

GULF ISLANDS NATIONAL SEASHORE
Annual Narrative Report
October 1, 1997 through September 30, 1998

MANAGEMENT:

Reconstruction of the 1886 Ship Island Lighthouse was authorized as a result of a request from a local interest group headed by Mr. George Schloegel, President of Hancock Bank in Gulfport, Mississippi. The approval was granted because of high public interest and support, because sufficient documentation exists to do an accurate reconstruction, and no expenses for construction or maintenance of the structure are to be borne by the National Park Service. Spurred by the approval of this project, the Friends of Gulf Islands National Seashore Group was established. The compliance process was started and agreements were established.

Gulf Power Company was granted a ten-year right-of-way permit to construct, operate and maintain an underground cable, a submarine cable, and an above ground switch box in the Naval Live Oaks Area of the Seashore to provide service to Pensacola Beach. As part of the agreement, Gulf Power agreed to clear and maintain the north and south fire lanes along the western boundary of the Naval Live Oaks Area of the Park by removing living and dead vegetation on an annual basis, within the boundaries of the right-of-way.

The Seashore became a participant in the Lever Brothers "Recycling at Work" program receiving a donation of approximately 1,800 square feet of recycled lumber for boardwalk projects. The lumber is to be used to reconstruct boardwalks at the Opal Beach Area of the Seashore which were destroyed during Hurricane Opal in 1995.

Recovery from the 1995 Hurricanes Erin and Opal continued into fiscal year 1998. Opal Beach facilities were approximately 60% completed during FY 98. The contractor went into default in August, 1998. The Surety Company began working on awarding a new contract in October 1998. In addition, the park began recovery efforts from the effects of El Nino, Hurricane Earle, and Hurricane Georges.

The Park's Incidental Business Permit program was expanded to include recreational charter fishermen during FY 98. The Special Park Uses program within the Seashore has been evaluated and application procedures and costs are under development to comply with NPS-53. The fee demo program was expanded to include pavilion reservation, boat launch fees, and a fee for trailer sewage dumping. A new campground reservation contract with Biospherics, Inc. was implemented. Fee procedures for the Okaloosa Area are contingent upon improving existing facilities. Total fee revenue collected for FY '98: \$1,288,033.

The Seashore completed Phase I of the development of a Wilderness Management Plan through preliminary assessment of backcountry/visitor management needs by contract with

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Cultural Resources:

Three 106 compliance reports were completed for proposed projects in the Park: 1) construction of a Florida District Maintenance Facility; 2) replacement of a culvert on Hanley Road in the Mississippi District; and 3) reconstruction of the Ship Island Lighthouse in Mississippi.

Several plans and documents were updated including the Scope of Collections Statement, List of Classified Structures Report, Resource Management Plan, and the Collections Management Report. The annual Inventory of Museum Property was completed and FY 97 catalog records were submitted to the National Catalog. Thirteen new accessions were added to the Florida museum collections database.

The Naval Live Oaks National Register Nomination was revised and submitted to the Federal Preservation Officer for review by the Keeper of the Register. The University of West Florida completed a GIS project for identification of cultural sites throughout the Naval Live Oaks Area.

An ARPA permit was issued to the University of West Florida for survey work on submerged archeological sites (8ES1905 – “Santa Rosa Wreck” and 8ES100 – “Catherine”). In addition, the University was contracted to perform conservation work on “Catherine” artifacts.

Work on several projects was undertaken: experimental stabilization for 8SR29 – “Butcherpen Mound”; repairs to the Fort Barrancas magazine, Water Battery storerooms and the Ranger Station garage; preservation work at Battery 234 including cleaning of gun emplacements, opening of gun pit drains, cleaning of rooms, sandblasting, priming and coating east gun, touchup painting on west gun; painting of 6” gun at Battery Cooper; painting of 20 historic structures at Fort Pickens (by contract); new roof shingles on Building 17; and new HVAC unit in Building 3.

The Park participated in a NAGPRA meeting at the Southeast Archeological Center in August, 1998.

Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program:

During FY 98, a total of 42,563 hours were contributed to the Seashore by 1,472 volunteers. The breakdown by division is as follows: campground hosts, 12,586-1/2; interpretation, 25,423; administration, 348-1/2; maintenance, 885; protection, 112; and resource management, 3,208. Of the 3,208 hours of volunteer time in resource management, 2,342 hours were provided by three (3) Student Conservation Association (SCA) participants.

Safety:

Safety was given high priority during this fiscal year. The Seashore's Safety Officer was an active member of the Southeast Region Safety Advisory Team as well as the Central Gulf Coast Federal Field Safety Council. An employee "Safety Awareness Committee" was appointed to develop a positive, employee-oriented safety plan and all lost time accidents are being discussed in monthly staff meetings to identify problems and possible solutions. Two members of this committee attended an OSHA sponsored Employee Safety Training course. The overall frequency injury rate for 1998 was 8.5; for lost time accidents, 5.9, and non-lost time accidents, 2.6. Higher profile and employee involvement in safety issues and concerns is expected to improve this rate. All employees with required law enforcement and/or emergency firefighting requirements are involved in a physical fitness/wellness program. Semiannual physical fitness testing is being conducted and employees are encouraged to participate in a fitness program. OAS reviewed the Park's aviation program and noted deficiencies were corrected. OM-3 (basic aviation safety) training was held for park staff.

An annual safety inspection was conducted in the Mississippi District during fiscal year 1998 with only minor deficiencies detected. The Central Gulf Coast Federal Field Safety Council was requested to conduct an OSHA compliance inspection in the Florida District.

As part of the Hazardous Materials Management program an old underground storage tank was discovered at the Fort Pickens Ranger Station. Negotiations for removal of the tank were begun.

Training and the opportunity to participate in the Hepatitis B vaccination program was provided to employees as part of the Seashore's Bloodborne Pathogens program.

INTERPRETATION:

Interpretive programs during fiscal year 1998 included the story of the 1863 African-American Louisiana Native Guards at Ship Island. Author and editor of the book Thank God My Regiment an African One: The Civil War Diary of Colonel Nathan W. Daniels, C. P. Weaver, spoke at both Ship Island and the Davis Bayou Visitor Center about the Louisiana Native Guards and their white regimental commander. The Park hosted a trip to Ship Island as part of a black media event sponsored by the Mississippi Gulf Coast Tourism Commission. Brochures were also developed about Apache Prisoners at Fort Pickens and the African-American experience at Gulf Islands. The Fort tours have been expanded to include the causes of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

A complete summer program including jon boat tours, children's programs, marine programs and rifle-firing and soldier's life demonstrations was presented in 1998. Programs were publicized in the summer Gulf Islands Guide, the park-wide newsletter.

Gulf Islands National Seashore, The Park in Pictures, a handbook of the National Seashore, is being produced by Eastern National. Expected delivery of the newly printed guide is in early 1999.

A visitor survey was completed from August 15-September 15, 1998 at Gulf Islands National Seashore based on the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Goal, IIB1.

Mississippi District Operations:

The master interactive CD-ROM, **Ecoventures: Focus on the Gulf of Mexico**, and labels of coastal high schools have been completed by Florida State University through a FY97 purchase order.

A FY98 purchase order for \$99,990 has been prepared to Florida State University to modify the master CD-ROM to include: 1) a new ecotour with National Park sites and Environmental Protection Agency facilities on a map accessed through a GULF icon; 2) a new EcoVenture with two environmental issues threatening the Gulf of Mexico: shellfish bed loss and hypoxia; and 3) 2000 copies of the CD-ROM for the National Park Service.

Theme programs were presented each month. Examples include:

November: Wilderness month programs including a traveling wilderness exhibit and a Thanksgiving Weekend open house. Press tour of East Ship Island was given with 5 reporters attending.

January: A guest speaker this month presented a program on D'Iberville's First to barrier islands.

February: History month programs included guest speakers presenting programs on "Tracing Civil War Ancestors" and "A Look at Civil War Medicine". Staff participated in the African American Press Tour of Fort Massachusetts. Park was represented in the annual Mardi Gras Parade in Ocean Springs.

March: Arts month programs included programs presented by the members of the Ocean Springs Art Association, by docents from the Walter Anderson Museum of Art and a guest speaker, Dean Mosher, who discussed "History on Canvas". Coast photographer Bob Brooks displayed prints of Horn Island scenics and wildlife. Staff assisted the US Wildlife Service with planning the first annual "Sandhill Crane Festival" in Gautier, MS.

April: A regional Earth Day Festival with 27 exhibitors was held at Davis Bayou and National Park Week program presented with emphasis on endangered species

featuring a live Florida panther. Mr. Wahl from Wildlife Rescue Inc. gave natural history programs about the endangered Florida Panther at the park, several schools, the J. L. Scott Marine Education Center and a local TV station.

August: The National Park Service Founder's Month featured a special program and book signing by C.P. Weaver about an African American regiment on Ship Island. Also the park recognized the 82nd anniversary of the National Park Service during Founder's Month and gave special recognition to the summer volunteers.

September: International Beach Cleanup took place on September 19, 1998.

Press Contacts included: Article "Boating Safety at the Barrier Islands" in Mississippi Outdoors by Mike Hobbs; extensive media contacts with the Florida Panther- endangered species program; extensive media contacts for Louisiana Native Guards, Earth Day Festival, National Park Week and Wilderness Month. Video press kits were compiled concerning the panther program and the Louisiana Native Guards.

Themes for monthly programs in 1999 have been prepared for "Rediscover Ship Island", to highlight the 300 years of history at Ship Island (1699-1999). Signs will be placed along the boardwalk at West Ship Island highlighting the historical periods.

Interpretive staff participated in the Chevron Field Day at Chevron Refinery.

Interpretive staff hosted the Taconi Elementary 5th grade classes for Marine Science Field Day. Approximately 500 students participated and became eligible for Junior Ranger certificates.

Interpreter participated in the career day in Gulfport City schools.

A special tour of Fort Massachusetts was given for the University of Southern Mississippi's Institute of Continuing Education.

Park hosted the environmental group of scientists that was headed by Suzette Kimball from Southeast Region.

Interpretive staff filmed the EcoVentures segment with Florida State University at Fort Pickens Area beach for the new interactive CD-ROM.

Interpretive staff hosted the park spring volunteer picnic on West Ship Island.

Interpreter assisted Mississippi State Department of Natural Resources in planning booklet, "Mississippi Watchable Wildlife".

Park participated in the yearly commemoration of Pascagoula Raid of Louisiana Native Guards where writer Kitty Weaver was guest speaker.

Auditorium at Davis Bayou is being updated with a video projector and screen.

A successful spring beach cleanup was held in May.

The District Interpretive Supervisor has worked with the park resource management staff and the Regional support office staff to plan an extension to the Davis Bayou Nature Trail, including preparation of the project proposal form.

The visitor center landscaping with native plants has been completed.

The District Interpretive Supervisor assisted with review of the Friend's group proposal to reconstruct the Ship Island Lighthouse for the 1699 celebration and is the interpretive representative for the Superintendent at the Friend's group meetings.

Three museum collection reports were completed and the 15" Rodman cannon at Fort Massachusetts was painted by volunteers from the University of Southern Mississippi Alternative Spring Break program.

Training included: Master Naturalist Program (District Interpreter), accessibility, wilderness preservation, aircraft use, wilderness stewardship, Interpreters' Exchange meeting, Blue and Gray Education Society conference and follow-up meeting with City of Mobile Museum, Incident command system training, interpretive curriculum coordinator, program management training, and Interpretive competency process for supervisors.

Florida District Operations

Full moon and bird walks, candlelight tours and Civil War rifle demonstrations were presented in the spring. Full moon and bird walks and "Walks Through the Woods" at Naval Live Oaks planned for the fall at Fort Pickens Area were cancelled due to Hurricane Georges damage.

During the summer new interpretive programs presented included "Birds in the Battery", "Junior Rangers", "Turtle Hurdles", "Marvels and Mysteries of the Marsh", "Wildlife Rescue" and "Fire Management at Gulf Islands". Also, interpretive rangers were at Perdido Key Area on Saturday and Sunday during the summer for 3 hours.

Interpretive staff assisted with the Naval ceremony recognizing the 300th anniversary of Pensacola at Fort Barrancas/Naval Air Station when the President of Spain visited in May, 1998.

Santa Rosa Wayside plan was prepared. Wayside panels and frames have been received and are in storage.

The forest diorama exhibit at Fort Pickens Area Museum was renovated.

New slide duplicates for the orientation program at Naval Live Oaks were prepared and installed in the slide program.

The Naval Live Oaks visitor center operation was modified and employee with visual impairment was trained to manage the visitor center. The Division Secretary serves as backup in managing the visitor center operation at Naval Live Oaks.

Perdido Key Interpretive/Regulation sign was planned, produced and installed at the Battery 233 area of Perdido Key.

An accessible video program for Fort Barrancas was produced and installed.

Four new site bulletins were produced for public distribution:

Black History
Investment in Our Parks
Birds in the Battery
Geronimo

The Fort Barrancas Story was printed through a Eastern National publication donation.

Four eagle scout projects painting interior walls and safety rails of Battery Pensacola were completed.

Volunteer staff renovated the Fort Pickens Amphitheater. The Escambia Amateur Astronomy Association presented a full summer schedule of astronomy programs at the Fort Pickens Amphitheater.

Newly designed bulletin boards were installed at 8 locations at Fort Pickens Area, 2 locations at Fort Barrancas/Redoubt, and at Okaloosa Area and at Johnson Beach in Perdido Key Area.

The auditorium at Fort Pickens is being updated with a video projector in FY 98/FY 99.

A successful underwater dive cleanup was held in April at the Fort Pickens Jetty. A similar cleanup is scheduled for September 20th, the day after the International Beach Cleanup.

Training completed: National Association for Interpretation Conference, aircraft safety, bloodborne pathogen, first responder, wilderness preservation, curriculum coordinators' workshop/summer interpretive program assignment to interpreters, specialized training for 4-6 months for two park employees, black powder rifle-firing training, Interpreters' Exchange meeting, Blue and Gray Education Society conference and follow-up meeting

with City of Mobile Museum, Incident Command System training, park representative at African-American: From Slavery to Contemporary Times conference, Naval Live Oaks slide show training and Interpretive Competency Process for Supervisors.

Cooperating Associations:

Eastern National outlets were challenged by several major storms and Hurricane Georges in 1998. The hurricane forced closure of all Eastern National outlets for several days to several months. Fort Pickens outlet (FL) was closed from September 26 through November 5 and the Davis Bayou outlet (MS) was closed from September 26 through October 13. West Ship Island outlet did not reopen in 1998. The outlet at West Ship Island suffered loss of all bookshelves and furniture due to Hurricane Georges. The outlet is scheduled to reopen in April 1999.

Although the outlets were closed for varying lengths of time, the overall sales for 1998 were up in both districts. Credit belongs to Eastern National operations staff: 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 Mississippi District. The full-time Eastern site manager worked with the interpretive staff to oversee the Eastern National operations in Florida District at Fort Pickens, Fort Barrancas and Naval Live Oaks.

The *Fort Barrancas Story* was published and sold at the three FL outlets. Work continues on the *Gulf Islands National Seashore - The Park in Pictures*, due to be published and sold in early 1999. A new publication request, *The Fort Massachusetts Story*, was prepared in 1998.

ADMINISTRATION:

Procurement and Contracting:

Gulf Islands National Seashore continues to issue and administer Cooperative Agreements and Purchase Order documents in support of GUIs, JELA and SEAC operations.

In support of GUIs operations the following procurement and contracting transactions were accomplished.

Completion of the parks annual property inventory.

Major accomplishments this year included the award of the lift stations contract located in the Santa Rosa Day Use Area, lift station contract for the Okaloosa Area, and the award of the construction contract for the new Santa Rosa Day Use facilities. Another major accomplishment was the contract completion of the new fishing pier at Ft. Pickens.

It is noted that the accomplishments listed above were made possible by the reorganization of the Administrative Division. The increase in the parks Property responsibilities, and the Contracting and Procurement needs will only continue due to the fee demo program.

Budget and Finance:

Budget:

1. Received a Planning Allowance of \$4,582,000. This represented a \$520,300 increase to the FY 1997 Planning Allowance. However, in FY 1997 we included \$216,700 X-Yr ONPS carryover from 1996 in our FY 1997 initial plan. Because of this, the increase was actually \$324,300 versus \$520,300. The \$324,300 increase included \$35,100 FY 1997 X-Yr ONPS carryover and an assessment of -\$23,000 for change of station. Increases were distributed as follows: Headquarters +\$62,600 (19%), Maintenance +\$84,700 (26%), Interpretation +\$35,500 (11%) and RMVP +\$141,500 (44%).
2. The regional hazardous materials funding was \$78,000 (ONPS) for three projects – Disposal of Hazardous Contents (\$3,000), Boardwalk Decking (\$10,000) and Distribution Systems (\$65,000).
3. The regional resource management funding was \$105,500 (ONPS) for three projects - Protection and Monitoring of Threatened and Endangered Species (\$14,500), Correct Impacts of Visitor Use (\$68,500), and Develop parkwide GIS (\$22,500).
4. For permanent change of station, we requested and received \$104,200 (ONPS). Six employees were moved during this fiscal year.
5. We received a carryover of construction storm funding of \$1,451,322 (Fund 05). We obligated and expended \$1,104,532 in total. The pier was completed this fiscal year. The Santa Rosa Boardwalks, Day Use Buildings and Utilities Projects are on-going. We will carryover \$346,790 to FY 1999.
6. 6c funding for seasonals was received (ONPS) in the amount of \$6,500. We also received \$57,000 (ONPS) of 6c for permanents.
7. In the housing program, we carried over \$33,466 from FY 97. We have expended \$34,606 in quarters operations and we have received \$19,968 in quarters income. We have a projected carry over of approximately \$18,800 to FY 1999.
8. We received \$1,100 in donations this fiscal year.
9. Two new reimbursable accounts were established. One with Santa Rosa Island Authority for \$10,000 for Turtle Surveys to be completed by December 1998 and one with US EPA for Eco Ventures: Focus on the Gulf for \$99,990 to be completed by September 1999.

10. The Fee Demo program carried over \$113,662 from FY 97 to 98. The funds were assigned to the Surf and Rescue project for year one (\$52,500) and to the Communication System (\$61,000). The income received for FY 98 was applied to the Cost of Collection \$493,800 and \$287,178 to the following projects: Communication System, Davis Bayou Nature Trail, Upgrade of Campground Electrical System, Okaloosa Improvements. The projected carryover from FY 98 collections should be between \$250,000 and \$300,000. Approximately \$1M should be authorized in total during FY 98.

11. Region authorized \$47,000 for Hazard Fuel Projects (Fund 85). Florida expended \$8,414 and Mississippi Districts expended \$4,001. The \$34,585 balance will be carried over to FY 99.

12. A \$650,000 ISTEA grant for construction of a multi-use path through the Santa Rosa Area was authorized.

Finance:

13. Seventy Bills of Collection were issued, received and deposited (@\$8,000) and 182 deposit tickets for campground and other funds were input in FFS (@\$927,000).

14. Approximately 325 utility payments totaling \$204,000 were reviewed, tracked and paid by Third Party Draft in the park.

15. Travel authorizations for over 200 trips were reviewed and over 200 travel vouchers were reviewed and paid by Third Party Draft in the park. Only three vouchers went to the Accounting Operations Center (AOC) for payment. Six permanent change of station authorizations and related vouchers were completed.

16. American Express statements were reviewed, processed for payment, and sent to AOC for airfare totaling \$19,700.

17. Miscellaneous Reimbursements to Individuals totaling 55 for \$3,000 were reviewed and paid by Third Party Draft in the park.

18. Wright Express statements were reviewed, processed for payment and sent to AOC for equipment fuel totaling \$2,300.

19. Motorpool payments totaling \$150,000 were reviewed, tracked, processed for payment and sent to AOC.

20. Seven Incidental Business Permits were deposited and expenditure transfers for administrative charges were completed for \$1,400.

21. Fifty five expenditure transfers were completed.

22. Franchise Fees totaling \$27,525 have been received and deposited.

Communication/Information Management:

Goals reached for the Information Technology include:

- Designing and developing a plan for installation of two new networks at Fort Pickens and Davis Bayou and there connection to the existing network at Live Oaks.
- Installing new equipment including computers, modems, printers, etc and moving existing assets into the field.
- Completing trouble calls on IT equipment, Customer Service.
- Training people on an individual basis on the use of equipment and software.
- Procurement and installation of NT server at Live Oaks.
- Upgrading existing software and hardware on all computers.
- Creating and developing an expanded park web page.
- Preventative maintenance on IT equipment.
- Maintain network integrity and performance.
- Perform scheduled and special data file backup, archival and recovery.
- Technical advice in the selection/development of cost effective, usable and supportable hardware and software that is compatible with existing resources

Human Resources:

In October of 1997, the Personnel Officer was promoted to another position. Beginning in November 1997 and lasting until May 1998, the Personnel Management Specialist assumed the duties of Acting Personnel Officer. The former Personnel Officer continued to provide, as necessary, classification and employee relations activities until May, 1998 when the new Personnel Officer entered on duty.

A 5-Year Position Management and Classification Plan has been initiated and is expected to be submitted to the Regional Director by September, 1998. All current and all proposed positions will be covered by the Plan.

During July, the Personnel Officer, Personnel Management Specialist, and the Administrative Support Assistant attended OPM sponsored Delegated Examining Unit (DEU) recertification training in Atlanta, Georgia and Memphis, Tennessee. Completion of the training will allow our personnel office staff to continue to perform open competitive examining for vacancies.

The Personnel Management Specialist, during the period of October 1997 until May 1998, conducted a new employee orientation trip in the Mississippi Islands portion of the park. The Specialist was also able to conduct FPPS Parallel training for all users in both the Florida and Mississippi Districts; on-the-job training for the new Administrative Support Assistant who came on board in November 1997.

Training:

Training continues to be an important asset to employee career development. In 1997, many employees completed a variety of computer classes at New Horizons Computer Learning Center in Pensacola, Florida. The entire Administrative Division attended the Franklin Covey Time Management seminar. Many employees attended a variety of courses including: Park Program Management, Bloodborne Pathogen, Aircraft Safety and Incident Command System, OWCP Case Management, Compass II, Concession Program Management, National Electrical Code, EO for Supervisors and Managers, National Recreational Fee Management Training, 40-hour Law Enforcement Refresher, Black Powder Refresher, Motorboat Operator Course, Defensive Driving, Firearms Training, Law Enforcement Supervision, and First Responder.

Staffing:

14 permanent positions were filled by either competitive selection, accretion/redescription, reassignment, and/or non-competitive promotion (2-Park Ranger (P), GS-0025-7/9; Administrative Support Assistant (OA), GS-0303-05; Administrative Officer, GS-0341-13; Personnel Officer, GS-0201-12; Program Manager, GS-0340-13 [reassignment]; Budget Analyst, GS-0560-11 [accretion of duties/redescription/non-competitive promotion]; Contract Specialist, GS-1102-09 [accretion of duties/redescription/non-competitive promotion]; Computer Specialist, GS-0334-11; Motor Vehicle Operator, WG-5703-04; Lead Visitor Use Assistant, GS-0303-06 [reassignment]; Resource & Visitor Services Assistant, GS-0303-06 [reassignment]; Maintenance Worker, WG-4749-07 [VRA]; Park Ranger (P), GS-0025-5/7/9 [NPS Intake Program].

Temporary promotions were made for Supervisory Fee Program Manager, GS-0301-09 [NTE 2-years through competition]; and Supervisory Park Ranger, GS-0025-11 [less than 120 days].

Two TERM appointments were openly competed and appointments made for Visitor Use Assistants at the GS-0303-4 and -5 levels.

All Career-Seasonal Law Enforcement positions were converted to full-time as were all part-time Interpretive positions due to increased organizational/operational needs. The Recreation Assistant (Lifeguard) positions were upgraded and filled this year at the GS-4 level.

Diversity:

Of 28 seasonal hires, 11 (39%) were minorities or females. This included one white female, one black female and one Hispanic male in the GS-025 series, and one white female in the maintenance (WG) division. Of nine term appointments, five (55%) were filled by females and minorities, including two black males and one black female. Of nine permanent hires, six (66%) were filled by females and minorities, including two black males (GS-025 & GS-341), one black female (maintenance/WG) and one American Indian/Alaskan native male. Four in-house promotions included one white female to a GS-13 position, one black male to a GS-13 position, one black female to a GS-9 position, and one American Indian/Alaskan Native female to a GS-11 position.

Employee Relations:

No formal complaints of discrimination were made during this FY. One informal complaint was resolved in-house and a long-term formal complaint was resolved through formal agreement.

Awards:

In total, 23 awards were presented to employees in 1997. Included were: 11 On-the-Spot, 4 STAR awards, 4 Quality Step Increases, 1 Time Off Award, and 4 non-monetary 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.

MAINTENANCE:

Work continued on reconstruction of facilities at the Opal Beach Area which were destroyed during Hurricane Opal. Park maintenance staff is completing portions of the reconstruction including roofing of 24 picnic pavilions, work on six bathrooms and the ranger/maintenance building. Gulf Power restored the primary service and telephone lines were reestablished. Under separate contract, five lift stations, force mains and all water lines at the main complex were installed.

At the Okaloosa Area, new sewer lift station and force main were installed to county sewer. The old septic tank was removed.

At Horn and Ship Islands a new fuel distribution system was installed with new fuel tanks which were purchased in FY-97 to bring this entire system up to all codes and regulations. Hurricane Georges (September 28, 1998) destroyed the fuel distribution lines on Ship Island (approximately 3,000 feet).

The Fort Pickens fishing pier was completed in October, 1997, at a total cost (including engineering planning, design and construction) of \$431,000.

Cyclic Projects:

1. Rebuilt engines in Miss Teak
2. Completed hull repair on LCM

Equipment Replacement:

1. 25' boat for Mississippi District
2. 4 x 4 tractor for Florida District

FHWA:

FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) contract for the culvert replacement at Davis Bayou was awarded to Parnell Construction.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND VISITOR PROTECTION:

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

- Several new projects were funded and implemented:

- Develop GIS - USGS/BRD
 - Monitor/Protect Nesting Sea Turtles - Florida District
 - Develop Wilderness Management Plan

- Several projects were completed:

- Effects of Hurricanes on Coastal Ponds - Gulf Coast Research Lab
 - Investigation of Potential Leachfield Impacts at Fort Pickens Campground - UWF
 - Beach Nourishment Monitoring Program at West Ship Island - LSU
 - Soundside and Nearshore Profile Response to Storms on West Ship Island - LSU
 - Soundside and Nearshore Profile Response to Storms on Santa Rosa Island - LSU
 - Impacts and Post-Storm Adjustment on Santa Rosa Island - LSU
 - Hurricane Impacts on Aquatic Habitats at Fort Pickens - UWF
 - Preliminary Assessment of Backcountry/Visitor Management Needs - Utah State U.
 - Natural Resource Bibliography - Idaho State University

- Ongoing projects were managed and tracked:

- Water Quality Assessment of Nutrient and Bacterial Pollution in Park Waters - UWF

Survey of Bird Populations Following Hurricanes Erin and Opal - UWF
Assessment of Macrobenthic Impacts from Hurricanes Erin and Opal - GCRL
Analysis of Plant Succession in Post-Storm Surge Environment - UWF
Wave-Current Measurements in Mississippi Sound - LSU
Perdido Key Beach Mouse Protection and Habitat Restoration

- Project proposals submitted for several funding calls and opportunities:

Servicewide Unified Call
Regional GIS
Regional Science and Resource Management
Servicewide Technical Assistance
Challenge Cost Share
National Park Foundation/Canon U.S.A.
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

- Perdido Key Beach Mouse:

GUIS hosted the annual meeting to evaluate park habitats and population, discuss necessary improvements, and development plans for future management
predator control activities implemented in conjunction with FWS and USDA
population surveys and habitat assessments conducted with assistance of FWS/Auburn University

- Beverly Place Subdivision:

developed monitoring plan for buffer restoration
monitored construction activity and compliance with permit conditions
threatened legal action to force compliance
developed plan and coordinated enhancement activities in NPS pine savanna habitat

- Developed sand management plan for Ft. Pickens and Santa Rosa areas
- Developed project proposal form for project review and to trigger NEPA
- Coordinated site visit to and meeting on West Ship Island beach erosion problem - Dr. Stone presented research findings and future management recommendations - Dr. Stone was asked to undertake additional work relative to future needs and proposed pier extension
- Completed annual calls:
Investigator's Annual Report
Pesticide Use Logs and Proposals
Resource Management Plan update
threatened and endangered species expenditures

predator trapping report
Wildlife Morbidity/Mortality Survey
Vaccination Use on Wildlife

- Presented "Barrier Island Processes" program to RM&VP staff in both districts
- Coordinated various volunteer projects:
 - seagrass monitoring in partnership with Washington H.S./ICAMS
 - eagle scout project installed sand fence
 - Sierra Club plant sea oats
 - Escambia H.S. continues to propagate sea oats
 - school group from Tennessee installed sand fence
 - directed study students from UWF studied reproduction in certain fish and geologic origins of NLO bluffs
- The park's Fire Management Plan was finalized and approved. We now have a plan, including a Prescribed Burn Program, which is badly needed throughout the park.

Mississippi District:

- CY-98 has been the best year in memory for the protection and documentation of nesting birds. With the use of a seasonal biotech and a Student Conservation Association employee, we have been able to offer the greatest degree of protection to terns, skimmers, osprey, and eagles ever. Several thousand terns successful nested on Spoil Island, with skimmers and terns nesting on East and West Ship and Horn Island. Nesting areas were delineated with signs and employees regularly patrolled the closed areas to educate the public during busy weekends. Additionally, we were able to achieve a much more accurate census due to these employees. We were also able to obtain the most accurate census in many years of the osprey populations of the islands due to these employees. As a result, we've found more nesting osprey than we knew existed.
- Successfully maintained our monitoring of stranded sea mammals (dolphins and whales) and seaturtles, as well as seaturtle nesting.
- Restored several acres of Mississippi pine savanna wetlands by mechanically clearing underbrush from beneath the pine trees. This mechanical restoration was needed in order to replicate the effect of fire in this area. This restoration work has drawn praise from the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and the Mississippi Coastal Extension Service.
- Convinced the Coast Guard to respond to the offshore islands to remove a hazardous materials container, which washed up on the beach. This was the first time the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office had responded to pick up hazardous materials. This

cooperation resulted from a concerted effort by the park to get a greater degree of assistance from Coast Guard MSO. Following Hurricane Earl, three more hazardous material containers were found on the islands and subsequently removed by MSO.

- The park has been developing a stranded vessel response/removal plan during the past year. During that time we paid to have a commercial fishing boat removed from the West Ship Island shoreline after it became obvious the owner was unable to salvage the vessel. This was the first time the park has ever been successful in removing an abandoned vessel that would have turned into a long-term obstruction and physical hazard. Later in the year, the park also removed a shrimp boat from the north side of Ship Island after the captain was arrested for boating under the influence. Because this did not require a wholesale salvage operation, the park was able to get the boat towed by a commercial towing company without having to pay; the owner/operator was billed for the tow. These types of incidents have caused us to modify the plan we've been working on. Although a final draft of the plan is now ready, it too may be modified after a November seminar on grounded vessels
- Continued the practice of charging tugboat operators for damages to natural features when they ground their tugs or barges in seagrass habitat along the north sides of the islands. So far this year, we have charged three tug boat captains due to groundings within the park. The park has also continued enforcement of the commercial fishing prohibition begun in 1995. During the first 9 months of this year, intrusions into the park have been greatly reduced over previous years and we have only apprehended three violators, as opposed to nine during CY-97.
- The park's involvement in the red wolf propagation program ended this past year. A pair of wolves was placed on the island in late July, but was removed three weeks later when it became apparent that the wolves were not feeding, but becoming dependent on handouts from campers. Several months after the wolves were removed, the Fish and Wildlife Service made the decision to reduce the scope of this program and decided not to place wolves on Horn Island.
- In order to obtain a higher level of understanding of the influence of waves and currents on the shoreline of West Ship Island, particularly around fort Massachusetts, the park contracted with L.S.U. to conduct wave/current monitoring. This data collecting occurred through much of the year and the school is in the process of providing the park with recommendations for dredging, sand budget, and a beach threshold configuration.
- Shoreline monitoring by GPS has been accomplished obtaining high quality GPS data which will help us obtain a picture of shoreline changes in coming years.

Florida District:

- District Resource Management Specialist Mark Nicholas completed the resource management competencies program.

- Monitored and protected nesting shorebirds
- Implemented the sand management plan for the district to include the installation of ¼ mile sand fencing near parking lots and along roads.
- Managed the sea turtle monitoring program to include predator control. The park entered into an agreement with USDA for predator control assistance. Santa Rosa Island Authority funded a Student Conservation Assistant who was primarily responsible for monitoring nesting sea turtles on Pensacola Beach. The park played a key role in an educational program by Gulf Power Company to educate residents of Pensacola Beach to reduce harmful lightning that adversely impacts nesting sea turtles.
- Coordinated the park's fire management program. Assisted the efforts of the Asheville HotShot Crew detailed to construct a fuel break at Naval Live Oaks.
- Improved habitat for the Gopher Tortoises, a threatened and endangered species.
- Removed exotic vegetation from approximately five acres.
- Monitored sea grass beds with the RM boat.

VISITOR PROTECTION

Chief Ranger's Office:

- Law Enforcement Memorandum's of Understanding were developed and signed by Gulf Breeze Police Department and Okaloosa Sheriff's Department. Negotiations continue with Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties and Florida Marine Patrol. Initial discussions with Harrison County and Jackson County sheriff's departments concerning MOU's have taken place, but no new MOU's have been developed to date. This will be accomplished this winter.
- Considerable staff time was spent implementing the Incidental Business License program for charter boat captains. The program is place and compliance has begun.
- The park's Special Park uses program was evaluated. Application procedures and costs have been developed to comply with the recently released NPS-53.

Mississippi District:

- A physical security plan was developed in February and approved by the Chief Ranger. The plan prioritizes security needs for the district as money becomes available. Since that time, the fee collection building at the Davis Bayou campground has been placed on an alarm system.
- Work has begun on developing a photovoltaic power system for Horn Island to reduce the dependency on diesel powered generators. The plan is still being finalized in region.
- The effects of crimes in the park on visitors are sometimes hard to determine. In several categories, crimes have been reduced, while in other categories, we are documenting a

greater number of incidents. Violent crimes and drug offenses have gone down , although traffic offenses and boating offenses have increased. This can be attributed to a greater emphasis to reduce visitor accidents. Traffic accidents have gone down considerably, while boating accidents have gone up. Commercial fishing cases have dropped dramatically, but preservation of natural features incidents have increased slightly. Theft cases have increased, although most of that increase is due to initial resistance by some people to paying a new boat launch fee. Those violations are coded as thefts.

Offense	1997	1998
Assault	2	1
Burglary	0	1
Vandalism	11	12
Drug Possession	3	1
Theft	1	85*
Weapons	1	3
Disorderly Conduct	2	7
Public Intoxication	1	7
Boating Violations	4	46
Commercial Fishing	9	3
Preservation of Natural Features	3	5
Traffic Violations	39	157
Motor Vehicle Accidents	5	2
Vessel Accidents	5	9
Assist to Visitors	2	19
Assist to Agencies	4	11

*theft increase due in large part to boat launch fee implementation.

Note: 1997 figures are for 12 months; 1998 figures are for period of January through August.

- The Mississippi Gulf Coast Boaters' Rendezvous was again held at Ship Island,. The event drew approximately 1,500 boats and 10,000 people. The event was managed under ICS with agency participation by Coast Guard, Harrison County, Am-Serve, and NPS. There were 17 arrests for disorderly, public intoxication, boating under the influence, and damages to resources. NPS rangers handled 195 incidents during the event, with deputies from Harrison Co. and Coast Guard taking care of about the same number.

- The Mississippi District is getting more and more large groups showing up on the tips of the islands. This year we had several groups of 150 to 200 boats (500 - 700 people) on different weekend days. This level of visitation pushes patrol rangers way outside their patrol and response capabilities. We've found we can not provide adequate coverage for these large crowds, along with the rest of the islands.

Florida District:

- Memorial Day Weekend crowds proved to be manageable without the need for outside assistance and resources. We went through the entire holiday weekend without a significant incident occurring. Efforts by the local gay and lesbian community to implement a public transportation system were only partially successful as our primary workload continued to center around traffic control and parking issues in the Santa Rosa Area.
- The July 4th Holiday presented us with new challenges in 1998 in that the entire State of Florida was experiencing severe drought conditions and the fire danger remained extremely high. We strictly enforced a ban on all fireworks and open fires and maintained a high state of readiness for wildfires, which paid off with no fires resulting during the entire holiday period. Public cooperation with our efforts also proved to be exceptionally good.
- Security intrusion systems were installed in the following buildings during the year:

Naval Live Oaks Administrative Building and Visitor Center. (3) entrance stations, and the Ranger Station. The intrusion alarm at Perdido Key prevented the loss of government property during an attempted burglary. Panic alarms were installed at each location for use by those employees who often work alone.

Fort Pickens and Perdido Key have video surveillance equipment installed. The cameras have proven to be effective in determining the identity of attempted burglars. Fire alarms were also installed at the Naval Live Oaks building and Fort Pickens Ranger Station.

- Walt Woodside completed the FLETC Physical Security Course..
- Fire Extinguishers in the Florida District were inspected and repaired/replaced where necessary.
- A *55 Park Watch cellular program was implemented in the park this year with all cell phone calls programmed to be sent to the Gulf Breeze Communications Center.
- Motor vehicle accidents on Highway 98 through Naval Live Oaks dropped from 27 in 1997 to 11 in 1998. We can attribute most of this drop to the fact that we were successful in convincing Florida DOT to close the remaining medians that were contributing to the majority of the accidents and reducing the speed limit.
- Crimes against persons and property decreased from 83 incidents reported in 1997 to 34 in 1998. Part of this can be attributed to increased patrols in all areas of the park as well as the construction of an automated gate at the entrance to Fort Pickens that is closed after hours. By making the area accessible only to registered campers and other authorized users after hours, our vandalism incidents have dropped (from 11 to 9) but more importantly the seriousness and financial impacts of the vandalism has diminished dramatically.

- Vehicle burglary numbers dropped from 38 to 17. While some of this decrease can be attributed to the dune destruction caused by Hurricane Opal, we also can take credit because of our increased preventive law enforcement patrols on Highway 399, Perdido Key Parkway and Fort Pickens Road. These patrols were largely possible because of the addition of our seasonal work force.
- Enforcement patrol hours and miles were increased in 1998 and the net result was 651 violation notices as compared with 609 in 1997. Since the CAD system was not operating in 1997 we can not compare the numbers of calls taken and "coded out" between the 2 years in order to see the differences. DUI's are down from 17 in 1997 compared with 11 in 1998 (again these numbers are only through 9/8/98 and will not reflect the remainder of 1998).
- Boat patrols for Incidental Business Permit compliance, commercial fishing enforcement and water safety were scheduled throughout the year. We won one significant commercial fishing case (Dennis Parsons) that helped to reinforce our jurisdiction and law enforcement presence on park waters. Thus far there have been no contacts made with individuals who were not in compliance with our newly instituted IBP Program. A number of routine patrols were conducted in the vicinity of McCree Cove and Big Lagoon by Dennis Parsons and Ben Hansel; once again, establishing our presence and getting boaters used to the fact that we will be enforcing boating safety regulations.
- Law Enforcement Field Training Officer Program (FTO) developed and instructed by John Hughes. Three employees (2 seasonals and 1 permanent) completed the program.
- Junior Lifeguard Program run by Lead Lifeguard Robert Quinata. A total of 11 young boys and girls completed the 6-week program.
- Established Lead Lifeguard position to improve organizational effectiveness and accountability. The net results were no problems with tardiness, conduct or performance issues. There were no drownings on guarded beaches this year.
- Implemented Ranger competencies for the division. Competency goals were established and reached through Friday training sessions.
- I-200 Incident Command training was held in May with over 40 park staff attending. Our ability to evacuate the park in an organized and concerted fashion during storm events is now at a point where teamwork is the watchword and the key players appear to be on the same page as to responsibilities and accountability under the ICS system. Plans have already begun for the I-300 Intermediate Incident Command course for next year.
- OAS reviewed the park's aviation program and noted deficiencies were corrected. OM-3 training was held for park staff and all protection personnel attended. OAS carded aircraft and pilots in Florida and aircraft are being used for resource and law enforcement.
- Department of Interior Boat Operators course was put on four times last year, with all park boat operators including maintenance attending. Unfortunately, our instructor has now transferred and we are trying to get another employee into the Instructor course.
- Ensured that all employees with required law enforcement and/or emergency firefighting requirements are involved in a physical fitness/wellness program. Semiannual physical fitness testing is being conducted and employees are encouraged to participate in a fitness program.

- Developed a comprehensive goals and work plan for the division aligned with the park's GPRA goals.
- Developed and implemented Ranger Directives to assure employee accountability.
- The park has implemented a new radio system that links the Mississippi District to a common dispatch/communications center in Gulf Breeze. The Mississippi District made the technological jump to narrow-band radios as part of the same radio system upgrade.
- Communications Center staff received training from SACC on ordering resources under ICS system.

Other Training Accomplished:

Small Craft Enforcement: Hansel, Parsons, Kinney, and Moore

Environmental Crimes: Hughes, Wilson

Physical Security: Woodside

OSHA Safety : Bova

Criminal Investigator School-FLETC: Hughes

Emergency Medical Technician: Howell

Natural Resources Management: Nicholas

Wilderness Management: Hopkins

Law Enforcement Leadership : Prange, Parsons

Fee Collection:

- The Fee Demonstration program has resulted in some significant changes in the park. We are now collecting user fees for boat launches at Davis Bayou and allowing the public to reserve picnic pavilions in both districts for a fee. The pavilion reservation system, on the other hand, has been very popular. The park has also instituted a use fee for trailer sewage dumping, but this has seen very little use.
- Implemented the Biospherics contract with no disruption to campground operations.
- Purchased pier-fishing license for the Fort Pickens Fishing Pier so no fishing license is required to fish on the pier.
- Collected in excess of \$1.3 million dollars
- Increased the annual pass to \$20.00.

- Hired a term visitor use assistant for the Mississippi District. This is first time an employee has been dedicated to fee management in this district.
- Took over and redesigned remit program from Administration
- Have increased coverage at Fort Pickens and Perdido Key Entrance Stations to 7 days and 12 hours during the summer months which has impacted both income and security
- Funded the printing of the interpretive spring, summer, and fall activity schedules due to Fee Demonstration information incorporated into the handout. Also funded a Fee Demonstration brochure.
- Funded the construction of the Santa Rosa Entrance Station.
- Funded the Star Pavilion structure evaluation to the tune of \$2,000.

The Jon Boat Tours were removed from the program. The Santa Rosa Entrance Station operation was delayed until May of 1999. Okaloosa fee collection operation delayed. In the process of preparing a Ship Island fee collection proposal.