

## Request for Proposals: Gulf State Park Master Plan

posted: September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014

### Introduction

On behalf of the Governor of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the University of Alabama System is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) in relation to the development of a Master Plan for Gulf State Park in Baldwin County, Alabama.

### Narrative Overview

As one of Alabama's most cherished assets, Gulf State Park preserves more than 6,000 acres of coastal scenery and wildlife habitat on the historic Alabama Gulf Coast. Adjoining the cities of Orange Beach and Gulf Shores, the park features spectacular views of natural freshwater lakes, preserved wilderness areas, and white sand beaches along the Gulf of Mexico. It is a popular family destination for many residents within Alabama, the United States, and the world.

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan and in 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused major damage to both the park facilities and landscape. The storms devastated the park's woodlands, blowing down trees and inundating lowland areas with saltwater. Remediation efforts, including reforestation and prescribed burns to deal with the effects of these storms, have since been made. Also as a result of these storms, the park's beachfront lodge, inshore campgrounds, and fishing pier were damaged or destroyed. A beach pavilion and fishing and education pier have subsequently been built.

To add to these setbacks, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill detrimentally affected the park's unique ecosystem, coastline, and the large number of visitors to the Alabama Gulf Coast. Scientists are still assessing the effects of the millions of gallons of oil that flooded into the Gulf after the explosion of BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig. The long-term damage caused by the oil and the chemical dispersants used on the spill may not be known for years.

While these events have created a need for revitalization and recovery, they also present a unique opportunity to define the future of Gulf State Park. It will need to be supportive of maintaining and expanding growth in visitors while preserving the resources that make the area inviting. A comprehensive approach to future development will allow for consideration of cost efficient solutions to any infrastructure issues and environmental restoration.

The Gulf State Park Enhancement Project has been proposed as an early restoration project of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment process (<http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration/early-restoration/phase-iii/>). This project would provide ecologically-sensitive enhancements to Gulf State Park, a 6,150-acre park located in Baldwin County, Alabama and operated by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The project consists of five components:

- **Rebuilding the Gulf State Park Lodge and Conference Center** as a "green" overnight stay and meeting facility that will improve public access to the park's beaches, trails, freshwater ecosystems and other natural resources, as well as serve as a model of resilient, environmentally friendly coastal development. The reconstruction will occur within the footprint of the original lodge and conference center.
- **Ecological Restoration and Enhancement of Degraded Dune Habitat** to restore approximately 50 acres of dunes in the park through creation of sand movement corridors at strategic locations to allow for the natural buildup of dunes. Additionally, native vegetative plantings, possibly including sea oats, sand oats, or seaside bluestem, would be utilized to stabilize dunes and promote increased dune coverage.
- Building an **Interpretive Center** which would include meeting space and classrooms as well as indoor and outdoor exhibits devoted to promoting better public understanding of the valuable natural resource services provided by Alabama's coastal ecosystems.
- Building a **Research and Education Center** adjacent to the existing nature center in the park to expand the park's research and education programs and which would include classrooms and laboratories to support a year round program of K-12 environmental education.

- **Visitor Enhancements** which improve the visitor experience by expanding walking, cycling, or running opportunities in the park through construction of approximately 9.5 miles of new trails and approximately 3.5 miles of enhancements to existing park trails.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and the associated response activities, resulted in the loss of a large number of beach, boating, and fishing visits to the Alabama Gulf Coast's natural resources. This project is designed to partially compensate for these losses by improving the public's access and enjoyment of the Gulf State Park's natural resources, enhancing public understanding of Alabama's valuable coastal ecosystems, and restoring degraded dune habitat in the park.

A master plan for Gulf State Park will become a comprehensive guide for integrating the proposed components with the existing park conditions and amenities. The vision statement for this revitalized state park is:

*Gulf State Park will be an international benchmark of economic and environmental sustainability demonstrating best practices for outdoor recreation, education, and hospitable accommodations.*

### Project Scope

The selected firm or team will provide a Master Plan for Gulf State Park that integrates the proposed project components with existing conditions and amenities that achieve the stated vision for Gulf State Park. Additionally, the Master Plan firm or team will be expected to suggest any other improvements to Gulf State Park that would help it achieve its fullest potential. The Master Plan will demonstrate a method to achieving the stated vision for Gulf State Park.

This RFP does NOT include requests for architectural design, civil engineering, or other professional services related to individual component development. It also does NOT include requests for construction documents or construction services.

The firm will work with The University of Alabama System's Gulf State Park Project Team. This team is acting on behalf of the Governor of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to realize the stated vision for Gulf State Park.

The process will be interactive and will require consistent, effective communication between the firm and client.

See the document's appendices for more information related to existing site conditions, permitting commitments, and the overall vision for Gulf State Park.

### Professional Experience

Firms or teams that respond to this RFP are expected to have significant experience in the following areas. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive but instead demonstrate the breadth and type of experiences expected.

- Land Use
- Programming
- Project Scheduling and Phasing
- Community Input
- Ecological Restoration Planning
- Landscape Architecture
- Transportation Planning
- Communications
- Visual Presentations
- Performance Guidelines
- Design Guidelines
- Cost Estimating
- Low-Impact Design or comparable sustainable practices
- LEED, SITES, or similar environmental rating systems

## Submittal

### *Content*

#### - Introduction:

Provide a brief narrative describing your understanding of the project, your firm or team's perspective on it, and any other information you would like to highlight.

#### - Firm or Team Description:

Provide a broad explanation and history of your firm or team. Because of the diverse skill sets that are necessary for completion of the master plan, we anticipate applications from project-specific teams as well as individual firms. For team responses, in addition to the individual firm descriptions, describe any previous collaboration and note collaborative projects.

#### - Team Structure and Bios:

Describe the organizational structure for this project and provide bios for individual team members. Describe their relevant experience as well as their role on this project.

#### - Process Description:

Describe a potential approach that your firm or team may take to this project. Use this section as an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the project. Do NOT describe a standard process, but rather a customized approach that reflects the existing conditions, goals, and vision for Gulf State Park. Explain how your firm or team would execute that approach and how your team structure supports that methodology. Illustrate your process using whatever method is appropriate including infographics and existing case studies. It is NOT necessary to develop a schematic proposal for the plan of Gulf State Park.

#### - Fee Structure:

Provide an understanding of your fee schedule and an estimate of your monthly cost for this project. These estimates may be presented as a range. Prior to the final firm selection, the scope of work will be finalized and the fee structure negotiated.

#### - Project Examples:

Include a minimum of 4 project examples per firm that demonstrate your capacity and experience in the expected professional services. Select examples that address how you handled complex challenges in highly visible situations and identify individual team members that are also proposed for the Gulf State Park Project. Include at least 1 project that had a public participation component. For that project(s), describe the tools and methods you used and how the results were integrated into the final result. If public participation is a significant component of your process, describe it more fully in the "Process Description" section. Include references for each project with name and current contact information.

### *Evaluation Criteria*

- Demonstrated understanding of the scope of the project
- Previous experience with projects of similar complexity and scale
- Ability to clearly and completely explain a potential process for Gulf State Park Project
- Team composition and appropriate levels of experience
- Quality of RFP submittal and interview presentation

### *Format*

Coil bound 8-1/2" x 11" – landscape or portrait format (There is a 12 page limitation on proposals not including appendices with project case studies, references, and other supporting materials. Clarity through brevity and conciseness is expected in achieving a complete package.)

6 printed copies

1 digital pdf (CD or Flash Drive)

### *Send to*

The University of Alabama System Gulf State Park Project  
Attn: Cooper Shattuck  
500 University Boulevard East  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

*Questions and Clarifications*

Email questions to [info@gsp.ua.edu](mailto:info@gsp.ua.edu)

Subject line should read: Questions for GSPP Master Plan RFP

Questions and answers as well as clarifications will be posted to [www.gulfstateparkproject.ua.edu](http://www.gulfstateparkproject.ua.edu)

No phone calls please.

Project Schedule

RFP Released	September 4 <sup>th</sup>
Deadline for RFP Submittal	October 6 <sup>th</sup> (received by close of business, not postmarked)
Firms selected for Interviews	October
Interviews	October

Appendices

- A: Site Maps
- B: Project Requirements
- C: Project Vision Document

## **Request for Proposals: Gulf State Park Master Plan**

### **APPENDIX A: SITE MAPS**

These maps are taken from the “Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: Programmatic and Phase III Early Restoration Plan and Early Restoration Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.”

The document may be found online at: <http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration/early-restoration/phase-iii/>

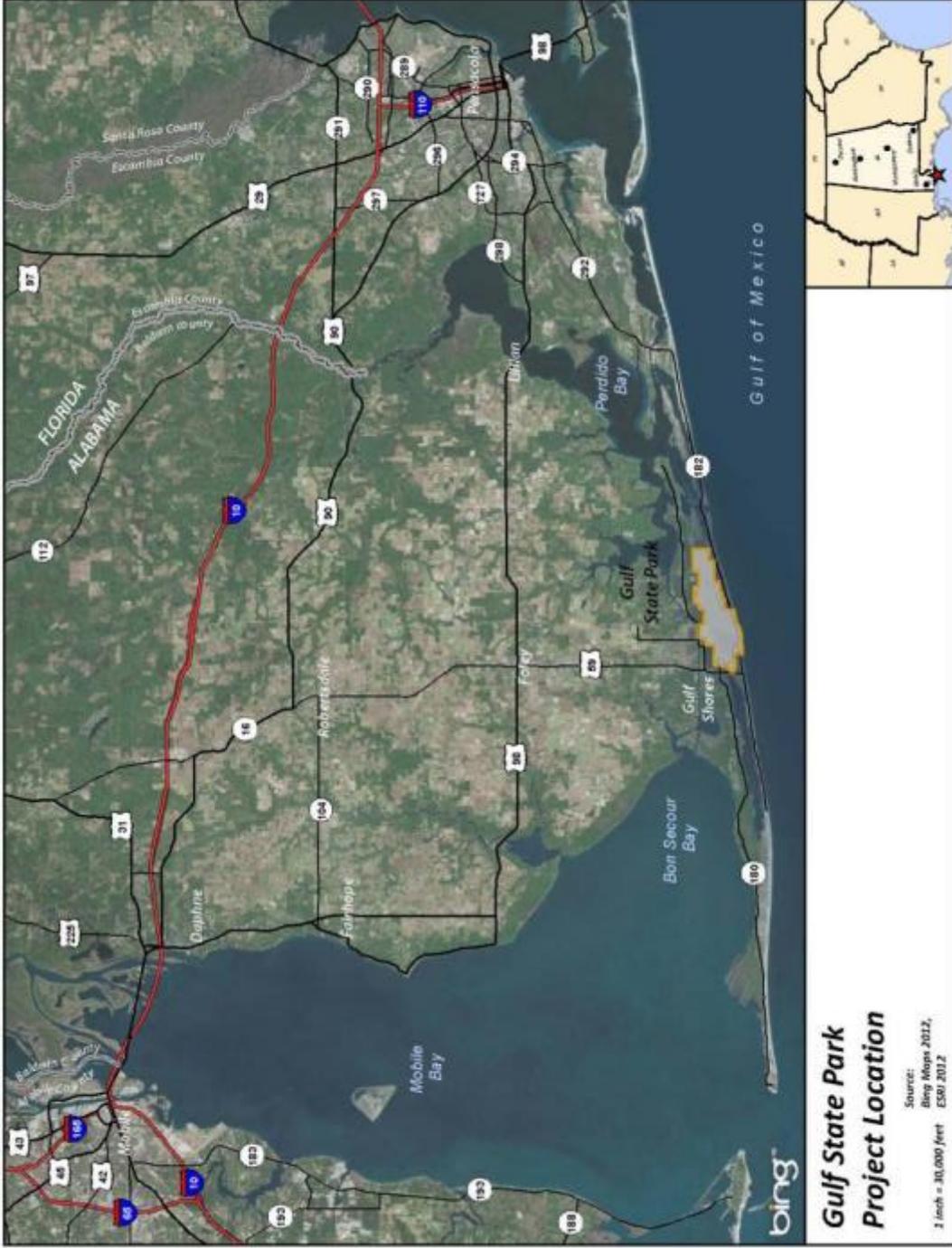


Figure 11-9. Gulf State Park vicinity map.



Figure 11-21. Location of Alabama Beach Mouse critical habitat.





Figure 11-20. Jurisdictional wetlands in Gulf State Park.



Figure 11-13. Dune enhancement action area.

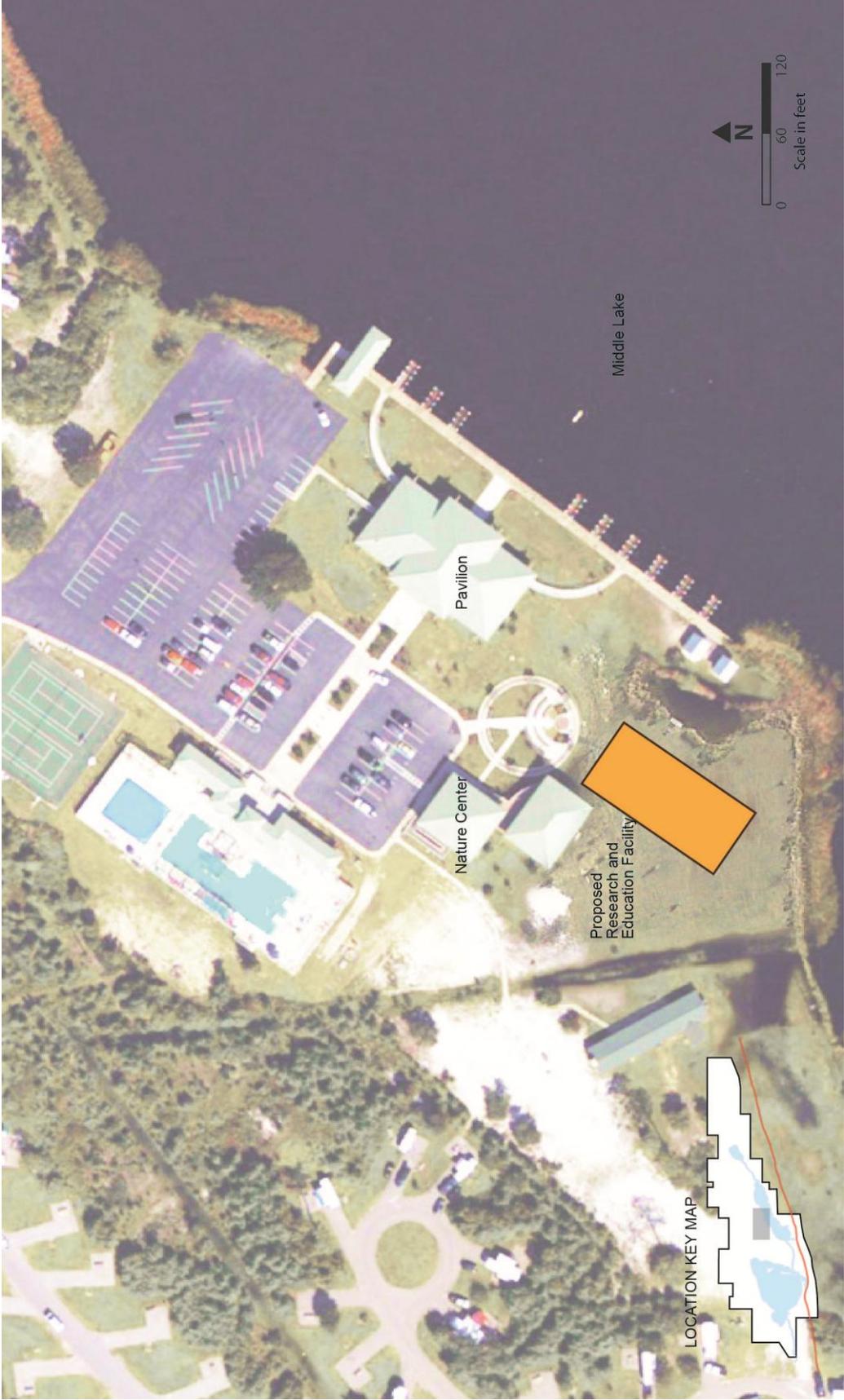
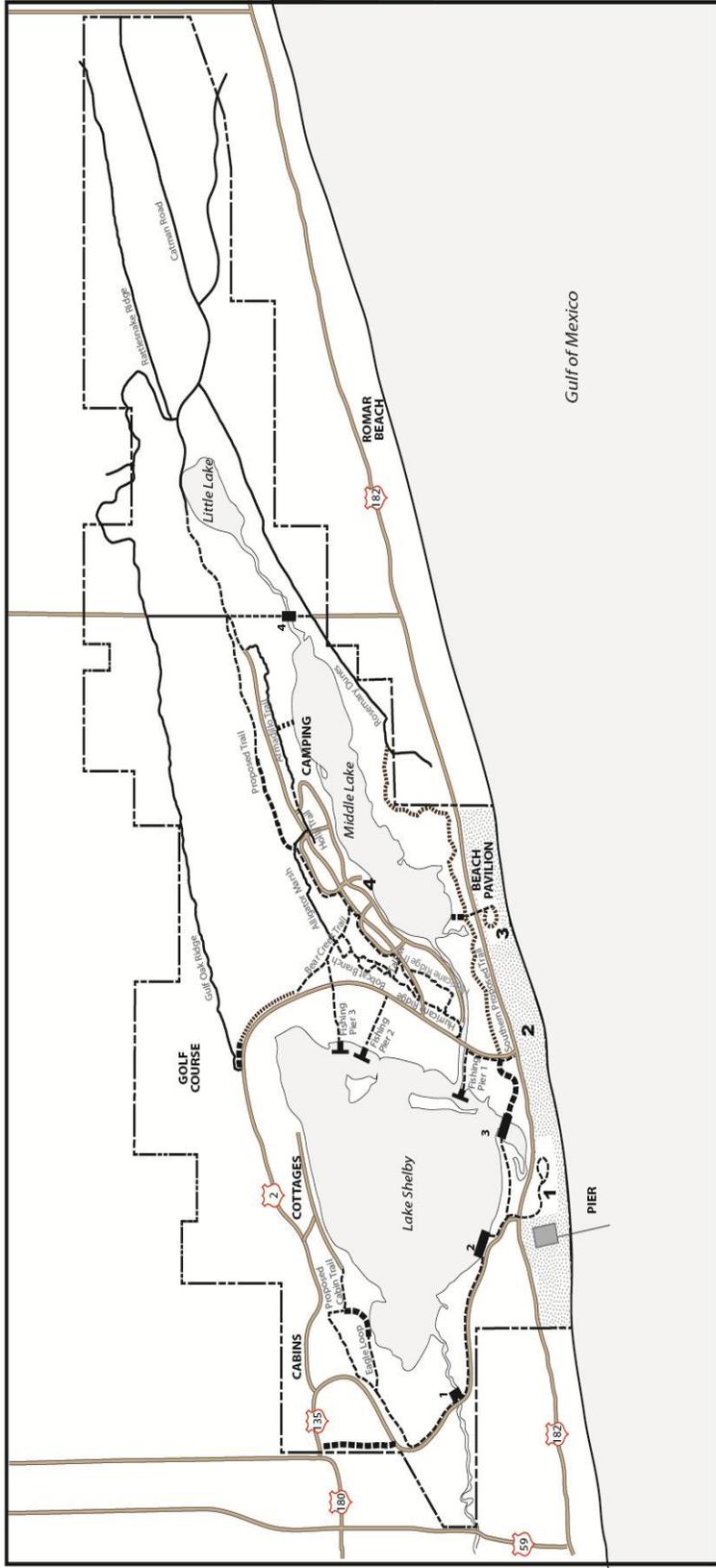


Figure 11-15. Gulf State Park Research and Education facility location.



## Gulf State Park Proposed Trails

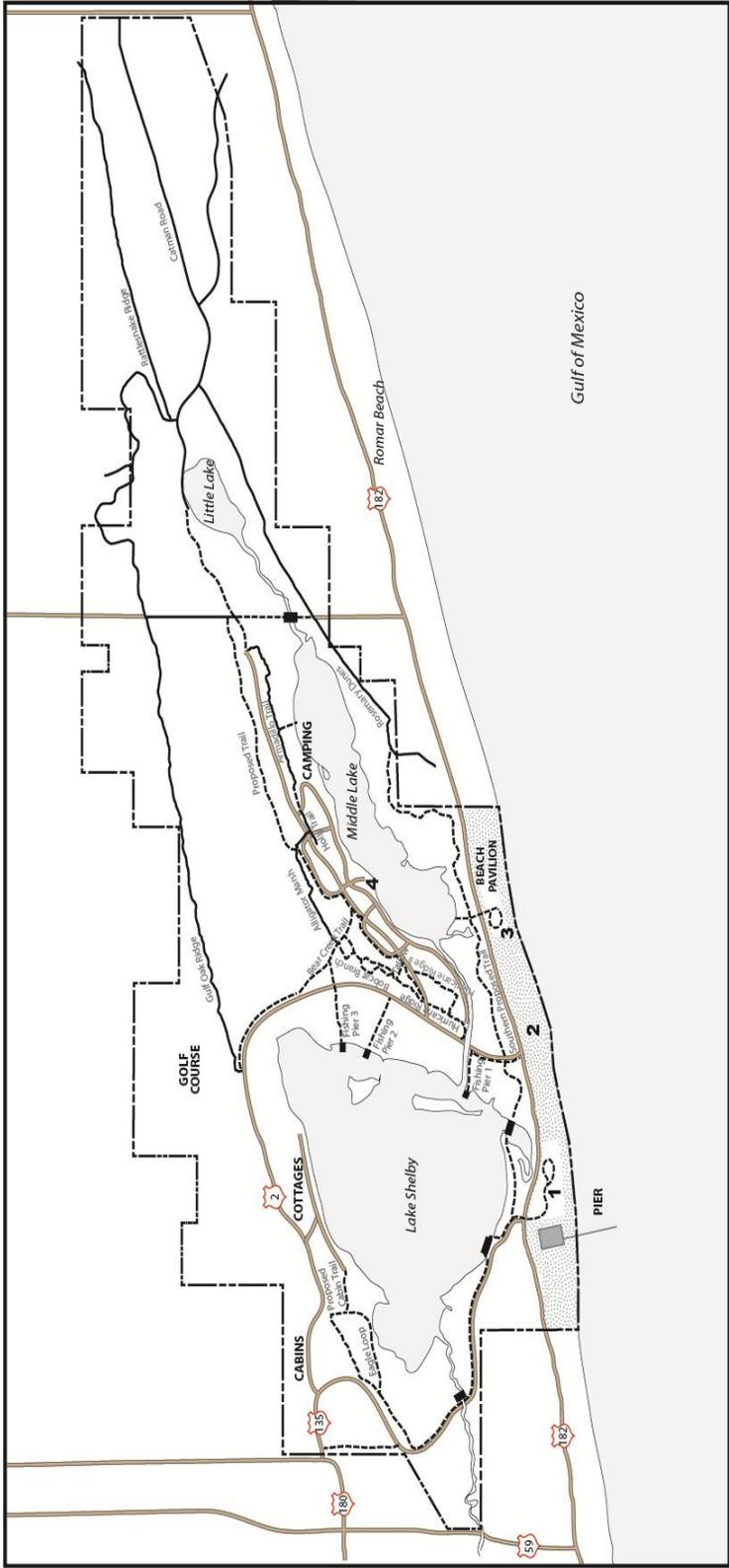
- LEGEND**
- Gulf State Park (6,150 acres)
  - Existing Road
  - Existing Trail
  - Proposed Lodge
  - Proposed Dune Restoration Area
  - Proposed Interpretive Center
  - Proposed Research/Education Facility



0 2,000 4,000  
Scale in feet

- Proposed New/Improved Upland Crossing
- Proposed Raised Upland Crossing
- Proposed Wetland Crossing
- Proposed Open Water Crossing
- Proposed Fishing Pier

Figure 11-16. Trail locations.



# Gulf State Park Project Locations

- LEGEND**
- Gulf State Park (6,150 acres)
  - Existing Road
  - Existing Trail
  - Proposed Trail Improvement
  - Proposed Pier/Bridge
  - 1** Proposed Lodge
  - 2** Proposed Dune Restoration Zone
  - 3** Proposed Interpretive Center
  - 4** Proposed Research/Education Facility



Figure 11-10. Project element locations.



# 2000 Aerial

1 inch = 300 feet



## Legend

 Buildable Footprint of Proposed Legislation - 21.6 Acres

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**APPENDIX B:  
CURRENT PERMIT COMMITMENTS**

Current permit commitments can be found at [www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org/nrdaSupportingDocumentation.aspx](http://www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org/nrdaSupportingDocumentation.aspx)

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**APPENDIX C:  
GULF STATE PARK VISION DOCUMENT**

(Download as separate file found at <http://www.gulfstateparkproject.ua.edu/rfp>.)