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GULF ISLANDS NATIONAL SEASHORE
Annual Narrative Report
October 1, 1996 through September 30, 1997

MANAGEMENT:

Recovery from the 1995 Hurricanes Erin and Opal continued into fiscal year 1997. The Santa Rosa Area of the Seashore was reopened on December 5, 1996, after a fourteen-month closure during which reconstruction of State Road 399 was completed. The replacement of water, sewer and electrical lines followed while demolition of damaged structures began and design of new facilities was completed. In terms of numbers, the area had a successful visitor season even though the only amenities were paved parking spaces and some port-a-lets. All planning and compliance for the replacement of the fishing pier at Fort Pickens were completed and bids for the project were opened in late September.

Through extensive educational efforts and working with user groups, the Park successfully eliminated roadside parking, which had been a traditional (but very destructive) use dating back prior to the Seashore's establishment.

Major management issues which were dealt with included offshore drilling in Mississippi, implementing the Service-wide campground reservation system in the Florida District of the Seashore, and initiating the pilot fee demonstration program. In its first year, the fee demo program generated in excess of $113,000 which was retained for approved in-park projects.

Funding to GUIS through agreements with other agencies totaled $36,200. A NPCA/ Georgia Pacific Foundation grant provided $10,311 plus an equivalent of $32,125 in materials. Cash donations were in excess of $9,000 and volunteers provided in excess of 40,000 hours of labor.

Through an agreement with an adjacent business owner at Fort Walton Beach, the Okaloosa Area of the Seashore was operated at minimal cost. Services provided included cleaning restrooms, picking up litter, opening and closing gates, and general day-to-day oversight. The estimated value of the services provided was $50,000.

Cultural Resources:

The Fort Pickens Preservation Project concluded on June 30, 1997. The preservation crew, composed of inmates from the Federal Prison Camp at Pensacola accomplished major repairs to the counterscarp wall of Fort Pickens. Other miscellaneous brick masonry repairs and repointing were accomplished at Fort Pickens and Fort Barrancas during the year. The Water Battery (Bateria de San Antonio) of Fort Barrancas was pressure washed and white washed during October and November. A brick walkway was laid in the courtyard of the battery in December and stucco repair made to the west face of the battery's bombproof in the spring. An elaborate steel stairway and platform was designed, built and installed by Gulf Islands maintenance personnel at Battery Cooper, completing the major renovation of that facility in February and March. The deteriorated Ranger

Station garage (old Coast Guard Equipment building, c 1939) was renovated, and miscellaneous repairs to windows, doors, roofs and porches were accomplished on other historic wood structures.

Three 106 compliance reports were completed for proposed projects in the Park: 1) installation of buried utility line at Naval Live Oaks; 2) construction of magazine doors at Fort Massachusetts; and 3) construction of new maintenance facilities in the FL District.

A Multiple Property National Register Nomination for Prehistoric and Historic properties of the Naval Live Oaks Reservation was completed under contract by the University of West Florida in June.

A revised Scope of Collections Statement (SOCS) for museum collections at Gulf Islands National Seashore was completed late in the year. Eleven new museum accessions were added to the Florida collection and some fifty objects were cataloged or re-cataloged.

A NAGPRA consultation in November resulted in the cancellation of a proposed archeological field school at a prehistoric site in Naval Live Oaks. Alternative methods for site protection were pursued.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP):

During the period October 1, 1996 through September 30, 1997 there was a supervisory training session conducted in both Districts. The session in MS was attended by 3 supervisors and the one in FL was attended by 12 supervisors. A general session for non-supervisory employees was held in MS and attended by 5 employees. There were two sessions for non-supervisory employees in FL and 12 employees attended.

Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program:

During FY 97, a total of 40,659 hours were contributed to the Seashore by 1,013 volunteers. 11,681 of these hours were contributed by Campground Hosts and Interpretive volunteers gave 25,347 hours of their time. Other Seashore divisions received 3,631 hours of donated time from volunteers.

Safety:

Annual safety inspections were conducted in both Seashore Districts during fiscal year 1997 with only minor deficiencies detected.

As part of the Hazardous Materials Management program, Ecology and Environment, Inc. was contracted to produce an "Emergency Response Hazardous Waste Management Plan" for the Seashore. Numerous recommendations and suggestions were made in a final report to assist the Seashore with proper handling of hazardous materials and any waste generated from their use. Additional funds were requested to implement the recommendations.

INTERPRETATION:

With a mix of interpretive park rangers, volunteers, intermittent and full-time seasonals, Gulf Islands National Seashore provided year round interpretive program opportunities for visitors in 1997. Several seasonals were hired for June and July in the Seashore using funding from a lapsed permanent ranger/interpreter position.

Interpretive rangers presented programs based on monthly themes at the Davis Bayou Area in the MS District. News releases provided in depth publicity each month for these scheduled interpretive programs.

During April, Gulf Islands and SMECO (an environmental consortium) held a very successful Earth Day Festival that 2,053 visitors attended at Davis Bayou. Special exhibits, an Explorer Scout troop's original play and Bayou Time Puppet Theater were shown. In August the annual National Park Service Founders' Day was celebrated and November's Welcome to Wilderness Month featured a Gulf Islands Holiday Open House which was well advertised. Programs were scheduled throughout the day, but heavy rains prevented an anticipated high attendance of visitors.

In The MS District at Davis Bayou Area, volunteers presented a new series of summer programs for children 3-5 years of age entitled "Sea Stars", which was very popular. The attendance at the Junior Ranger programs increased three times in 1997. More than 870 children participated in the Junior Ranger programs in the summer. Two interpreters were hired to work six hours a weekend to operate and present salt marsh tours in jon boats during June and July.

Ten Ocean Springs high school students volunteered at Fort Massachusetts during the summer.

"Focus on the Gulf", a curriculum-based interactive computer program to orient high school students to the importance of the Gulf of Mexico was funded through the Parks as Classrooms Program and the Challenge Cost Share Program during 1997. Staff at Florida State University are adapting, "EcoVentures" for the National Park Service which will be distributed to all high schools in counties adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico.

Ed Kanze prepared The Gulf Islands Guide manuscript, and the park provided some color slides to illustrate the guide. The park has requested Eastern National to print this full color guide booklet in 1998.

In both districts, interpretive programs highlighted National Parks Week, April 20-26, 1997.

Interpretive rangers in The FL District highlighted the 200th anniversary of Bateria de San Antonio during 1997 in their fort tours of Fort Barrancas. Also known at the Water Battery of Fort Barrancas, this original Spanish fortification was completed in 1797.

In March during Florida Archeology Month, the interpretive staff arranged for guest speakers to present several special archeology programs, and had archeology hands-on exhibits, computer games and reading materials available at Naval Live Oaks Visitor Center.

During the year, volunteers presented new bird and butterfly programs for visitors and school groups and living history encampments for visitors at Fort Pickens and Fort Barrancas. These programs supplemented the regularly scheduled ranger programs in March, May-July and October.

In The FL District, a ceramic wall painting of children snorkeling was placed in the Barrier Island Discovery Room of Battery Cooper. To use the Gulf of Mexico program CD-ROM for school children ages 3-18 in the discovery room, a lap top computer with a 17" monitor and docking station were purchased. These projects for the discovery room have been funded through the Challenge Cost Share Program with Eastern National as the park's partner providing matching funds.

A new wayside exhibit for the 15" Rodman cannon at Fort Pickens and the regulatory/interpretive sign for Perdido Key were received. The Perdido Key site bulletin rewritten in 1996 was printed. Work continues on the battery illustration for Battery Cooper and the traveling trunks. A site bulletin in limited quality was printed on the fee collection demonstration program to explain why fees had increased.

New bulletin boards with roofs and laminated materials were produced in The FL District with the assistance of volunteers and the maintenance staff.

Resource Management:

Team effort among district employees and volunteers completed resource management projects at Fort Barrancas/Bateria de San Antonio for the 200th anniversary recognition, including initiating and coordinating a brick path in the battery, painting of doors, rails, drawbridge and other fixtures, refurbishing signs, and water spraying of fort and sidewalks.

Beach cleanups in May/September in The MS District and in September in The FL District were held for the public and Adopt-A-Beach groups. In addition, there were special asphalt cleanups held in The FL District in the spring and fall at Fort Pickens and Santa Rosa Areas, as well as a spring and fall underwater dive cleanup at the Fort Pickens Jetties.

A silk screen sign operation in The FL District was initiated to prepare not only interpretive signs, but also regulatory signs for the forts.

The District Interpreter in The MS District prepared the park's Mississippi Wildlife Viewing Guide nomination and then served as a member of a joint committee to review the nominations.

Landscape architects from Southeast Region Support Office came on site in September to layout and prepare a plan with the park staff for the trail extension at Davis Bayou.

A wildflower exhibit to compliment the "going native" project at the landscaped entrance to the visitor center was prepared.

New museum items received included the photographs of Ship Island from the Daniels' diary of the black troops and two journals of logs from the Quarantine Station. Volunteers are transcribing the logs.

Cooperating Associations:

A summer sales clerk worked with the part-time clerk and district park coordinator to oversee the Eastern National operations at Davis Bayou Area and West Ship Island in The MS District. New sales items and a new interpretive program using the park patch helped increase sales in 1997.

A new site supervisor was hired in April after the Florida Eastern site supervisor accepted the new Eastern National position as Assistant Regional Manager and moved to Jacksonville, Florida.

The level of sales in The FL District in 1997 have shown good recovery from the period in 1995 and 1996 when Fort Pickens outlet was closed due road repairs from the 1995 hurricane damage.

In 1997, two Eastern National publication requests were funded to print the manuscript of The Fort Barrancas Story and to prepare the manuscript of Gulf Islands National Seashore in Pictures.

Training:

Training included a computer course on Microsoft Office Professional in The MS District and desktop publishing in The FL District for the interpretive rangers.

Supervisory training included Role of Supervisors and Managers in EO, Government Performance and Results Act, National Park Service leadership, and volunteer supervisors' training.

In The FL District, local training also include black powder rifle firing and partnership training sponsored by the local state recreation area.

Both district interpretive supervisors attended the regional meeting Eastern National hosted for park coordinators.

Cooperative Activities:

The FL District Interpretive supervisor presented a resource management/interpretation program at the regional National Association for Interpretation (NAI) conference.

ADMINISTRATION:

Grants, Partnerships, Agreements and Donations:

The following is a summary list of Grants, Partnerships, Agreements and Donations that we have entered into in Fiscal Year 1997:

1. 1448-42910-97-N-048 - This is an Intra-Agency Agreement with FWS - Repair/rebuild acclimation pens for the Red Wolfs on Horn Island. Total funding given to GUIS - $4,500. Exp. 12/31/97.

2. 1448-41410-97-N071 - This is an Intra-Agency Agreement with FWS - To construct dune cross-overs in the Santa Rosa Area of GUIS. Total funding given to GUIS - $10,000. Exp. 12/31/98.

3. 1443MA532097056 - This is a Memorandum of Agreement that GUIS entered into with the Santa Rosa Island Authority, Pensacola Beach, Florida for turtle monitoring. Total funding given to GUIS from SRIA is $10,000. Exp. 12/31/97.

4. 1443MA532097007 - This is a Challenge Cost Share Memorandum of Agreement that GUIS and ENP entered into for exhibits located in Battery Cooper. Total funding given to GUIS from ENP is $2,000. Exp. 9/30/97.

5. IA-01-5WCA90063 - This was an Inter-Agency Agreement between NOAA and GUIS for Turtle surveys to be conducted in The MS District an the outer Islands for NOA, by GUIS. Total funding given to GUIS for FY-97 monitoring from NOAA is $9,700. Exp. 9/30/97.

Previous Year On Going Agreement:

1. MOA5320-6-9061 - This was a Challenge Cost Share Memorandum of Agreement entered into by ENP and GUIS for exhibits for Battery Cooper. Total Funding given GUIS $1500.00. Exp 9/30/97.

The park received a grant from NPC/Georgia Pacific Foundation to construct dune crossovers and erect fencing to restore the beach areas hit by Hurricane Opal. $32,125 in material and $10,311 in monetary support was donated.

Budget and Finance:

As of 8/20/97 the FFS/AFS reports the park has $717,715.15 showing as income in Fee Collection Accounts.

General Donations received YTD:

Eastern Donation Drop Boxes	$5648.00
Other:	$2681.49

All audits and reviews completed by September 30.

Contracting and Acquisitions:

Contract Specialist conducted additional Purchase Card Training for the Park. We now have 33 trained purchase card users at Gulf Islands.

It is also noted that the Contracting Section has issued and administered Cooperative Agreements, Contracts and Purchase Order documents in support of JELA and SEAC operations.

In support of the park operations the following procurement and contracting transactions where accomplished.

1. Prepared and released 13 Request for Quotations. (4 more scheduled prior to completion of the FY).

2. Prepared and released 12 Formal Contract Solicitations.

3. Prepared and completed 15 contract transactions.

4. Prepared and issued 180 purchase Order transactions.
GUIS PX transaction is down an estimated 45% due to the continued training and use of the Purchase card program.

Major accomplishments this year included the completion of the water and sewer line installation at the Santa Rosa Day Use area. completion of design work for Santa Rosa's new structures, and the completion of design work and contract work for the new Fishing pier to be located at Ft. Pickens.

Contract award for the actual construction of the Fishing pier is scheduled for September 22, 1997.

Other accomplishments in the park consisted of installation of a new fresh water well on Ship Islands, and scheduled prior to the end of the fiscal year is complete rehab of the parks LCM, paint historic buildings, repair/construction of breakwater at Ship Island, and complete road stripping of the roads in both the FL and MS districts.

Property:

The park completed it's annual personal property inventory.
Transfer of Property - 3
Reports of Survey's - 45
Formal Boards of Survey's - 8- covering vehicle accidents and loss of property.

The park Housing Management Plan was amended to include new housing on Ship Island and restoration of M-8 as a housing unit in Davis Bayou.

Housing Inspections were completed in August.

Communication/Information Management:

The park installed a Ccmail Post Office to improve communication skills within the park. Installation includes providing remote access via cellular telephones on the barrier islands of Mississippi.

A DOINET router and connections has also been installed in an effort to connect park staff with inter/intranet applications and improve data transmission.

Human Resources:

Training: The Park contracted with USDA Graduate School to present EO for Supervisors and Managers course at Pensacola Beach in January, 1997. All GUIS supervisors attended, updating their required EO training, as well as supervisors/managers from Jean Lafitte NHP and Preserve; Everglades NP, DeSoto NM, and Biscayne NP. GUIS also hosted a service-wide Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) course at Pensacola Beach in January, 1997, and the NPS Leadership Seminar in September, 1997. Other training presented at the Park included IMPAC credit card, Government Performance and Results Act, Black Powder, EAP employee and supervisory , supervision for VIPs, Bloodbourne Pathogen, and payroll training. The Personnel Office conducted training with the Gulf Coast Cluster Personnel Management Specialist in Atlanta, GA, on personnel procedures and classification, and with Jean Lafitte NHP and Preserve staff on payroll system and personnel processing. The Personnel Officer served as the Gulf Coast Cluster representative in planning and presenting a Region-wide Human Resources Workshop which was presented in August, 1997.

The Chief of Administration served as a Regional GPRA instructor for the Gulf Coast Cluster and as a Regional instructor for the Servicewide training course "Introduction to Park Program Management".

Retirements:

Jack Wilburn; Chief of Maintenance, Paul Hicks, Maintenance Mechanic, and Gene Phillips, Chief Ranger.

Classification/Position Management:

Draft Resources Management Careers position descriptions were received and a position management review of the GUIS positions was accomplished (final PDs have not been approved as of this date). A position management review of the MS District Maintenance Division was completed and recommendations implemented. Plans to reorganize the dispatch operations of the Park were initiated and resulting personnel actions and position reviews accomplished (continuing at this time).

A total of 37% of the positions at GUIS are under NPS approved benchmark position descriptions (32 of 86 permanent positions). Of the remaining positions (54), 22% (12) were reviewed and reclassified during FY 1997. Other classification actions included those accomplished for Jean Lafitte NHP & Preserve, Cane River Creole NHP, New Orleans Jazz NHP, and the Southeast Archeological Center.

EO Committee:

The EO Committee was reorganized in 1997 and the role and function redescribed. The purpose was to bring the committee's role and function into agreement with needs of the Park's EO program and to structure the committee with appointed representation from the Park staff, seeking a diverse cultural representation. New members were appointed.

Diversity:

Of the Park's summer seasonal hires, 29% were minorities (8 of 27 hires). This included two Hispanic males in Recreation Assistant (Lifeguard) positions; one American Indian/Alaskan Native in a Recreation Assistant (Lifeguard) position; one white female in a Laborer position; one American Indian/Alaskan Native male in a Motor Vehicle Operator position; one black female in an Interpretive Park Ranger position; one Hispanic male in an Interpretive Park Ranger position; and one black female in a Visitor Use Assistant position.

Nine permanent position were filled during FY 1997, three (33%) were minority hires: two black males in Motor Vehicle Operator positions (one in FL District and one in MS District); and one black female in an Interpretive Park Ranger, GS-7/9 position in the FL District. In accomplishing these hires, the student temporary employment program and the student career experience program were utilized, as well as through regular appointing authorities.

Employee Relations:

One informal EO complaint was received, but not resolved at the Park level. It is pending in the formal stage. No administrative grievances were filed (one from the previous year is pending). One within grade increase was denied

Awards:

Seventeen non-monetary awards, including six time-off awards; ten on-the-spot awards; four quality step increases; and a Unit Award for Excellence of Service for Florida District field employees for the teamwork, perseverance, and dedication to the park resources and visitors exhibited in response to Hurricanes Erin and Opal.

Miscellaneous:

In September, 1997, the Personnel Officer served as an alternate Management Data Collector for the wage survey for the Pensacola, Florida wage area. This was in cooperation with the Department of the Defense, Pensacola Naval Air Station.

The new electronic payroll system was implemented Park-wide during FY 1997. This allows timekeepers to process payroll on-line and allows for electronic signatures. Associated software needs assessments , installation, and development of guidelines and instructions were completed.

In March, 1997, the servicing personnel office (SPO) functions for the Louisiana parks were turned over to the Southeast Region due to a lack of staff within our personnel operation.

MAINTENANCE:

The most significant activities of the year were the completion of an IA with the Army Corps of Engineers for A & E services to design and let a contract for our new fishing pier. At years end, the contract had been let to Soule Marine of Pensacola, Florida for $294,000.; and several noteworthy items for the Santa Rosa Day Use Area, which are the following:

1. Demolition contract completed.
2. Plans and specs completed for Phase I re-construction.
3. New underground electrical installed by Gulf Power.
4. New water and sewer lines installed by contract from Navarre Beach.
5. Three (3) temporary power poles installed at lift station locations; and four dune crossovers were completed at parking lots 1, 2, 3, and 21.

Cyclic Projects:

1. 6,600 sq. ft. of boardwalk was replaced at Ship Island with recycled plastic lumber.
2. New potable water well was drilled at Ship Island.
3. Painted the exterior of 19 historic buildings in Fort Pickens Historic District.
4. Restriped road and parking lots in both districts.
5. LCM (Landing Craft) repairs exceeded what was expected and will be repaired using FY 97 and FY 98 funds.
6. MV (Motor Vessel) Miss Teak repairs went as scheduled.

Equipment Replacement:

1. Three (3) outboard motors, 200 HP, were replaced in MS district.
2. Four wheel drive (4x4) tractor was replaced in MS district.
3. ATV (All Terrain Vehicle) was replaced in MS district.

HAZMAT Projects:

Three (3) vaulted AST's (Aboveground Storage Tanks) 1,000 gal. each for generator diesel fuel were purchased and transported by park vessels to Horn and Ship Islands. Fuel distribution line and associated material was purchased for Horn Island.

FHWA:

FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) project for the culvert replacement at Davis Bayou progressed from core drills to the PS&E (Plans, Specs and Engineering) completed. We are now in the compliance stage of this project.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND VISITOR PROTECTION:

Effects of Hurricanes on Perdido Key Beach Nourishment. Project completed. Researchers from the University of Florida conducted beach profiles on the eastern end of Perdido Key (onshore and offshore) to determine physical changes to the beach nourishment and spoil areas as a result of the hurricane. These new profiles were conducted on the same transects as the 5-year Perdido Key project for direct comparisons.

Limnological Survey of Freshwater Ponds. The ponds on Santa Rosa Island were surveyed for water quality, flora, and fauna by the University of West Florida. Stability and alteration of the ponds due to hurricane impact were examined over several time periods.

Hurricane Impacts on Seagrass Resources. The Dauphin Island Sea Lab completed quantitative monitoring of seagrasses to determine hurricane effects on spatial coverage and growth. A "functional assessment" of all park seagrass beds was also conducted.

Hurricane Effects on the Distribution and Status of Amphibians and Reptiles. Southeastern Louisiana University completed a follow-up survey to a recent comprehensive inventory of park reptiles and amphibians. The survey determined the current status of park populations and ascertained the short-term effects of two consecutive hurricanes.

Assessment of Bacterial and Nutrient Pollution. The first year of a two-year study was completed by the University of West Florida to determine water quality conditions of park waters, evaluate threats and impacts to public health and park resources, and identify possible sources of pollution. Preliminary surveys have indicated unusually high bacterial counts and nutrient-loadings. Area water quality degradation, often associated with extensive development, has been observed and documented.

Investigation of Water Quality Impacts from Ft. Pickens Septic Leachfield. An 18-month investigation of the Ft. Pickens campground septic system was completed by the University of West Florida. The study was designed to determine potential impacts on park groundwater and near-shore surface waters.

Monitor Wave/Current Interactions and Sand Transport Along the Soundside of Santa Rosa Island and West Ship Island. Louisiana State University completed field work for a 2-year study into the causes of chronic soundside shoreline erosion. The study focused on Santa Rosa Island and West Ship Island.

Deployment of a Continuous Monitoring, Shallow Water Hydrodynamic and Meteorological Station in Mississippi Sound. Louisiana State University implemented a monitoring program to obtain wave and current data for a better understanding of the variance in the wave climate affecting West Ship Island and Fort Massachusetts. The data will allow an accurate sediment budget for the island to be developed which, in turn, will be used to develop an erosion control program for the fort area.

Pensacola Beach and Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Surveys. In a cooperative project with the Santa Rosa Island Authority and FL Department of Environmental Protection, the park organized and conducted the required sea turtle survey for Pensacola Beach and Navarre Beach. The survey is required by FL DEP if any construction or major maintenance is to be conducted seaward of the primary dune line from May 1 through October 31. Beach surveys were conducted every morning from May 15 through the end of October.

Preliminary Assessment of Backcountry/Visitor Management Needs. A project was implemented by Utah State University to identify wilderness and backcountry management issues, determine interested stock holders, analyze current and past use, and identify the appropriate process to assess management needs. These findings will be utilized in the develop of a wilderness/backcountry plan.

Parking Lot Restoration. Restoration activities were undertaken in five remote parking areas in the FL district. Restoration efforts included the construction of dune crossovers made possible through a grant from NPCA and Georgia-Pacific Corporation. Sand fencing, sea oat plantings, and barrier fences were also installed as part of the project.

Beach Mouse Conservation and Preservation. An Intra-Agency Agreement was developed between the park and the Fish and Wildlife Service to further the efforts to conserve two beach mouse species, one listed as endangered and the other tending towards federal listing. The effort with include research to determine current status, assess population recovery, and assess existing mouse habitat and to develop long-term management strategies for beach mouse species within the park.

Vessel Groundings and Sinkings. Numerous tug boats, barges, and fishing vessels grounded or sunk inside or adjacent to park boundaries in which the park was involved in response and restoration efforts. A substantial need for contingency funding was identified to properly respond to such incidents. Park base funds are not adequate to cover these costs and reimbursement from other accounts can not be guaranteed.

Natural Resource Bibliographic Project. The servicewide project to catalog all natural resource related publications associated with the park was implemented. The project is being conducted by the University of Idaho.

Proposed Natural Gas Drilling Adjacent to The Mississippi Barrier Islands. The State of Mississippi proposed leasing offshore tracts for the exploration and development of natural gas reserves. Several of the proposed blocks were adjacent to the wilderness islands of Horn and Petit Bois. The proposal was eventually withdrawn following significant public opposition after the park spent substantial effort to insure the protection of park resources and wilderness values.

Natural Disasters:

Hurricane Danny moved into our area in the middle of July resulting in a full evacuation of visitors, personnel and boats, and a closure of all facilities from July 17 - 20. The Mississippi District sustained damage to the Ship Island pier, the Horn Island pier, lost shingles off buildings, and lost a part of the metal roof of a work shed. The north shorelines lost sand and the south shores were built up with sand. Many osprey nests on the islands were destroyed, most shorebird nests were over-washed and lost, and the sand dunes on the south shore were flattened with sand dispersed into the marshes.

FL District experienced sand over wash closing the road system throughout the district. There was no structural damage.

Normal district operations resumed on July 22.

Lands:

The park successfully resolved without litigation the boundary encroachment at Villa Venice by the Carlucci family. The swimming pool and fence were removed from park property.

The discussions were renewed with the State of Florida regarding the transfer of submerged lands at Predido Key. The Regional Director has formally requested in writing the transfer of those lands.

A boundary adjustment at Perdido Key is in the final stages with permission being sought from adjunct landowners.

The developers at Beverly Place, a residential area immediately adjacent to the Davis Bayou unit of the park, have agreed to perform wetlands restoration work in mitigation of wetlands damage they caused adjacent to the park.

The Supreme Court agreed to hear a lands case involving Horn Island and the transfer of land to the government.

Fee Collection:

The park's campground at Ft. Pickens went onto the NPS reservation in the spring.

The park was selected as a Fee Demonstration Area. Recreation fees increased to $6.00 per vehicle from $3.00 and the annual passed increased to $15.00 from $10.00 Entrance stations at Ft. Pickens and Perdido were staffed seven days a week, 12 hours per day.

During FY-97 the park collected $879,070 in comparison to $494,923 in FY-96. The park received $113,400 under the 80% retained collections.

Visitor Management:

Memorial Day Weekend crowds in The FL District was successfully managed with existing park staff without a significant incident occurring the entire weekend. The roadside parking ban was also implemented with no repercussions or incidents from the large crowds.

July 4th in The MS District, the park experienced highest visitation anyone could remember, with Ship Island having over 1,300 boats and 1,000 tour boat passengers, Davis Bayou with a full campground and overflowing boat ramp parking area, and Horn Island and Spoil Island packed as well. The park handled 31 PWC violations, 2 fights, made a commercial fishing case, and fought the Ship Island fire.

Wilderness:

The park entered the scoping phase of the wilderness plan for The MS District.

Communications Center:

The park entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the City of Gulf Breeze to operate an Interagency Consolidated Communications Center. This agreement provides the park with a 24 hour communications center and services for the first time in its history. One NPS FT is assigned to the communications center under the agreement. The Communications Center will further serve as a communications link to the Mississippi District in Calendar Year 1998.

The entire radio backbone was replaced (Mississippi and Florida) and 50 % of The MS District's handhelds and mobiles were converted to the new APCO 25 standard. The park began installing mobile data terminals into patrol vehicles.

Law Enforcement/Public Safety Incidents:

	1997 Incidents	1996 Incidents
Part I:	61	61
Part II:	695	114

The most significant incident was an arson fire, which destroyed what remained of the Santa Rosa Day Use Facility. The facility was in the process of being torn down and salvaged by a private contractor when persons unknown entered the area and started the fire. We tried unsuccessfully to develop leads in the case through the Crime Stoppers Program. ATF, Florida Fire Marshal and NPS agents worked the case.

The park had a sexual assault at Santa Rosa, which resulted in a pursuit by Escambia and NPS law enforcement personnel. The pursuit ended with an Escambia County deputy shooting and killing the assailant.

The park entered into a MOU with NAS Pensacola deputizing their security police as NPS police. This allows NAS Police to respond to Ft. Barrancas and the Advanced Redoubt to deal with law enforcement situations until NPS personnel can arrive.

Some 30-40 Asians and 15-20 whites were involved in a racial disturbance in Davis Bayou that resulted in one person hospitalized and several arrested. Knives and bottles were the weapons of choice. The Ocean Springs Police Department provided considerable assistance. Less than two weeks later, The MS District personnel responded to a disturbance where 15 Asian youth were cited for being in the park after the 10 p.m. closure.

Although the sponsors chose not to hold a Boaters Rendezvous this year at Ship Island, an impromptu boater rendezvous was held by many of the participants, involving some 225 boats with those being intoxicated out numbering sober visitors.

Personal water craft violations accounted for 67% of the total recreational vessel violations, although they account for a very small, but growing portion of total vessel use in the Mississippi district

Resource Protection:

Commercial vessel accidents on the Mississippi islands included the grounding of a tugboat and 11 barges, the sinking of a tug with 2 barges beached, one shrimp boat grounded on Petit Bois and a second shrimp boat grounded and disintegrated at Ship Island. Additionally, another tugboat sank outside the park, north of Horn Island, releasing a diesel spill toward the park.

This year, The MS District wrote 15 commercial fishing violations to a combination of shrimpers, gill-netters, and crabbers. All individuals cited who have appeared in court have been found guilty. Several other shrimpers were warned when we found them on or just outside the boundary. A majority of shrimpers caught were Vietnamese. We believe all of those cited knew they were in closed waters but were willing to risk the fines in order to make more productive catches.

Most of the gill-netters caught had histories of resource violations with the state. Many were running at night without any lights in dark colored boats, as well as using illegal, oversized and non-biodegradable nets. Vacant law enforcement positions on the island reduced the amount of effort we were able to dedicate to this activity. Additionally, stormy weather limited our response in our open patrol boats on some days, including the opening day of shrimp season, when an estimated 100 shrimpers were observed in or immediately adjacent to park waters.

Aircraft used for resource management purposes have resulted in most of our commercial fishing cases, and has been invaluable in working boat groundings and hurricane damage assessment.

The acquisition of a new patrol boat in The FL District gave us a more effective tool in enforcing fishing regulations which had previously been investigated in a haphazard fashion. Numerous educational contacts were made before citations were issued. Initially there was some interest in our enforcement actions by the local media and congressional delegation which has diminished.

Wildland Fire and Aviation:

The park had four wildland fire incidents with two per district. All fires were suppressed since the park lacks a fire a management plan.

On June 27th, a lightening strike ignited a 300-acre fire on Horn Island. The fire was initially fought by district personnel but U.S. Fish and Wildlife personnel, USFS and a contract boat and operator were brought in to allow Rangers to return to their enforcement duties on this hectic summer weekend.

The following weekend a fire on Horn Island caused by illegal use of fireworks was controlled by four district personnel after 11 hours of fire fighting, followed by a torrential downpour! The fire burned 62 acres.

Pensacola Aviation was carded by OAS giving The FL District aircraft capabilities.

Emergency Services (EMS and SAR):

The MS District responded to two reports of attempted suicide in the Davis Bayou area, and were involved in a search for a presumed crashed airplane north of Horn Island, and a drowning south of Petit Bois. We worked one personal water craft accident requiring helicopter transport for the victim, which was delayed for over an hour by a strong storm.

Lifeguards were at full staffing with 9 positions filled 6 in The FL District and 3 in The MS District. Aquatic rescue coverage was from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Training/Staffing:

The Division was 3 FTE below authorized levels and 14 FTE below VRAP staffing levels.

Visitor Protection came into compliance with NPS-9, NPS-57 and DOI boating requirements. Personnel received FLETC instructor certifications in pursuit driving, health and fitness, and boating. Personnel attended the FBI's environmental crimes course and FLETC's marine enforcement program.

The Fee Collection Program was increased in staffing and realigned with dispatch responsibilities being removed from the fee collection staff. A fee program manager (GS-9) was created and filled on a temporary basis (not to exceed two years).

A Visitor Use Assistant (GS-6) was created at the Naval Live Oaks Visitor Center to accommodate a displaced dispatcher. The position provides visitor center staffing and assists the Chief ranger's office with special use permits and resource management projects.

Resource Management:

The MS District:

- The Army COE pumped additional sand onto Spoil Island, while dredging the pass into Pascagoula.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife trapped and removed four wolves from Horn Island this year. Another pair is proposed for release in January 1998.
- Spoil Island was the only active nesting site for colonial ground nesting shorebirds in the district this year. Some 2,000 birds (sandwich terns, royal terns, black skimmers) used the island.
- Horn Island had 31 active osprey nests and 13 inactive nests this year.
- The bald eagle pair returned to Horn this year, but did not fledge any chicks.
- Turtle crawls relating to nesting were observed 8 times this year; 3 crawls with associated body pits were found on Petit Bois, 3 crawls and 1 body pit were on Horn, and 1 crawl and pit were observed on Cat Island, outside the park.
- A total of 14 sea turtles were washed up dead on the beaches this year; these include 8 Kemps Ridley and 6 Loggerhead. At least 16 bottlenose dolphin were stranded also; two of those had evidence of fishnet marks on their bodies.

- Several sick raccoons were found in Davis Bayou and were taken to a local veterinarian to be dispatched. The raccoons all appeared to be suffering from distemper.

The FL District:

- Mapped shorelines of park beaches at high and low tides with GPS to document shoreline changes and to provide historical database.
- Organized volunteers to continue biweekly or monthly shorebird monitoring at Fort Pickens, Santa Rosa and Perdido Key. Data entered into parks database.
- Helped organize and install 5 Osprey nesting platforms with Gulf Power and the National Audubon Society.
- Conducted monthly surveys of Perdido Key beach mouse.
- Recruited, organized and trained 20 volunteers and SCA Troy Davis to patrol park and Pensacola Beaches for turtle nests. Recruited the help of a graduate student from the University of West Florida. Conducted exotic predator removals while patrolling park beaches. Monitored nests closely during hatching times to help prevent hatchling disorientation. Assessed 41 nests, recording the total number of eggs and hatching success rates of the nests.
- Conducted beach monitoring for Santa Rosa Island Authority under MOA with SRIA paying $10,000 to the NPS.
- Conducted removal of exotic popcorn trees in the Fort Pickens Area.
- Continued storm recovery efforts by removing asphalt debris from Hurricane Opal in the Fort Pickens Area. Six dune crossovers were built by maintenance in conjunction with sand fencing to protect dune structures for visitor foot traffic.