf](https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/pensacola/Visit_Pensacola_Tourism_Week_Research_Presentation_2_13221128-20d2-47cd-a359-6481cadae81a.pdf) )

2017 Visitor Profile & Behavior

Average Age: 44

Average Household Income: \$86,472

Traveled with Children: 30%

First Time Visitors: 40%

	<u>2014</u>		<u>2015</u>		<u>2016</u>		<u>2017</u>
	%		%		%		%
Went to the beach	89		90	←	80		79
Shopped	29	→	34		32	→	36
Visited museums	34	→	46	←	34	←	27
Went to a fine dining restaurant	11	→	32	→	38	←	25
Went fishing	10		13		11		14
Participated in water sports	4	→	13	←	6	→	12
Played golf	5		6		6		9
Non-ticketed/free performance/event	2	→	14	←	8		9
Visited art galleries	9	→	13		13	←	8
Attended a ticketed performance	3		4		5		6
Ecotourism	NA		NA		NA		6
Attended a professional sporting event	3		2		2		4
Attended non-professional spectator sports	3		1		3		4

Local Demographic Information

Community													
Source	US Census Quick Facts (V2018, results generated July 2, 2019) <a href="http://quickfacts.census.gov">http://quickfacts.census.gov</a>									NPS Visitor Survey Data Card Report			
	Escambia		Santa Rosa		Harrison		Jackson		Hancock		2014		2018
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>													
Hispanic/Latino	5.8		5.7		5.6		7.0		4.0		-		-
African American	23.2		6.5		25.7		21.8		8.2		-		-
Asian	3.4		2.2		2.9		2.3		0.9		-		-
American Indian	0.9		0.9		0.5		0.5		0.7		-		-
White	68.9		87.0		68.1		73.3		87.9		-		-
<b>AGE AND GENDER</b>													
Under 18 years Census/15 NPS survey	20.8		21.9		23.9		23.3		20.5		2		5
Over 65 years Census/61 NPS survey	16.8		16.0		15.0		15.9		19.8		42		16
Female	50.5		49.0		51.0		50.8		51.1		63		56
<b>SPECIAL NEEDS</b>													
Language other than English spoken at home	7.0		5.8		7.2		6.4		4.0		-		-
Foreign Born	4.8		4.7		4.8		3.4		2.1		-		-
Disability – under 65years old	10.9		11.5		11.1		13.1		13.7		-		-
Disability - Encountered Access Problems	-		-		-		-		-		-		-
<b>INCOME</b>													
Median Household Income	\$47,361		\$62,731		\$44,684		\$50,274		\$47,518		-		-
\$50,000-74,000	-		-		-		-		-		-		-
\$ 75,000-99,000	-		-		-		-		-		-		-
\$100,000-149,000	-		-		-		-		-		-		-
Below poverty level	16.4		10.2		19.7		14.5		17.0		-		-
<b>EDUCATION</b>													
HS Graduation	90.6		90.7		87.0		87.8		84.7		-		-
Bachelor’s Degree	26.0		27.1		22.2		20.7		20.9		-		-
Graduate Degree											-		-

Note: US Census and park demographics differ slightly, but generally align. For example: under 18 years for Census, 15 years for NPS; 65 years for Census, 61 years for NPS; high school graduation vs. college degrees.

Potential Future Audiences:

All audiences are welcome and invited to participate in Seashore programs and services; some techniques are better adapted or appeal to particular audiences. Parks seek to appeal to a wide range of visitors of varied backgrounds and ages with different motivations and expectations for visiting.

Potential new audiences will receive focused attention because they are either inadequately served by existing interpretation/staffing, need different strategies for engagement, or require specific methods to open or sustain communications and relationships. Factors to consider when developing interpretive and educational programs and services include the life experiences of the individual or group, level of education, learning styles, language, cultural traditions, and time available for interaction.

- Children attending Title I schools
- Socio-economically disadvantaged families
- Families riding the tour boats in MS and in FL
- School children and teachers in local counties
- Children attending summer programs –YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, GCRL, IMMS, others
- Local group meeting in the park
- Potential NPS employees visiting for training/meetings
- Active/Veteran Military Families and Veterans
- Gulf Coast Research Laboratory Marine Education Center students
- IMMS Students
- Mississippi Aquarium
- Cyclists, campers, boaters, hikers,,
- Locals - Wilderness etiquette
- Recreational Users from outside the park
- Concessionaires
- Commercial Use Permits Holders
- Special Use Permit Holders
- Local fishing community
- LGBTQ
- Beach goers

## **Appendix E: Existing Conditions 2020**

### ***FLORIDA***

#### Fort Pickens Area

The Fort Pickens Area is the most highly visited area of the seashore. Fort Pickens Area is open year-round. The area is open from 5 am-9 pm (last entry 8 pm), March 1 to October 31, and 5 am-6 pm (last entry 5 pm), November 1-February 28, registered campers excepted.

The Fort Pickens Visitor Center is open from 9 am-4:30 pm, 7 days per week, except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Years Day. Visitors can learn about the park's natural, historical, and cultural resources through hands-on exhibits and a 15 minute orientation film about Fort Pickens. A staffed information desk with free park publications is available inside.

The Fort Pickens Campground is open year-round. It contains 137 family sites with electric and water hookups, as well as 41 non-electric tent sites. 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.

There are three designated trails in the Fort Pickens Area. Seven miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail, administered by the US Forest Service, run through the area. A one-mile seawall trail stretches from the gulf side of the island to the bay side. A one-mile loop trail, the Blackbird Marsh Trail, can be accessed from campground Loop A.

Other visitor activities include swimming, water sports, boating, beach sports, biking, fishing, birding, interpretive programs, and Blue Angels performances.

#### Fort Barrancas Area

The Fort Barrancas Area is open year-round, subject to Naval Air Station Pensacola operations. The visitor center and historic Fort Barrancas are open seasonally, historic Advanced Redoubt is open for self-guided tours. The general public must enter through the station's West Gate and present government-issued identification. The area includes public restrooms. The closure of the main entrance (East Gate) of Naval Air Station Pensacola and associated changed traffic patterns continues to significantly reduced visitation to these seashore sites located on base. The Seashore is working with the base to install new wayfinding signs both on the base and leading to the base to improve and increase access to the forts.

#### Naval Live Oaks Area

The Naval Live Oaks Area is open year-round from 8:00 a.m. to sunset, and visitors have access to an accessible boardwalk, outdoor interpretive panels, 9.5 miles of trails, bay-side picnic tables, pavilions, and restrooms. A youth camping area is available for formal youth organizations.

#### Santa Rosa Area

The Santa Rosa Area is open 24 hours a day, year-round. Opal Beach facilities are open 8:00 a.m. to sunset. The area includes beach and roadside parking and public restrooms with outdoor showers and picnic area at Opal Beach.

Visitor activities include swimming, water sports, boating, beach sports, biking, fishing, and birding. A visitor center and interpretive programs are not offered at this area; interpretive waysides are available.

#### Perdido Key Area

The Perdido Key Area is open 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (last entry at 8:00 p.m.), March 1-October 31 and 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (last entry at 5:00 p.m.) November 1-February 28. The area includes boat-in only primitive/backcountry camping, hike-in only primitive/backcountry camping, beach and roadside parking and a picnic area, public restrooms with outdoor showers, and a beach wheelchair upon request at Rosamond Johnson Beach.

There are two designated trails in the Perdido Key Area. The accessible Discovery Nature Trail is a 0.5 mile long loop trail. The Perdido Key Blueway is a water trail running 5.5 miles and forms part of the Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail.

Other visitor activities include exploring coastal batteries Slemmer, Center, and 233, swimming, water sports, boating, beach sports, biking, fishing, and birding. A visitor center and interpretive programs are not offered at this area; interpretive waysides are available.

#### Okaloosa Day Use Area

The Okaloosa Day Use Area is open year-round, 8:00 a.m. to sunset. The area includes beach parking, picnic area, public restrooms with outdoor showers, and a boat launch for kayaks, canoes, or paddleboards; trailer launching is not recommended.

Visitor activities include swimming, water sports, boating, beach sports, biking, fishing, and birding. A visitor center and interpretive programs are not offered at this area; interpretive waysides are available.

#### Pensacola Bay Cruises

Pensacola Bay Cruises operates 7 days a week during peak season (May 17-August 15) and 2-3 days a week during off-peak season (March 15-May 16 and August 16-October 31).

Vessels offer climate-controlled main cabin and upper deck, beverages and snacks for sale, restrooms, and three different promotional videos.

In FY2019, the Seashore provided 3 seasonal park guides for roving interpretation on two vessels daily. NPS provided a recorded safety message and onboard interpretive programming.

### ***MISSISSIPPI***

#### Davis Bayou Area

The Davis Bayou Area is a popular destination for locals, campers, and school groups who enjoy the area for recreational and self-directed experiences. The William M. Colmer Visitor Center has exhibits, a beautiful decked overlook, tranquil trails, and hosts fewer visitors than Ship Island



and Fort Massachusetts. The William M. Colmer Visitor Center is open daily from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm, except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Day.

#### Ship Island – Fort Massachusetts

Ship Island (SHIS) is the most visited sites in Mississippi with approximately 46,455 annual visitors. About 20% of those visiting Ship Island participate in interpretive programs. In 2018, park rangers engaged a small fraction of students on Ship Island. Ship Island is open sunrise to sunset, and Fort Massachusetts is open to the public from 10:15 am to 2:15 pm from May through August, and Wednesday through Sunday March, April, September, and October. The fort continues to experience extended summer closures due to flooding inside the fort which prohibits safe visitation.

The Seashore maintains a concession contract with Ship Island Excursions to transport visitors to this area of the seashore. Visitors can take a ferry boat from Gulfport to SHIS. Private boaters also go out to SHIS.

#### Ship Island Excursions

Ship Island Excursions is the long-time concessioner to Gulf Islands NS. Starting in 1927, Pan Isles Inc., partnered with the American Legion Post in Gulfport, MS to provide a ferry service to Ship Island and Fort Massachusetts. The Skrmetta family has owned and operated ferry vessels to and from Ship Island since before the park was established. On the ferries, visitors can watch for dolphins, sea turtles, view neighboring Cat Island, and learn more about the waters that surround the Islands.

#### Horn Island – Wilderness (minimal NPS presence with no signs)

Horn Island is a 13-mile long Wilderness Barrier Island. Here visitors can camp, hike, fish, view wildlife, and take in the solitude of the wilderness area. Walter Anderson enthusiasts travel here to walk in his footsteps. Many visitors take their private vessels out to the island for day and overnight camping trips. There are no public ferries to the island, but the park has a list of authorized vendors for charter services to and from the island on the park's website.

#### West Petit Bois Island (minimal NPS presence with no signs)

West Petit Bois, formally Sand Island, is an island created by storing sand spoil from dredging operations. This island shows the veracity of barrier islands. From a small spoil area it has transformed into an ecosystem that supports a wide variety of wildlife, Visitors can see for themselves the dynamic nature of barrier islands and how they overcome adversity.

#### Petit Bois Island - Wilderness (minimal NPS presence with no signs)

The second of the two wilderness islands. This island is less visited and smaller than Horn. Though like Horn it has wildlife viewing opportunities, nesting areas for shorebirds, sea turtles, bald eagles, and osprey. Visitors can also take private or chartered vessels to the island for camping and fishing experiences.

#### Cat Island (minimal NPS presence with no signs)

Cat Island has the ruins and remains of a World War II training camp that visitors can explore. The island also has several large sand dunes and a maritime forest that house a variety of wildlife. Within the islands interior, there are lagoons and canals. On Cat Island there are private

properties with structures as well as state owned lands. This island, like the others, is only accessible via private or charter vessel.

## **Trails**

Throughout the Seashore, hikers must practice Leave No Trace principles.

### Fort Pickens Area

There are three (0.5-1 mile) easy walking trails in this area. A trailhead of the Florida National Scenic Trail is located at Fort Pickens and links the Seashore to the larger statewide trail system. The Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail may be accessed in this area. Fort Pickens is part of the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail.

### Naval Live Oaks Area

Leashed pets are allowed on the trails; however, bicycles are not. Horses may be ridden only on the trails and fire roads north of US Highway 98 (bayside). There are eleven different walking trails in this area. They are mostly easy to moderate and range from 0.3-2.4 miles. Naval Live Oaks is part of the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail.

### Perdido Key

Leashed pets are allowed on the trail. The Discovery Nature Trail (0.5 mile loop) is an easy walk beginning from the Soundside Boat Ramp. Using a kayak, canoe, or paddleboard visitors can explore 5.5 miles along the Perdido Key Blueway Trail. Perdido Key is part of the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail.

### Fort Barrancas and Advanced Redoubt

Leashed pets are allowed; however, bicycles are not allowed on trails in this area. The Nature Loop Trail (0.5 mile loop) and the Trench Trail (0.4 mile one way) are easy walking trails that begin at the Fort Barrancas Visitor Center.

### Santa Rosa Area

The Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail may be accessed in this area.

### Davis Bayou

At Davis Bayou there are 3 miles of gravel, dirt, and boardwalk trails that take visitors to overlooks of the bayou and through a relic dunes system on the half-mile Nature's Way Loop. The CCC Spur Trail takes visitors .25 miles into the coastal forest to the ruins of a Civilian Conservation Corps Camp that helped establish Magnolia State Park, the basis for the Davis Bayou Area. The Davis Bayou Blueway Trail offers visitors a chance to see the bayou, saltmarsh, and coastal forest from a gators eye view. Using a kayak, canoe, or paddleboard visitors can explore 3.5 miles of waterways in and around the National Seashore. On the Live Oaks Bicycle Route visitors can explore Davis Bayou and the surrounding area where many culture stops discuss the history of the area. Three locations are listed as part of the MS Gulf Coast NHA.

## **Public Programs**

Living History staff, including rangers, interns, and volunteers, present cannon and musket firing demonstrations on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays at historic Fort Pickens. A group of interns

conducts the programs during the summer months and one staff member and volunteers conduct a reduced living history and musket demonstration program the rest of the year.

## **Water Programs**

### *Florida Area*

Kayaking and snorkeling programs, offered seasonally weather and staffing permitting.

### *Mississippi Area*

“Bayou by Boat” motorized vessel programs and Kayaking 101 offered seasonally weather and staffing permitting.

## **Evening Programs**

Campfire programs are offered weekly in the fall and winter at Davis Bayou, which cover all of the interpretive themes and rotate weekly for variety.

Candlelight program once a year in a fort.

## **Education Programs**

The vision of the GUIS Education staff is to build a suite of curriculum-based programs in FL and MS. We will offer teachers a wide variety of free curriculum-based programs. The program will initially focus on 4th grade students then expand to 5th grade through HS and finally Kindergarten to 3rd grade. Field based programs will demonstrate how concepts learned in the classroom have real life applications. Our programs are designed to enhance classroom learning utilizing the cultural and natural resources of GUIS. Through place-based learning, students make real-world connections with science and history.

Education programs are presented at Fort Pickens or Naval Live Oaks 3 days a week, education/summer camp programs are presented at West Ship Island 3 days a week, and education programs are presented at the Marine Education Center/Davis Bayou 2 days a week.

The Seashore has three pilot education programs for grades 2-3 (sea turtles), 4-7 (barrier island ecology and salinity), and 8-12 (scientific method and barrier island ecology). Through the Teacher Ranger Teacher program, 12 teachers (6 from FL and 6 from MS) have been hired to collaboratively develop a suite of curriculum-based educational modules using interdisciplinary approaches to achieve Common Core Standards.

Through developing new and existing partnerships, Gulf Islands National Seashore will expand curriculum-based offerings and reach a wider more diverse audience. See *Appendix G* for education standards and local school district information

## **Interpretive Media**

Website: The Seashore website ([www.nps.gov/guis](http://www.nps.gov/guis)) is maintained by staff and features information about the Seashore. In FY2018, some sections, including Things to Do, Places to Go, and History & Culture sections, were updated and a webcam was installed at Fort Pickens.

Social Media: Facebook is used to communicate Seashore messages, issues, and special resources. Twitter is important for current events including storm updates.

Exhibits: Planning for the Mine Loading Building exhibits and the disposition of the Naval Live Oaks exhibits began in FY2018. The Mine Storeroom exhibit installation was completed, including the delivery of audio description audio files and devices for the new exhibits. Discovery Center will become the Fort Pickens Area Visitor Center, with repaired exhibits and replaced flooring.

Digital Media: Videos for the Pensacola Bay ferry service were produced in FY2018 through a contract with Silver Fir Media. The videos (four total, natural resources, cultural resources, recreational opportunities, tour boats) are shown on the ferry boats, in the local community, and online to promote the ferry service. Students continue to produce videos for the Seashore to use on the website and social media. Fifteen videos on a variety of topics have been produced.

Wayside Exhibits: There were a large percentage of storm damaged waysides which will have the panels replaced and be reinstalled. The Park will partner with Harper's Ferry Center to develop a new wayside plan. Some repairs were made to several Florida waysides which had become illegible, but there was no large replacement project as scheduled. Four weather worn panels and one base were replaced in the Perdido Key Area thanks to a donation from the local community. Updated panels made from more durable gel-coated laminate are being installed. The Seashore is working with the NHA to updated MS Blueway waysides. An ARPA wayside has been produced and installed to improve stewardship of historic structures at Fort Pickens.

Signs: RET will work with the park sign committee and Harper's Ferry Center on wayfinding type signs for the park. RET will also provide guidance regarding graphical design to the GUIIS sign committee. A cultural resource protection sign system for Fort Pickens (History Hurts) has been developed and produced. Historic Fort Pickens, is similar to a ruin in value and condition; however, visitors frequently sit, climb, and walk on masonry walls which over time damages bricks and mortar. Bricks are frequently removed from floors, walls, and arches and tossed around the fort. Graffiti is also an ongoing issue at the fort and outlying concrete coastal batteries and supporting structures. Cultural resource signs are needed to raise awareness of ongoing destruction.

Publications: The Seashore brochure (unigrid folder) is available to visitors at all of the visitor centers. The Florida Site Booklet (including self-guiding tours), the sea turtle magnet, beach mouse rack card – has been eliminated, sea turtle rack card – has been eliminated, shorebirds rack card – has been eliminated, fee envelopes- are managed by fees, and the Seashore's annual newspaper is annually updated. The consolidated Mississippi area booklet and alligator magnet is developed, and an initial order was funded. A new storage area for publications was established at the Fort Pickens Area which will improve inventory controls. All products are available via email and the park will work to develop 508 compliant versions for posting to the website. The Visual Information Specialist assist other park team/divisions with development of new print products.

## **Youth Programs**

### Every Kid Outdoors

In FY2018, the Seashore hosted 43 Every Kid in a Park (EKIP) activities, and efforts reached 950 fourth graders, and 241 EKIP passes were distributed. The activities were supported by funds provided by the National Park Foundation. During the annual Rosamond Johnson memorial event, fourth graders from Global Academy sang and displayed art work they created. Through their participation, the students discovered the Rosamond Johnson story and the history of Rosamond Johnson Beach.

### **Special Events**

Special events are held throughout the year. While the Seashore staff work hard to organize and promote these events, weather and unexpected conditions may cause them to be cancelled and not rescheduled. The events, including coastal cleanups, “Leave No Trace,” commemorative events (Rosamond Johnson and Memorial Day), and Civil War living history demonstrations, engage participants in protecting and preserving the seashore’s natural and cultural resources.

### **Outreach**

In FY 2018, seashore staff and interns participated in 8 outreach events and contacted 4,285 people. Through community outreach events, the team actively promotes the Coastal Night Sky and Turtle T.H.i.S. projects; recruits volunteers and interns; engages participants in pop up activities; and distributes materials emphasizing critical resource issues. The seashore also actively participates and provides leadership in state and local tourism/recreation development and promotional initiatives.

### **NPS Staffing**

The current staffing structure includes:

- Chief of Resource Education
- Lead Park Ranger FL (supervisor)
- Park Ranger FL
- Park Guide FL
- Lead Park Ranger MS (supervisor)
- Park Guide MS
- Park Guide MS
- Visual Information Specialist
- Education Specialist – Vacant
- Seasonal Park Guides FL and MS
- 

### **Volunteers**

In FY2019 Gulf Islands National Seashore had 1093 volunteers donate 30,206 hours. This is equivalent to 14.5 full time employees and, based on the hourly rate of \$25.43 set for volunteer time, the FY 19 VIP program was valued at \$768,138.58. The turtle patrol volunteers helping the park survey the beaches for turtle tracks each morning at dawn during nesting and hatching seasons and completing nest assessments; SRS volunteers responded to injured and deceased sea turtles and other wildlife; volunteers assisted with traffic control during Blue Angels practice days; living history volunteers lead and participated in historic weapons demonstrations and donated 1486 hours of volunteer time to the most attended interpretive programming that had 15,664 visitors in attendance; local boy scout troops planted over 400 native live oak trees in the Fort Pickens campground; NCCC volunteers spent three weeks in the park and updated and installed 208 signs, preserved 11 acres of dune habitat, and removed 4,000 pounds of trash. The

park also created and filled new volunteer positions for volunteer photographers, to bolster non-personal services.

Volunteer partnerships with Ocean Hour, Naval Air Station Pensacola, 3rd Coast Divers, = Walton Guard provided support for marine debris removal, historic preservation, and living history programs.

#### Youth Leadership Ambassadors (Internship Program)

In FY2018, Gulf Islands National Seashore hired and employed 20 youth interns. The Seashore worked with Environmental Stewards/Conservation Legacy to advertise and promote these internship opportunities through the Bureau of Indian Affairs and at regional Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions including Alabama A&M University, Alabama State University, Bethune Cookman College, Bishop State Community College, Florida Memorial College, Lawson State Community College, Tuskegee University, Broward Community College, Florida International University, Miami-Dade Community College, and Nova Southeastern University. The program has been successful in recruiting ethnically diverse and socio-economically disadvantaged youth. To date, 100% of the interns who have completed the 52 week internship program have secured employment with federal, state, or non-profit land management and conservation agencies or organization.

The majority of the interns work on a variety of Seashore-based programs and projects including Coastal Night Sky, living history, education, visual information, geosciences, beach mouse, and water resources. The Community Volunteer Ambassador (CVA) Intern builds community outreach and coordinates and supports the GUIS volunteer program.

#### **Formal and Informal Partnerships**

The Seashore has several formal relationships that operate under Cooperative Agreement or contract. These partners have written agreements with the Seashore or with the National Park Service. There are also a few significant, strategic, and reciprocal informal relationships with government agencies, municipalities, local organizations, academic, and cultural institutions.

#### **America's National Parks/Eastern National (EN):**

America's National Parks/EN is the Seashore's cooperating association and operates sales outlets at Davis Bayou, Fort Barancas, and Fort Pickens. Over \$340,000 in annual sales of interpretive and educational materials helps fund \$10,000 for the Fort Pickens living history program and provide assistance with daily operations at Colmer VC (MS).

#### **Mississippi Aquarium, Gulfport**

The Mississippi Aquarium is currently under construction and the plans are to focus on education as well as promote tourism. Major partners include the University of Southern Mississippi and Mississippi State University, both have signed on as aquarium partners. USM will be involved in saltwater research and education, while Mississippi State will provide veterinary services, with educational opportunities for students, and freshwater research.

#### **Gulf Islands Research and Education Center (GIREC)**

The GIREC builds on the long-standing partnership between the University of West Florida and GUIS to support Seashore conservation and restoration of gulf coast ecosystems and the University's mission to provide educational opportunities for students of all ages. The integrated

research project and education program provides science-based resource management data and enhances regional STEM education.

The seashore is moving forward with plans to move the headquarters operation and function to the north side of highway 98. The building currently serving as headquarters will become an educational facility as part of the GIREC, hosting school groups, research students and faculty, and becoming a hub of educational and science for the Gulf Coast area.

### **Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL)**

In April 2018, the Seashore established a General Agreement with GCRL with the goal to collaborate on research, permits, collections, and educational and summer camp activities on West Ship Island. Seashore staff coordinated with GCRL's Marine Education Center staff to ensure that a ranger met all education and summer camp group field trips to West Ship Island. The ranger provided an orientation to the seashore, safety message, and for tour for these groups.

An existing partnership with the **Florida National Scenic Trail, USFS and the Florida Trail Association** continues to thrive and new trail markers and signs have been obtained and installed.

A partnership continues to grow with the **Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN)** which jointly hosts archaeology programs. FPAN is leading an effort to establish a Panhandle Heritage Area which will feature resources at the Seashore.

**Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area (<https://www.nps.gov/migu/index.htm>)**  
**Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area**

## Appendix F: Education Standards and School District Goals

The needs of local schools, students, and educators should drive education decisions. School districts post goals and strategic plans on their websites and often post district demographics. These numbers can support funding and grant requests. Use this information to inform education planning and suggest where a park can best focus limited education resources.

Consider when planning: How can the NPS help the district(s) and local children and educators achieve their goals? The NPS has committed to serve fourth graders. What has the school district determined as goals for its fourth graders/elementary students?

### National Education Resources

- **Common Core Standards** - Academic standards that outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. The standards have been adopted in 42 states and the District of Columbia. MS works off of the College and Career Ready Curriculum and Florida is moving from common core to their own state standards by school year 2020.
- Florida curriculum can be found at the following websites:
  - <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/>
  - <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard>
- Mississippi curriculum can be found that the following website:
  - <https://www.mdek12.org/OAE/college-and-career-readiness-standards>
  -
- **Science, Engineering, Art, Technology, and Math (STEAM) and Science, Engineering, Technology, the Arts, and Math (STEAM)** – Look beyond traditional park areas of focus (such as history or environmental education) to broaden thinking about how to assist communities with *their* education goals including aligning with STEM and STEAM initiatives.
  - The [US Department of Education](#) and [US Department of Energy](#) have STEM education resources. NOAA, the EPA, and other agencies are also sources for STEM information.
  - The [Rhode Island School of Design](#) has championed STEAM education.

### Florida Schools:

Escambia County School District <https://ecsd-fl.schoolloop.com/>

39,807 Total Enrollment	40 Title 1 schools
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Enrollment	52 Total schools
81 % Graduation rate (17-18)	34 Elementary
53% Minority Students	10 Middle
75% Economically Disadvantaged Student	7 High Schools
	1 Combined school

Okaloosa County School District <https://www.okaloosaschools.com/>

31,237 Total Enrollment	88% Graduation rate (17-18)
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Enrollment	35% Minority Students



47% Economically Disadvantaged Student	18 Elementary
17 Title 1 schools	7 Middle
37 Total schools	5 High Schools
	7 combined school

Santa Rosa County School District <https://www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/>

27,446 Total Enrollment	14 Title 1 schools
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Enrollment	27 Total schools
89% Graduation rate (17-18)	13 Elementary
21% Minority Students	7 Middle
47% Economically Disadvantaged Student	4 High Schools
	3 Combined school

**Mississippi Schools:**

Hancock County School District <https://www.hancockschools.net/>

4,416 Total Enrollment	6 Total schools
345 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Enrollment	4 Elementary
83% Graduation rate (17-18)	1 Middle
14% Minority Students	1 High Schools
6 Title 1 schools	0 Combined school

Harrison County School District <http://www.harrison.k12.ms.us/>

15,010 Total Enrollment	22 Total schools
1,276 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Enrollment	14 Elementary
85% Graduation rate (17-18)	4 Middle
48% Minority Students	3 High Schools
20 Title 1 schools	1 Combined school

Jackson County School District <https://www.jcsd.ms/>

9,242 Total Enrollment	13 Total schools
706 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Enrollment	7 Elementary
89% Graduation rate (17-18)	3 Middle
20% Minority Students	3 High Schools
13 Title 1 schools	0 Combined school

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities:** <http://www.edonline.com/cq/hbcu/seast.htm>

Alabama:

Alabama A & M University  
Alabama State University  
Bishop State Community College  
Concordia College – Selma  
Gadsden State Community College  
H Council Trenholm State Technical College  
JF Drake State Technical College  
Lawson State Community College – Birmingham Campus  
Miles College  
Oakwood University  
Selma University  
Shelton State Community College  
Stillman College  
Talladega College  
Tuskegee University

Florida:

Bethune – Cookman University, Daytona Beach, FL  
Edward Water College, Jacksonville, FL  
Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL  
Florida Memorial University, Miami Gardens, FL

Louisiana:

Dillard University, New Orleans, LA  
Grambling State University, Grambling, LA  
Southern University and A & M College, Baton Rouge, LA  
Southern University at New Orleans, New Orleans, LA  
Southern University at Shreveport, Shreveport, LA  
Xavier University of LA, New Orleans, LA

Mississippi:

Alcorn State University, Alcorn State, MS  
Coahoma Community College, Clarksdale, MS  
Jackson State University, Jackson MS  
Mississippi Valley, Itta Bena, MS  
Rust College, Holly Springs MS  
Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, MS

**Hispanic Serving Institutions:** <https://www.hacu.net/hacu/HSIs.asp>

Florida:

\*Adventist University of Health Sciences  
\*Barry University  
\*Broward College  
\*Carlos Albizu University-Miami  
\*City College-Hollywood  
\*City College-Miami  
\*Florida Atlantic University  
\*Florida International University  
\*Florida Keys Community College  
\*Florida SouthWestern State College  
\*Herzing University-Winter Park  
\*Hillsborough Community College  
\*Hodges University  
\*Keiser University-Ft Lauderdale  
\*Miami Dade College  
\*Palm Beach Atlantic University  
\*Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico-  
Miami  
\*Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico-  
Orlando  
\*SABER College  
\*Saint John Vianney College Seminary  
\*South Florida State College  
\*St Thomas University  
\*Trinity International University-Florida  
\*University of Central Florida  
\*Valencia College  
Ave Maria University  
City College-Altamonte Springs  
City College-Fort Lauderdale  
College of Central Florida  
Daytona State College  
Everglades University  
Florida Gulf Coast University  
Florida Polytechnic University  
Florida State University  
Indian River State College  
Johnson & Wales University-North Miami  
Johnson University Florida

Florida (cont.):

Lake-Sumter State College  
New College of Florida  
Nova Southeastern University  
Palm Beach State College  
Pasco-Hernando State College

Polk State College  
Ringling College of Art and Design  
Rollins College  
Santa Fe College  
Seminole State College of Florida  
Southeastern University  
State College of Florida-Manatee-Sarasota  
Stetson University  
Trinity College of Florida  
University of Florida  
University of Florida-Online  
University of Miami  
University of South Florida-Main Campus  
University of South Florida-Sarasota-  
Manatee  
University of South Florida-St Petersburg

Arkansas:

\*Cossatot Community College of the  
University of Arkansas  
NorthWest Arkansas Community College

Georgia:

\*Altierus Career College-Norcross  
\*Dalton State College  
Georgia Gwinnett College  
Lanier Technical College

Louisiana:

\*Saint Joseph Seminary College  
Loyola University New Orleans

Mississippi:

Non

**Appendix G: Implementation Chart**

Gulf Islands National Seashore (GUIS) Recommended Goals and Actions by Fiscal Year	Support Required	On- Going	2020	2021	2022	
<b>Establish and Evaluate Parkwide Curriculum-based Education Program</b>						
Build relationships and collaborate with local schools in 5 different counties (2 FL and 3 MS) to develop curriculum-based programs	Local schools	X	X	COVID no Ed Specialist or Ed Techs	Jr ranger or modified public program -	
Develop 4 <sup>th</sup> -grade curriculum-based program			FL/MS DRAFT activities			
Coordinate with Santa Rosa and Escambia County Schools to use ferry for curriculum-based education programs going to Fort Pickens. Activities will be offered on or as part of ferry ride.	Santa Rosa and Escambia County Schools		Escambia County approved Complete	Santa Rosa County Risk management not approved		
Conduct needs assessment to identify area of emphasis based on FL and MS standards of learning			FL-complete	MS-complete		
Train staff/NPS to present Education Activities			Postponed no Ed Spec or budget			

Offer teacher workshops to identify schools to pilot program			FL-postponed due to Covid	MS-Postponed due to Covid		
Conduct evaluation of new curricula		postponed				
Develop and implement online reservation system	Web-services		PMIS/no funding	Hired VIS Info		
Coordinate transportation via bus and/or ferry	Local schools, Eastern National, NPF	X	request grants			
Present programs, including Turtle Turtle Watch Out!Environmental Education Curriculum for 1-3 graders		X	X	X	Postponed no Ed Spec or budget	P s
Following 4 <sup>th</sup> -grade model, in priority order: develop grades 6 and 8; grades 5 and 7; grades 9-12; grades K-3			3rd &4th FL - draft	4th MS 6th/8th - draft	5th/7th-draft	
Continue to support existing programs as new programs are developed		X				
Populate the park's website education portal			PAC/plan field trip Postponed to 2024 or beyond	curriculum materials Postponed to 2024 or beyond	suggested readings Postponed to 2024 or beyond	cur a Pos
Coordinate and promote Every Kid Outdoors program	Fees	X		X		
Recruit and hire seasonal education tech positions		annually	Postponed no Ed Spec or budget	Postponed no Ed Spec or budget	Postponed no Ed Spec or budget	

Recruit and hire FL career seasonal education tech positions		X	Postponed no Ed Spec or budget	Postponed no Ed Spec or budget	Postponed no Ed Spec or budget	
<b>Ensure Resource, Visitor, and Employee Health, Wellness, and Safety</b>						
Public Interpretive programming at Fort Pickens, Fort Massachusets, Fort Barracas/Advanced Redoubt, Horn Island, and Ship Island.		X	X	COVID	X	X
Continue to provide parkwide employee and volunteer training: CPR, AED, <u>operational leadership, kayak leadership Cas and John</u> , first aid -		X	positions not filled CPR/AED/first aid removed from RED	Kayak training for SRS - positions not filled CPR/AED/first aid removed from RED	kayak training-for leader position	co k
Continue to conduct building inspections - removed this task per Dan Brown and Steve McCoy 2020 – Park hired a GS-12 Safety position		X	eliminated	eliminated	eliminated	
Continue participation in parkwide Safety Employee Wellness Committee (SEWC)		X	X	X	X	
Continue roles on parkwide Incident Command System (ICS)		X	X	X	X	
Continue to maintain Historic Weapons certification and provide training -location for MS magazine		X	MS	Self certified due to COVID	Cas & Eddy Black powder training	
Continue to provide safety and resource protection messaging and delivery		X	X	X	Rip Currents	
Review existing and maintain SOPs and JHAs		X	X	X	X	
Conduct Team SAFE <u>Monthly</u> safety messaging substituted weekly tail gates-			implement	X	eliminated	

Establish and implement RED Service Standards			X	X	Updated	
Design, fabricate, install safety messaging on Interp signs and media - rack card				X	Use emerald coast rack cards	
Develop PMIS, secure funds, conduct visitor use capacity study Ship Island, including pier- Dan Brown meeting decided to eliminate this project.			SOW/PMIS	eliminated	eliminated	
Develop "no off road" parking signs for FI and MS			complete	Sign Developed FM/LE ordered signs		
Design, fund, and install "History can Hurt" safety panels			Design complete	Postponed until new sign committee	Fund and install	
<b>Diversify and Offer Thematically Relevant Interpretive Programs</b>						
Offer seasonal historic weapons program (Fort Pickens)		X	Covid	covid	X	
Ensure interpretive and educational programs and services align with and accurately communicate parkwide initiatives' primary messages		X	Covid	covid	X	
Diversify the stories to describe how coastal defenses changed over time		X	X	X	X	
Evaluate best ways to connect to visitors – short duration formal programs vs. longer regularly scheduled programs		X	X	X	X	
Pilot ideas for wildlife activities and programs (Fort Pickens, Ship Island)			X	covid	X	
Continue snorkeling program (Fort Pickens) if staff available		X	Covid	covid	Covid	

Staff VC at Davis Bayou (7 -5 days), Fort Barrancas 2 days), Discovery Center (7 days),		X	Covid	X	X	
Evaluate potential for providing informal interpretation and mobile VC (Perdido Key, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa)			Covid	covid	Perdido	
Interface with Camp Happy Sands during summer season - invite to Rosamond Johnson Event, boardwalk, beach activity	Camp Happy Sands		Fees	Covid	No Ed Techs	D Sum
Continue to offer evening programs, gator pond walks (Davis Bayou) if staff available		X	COVID	COVID	add kayak/skiff boat	
Refine and evaluate interpretive program and opportunities on Pensacola Ferry.			Pilot	Covid	X	
Provide occasional interpretation (Ship Island ) if staff available		X	Covid	Covid	Pilot programs	
Finalize Captain's announcement for FL ferries			Complete	PBC is making a modified version of the announcement but not using	PBC is making a modified version of the announcement but not using SIE uses their own announcements	I mo th SI a
<b>Expand Volunteer and Youth Internship Programs</b>						
Assess parkwide needs, continue targeted recruitment, and hire volunteers		X	X	Park VIP program moved to Fees	Park VIP program moved to Fees	P
Improve RET volunteer recognition					X	



Provide training and maintain Historic Weapons certification		X	X	X	X	
Establish parkwide ferry corps (staff/intern/volunteer)			pilot	COVID	Postponed Recruit and train	
Manage RED volunteer program: maintain documentation; provide orientation and training for volunteers and supervisors; provide appropriate uniforms and personal protective gear; update volunteer handbook and policies		X		Park VIP program moved to Fees	X	
Identify opportunities to participate in NPS VIP 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	WASO & SER Vol Offices		X	COVID	Park VIP program moved to Fees	P
Continue youth internship programs using a variety of sources		X	X	X	X	
<b>Continue Collaboration with Existing and Establish New Partnerships</b>						
Collaborate with GIREC on work-study program and service learning	GIREC		COVID	Complete	SRS has the lead with GIREC	SRS
Continue to work with GIREC on issue-based interpretation	GIREC	X	COVID	COVID	Need Staffing	
Establish relationship with new MS Aquarium	MS Aquarium		X	COVID	postponed Need Staffing	p Su
Establish relationship with YMCA/Jackson County Recreation for kayaking program MS	YMCA/jackson County				postponed Need Staffing develop/pilot	p
Establish partnership with Gulf Breeze Rec Center so they can provide kayaking and nature-based programs for scouts and youth groups	Gulf Breeze, FL Rec Center		Meetings	COvid	Covid	
Improve partnership with Naval Aviation Museum	Naval Aviation Museum			distributed passes	distributed passes	VI

Offer new living history programs in cooperation with Naval Aviation Museum	Naval Aviation Museum					<b>Postponed Meeting with Superintendent</b>
Implement sign plan and relocate informational and directional signs in cooperation with Pensacola Naval Air Station	NAS				X	<b>Meeting with Superintendent regarding sign task</b>
Integrate person/non-personal services/programs/media with SRS/issue-based	SRS	X			<b>Dog off leash rack card and web page</b>	<b>Bark Ranger programs</b>
Assist SRS symposium - GIREC	SRS	<b>postponed</b>	<b>postponed</b>		<b>postponed</b>	<b>postponed</b>
In cooperation with SRS, offer public programs (Naval Live Oaks, Davis Bayou)	SRS, FWC, DNR	X	X		X	X
Explore potential resource campaign (collaboration between GUIS and other agencies): sea grass awareness, protection and restoration						<b>postponed plan</b>
Work with SRS on outreach with counties, boat launches, boat registration about seagrass awareness	SRS, FWC, DNR, MS					<b>postponed plan</b>
Work with Alternative Break student groups		X	<b>COVID</b>		<b>COVID</b>	X
Work with SRS on outreach communication for Marine Reserve Plan	SRS		X		X	X
<b>Strengthen America's National Parks/Eastern National Relationship and Sales</b>						
Update eparks (online store)	EN		<b>COVID</b>		<b>COVID</b>	<b>review</b>
Add new items to keep stores current and relevant	EN	X	<b>COVID</b>		<b>COVID</b>	X
Produce new GUIS-specific sales items	EN	X	<b>COVID</b>		<b>COVID</b>	
Diversify and increase sales of children's items	EN	X	<b>COVID</b>		<b>COVID</b>	
Implement agreement for personal services	EN	X	<b>COVID</b>		<b>COVID</b>	--
Continue to use 2017 Scope of Sales	EN	X	X		X	<b>New</b>

Update and refresh sales area to include interpretive props at Fort Barrancas, Davis Bayou	EN		COVID	COVID	Eliminated	
Continue to incorporate interpretation and book reviews in sales area	EN	X	COVID	COVID	X	
Continue and perhaps expand staffing support at VCs	EN	X	COVID	COVID	Eliminated	
Continue bookstore operation at Fort Pickens, Fort Barrancas, and Davis Bayou	EN	X	COVID	COVID	Eliminated	
<b>Maintain, Upgrade, and Integrate Innovative Interpretive Media and Technology</b>						
Update web-based resources		X	X	X	X	
Produce new parkwide mobile app	HFC		X	migrate to NPS app	update	
Continue parkwide social media presence		X	X	X	x	
Convert Mine Loading Building into visitor contact station including exhibits			design - complete	install - postponed due to work on bldg	Went with Park Contract	
Update videos using current scholarship to accurately represent enslaved conditions (Fort Pickens, Fort Barrancas)					Postponed Davis Bayou	
Plan, fabricate, and install waysides (Johnson Beach, <b>Cat Island</b> )			JB complete	PMIS - Cat, postponed	PMIS - Cat, postponed	desi
Relocate Naval Live Oaks exhibits to Fort Pickens Discovery Center			design	Postponed - need mine loading bldg renovations	Funded, SOW complete,	Con
Maintain NPS arrowhead (brand) signs and wayside exhibits (Santa Rosa Area, Okaloosa Area, Davis Bayou, Ship Island)		X	x	x	X	

Develop interpretive component identified in \$3.2M Okaloosa Area upgrade (campsites, boat launch, boardwalks)			design postponed	install -postponed	attend project meetings	
Continue to offer self-guided tour (Ship Island, Fort Pickens)		X	x	x	x	
Continue to produce web-based videos and media with Alternative Spring Break group	Indiana Univ, other?	X	Covid	Covid	X	
Incorporate wilderness messaging, including Leave No Trace ethics, into camp permits required by all visitors		X	X	X	X	Fee
Continue to update and maintain wilderness messages in Junior Ranger programs, MS booklet, rack cards, website, and YouTube videos		X	X	X	X	
Assist Business Services with AV equipment upgrades for Pensacola ferry - use mobile microphone. PBC will maintain all electronics on vessel.	business services		X	Covid	ABS not doing this	AB
Replace all of the waysides and update the kiosk maps that show the water boundary			X	purchase	Install	
Develop new backcountry/backpacking messaging strategy (Perdido Key)			plan	implement -postponed new Superintendent	implement -postponed new Superintendent	
Perform cyclic maintenance on exhibits (DB VC, FB VC, FP (all))			PMIS		Postponed	
Perform cyclic maintenance on parkwide wayside exhibit hardware			PMIS		postponed	
Update/revise publications annually		X	No VIS Info Spec	X	X	

Produce audio recording for Pensacola Ferry		Complete	PBCF declined to use scrip	Postponed - need to coordinate with PBC -X	Postponed - need to coordinate with PBC -X	
Produce a new GUIS Junior Ranger booklet			X	Complete update for 50th anniversary	update	
Develop a GUIS wayfinding Sign Plan in partnership with HFC			X		who does signs	
Relocate FOPI cannon outside period of significance	Assist Cultural Resources					
Remove "fake" cemetery at FOPI area	Assist cultural resources					
Relocate exhibits (NLO, DC, MS)	FM - contractor			X-postponed 0 bldg needs prep	waiting on IDIQ	
Re-evaluate waysides for Perdido Key as part of wayside plan				assess waysides	X	
Develop a wayside plan in partnership with HFC		annually enter cyclic needs			Meet with HFC Fund with Eastern National	
Design Mine Loading web page						
Design Okaloosa (including new maps) and Cat Island (seek funding) waysides			design -postponed	install-postponed	attend meetings	
cullum servier waysides during stabilization project					Postponed -plan	P
Develop and install Exhibits for Mine Loading and Battery Cooper			design			Build
<b>Organize and Host Special Events</b>						
Plan for 2021 GUIS 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	all divisions		COVID	COVID	Complete	

continue to offer Rosamond Johnson special event	Perdido Key C of C	X	Cancelled	Complete	X	
Continue to offer special events (Fort Pickens)		X	COVID	Virtual	X	
Establish special living history/black powder programs (Ship Island)				John Training	IR2 inspections and locate magazine	
<b>Engage Existing Community Summer Camps and Pilot New Summer Youth Activities</b>						
Provide fun learning activities (curriculum-based education or similar) for summer camps visiting the park	IMMS, MS Aquarium				X- postponed - no ed specialist	X- p ed s
Develop NPS-GCRL cooperative summer youth camp activities/program including learning outcomes	GCRL, Business Services				X-postponed - no ed specialist	X-p