

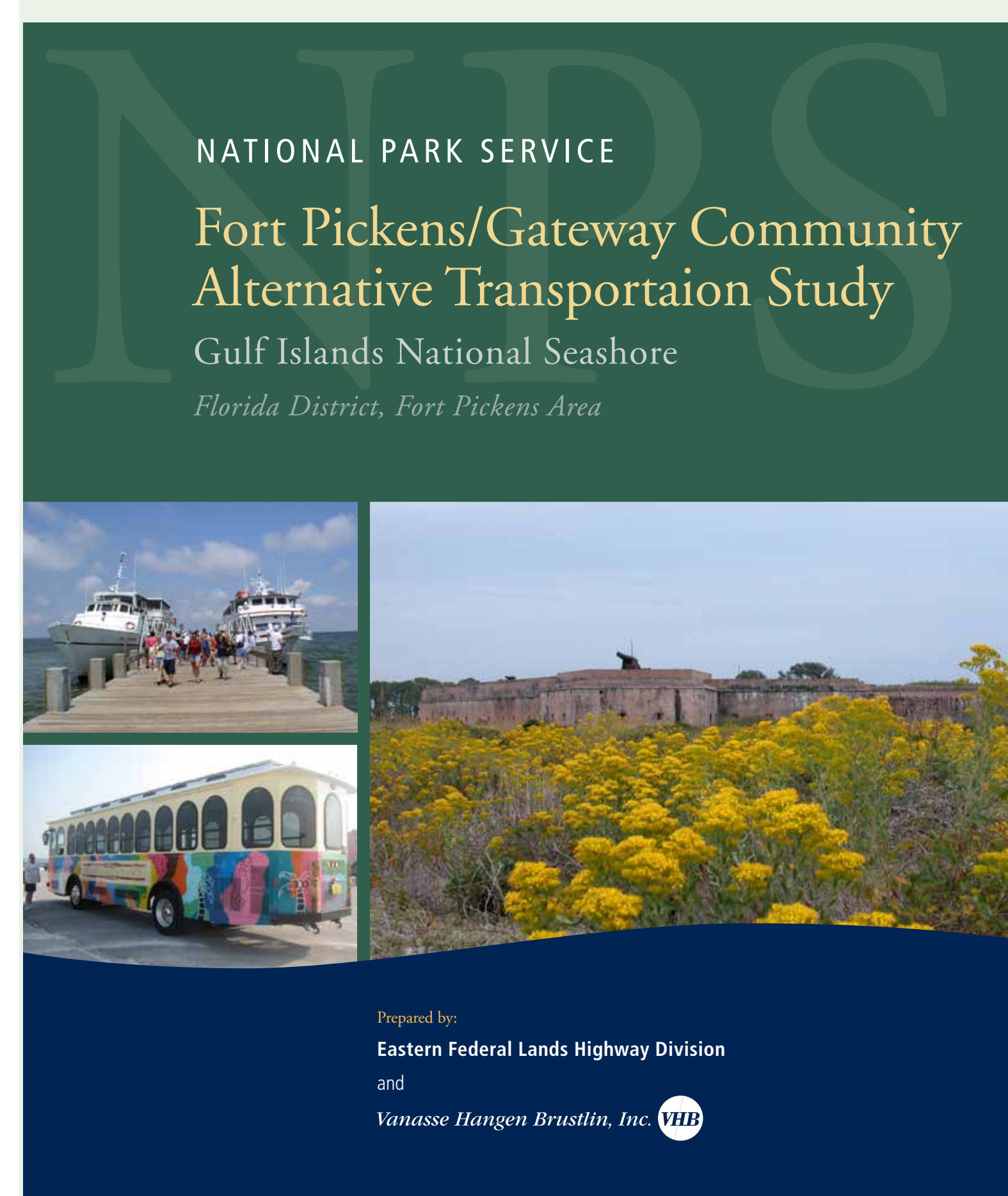


PROJECT BACKGROUND

It has long been acknowledged that the Fort Pickens area of Gulf Islands National Seashore would benefit from water access for the reasons outlined below. The National Park Service has been working steadily to establish this access, as demonstrated by the timeline of documents building to this project, which will provide the final improvements needed to ensure a quality experience for visitors to Fort Pickens who arrive by water.

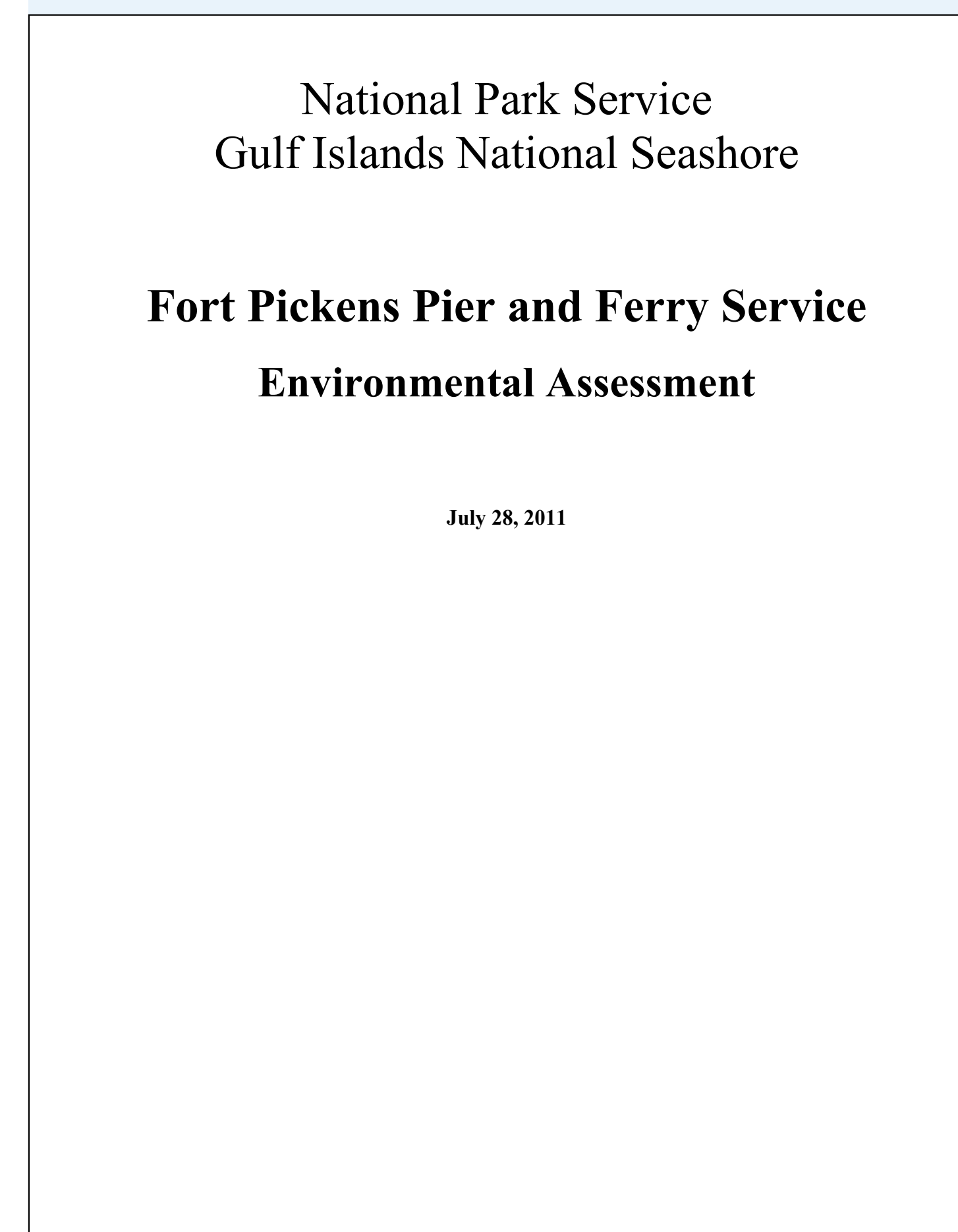
- Most visitors traveling to the Fort Pickens area arrive by private vehicle. From downtown Pensacola, visitors drive 7.5 miles to Santa Rosa Island and must travel over two bridges and through the community of Gulf Breeze. This route is often congested.
- Hurricanes in 2004 and 2005 damaged sections of Fort Pickens Road so severely that it was closed for nearly five years, limiting access to the Fort Pickens area to hikers, bikers, private boats, and a few small commercial providers.
- Although Fort Pickens Road was reconstructed, it is closed 10 to 12 times a year because of flooding. Closures vary in length from a few days to weeks.

2009



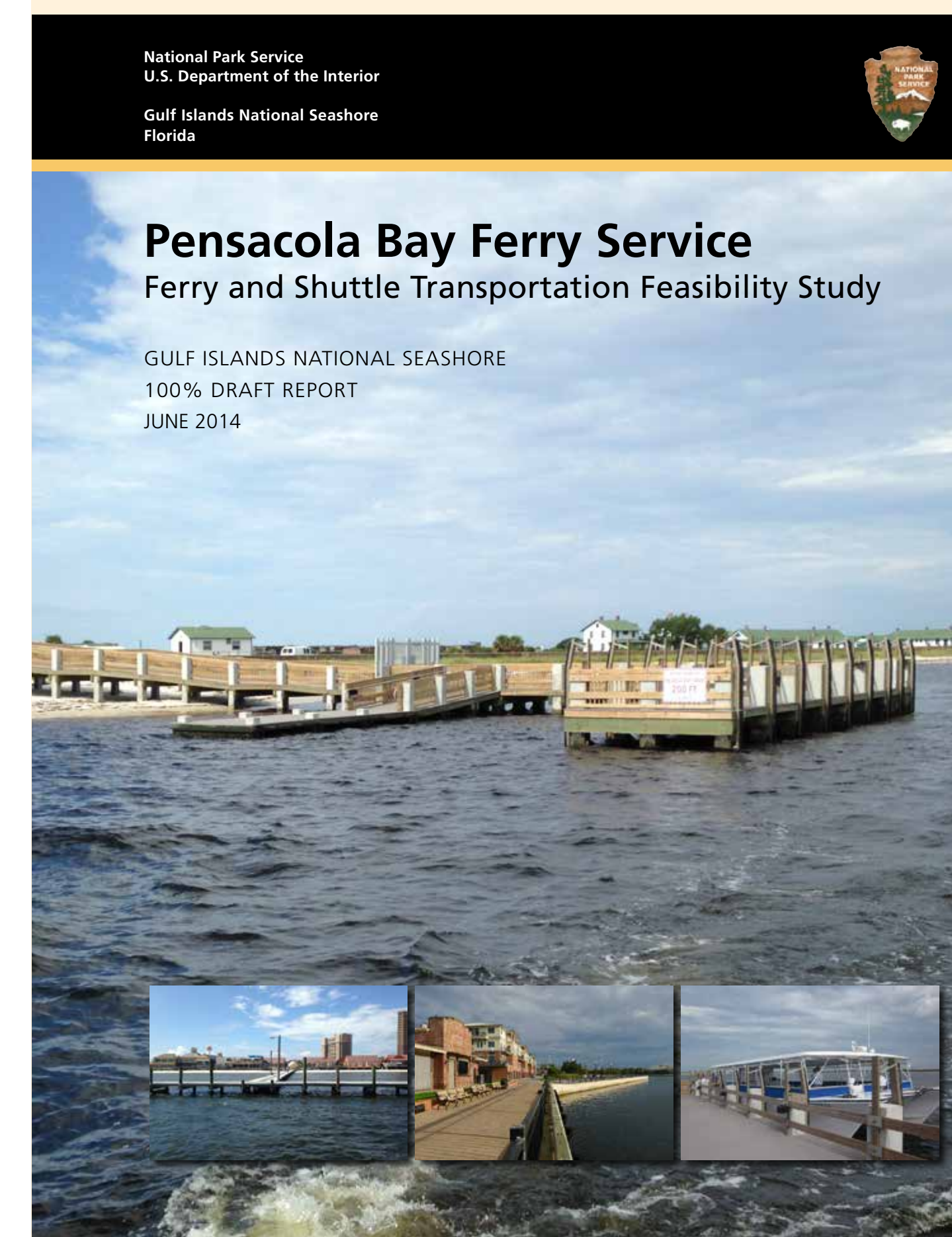
This study provided a strategy for supplementing Fort Pickens Road with alternative transportation systems to provide consistent public access to the Fort Pickens area in the future. Alternative transportation ideas included establishment of a Pensacola Bay ferry service that had long been envisioned by multiple stakeholders for this area.

2011

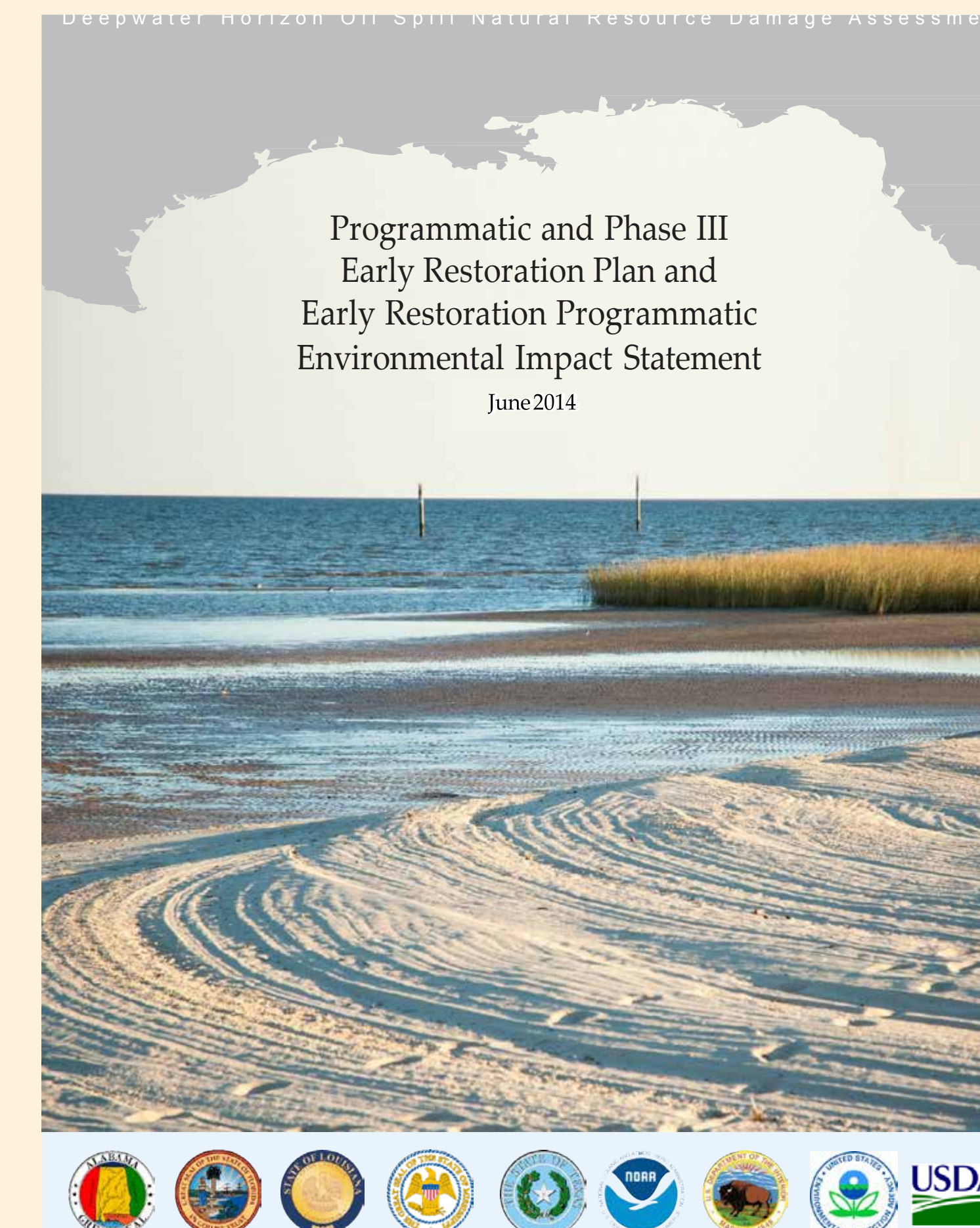


This project established improved docking facilities at Fort Pickens for a future ferry system and visitor use opportunities.

2014



Members of the NPS planning team have been coordinating with local stakeholders to develop a financially feasible ferry service and a shuttle system for the Fort Pickens area. This draft technical study is scheduled to be completed Fall 2014.



This programmatic document includes planning for the purchase of ferry vessels and establishment of the Pensacola and Pensacola Beach ferry facilities as one of the many actions being undertaken to restore the Gulf Coast following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.



FERRY SYSTEM OVERVIEW



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community



PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

Purpose

This project continues the park's plans to establish seasonal passenger ferry service between Fort Pickens, Pensacola, and Pensacola Beach. The purpose of this project is to improve landside facilities and access opportunities for ferry passengers during a visit to the Fort Pickens area.

Need

The project is needed because, although the park recently constructed a dock for use by a future ferry service, other landside facilities to support visitation via ferry are currently lacking. Although there are a number of historic buildings available for adaptive reuse, they currently offer limited accommodations for the comfort and orientation of ferry visitors. Ferry visitors arriving at Fort Pickens can walk or rent bicycles to visit the beaches and other attractions in the Fort Pickens area; there is currently no shuttle service available to improve visitor circulation to sites that are further away such as the campground and the amphitheater.





PROJECT AREA



Gulf Island National Seashore

Fort Pickens Ferry Support Facilities and Shuttle Service

Environmental Assessment

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

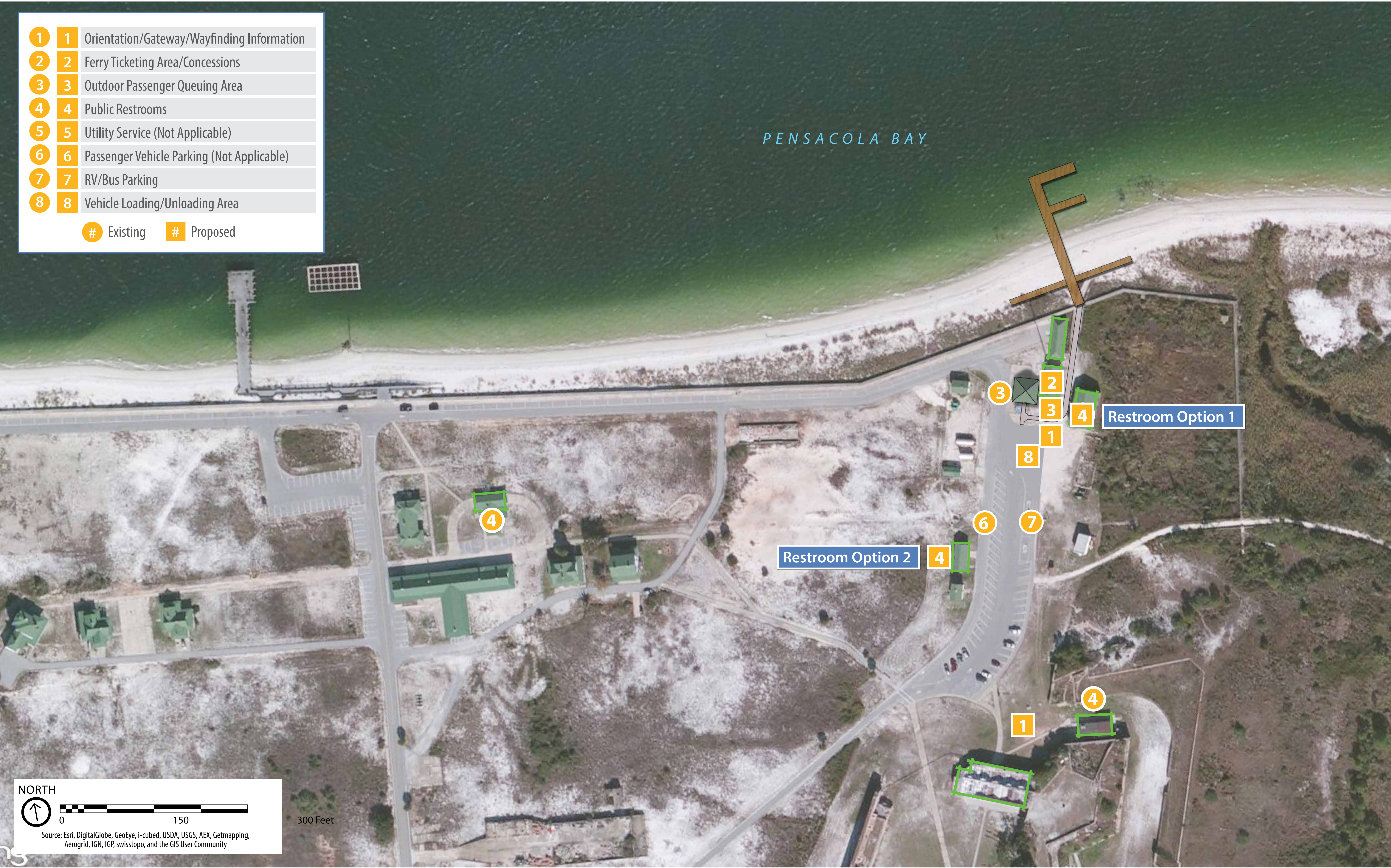


PROJECT AREA



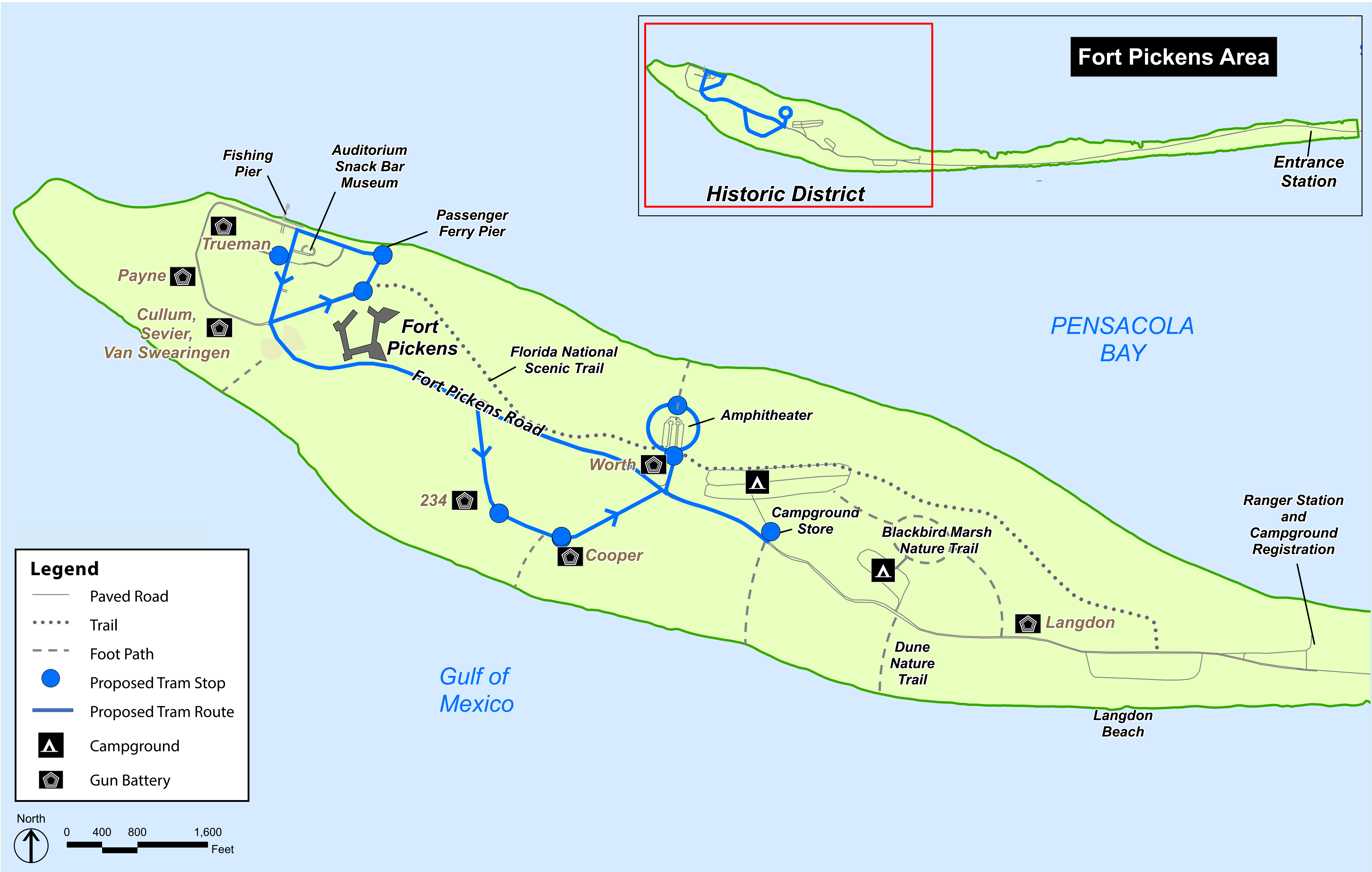


PRELIMINARY SITE CONCEPT: FERRY SITE ELEMENTS





PRELIMINARY SITE CONCEPT: SHUTTLE SERVICE





HOW TO COMMENT & NEXT STEPS

How to Comment

Online:



Electronic comments are preferred and can be submitted at
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/guis>

OR

Written:



Hand-written comments can be submitted tonight in the comment box provided or can be submitted later by mail.

If mailing comments, please send to:

Superintendent
Gulf Islands National Seashore
1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563

Comments are requested by
October 17, 2014

Next Steps in the Planning Process

Fall 2014	Public and Agency Scoping	←WE ARE HERE
Winter 2014 - Spring 2015	Review Public/Agency Comments & Develop Environmental Assessment	
Spring 2015	Public Review of Environmental Assessment	
Summer 2015	Review Public/Agency Input	
Summer 2015	Announcement of Decision	

