

Chapter 6

Natural and Historic Resources

Dauphin Island's natural and historical resources define the character and identity of the Town and are the foremost reasons why tourists and residents are attracted to the Island. The Town is committed to the preservation of its unique historical and cultural resources and works with the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board and the Dauphin Island Property Owner's Association to ensure these facilities and locations are properly protected.

The Natural and Historical Resources Chapter provides an inventory and assessment of natural and historical assets and proposes recommendations and strategies to preserve and enhance their existence. Natural resources include the Island's coastal resources, topography, hydrology, soils, forests, wetlands and natural habitats and wildlife. Historical resources include the Island's historic buildings, sites, and landmarks that help define the identity and character of Dauphin Island.



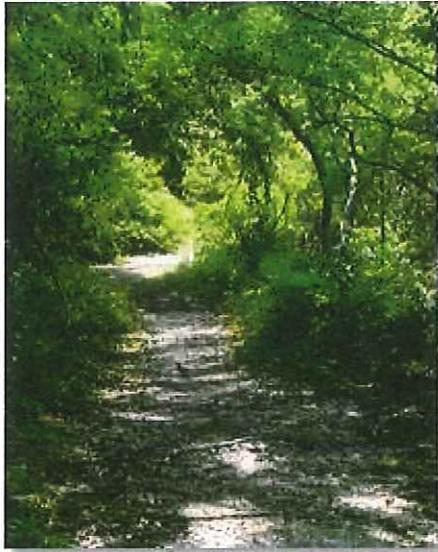
Natural Resources

Topography and Climate

The Town of Dauphin Island is located on Dauphin Island, Alabama's only barrier island. The Island itself is a natural resource with an abundance of sensitive and diverse ecosystems.

The Island only consists of 6.2 square miles of land with the rest composed of marsh lands and coastal waters. The Mississippi Sound and Mobile Bay are located three miles north of the Island. The Island's eastern tip helps to define the mouth of Mobile Bay. The Gulf of Mexico is located south of the Island. The Island is approximately 14 miles long and 1 3/4 miles wide at the widest point, which is the eastern portion of the Island. The wider east end of the Island consists of thick stands of pine trees while the narrow west end consists of scrub growth and few trees. The west end of the Island is known for its beautiful rolling sand dunes and pristine white beaches. The north portions of the Island on the Mississippi Sound consists of sensitive marsh lands and wetland habitats that serve as the nurseries and breeding grounds for many aquatic and terrestrial animals. These salt marshes, tidal flats, and maritime forests house the Gulf Coast's oysters, shrimps, crabs, and mussels that support the local seafood industry as well as provide food for larger sea life and coastal animals.

Figure 32: Maritime forest on the Island



Source: SARPC

Dauphin Island has a marine subtropical climate characterized by mild winters and hot, humid summers. Summers are long with air temperature averages of 80°F. Winters are short and moderate with an average temperature of 54°F. The average annual rainfall is 64.4 inches with most of the precipitation occurring in the summer months. Overall, the Gulf Stream keeps temperatures on the Island moderate and breezes from the ocean keep the climate pleasant year round.

Figure 34 illustrates the topography of Dauphin Island. Elevations on the Island vary from 0 to 6 feet above sea level resulting in frequent flooding from tides, waves, and storms.

Water Resources

Surrounding Waters

The waters surrounding Dauphin Island influence every aspect of the community's existence from the shape of the Island and beaches, to the health and sustainability of the natural resources, to the economic stability of the Town and property owners. The Mississippi Sound separates the Island from inland Mobile County and communities like Bayou La Batre and provides critical habitat for the fishing and seafood industries. The eastern tip of the Island helps form the mouth of Mobile Bay which extends inland to the City of Mobile and other communities along the eastern shores of

The topography of Dauphin Island, like most all barrier islands, is characterized by flat terrain, lacking any slope, that is at or slightly above sea level. Barrier islands also shift, change shape, and “roll over” in response to ocean tides, currents, and storms. *Figures 32, 33 & 34* illustrate the island's topography.

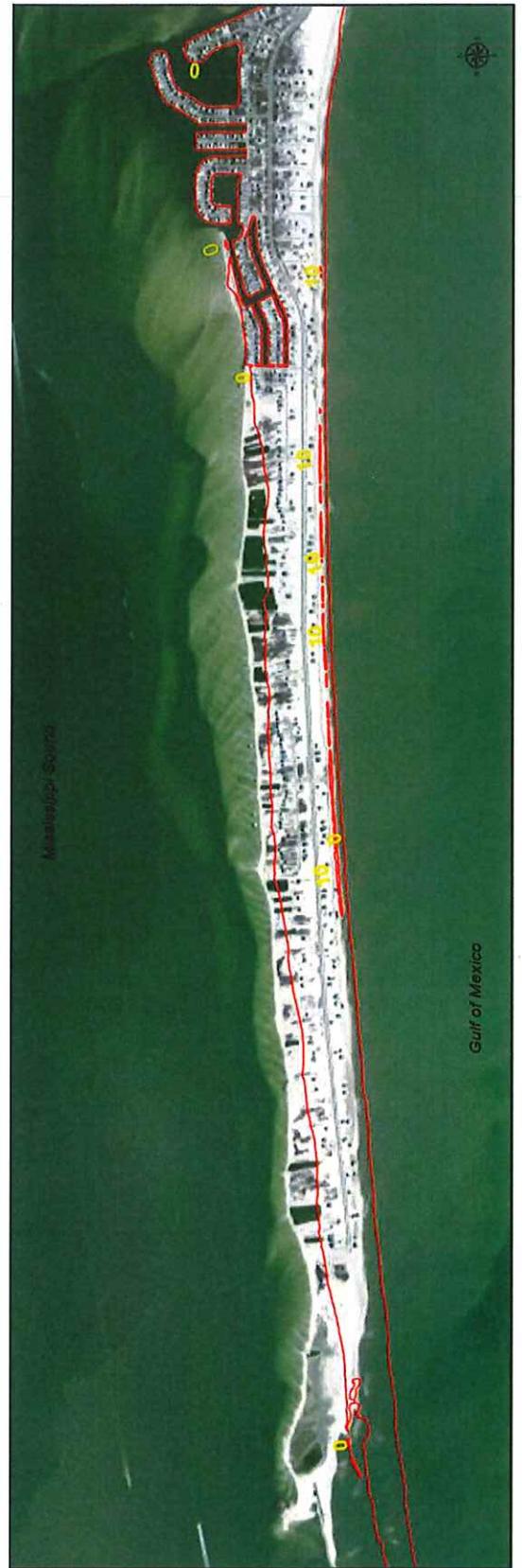
The interior portions of the eastern end of the Island have not substantially changed in shape or form for many decades. However, the exterior, coastal, portions of the east end have changed in shape and form from manmade and natural events. Studies indicate that the Gulf fronting beaches are naturally eroding. Hurricanes and tropical storms expedite this process and result in severe beach erosion and property loss to property owners on the Gulf. The Town of Dauphin Island and local residents are working with local, state, and federal entities to find a solution to this ongoing problem.

Figure 33: Island coastal wetland



Source: SARPC

Figure 34: Topography Map of Dauphin Island-East and West Sections of Town Showing 10 Foot Contour Lines



Source: SARPC

Alabama and serves as a world known shipping channel for freight transit. The south beaches of the Island extend into the Gulf of Mexico and serve as a barrier to the forces of the ocean including hurricanes and tropical storms and serve as a tourist attraction to thousands of tourists every year. Therefore, the health of these water resources is vital to the economic and social existence of the Island community.

Water quality protection through local ordinances as it pertains to Island development is necessary to prevent adverse impact to these resources. Storm water management regulations should be adopted in the Town's Zoning Ordinance to prevent nonpoint source pollution. This includes encouraging property developers to utilize Low Impact Development techniques within their construction and to limit the creation of impervious surfaces within the development. Poor water quality will result in the loss of the plants and animals that support the fishing and seafood industries. Poor water quality will also significantly decrease the recreational appeal of the water, thus devastating the local tourist economy, local businesses, and property values.

The Island has two freshwater lakes. One is located in the Audubon Bird Sanctuary and the other is at the Dauphin Island Country Club on the golf course. This surface water is susceptible to storm water runoff and should be protected from adverse impact from development.

Soils

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining agricultural productivity and the best and most cost efficient locations for new development. Factors such as drainage, erosion, land use, and watershed management are affected by soil types. There is only one general soil association found on Dauphin Island, the Axis-Lafitte, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. This type of soil is nearly level, very poorly drained, loamy mineral soils and organic soils; formed in loamy marine sediments and thick herbaceous plant remains on coastal marshes. *Figure 35* illustrates the soil association of Dauphin Island.

Poor storm water management impacts the health of all surface waters on the Island as well as the quality of the groundwater aquifer. The Town's drainage ditches create health and safety issues across the Island. These facilities also collect a great deal of litter and debris resulting in blocked water flow.

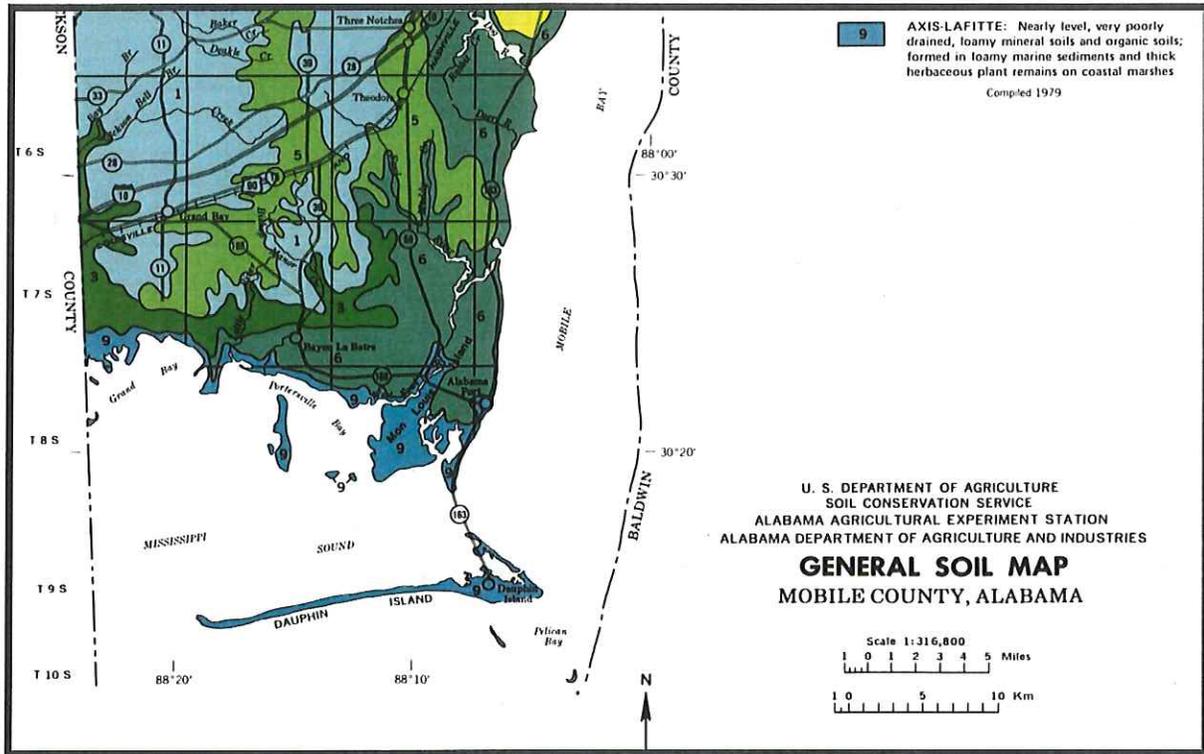
In addition to local protection efforts, County, State, and Federal initiatives should ensure the protection of the water quality of these resources. It will take several years before scientist can accurately assess the damage from the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill Disaster of 2010 on these water resources and their associated habitats and industries.

Drinking Water Supply

Dauphin Island Water and Sewer Authority (DIWSA) provides the Island with its potable water supply. Chapter 8 of this Plan, Community Facilities and Services, identifies the current

groundwater wells and the service capacity of the system. The groundwater aquifers of Dauphin Island serve as its sole source for drinking water. Due to the topography of the island, the current

Figure 35: Soil Map of Dauphin Island



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service

drinking water supply is also affected by the threat of saltwater intrusion. DIWSA has recently upgraded its water treatment facility to eliminate salt water intrusion through reverse osmosis methods and eliminate this potential threat.

Like surface waters of coastal areas, groundwater resources must also be protected through local regulations from threats of pollution and saltwater intrusion. DIWSA developed and implemented a Well Head Protection Plan in 1983 to protect this vital resource, and the town supported this effort by adopting a Well Head Protection Ordinance (Ordinance 12) in 1989. The Town should encourage conservation-based development practices such as low-impact development methods.

Air Quality

Dauphin Island's tourist population can triple resident population numbers during peak seasons. The Island experiences many day tourists as well. The use of personal motor vehicles contribute up to 70% of ozone-forming emissions in developed areas. Ozone levels also increase with heat and are the highest in summer months. The lack of adequate tree canopies creates pockets of increased air temperatures over paved areas. The Island has purchased two public transit buses and has

established an Island transit route. This will decrease Island traffic congestion and improved the overall air quality of the Island.

Vegetation

Very little natural vegetation remains on the west end beach dunes due to extensive erosion. The beach vegetation presently consists of sea oats, sand spurs, and broom sedge. The natural beach located within the Audubon Bird Sanctuary possesses more native vegetation including loblolly pines, sea oats, palms, broom sedge, sand spurs, and beach sage. The majority of the vegetated inland area consists of maritime forest complex with slash and loblolly pine, live oak, magnolia, cabbage palm, dwarf palmetto, and red bay. The Town currently has an adopted Tree Ordinance. The coastal wetlands and tidal marsh lands are a mixture of cord grass, needle rush, yaupon, and sea myrtle. Non-native species have been introduced on the Island for landscaping. The Town should promote landscaping with native, indigenous species to preserve the natural habitat.

Wildlife

There are currently many natural wildlife habitat preserves, trails, and recreational areas on Dauphin Island that serve as critical habitat for many threatened or endangered species including: Piping Plover, Least Tern, Loggerhead Sea Turtle, Green Sea Turtle, and Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle. Dauphin Island also hosts over 380 different species of birds, especially during the spring and fall migrations. In addition to these species, many of the following plant and animal species can be observed in southern Mobile County and on the Island, all of which are listed on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Threatened or Endangered Species list:

- West Indian Manatee
- Gulf Sturgeon
- Gopher Tortoise
- Red-Cockaded Woodpecker
- Peregrine Falcon
- Black Pine Snake
- Flatwoods Salamander
- Bald Eagle
- American Burying Beetle
- Eastern Indigo Snake
- Alabama Red-Bellied Sea Turtle
- Wood Stork
- Alabama Sturgeon

The Beach and Dune Ecosystem

Dauphin Island's beaches are the Town's most valuable economic resource. Additionally, the Island's oceanfront beaches and dunes serve several important functions. The dunes provide storm protection for inner portions of the Island and habitat for a variety of plant and animal species such as sea turtles and shore birds, see *Figure 36*. The beaches provide recreation for the Town's residents and tourist.

Figure 36: Natural beach and dune system on the Island.



Source: SARPC

The east end of the barrier island has some of the highest sand dunes along the northern Gulf of Mexico. These dunes provide essential protection for the maritime forest portion of the island including most of the historic east end areas.

Dauphin Island is experiencing a geological phenomenon which is truly one-of-a-kind in North America and which will provide an opportunity to observe tremendous natural ecosystem changes during the next several decades. The barrier island has been changing shape for thousands of years and these major changes continue today. Several years ago, Pelican Island, the island which had been immediately south of Dauphin Island for the past several decades, migrated north onto the southern beaches of Dauphin Island. The former island is now a sandy peninsula extending over two miles southeast from Dauphin Island. Records indicate that this has happened twice before: around 1705 and around 1855. Thus, it appears that geologic history is repeating itself. It is likely that the sand that is in the high sand dunes today came from similar episodes over the past several thousand years. Records indicate that it will take a couple of decades for all of this sand to migrate north onto Dauphin Island. As this happens, over the course of the next 10-20 years, the ecosystems of the beach, tidal pools, sand flats, and dunes in this portion of the island will continually change.

The west end of the barrier island is geologically newer/younger than the rest of the Island. The tree line is the geographic divider between the Island's historic east end areas, which have higher ground and more stability, and the newer west end beaches. The lower western end has traditionally over washed in major storms and temporary inlets have opened up at numerous locations in response to storms. *Figure 37* illustrates beach erosion on the west end of Dauphin Island. Portions of the western end have migrated, through these processes of over wash and inlet formation, over an entire island's width to the north.

The beach ecosystem of Dauphin Island has probably been negatively affected by the dredging disposal practices of the Mobile Ship Channel. The barrier island is down drift of the channel in the littoral system and sands dredged from the outer bar of the ship channel over the past century may have been permanently removed from the littoral system of the island. Research indicates that this has contributed to

the land loss and beach erosion on Dauphin Island. Efforts are now underway to restore some new sands to the beaches of the island and to fix the up drift problem. The Town of Dauphin Island has completed a multi-phase study to determine options and costs for a solution to address the island's chronic beach erosion problem in a manner that will preserve the beaches and property for future generations. Beach nourishment and barrier island restoration, by pumping large amounts of good

Figure 37: West end beach flooding after Hurricane Katrina.



Source: SARPC

quality sand from an offshore source, appears to be one available solution. The Town has prepared detailed plans for beach nourishment and barrier island restoration projects along both the east and west ends of the island. While there have been attempts at placing small amounts of sand on the beaches in the past, those efforts were not of the scale of the present plans nor did they add new, clean sands to the littoral system of the island.

The Town is also initiating an effort to assure that all beach-quality sands dredged from the up drift ship channel in the future be placed either directly on the beaches or in the shallows around Sand Island so that they eventually migrate to the Dauphin Island. The long-term fate of Dauphin Island, a barrier island, depends on sands coming to the island from the up drift. These efforts are consistent with modern coastal science and engineering principles of working with the natural systems as much as possible to preserve the barrier island beach and dune ecosystems.

Dauphin Island, as a barrier island, is critical to the protection of island-based and coastal mainland ecosystems and is thus a regionally significant economic driver. It is the barrier island protecting all of the estuarine habitats of Mississippi Sound. Dauphin Island is important not only for the residents, but for the entire coastal system as it is the upland sand source for the Mississippi/Alabama barrier island chain.

Most property owners on the Island support further research and evaluation of beach stabilization and re-nourishment. This includes consideration of an engineered beach, consideration of introducing materials offshore to affect currents and sand movement.

The Marsh and Wetland Ecosystem

Wetlands represent the interface between aquatic and terrestrial environments. Wetlands provide a variety of functions which include: filtering excess nutrients and contaminants from runoff before they enter surface waters; providing temporary storage for flood waters; providing erosion control through coastal stabilization and shoreline protection; providing habitat for water-dependent and upland plants and animals, some endangered; and serving as nursery areas for aquatic and terrestrial fauna. Wetlands also provide an array of recreational and educational resources and have become economic assets to tourist communities that depend on the aesthetics for passive forms of recreational attraction. Local residents also value and enjoy these natural habitats for wildlife viewing, fishing, shrimping, crabbing, and kayaking/canoeing.

Dauphin Island possesses an abundance of saltwater and freshwater wetlands. Most of the 530 acres of parks and recreational land uses on the Island contain wetland systems. The Town currently implements an adopted Wetland Ordinance for the protection of these natural resources on the Island. *Figure 38* illustrates the Wetland Inventory of Dauphin Island.

Figure 38: Dauphin Island Wetland Inventory (East End)

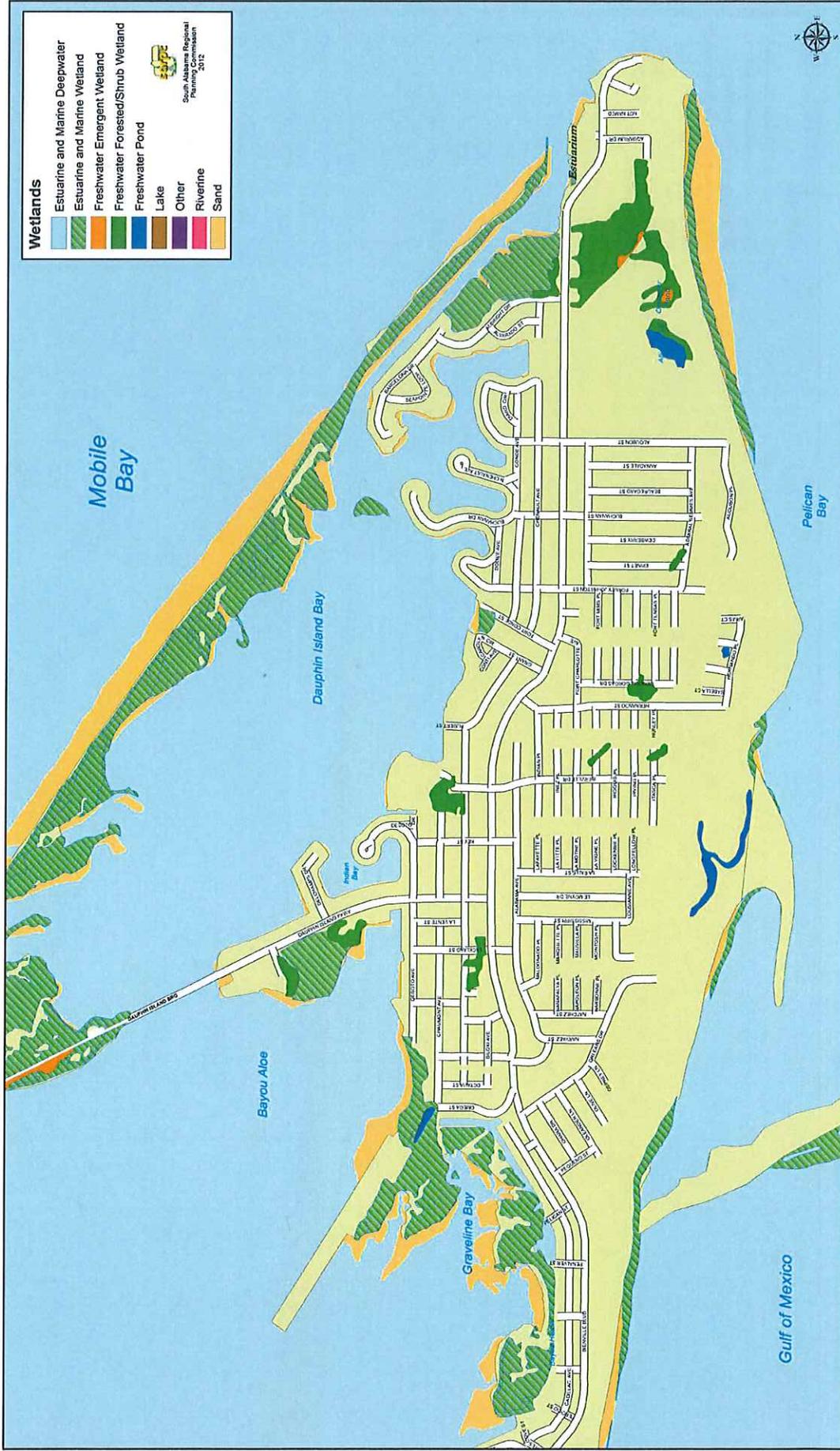
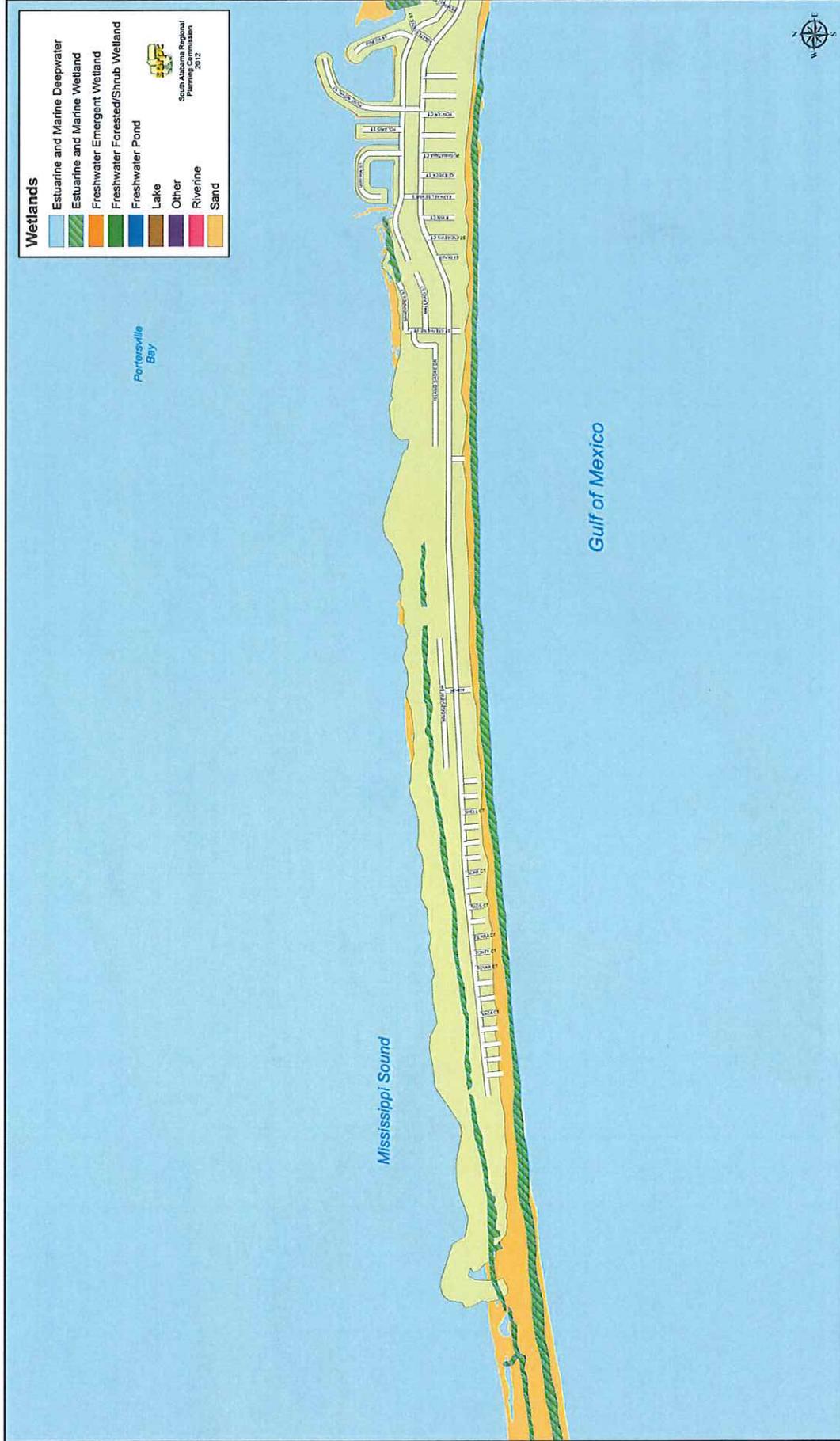


Figure 38: Dauphin Island Wetland Inventory (West End)



The Maritime Forest Ecosystem

The extensive maritime forest and understory serve to enhance the Island's natural beauty, provide sediment stability to the interior portions of the Island, and shelter a diversity of wildlife, particularly neo-tropical migratory birds during the spring and fall migrations. The maritime forests also provide a wind break during storm events and serve to recharge the groundwater aquifer. These forests face threats from invasive species and clear cutting for development. As Island development progresses, careful attention and planning must be given to preserving and maintaining these maritime forests, the understory, and the quality of these ecosystems.

Education Resources

The Dauphin Island Sea lab, located on the eastern end of the Island, provides a variety of educational resources to the community through many annual activities and onsite amenities. The facility houses the Estuarium which is an educational facility displaying the four habitats of coastal Alabama. Printed resources are also available for residents and tourists on these habitats, their species, and conservation efforts.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Marine Resources Division is located on the Island adjacent to the Indian Shell Mounds. This facility maintains many printed resources for fostering environmental awareness of the unique coastal habitats on the Island.

The Dauphin Island Foundation, located in the central portion of the Island adjacent to Town Hall, also maintains many printed resources for environmental education. This includes the Dauphin Island Bird Checklist Brochure used by the thousands of birders who visit the Island each year to observe over 380 species, many being neo-tropical migratory birds during the spring and fall. Town Hall also maintains many educational resources for environmental awareness and conservation.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism, or nature-based tourism, is a growing industry on the Island due to its abundance of natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities. Dauphin Island has been fortunate to have a well-established ecotourism base and continues to attract vacationers interested in both active and passive forms of recreation. Dauphin Island is rich in historical assets which have influenced the cultural heritage of the Island.

Dauphin Island's History of Development

Serpentine shell mounds located at the Indian Shell Mound are dated 1500 years old and attest to at least seasonal occupation by the Native American Mound Builder culture. In 1519, the Spanish explorer, Alonzo Pineda, was the first documented European to visit, staying long enough to map the island with remarkable accuracy. D'Iberville later decided to locate a port on the Island due to

abundant timber, reliable supply of fresh water, and a deep-water harbor. The settlement consisted of a fort, a chapel, government-owned warehouses, and residences.

During World War II, with the activation of the local military base, houses for military families were built on the Island. The Island became subdivided in 1953 and the Dauphin Island Property Owner's Association was formed. The bridge from the mainland opened in 1955. The Town eventually incorporated in 1988.

Historical Sites

The Town of Dauphin Island does not possess a historical downtown area of commercial development due to the historical development and land uses of the Island as a recreational destination. The historical development pattern of Dauphin Island is typical of early resort community developments where these communities were envisioned as complete units. However, due to the Island's rich history, there are several identified historic sites on the Island: Fort Gaines, the Indian Shell Mound, the Sand Island Lighthouse, and the Isle of Dauphine. These facilities and their current uses are discussed in more detail in the Parks, Recreation, and Events Chapter of this Plan.

The Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board owns and maintains Fort Gaines. The Dauphin Island Property's Association owns and maintains the Isle of Dauphine. The Indian Shell Mounds are located on property owned and maintained by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The Sand Island Lighthouse is not located on the Island but is in Mobile Bay. It is owned and maintained by the Town of Dauphin Island. In addition to these sites and structures, the old Fort Gaines Officer Quarters home has recently been moved to a more interior residential lot on the Island and rehabilitated for occupancy.

All efforts should be taken by the Town and property owners of the Island to preserve the historical and cultural assets of the Island. A local committee should be established to identify sites and structures of significant historic and cultural relevance to the community and develop an action plan for their preservation and rehabilitation.

Community Goals

The following goals, associated with natural and historic resources were identified by the community and presented in the Strategic Plan.

- Design cultural and nature based tourism on the Island that does not over burden the natural or historical resources of the community but promotes the Island's unique history, culture, and sensitive coastal habitats. This includes determining an acceptable user capacity in relation to resource vulnerability.
- Make Dauphin Island a more environmentally friendly community by moving away from traditional building and utility methods to more "green" processes.
- Protect, maintain, and enhance healthy terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and other natural resources on the Island. This includes habitat preservation and restoration of the maritime forests, saltwater and freshwater wetlands, beach and dune systems, groundwater aquifer, lake surface water, terrestrial fauna/birds/flora/fisheries, and barrier islands/shoals.

- Implement protection and conservation initiatives for the entire Dauphin Island barrier island complex which includes Sand Island, Pelican Island, and Little Dauphin Island.
- Protect and sustain the Island's source of drinking water, the groundwater aquifers.
- Research and propose a solution to beach erosion, beach stabilization, and beach re-nourishment for the Island's coastline to prevent further property loss.
- Identify future development methods to lessen the adverse impact of residential development of the east end forested parcels of the Island on the groundwater aquifer and its water quality.
- Protect and preserve the historic and cultural assets of the community for future generations.

Recommendations and Strategies

Below are recommendations for future improvements to strive to achieve by the year 2030:

1. Investigate and consider the process to achieve sole source aquifer designation through an application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
2. Consider future hydrologic studies to measure the sole source groundwater aquifer condition and supply capacity on Dauphin Island. Coordinate with the Dauphin Island Water and Sewer Authority to determine future demand and capacity for 2030.
3. Prepare a future design and implementation of an Island- wide drainage system that protects ecosystems and people.
4. Preserve the ecological and hydrological functions of wetlands and marsh habitats on the Island by using the Town's adopted Wetland Ordinance.
5. Establish markers or signage for the identification of wetland areas on the Island as means of public notice and education of their local importance.
6. Protect the quality of surface water and groundwater by implementing more restrictive storm water management regulations through the development of a Storm Water Management Plan amendment to the Town of Dauphin Island's Zoning Ordinance.
7. Monitor and regulate future residential development of the east portions of the interior part of the Island that could have an adverse impact of the water quality of the groundwater aquifer. This may require development restrictions due to potential adverse impact.
8. Pursue conservation-based development strategies. Amend current zoning regulations to allow for mixed use types of developments on parcels to increase density as opposed to additional lot development.
9. Update and enforce the Town of Dauphin Island's Tree Ordinance for further protection of existing trees with significant diameter and more restrictions and increased fines applied in regards to their removal. This includes encouraging vertical layers of vegetation (canopy, understory, shrub, and herbaceous) whenever possible to protect or restore these layers on developed lots.
10. Establish a committee to purchase or transfer development rights from private properties that possess sensitive habitats such as coastal wetlands to permanently protect these natural resources and compensate land owners for the equity in their land.
11. Form a partnership with the Dauphin Island Sea Lab to establish a part-time position or internship of a field biologist to provide guidance with balancing wildlife and habitat conservation with future development of the Island. This partnership could be used to record and monitor erosion and accretion of the Island's beaches, monitor the health and

- status of the Island's natural resources in regards to user impacts, and help implement the Town's Wetland Ordinance through individual site inspection.
12. Partner with real estate agencies and property owners of seasonal vacation rentals to provide these entities with printed resources for environmental education and awareness regarding the sensitive coastal habitats of the Island. Also encourage tourists and residents to utilize the Island's public transit system and bicycle transit across the Island to decrease adverse impacts on air quality. The source material could be in the form of brochures, flyers, and/or refrigerator magnets.
 13. Encourage property owners, through local incentives, to plant native species of vegetation on their property. The Town, with guidance from local environmental agencies, should establish a native plant species list for the Island and develop incentives for developments to landscape with these species.
 14. Ensure that all future development, whether residential or commercial in nature, recognizes and supports the small town character of the Town as a residential community surrounded by unique natural resources. This includes encouraging future developments to leave undisturbed, natural habitat areas on their lots to protect the environmental integrity and visual character of the Island. When possible, new developments should create a plan for the linkage and connectivity of the natural resources on the Island.
 15. Town easements and alleyways to be used for greenways for pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.
 16. Support future maintenance and expansion of natural resource areas on the Island through local, state, and federal grant opportunities. This plan should include supporting and assisting other entities on the Island, including the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board, the Dauphin Island Property Owners' Association, the Dauphin Island Foundation, and other applicable entities with these same efforts.
 17. Update the Town's Zoning Ordinance to require adequate natural resource buffers for developments that abut wetlands and marsh lands to maintain and improve storm water retention on site. Habitat buffers between developed land also allows animals to move back and forth from shelter to water and feeding areas without leaving the cover of natural vegetation. Typical buffers are between 25 to 50 feet and they restrict any development from occurring within their boundaries.
 18. Provide local tax incentives to encourage ecotourism and nature-based businesses to locate on the Island.
 19. Continue research efforts to evaluate all possible beach stabilization and re-nourishment options available. This includes consideration of an engineered beach and introducing materials offshore to affect currents and sand movement.
 20. Research and evaluate the implementation of a user fee structure to provide maintenance and upkeep of natural resource areas.
 21. Establish a scheduled community volunteer Island clean-up with volunteers collecting trash and debris from natural resource areas and drainage ditches across the Island. Provide incentives to local business to use paper bags instead of plastic bags
 22. Design and implement a protection and replanting program for dune vegetation to stabilize and prevent erosion of the beach dune system on the Island.
 23. Establish and implement a comprehensive plan for beach access areas Island-wide that identifies sanctioned dune walk-over areas along the entire extent of the beach and identifies indigenous plant species suitable for dune stability.
 24. Update the Town's Zoning Ordinance to require heavy industrial land uses and facilities to be sensitive to natural resource areas.

25. Create opportunities for property owners and developers to “go green” with building and landscaping methods. The Town should amend the building code and require the use of water and energy saving appliances.
 - a. Create a mandatory water conservation action plan for property owners during times of extreme water shortage. It could also include public education and awareness for establishing onsite recovery of rainwater (rain barrels, rain gardens, cisterns) for private uses such as landscaping.
26. Create a committee to identify historic elements of the community, which will allow the Town to preserve its history and define sites and structures of historic or cultural significance on the Island.
27. The Town should re-examine and select a sand restoration and restore plan identified in the recently completed multi-phase study that addressed chronic beach erosion.

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Chapter 7

Parks, Recreation and Events

Adequate parks, open space, and recreational opportunities are vital to the quality of life in communities by providing citizens of all ages with enjoyable activities and settings in which to spend leisure time. The Town of Dauphin Island has demonstrated an active role in improving their parks and recreational facilities in support of their abundance of natural resources and tourist based economy. This has proved beneficial to the Town and its residents by increasing recreational opportunities and events for the residents to enjoy while increasing the Island's tourist appeal. Currently, the Island inventories approximately 50 parks, recreational facilities, attractions and annual events. The Town coordinates with South Mobile County Tourism Authority in making current and local information available on-line at: www.dauphinislandtourism.com.

Current Inventory

The first part of this chapter inventories all parks, recreational facilities, events and attractions on Dauphin Island. The second part of this chapter identifies the community goals associated with parks and recreation. The third portion of this chapter formulates recommendations and strategies to aid the Town in achieving goals in unison with future growth and development.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

There are several entities on Dauphin Island responsible for the maintenance of parks, conservation areas, trails, and open space. These include the Town of Dauphin Island, the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board, the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc., the Property Owners Association, and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Dauphin Island also has many recreational facilities and attractions for residents and tourist to enjoy. The location of each facility on the Island is numbered and identified on the maps in *Figure 39*.



Green Park

Green Park is located on the northwest corner of Lemoyne Drive and Cadillac Avenue and is maintained by the Town of Dauphin Island. The park is located on property owned by the William L. Green Family, who generously provides use of the property to the Town. The natural landscape and open space of the park provides a relaxing atmosphere for residents and tourist to enjoy the outdoors year round. The park has many large oak trees that provide a beautiful setting for bird watching and plenty of shade for social gatherings. The park's amenities include a gazebo, park benches, picnic tables, and several porch swings that hang from the large oak trees, see *Figure 40*.

Figure 40: Green Park



Source: SARPC

Jefferies Park

Jefferies Park is located at the end of Conti Street, on the northeast side of the Island. It is a large waterfront park, situated underneath a scrub pine canopy with plenty of open space along the water. It provides great views of Little Dauphin Island and is surrounded by residential land uses, providing the abutting neighborhood with waterfront recreational opportunities for social gatherings. The park currently has no amenities. The park is maintained by the Dauphin Island Property Owners Association.

Salt Creek Park

Salt Creek Park is located on Bienville Boulevard, west of Lemoyne Drive. Salt Creek runs along the west side of the park and it abuts the Dauphin Island Bike Trail. The park's amenities include a small gazebo, playground, benches, and picnic tables. The park is maintained by a partnership between the Town of Dauphin Island and the Dauphin Island Property Owner's Association.

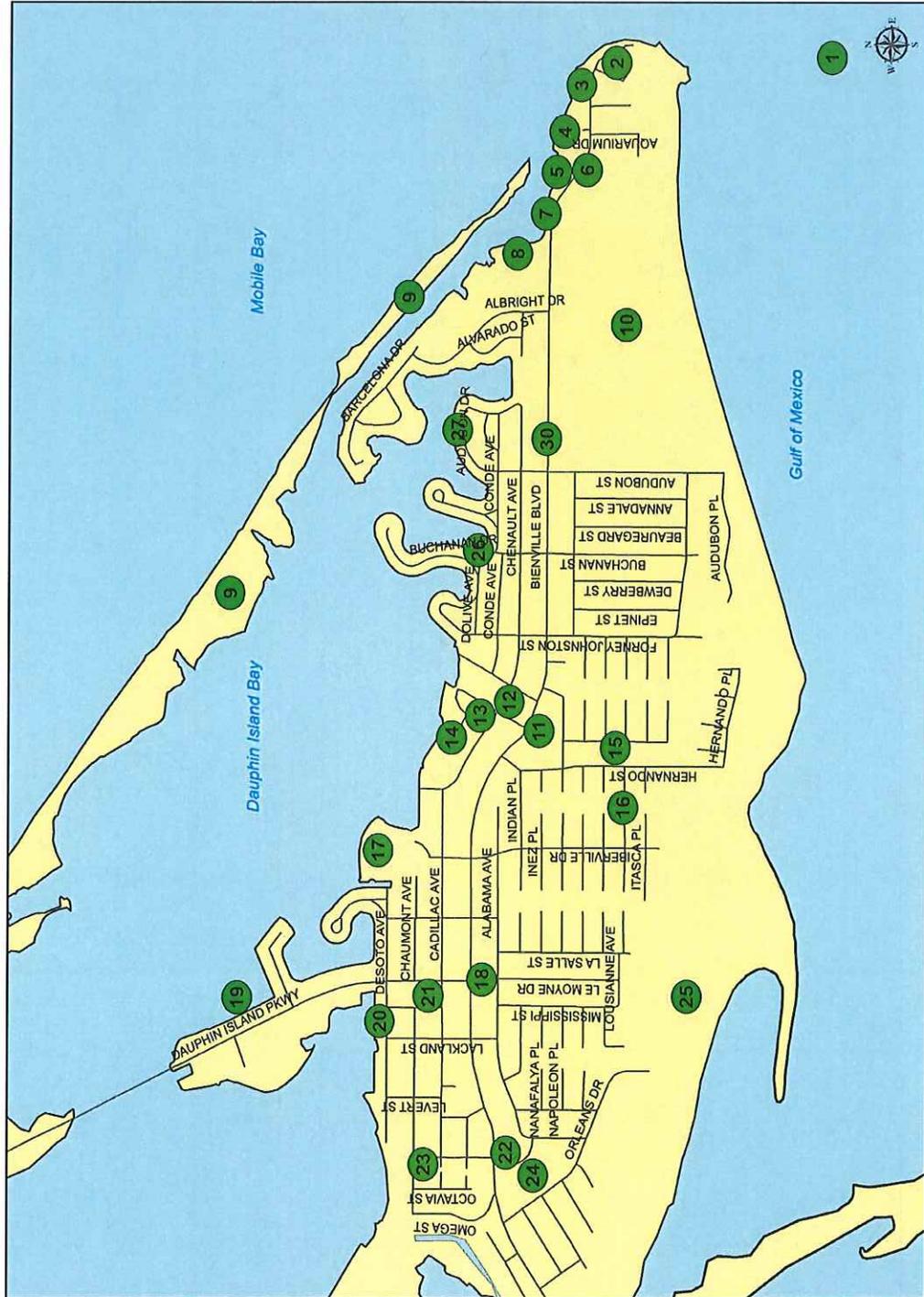
Pryor Park

Pryor Park is maintained by the Town and located at the southwest corner of Narvaez Street and Chaumont Avenue. It is a small park located in a residential neighborhood with waterfront views of Aloe Bay and the Dauphin Island Bridge. It has natural landscaping with several benches for relaxation and bird watching.

Quarles Park

Quarles Park is located on the southeast corner of Bienville Boulevard and Narvaez Street. The recreational facility is a new, modern skate park. The park abuts the Dauphin Island Pedestrian and Bike Trail and a residential neighborhood to the south. It is maintained by the Town.

Figure 39: General Location of Parks and Recreational Facilities on Dauphin Island-East End



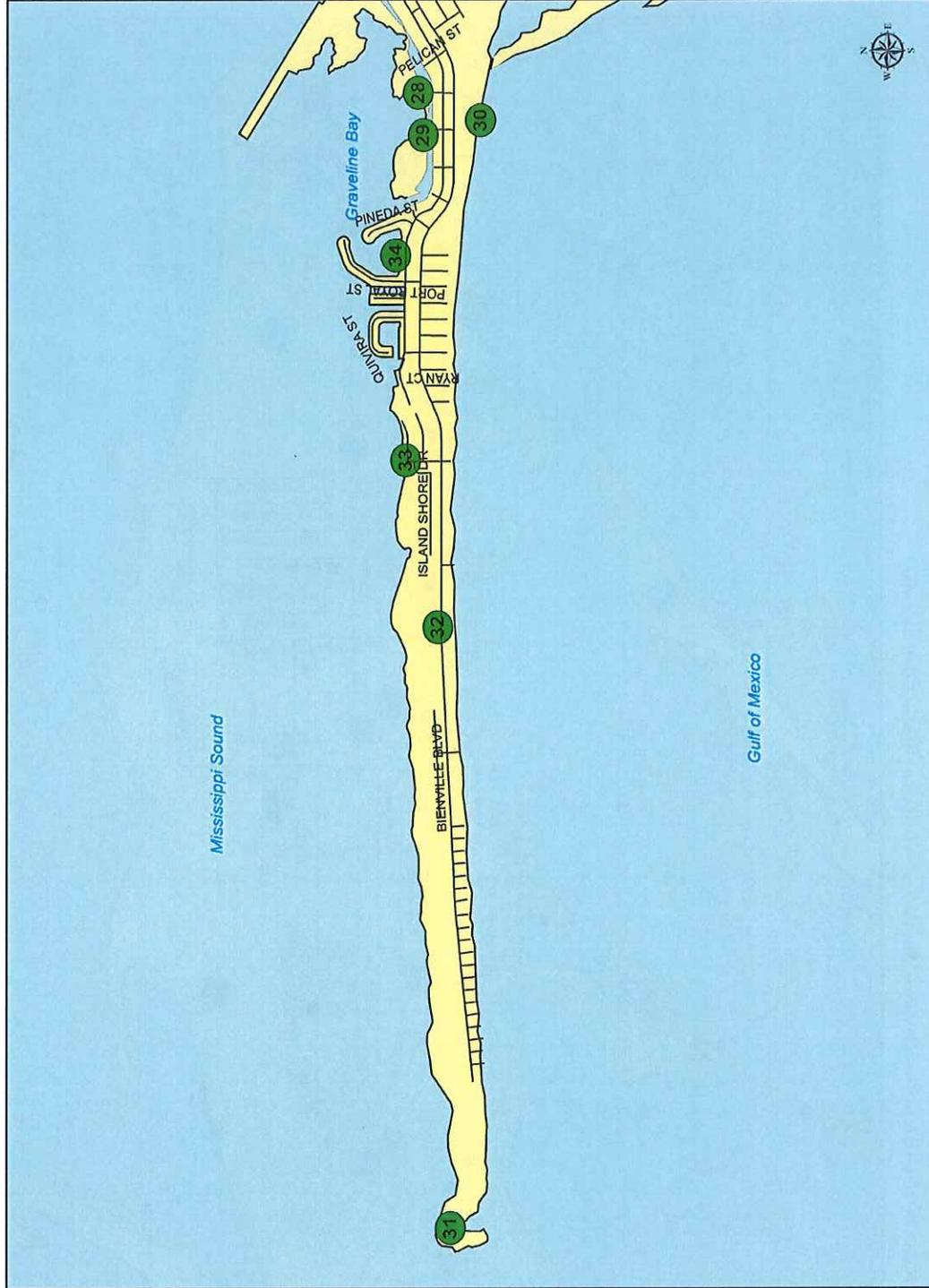
KEY

1. Sand Island Lighthouse
2. Historic Fort Gaines
3. Little Billy Goat Hole/East End Landing
4. Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Estuarium Living Marsh Boardwalk
5. Magnolia Park
6. Dauphin Island Campground
7. Mobile Bay Ferry and Billy Goat Hole
8. Saw Grass Point Salt Marsh
9. Little Dauphin Island
10. Audubon Bird Sanctuary
11. Cadillac Square Park
12. Steiner Property
13. Goat Tree Reserve
14. Jeffries Park
15. Gorges Swamp
16. Tupelo Gum Swamp
17. Indian Shell Mounds Park and Trail
18. Water Tower Lawn/Calumet Park
19. Dauphin Island Marina
20. Aloe Bay Landing Park
21. Green Park
22. Quates Park
23. Pryor Park
24. Salt Creek Park
25. Isle Dauphine Golf Club
26. D'Olive Park
27. Audubon Park



South Alabama Regional
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2012

Figure 39: General Location of Parks and Recreational Facilities on Dauphin Island-West End



KEY

- 28. Penalver Park
- 29. Bayou Heron Park
- 30. Dauphin Island Public Beach and Pier
- 31. West End Beach Park
- 32. Dauphin Island Pedestrian/Bike Trail
- 33. Sandpiper Park
- 34. Lafitte Bay Park



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2012

West End Beach Park

The West End Beach Park is operated by the Town and is located at the west end of the Island on Bienville Boulevard. The beach has views of the Gulf, powdery white sand, palm trees, and all the amenities needed for a fun day at the beach. Park amenities include beach chairs and umbrellas, baby furniture, lifeguards, volleyball net, jet skis, mopeds, sail boats, knee and boogie boards, surf boards, tiki bar, and live entertainment. There is a nominal entrance fee to the park, see *Figure 41*.

Figure 41: West End Beach Park



Source: SARPC

Aloe Bay Landing Park

Aloe Bay Landing is owned and maintained by the Park and Beach Board and is located on Desoto Avenue. This park is a small waterfront park that has a wonderful beach for launching kayaks and canoes. Aloe Bay Landing is located in the central business district and working waterfront. The park is ideal for residents and visitors to watch the shrimp and crab boats come and go. The park has great views of the Dauphin Island Bridge.

Cadillac Square Park

Cadillac Square Park is owned and maintained by the located on East Bienville Boulevard on the southeast side of the Island between Hernando Street and Fort Charlotte Avenue. This is a beautiful park rich in local history. The live oak trees throughout this historic site are all that remains of the home of the first governor of Dauphin Island. This Park is used for local festivals, birding, farmers market and social gatherings. The park has public restrooms and several picnic tables and benches throughout. The Dauphin Island Bike Trail runs along this park see *Figure 42* for illustration.

Figure 42: Cadillac Square Park



Source: SARPC

The Water Tower Lawn/Calumet Park

The Water Tower Lawn, or Calumet Park, is located in the center of the Island at the north end of LeMoyne Drive. It is owned by the Dauphin Island Water and Sewer Board. The park is named after one of America's greatest Indian "pow-wows" or peace conferences which were held on Dauphin Island. The park features a large lawn under the water tower ideal for Town festivals and music concerts. The park also abuts the Dauphin Island Bike/Pedestrian Trail, has park benches, and a pavilion adjacent to the trail.

Bayou Heron Park

Bayou Heron Park is owned and maintained by the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board and it is located on the northwest corner of Penalver Street and Cadillac Avenue on the northwest side of the Island. This bayside waterfront park provides a great location to view many of the water birds that live on and visit Dauphin Island. The Dauphin Island Bridge is also visible from the park. Amenities include a small handicap accessible fishing pier and several benches and picnic tables are throughout the park.

Dauphin Island Public Beach and Pier

The Dauphin Island Public Beach is owned and maintained by the Park and Beach Board, see *Figure 43*. This is the most visited beach on Dauphin Island. The beach has beautiful white sands and is great for swimming. Due to recent storms, the beach has extended further into the gulf and now adjoins Sand Island (Pelican Island), which prior to 2008, was only accessible by boat. Park amenities include large pavilions, restrooms, a playground, and picnic tables. Vendors supply a variety of amenities to beach going visitors. Recently, the Park and Beach Board have made significant updates to the parking area and around 300 parking spaces are available. There is a nominal entrance fee to the park. Currently, the 850-foot fishing pier is landlocked. However, the pier has been modified to provide vendor, sightseeing and picnicking opportunities.

Figure 43: Dauphin Island Public Beach



Source: SARPC

Magnolia Park

Magnolia Park is owned and maintained by the Park and Beach Board and it is a pedestrian-access only park located between the Mobile Bay Ferry and historic Fort Gaines on the northeast side of the Island. It is designed to give walk-on passengers from the ferry and bicyclists from the Dauphin Island Bike Trail a place to picnic and relax. It includes picnic tables, benches, and a swing that hangs from a large Magnolia limb. It has great views of Little Dauphin Island and the ferry boat passing through Mobile Bay.

Tupelo Gum Swamp

The Tupelo Gum Swamp is located between Iberville Drive and Hernando Street on the southeast side of the Island. The swamp consists of over 11 acres on 20 lots of land hidden behind several dead-end roads. The swamp is bisected by a 10-foot wide public access right-of-way. The swamp is prime wetland habitat full of tupelo gum trees and wetland plant and animal species. The swamp has been targeted for conservation by many state and federal agencies. The Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. currently maintains four of the lots, while the other lots are privately owned.

Isle Dauphine Golf Club

The Isle Dauphine Golf Club is maintained by the Property Owners Association and is located at 100 Orleans Drive on the southwest side of the Island. This public facility offers a scenic 18-hole championship golf course, tennis courts, salt water pool, bar & grill and a historic clubhouse, which is available for banquets and other special events. The complex is nestled between the gulf-fronting beach and native dunes, providing a spectacular view of the natural landscape. See *Figure 44*.

Figure 44: Isle Dauphine Golf Club



Source: SARPC

Saw Grass Point Salt Marsh

The Saw Grass Point Salt Marsh is a conservation area maintained by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Town of Dauphin Island. It is located on Albright Avenue, on the northeast side of the Island just west of Ferry Landing. The conservation area consists of 35 acres of wetland habitat covered in black needle rush and cord grass. The marsh is populated with many species of water birds and is a great location for bird watching. There is an observation pier that extends 100 feet along the marsh habitat.

East End Landing/Little Billy Goat Hole

The East End Landing, also referred to as Little Billy Goat Hole, is owned and maintained by the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board and is located on Bienville Boulevard across from Historic Fort Gaines, on the east end of the Island. The East End Landing provides wonderful views of Fort Gaines, Mobile Bay Channel, and Fort Morgan across the Bay, and on a clear day, the Sand Island lighthouse. The beach area consists of powdery white sand, but the coast is rocky and the undertow is very strong, therefore, swimming at this beach is prohibited. It is a great place for shore fishing and the rocky beach is usually spotted with fisherman. The East End Landing offers three public boat launches, several gazebos and picnic tables, and a 250 foot public fishing pier along with a public beach; see *Figure 45* for an illustration of the Landing.

Figure 45: Little Billy Goat Hole



Source: SARPC

Penalver Park

Penalver Park is located in a coastal marsh preserve. It runs along the Island's northern coast, located between Pelican Street and Penalver Street. The park abuts a public boat launch that is located behind the Gulf Breeze Motel and provides water access to Graveline Bay. It is maintained

by the Park and Beach Board. The park's location makes it a favorite for birders, especially in the spring and fall when thousands of neo-tropical birds visit the Island during their long migration.

Indian Shell Mounds Park and Trail

The Indian Shell Mounds are located on Iberville Drive, see *Figures 46 & 47*. The park is maintained by Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) and Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. (DIBS). It is part of the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail. The Indian Mounds originated from oyster shells discarded by Native Americans. There is a freshwater pond in the middle of the park that has attracted migratory birds to this very spot for many generations during the spring and fall. Approximately 25,000 people visit the Shell Mounds each year to observe the neo-tropical bird migration during these seasons.

Figure 46: Indian Shell Mounds



Source: SARPC

Figure 47: Indian Shell Mounds Drive



Source: SARPC

Little Dauphin Island

Little Dauphin Island is an undeveloped narrow barrier island located immediately northeast of Dauphin Island. The island is about two miles long and can be observed from the northeast side of Dauphin Island. It is part of the Bon Secour Wild Life Refuge System and is only accessible by boat. Habitat diversity of the Island includes beaches, coastal dunes, salt marshes, uplands, and wetlands. These habitats support a variety of threatened and endangered species, including the piping plover, sea turtles, and more than 370 species of migratory birds. The island is a popular location for kayakers during the spring and fall who come to explore the island and observe water birds and migratory birds. There are many observation points on the northeast side of Dauphin Island for birders to view Little Dauphin Island during the spring and fall migrations including the Indian Shell Mounds, Saw Grass Point Salt Marsh and Little Billy Goat Hole.

Steiner Property

The Steiner Property is located on Grant Street on the northeast side of the Island across from the Goat Tree Reserve. The Steiner property consists of large parcels of property that were never subdivided or developed due to the family's desire for conservation and preservation of the Island's natural resources. Only two lots on the entire block have been developed. The property consists of over 12 acres of critical wetland habitat stretching from Bienville Boulevard, north to the Bay. The

salt marsh habitat is populated with black needle rush and provides prime habitat for wading birds and waterfowl. The upland lots are wooded and provide prime habitat for migratory birds. The Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. maintains five of the lots within the conservation area.

Audubon Bird Sanctuary

The Audubon Bird Sanctuary is owned and maintained by the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board and it is located on the southeast side of the Island on Bienville Boulevard. The Sanctuary is part of the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail and the Alabama Coastal Connection. It provides the largest segment of protected Maritime Forest on the Island. The park consists of 164 acres with trails through various types of habitats. These habitats include the freshwater Gaillard Lake, Tupelo Swamp, a pine savanna, a beach and dune system, and hardwood clearings. The dominant trees in the maritime forest include longleaf and slash pine, southern magnolia, live oak, and tupelo gum. A transition zone of white sand dunes covered in sea oats separates the beach from the forest. Gaillard Lake is approximately 4.5 acres in size and is the home to several wildlife species, including alligators.

A half mile nature interpretive trail takes visitors through all of the habitats found in the sanctuary, see *Figure 48*. Interpretive signage provides visitors a wealth of information on different aspects of the sanctuary, i.e. animals, plants, birds, beaches, etc. There are also several piers, observation decks and benches scattered throughout the Sanctuary, along with some handicap accessible boardwalks. This park has been named one of the top locations in North America to view bird and butterfly migrations by *Wild Bird* magazine, the National Audubon Society and the Alabama Ornithological Society.

Figure 48: Audubon Bird Sanctuary



Source: SARPC

Gorgas Swamp

Gorgas Swamp is located on General Gorgas Street on the southeast side of the Island, and is surrounded by a residential neighborhood. The swamp consists of 10 acres of tupelo gums and protected wetland habitat. The conservation area is prime location for migratory birds in the spring and fall. The Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. maintains three lots within the swamp, and the other lots are privately owned. Additional land acquisition of the sensitive habitat by a conservation organization is a possibility.

Dauphin Island Campground

The Dauphin Island Campground is located at 109 Bienville Boulevard on the southeast side of the Island. It is in close walking distance to the Dauphin Island Ferry, Magnolia Park, the Sea Lab and Estuarium, Fort Gaines, and the Audubon Bird Sanctuary. The campground has water views of the Bay at Ferry Landing and of Little Dauphin Island. The campground has beach access to the Gulf via tree-lined paths to snow white sand beaches. There are 150 camp sites which include power and water and 70 of those sites include sewer. There is a bathhouse with showers, washers, and dryers.

The campground also has a store, group pavilion with a barbecue grill, walking trails into the Audubon Bird Sanctuary, a boardwalk to a secluded beach, bicycle rentals, playground, badminton, volleyball, shuffleboard and horseshoes. Free boat launches and a fishing pier are only a short walk from the campground. It is maintained by the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board.

Dauphin Island Pedestrian/ Bike Trail

The seven mile Dauphin Island Pedestrian/Bike Trail runs the length of the Island along Bienville Boulevard from the east end to the west end, see *Figure 49*. The trail is a paved, scenic pedestrian/bicycle trail that passes many of the Island's recreational facilities. Several benches are also provided along the way for relaxation and passive enjoyment. The area is maintained by the Town.

Figure 49: Dauphin Island Pedestrian/Bike Trail



Source: SARPC

Dauphin Island Marina

The Dauphin Island Marina is located on the northwest side of the Island at 650 LeMoyné Drive. The Marina is located inside Little Dauphin Bay which provides shelter from rough seas and is safer and more secure for yachtsmen, fisherman, and their craft. The Dauphin Island Marina is open from 8am to 5pm during the off season and from 6am to 6pm during seasonal time. The facility can house up to 255 boats, 85 in wet slips and 140 in dry slips. Transient boats are also welcome at the Marina and are allowed to tie off onto the fuel dock. The Marina is home to 18 charter boats and is the site of numerous annual fishing tournaments. Other amenities offered on-site include a ships' store, fishing bait, fuel service, engine repair, and craft towing/assistance. It is maintained by the Town of Dauphin Island.

D'Olive Park

Located on D'Olive Avenue, within a residential neighborhood, D'Olive Park is a small mini- park or pocket park found on the east end of Dauphin Island that provides direct views of Dauphin Island Bay and Mobile Bay. It is currently maintained by the Dauphin Island Property Owner's Association.

Audubon Park

Another mini-park or pocket park, nestled within a residential neighborhood on the east end of the Island, is Audubon Park. It is located on Audubon Drive, sitting directly on the waterfront of Dauphin Island Bay. The Dauphin Island Property Owner's Association maintains this park.

Mobile Bay Ferry/Billy Goat Hole

The Mobile Bay Ferry is located at 918-B Bienville Boulevard on the northeast end of the Island adjacent to the Dauphin Island Camp Ground. The Mobile Bay Ferry is a vehicular/pedestrian ferry service that operates one ferry most of the year, and two ferries during the busier spring and summer months. The Mobile Bay Ferry has two vehicle loading lanes on Bienville Boulevard. The ferry holds approximately 28 vehicles depending on the size and type with a maximum of 149 passengers per trip. The ferry travels between Dauphin Island's east end, across Mobile Bay, to the tip of Fort Morgan Road in Baldwin County, adjacent to Fort Morgan.

Once aboard the ferry, passengers are allowed to leave their vehicles and enjoy the scenery on the deck or observation platform. Hours of operation vary by season, and by weather and the ferry does not always run during parts of the winter season. The Mobile Bay Ferry is managed by Hornblower Marine Services and is funded by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), see *Figure 50*. A public boat launch area is located adjacent to the ferry landing along with a concession stand and public restrooms.

Figure 50: Mobile Bay Ferry



Source: SARPC

Historic Fort Gaines

Historic Fort Gaines is owned and maintained by the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board and it is located at 51 Bienville Boulevard on the southeast end of the Island, see *Figure 51*. Fort Gaines was established in 1821 to protect the entrance into Mobile Bay. Construction of the Fort was not completed until the beginning of the civil war. The structure was based on a European design dating back to the Renaissance era. The exterior walls are over 22 feet tall and form an un-even pentagon. The fort played an intricate part in the Battle of Mobile Bay. The well-preserved ramparts of Fort Gaines have guarded the entrance to Mobile Bay for more than 150 years. The Fort is an excellent example of 19th century brick seacoast fortifications in the eastern United States. Now a fascinating historic site, Fort Gaines stands at the eastern tip of Dauphin Island where it commands panoramic views of the bay and the Gulf of Mexico. It was recently designated as one of the eleven most endangered historic sites in America due to on-going shoreline erosion. The Fort showcases the original tunnels, bastions, blacksmith, bakery, and kitchen, in addition to a comprehensive museum, exhibit halls and

Figure 51: Historic Fort Gaines



Source: Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board

a gift shop. Fort Gaines also hosts a variety of special event weekends which include civil war reenactments, a living history of colonial life, and the Renaissance era.

Goat Tree Reserve

The Goat Tree Reserve is maintained by the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. and is located on the corner of Cadillac Avenue and Grant Street on the northeast side of the Island. Listed in the National Wetlands Inventory, the reserve is a natural wooded habitat for plants and animals and is identified as a migratory bird refuge during the spring and fall. *Figure 52* illustrates why the reserve is known for its magnificent ancient oak trees that provide shade over the walking trail with limbs reaching out as far as 50 feet from the trunk and almost parallel to the ground. The reserve gets its name from Island history that dates back before the construction of the bridge. According to legend, these ancient oak trees served as shelter for a population of wild goats that roamed the Island. The goats would seek refuge in the trees for protection from roaming alligators.

Figure 52: Goat Tree Reserve



Source: SARPC

The Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Estuarium Living Marsh Boardwalk

The Living Marsh Boardwalk at the George F. Crozier Estuarium spans across approximately four acres of salt marsh habitat. It is an interactive exhibit designed to educate the public and promote the importance of preserving the estuary's fragile ecosystem, see *Figure 54*. Informative panels are

Figure 54: Dauphin Island Sea Lab & Estuarium Boardwalk



Source: SARPC

posted at various points throughout the boardwalk that identify the different species of marsh grasses and wildlife common to the area. The boardwalk is located behind the Estuarium at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, on the east end of the island and is maintained by Sea Lab personnel.

Sandpiper Park

Sandpiper Park is another small mini-park surrounded by a residential neighborhood on Dauphin Island. The park is located on the west end of the Island on Sandpiper Street. It provides a wonderful, unobstructed view of the Mississippi Sound. Park maintenance is provided by the Dauphin Island Property Owner's Association.

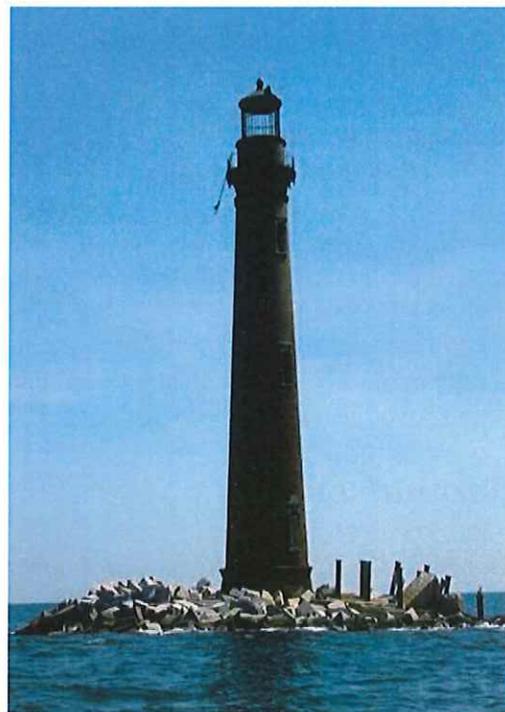
Lafitte Bay Park

Located on the west end of the Island, within a residential neighborhood, is Lafitte Bay Park. This waterfront park sits directly on Lafitte Bay, between Port Royal Street and Pineda Street. The Dauphin Island Property Owner's Association is responsible for the maintenance of the park.

Sand Island Lighthouse

The Sand Island Lighthouse is located in the Gulf of Mexico, three miles from the entrance to Mobile Bay, between Mobile Point on the east and Dauphin Island on the west. The lighthouse is visible from the East End Beach and Fort Gaines on a clear day. The Sand Island Lighthouse has a long history of threat and destruction by war and weather since its first construction in 1837. The present day structure is the lighthouse's third construction, which was completed in 1873, and is located on a man-made rock island, see *Figure 53*. The current lighthouse was in use until 1933 when it was deactivated by the U.S. Coast Guard in response to new technology rendering the use of lighthouses obsolete. The lighthouse is a significant historical structure for residents of Dauphin Island, Mobile and Baldwin Counties, and the State. It is the oldest of Alabama's three lighthouses. It is the last remaining of the classic brick lighthouse style built along the Gulf of Mexico coast. In 2003, the Town of Dauphin Island obtained ownership of Sand Island Lighthouse and has taken aggressive action in the restoration of the structure.

Figure 53: Sand Island Lighthouse



Source: SARPC

Regional Trails

The following locations on Dauphin Island are identified as Alabama Coastal Birding Trails: The Indian Shell Mounds, Goat Trees, Cadillac Square, Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuary, Pelican Point, Dauphin Island Airport, the Public Beach, the west end, and Cedar Point. The Alabama Ornithological Society meets annually on Dauphin Island in the spring and fall.

The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail

The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail is considered one of the nation's top birder's paradises with trails that span two counties, offering birding enthusiasts endless opportunities for avian appreciation. The trails are located in Baldwin and Mobile counties and divided into six regions of interest with over 50 identified loop trails. The Dauphin Island-Bayou LaBatre Loop is one of six regions of interest on the trail.

Dauphin Island has been designated as a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy and one of the best locations in the country to observe neo-tropical migrant birds and butterflies, see *Figure 55*. Wild Bird Magazine has rated Dauphin Island as one of the top four locations in North America for viewing migratory birds in the spring. For many migrant birds and butterflies, the Island is the first landfall after their long flight across the Gulf of Mexico from Central and South America each spring. For these birds, exhausted and weak from their long voyage, the Island is their first refuge for food and shelter. Conversely, it is their final feeding and resting place each fall before their migration back over the Gulf. There are over 348 reported bird species on the Island during the migrations.

All of the parks that make up the Island's inventory are connected to a regional trail network, which includes: Alabama Coastal Birding Trail, Civil War Trail, Scenic By-Ways Trail and Coastal Connection Trail. More information on these trails can be found on the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board website at www.dauphinisland.org and the Alabama Tourism Department website at: www.alabama.travel.

Figure 55: Birders



Source: SARPC

Annual Events

Dauphin Island Mardi Gras Celebration & Parades

In January and February of each year, the Town of Dauphin Island celebrates Mardi Gras with two parades. The Krewe de la Dauphine Society opens the Mobile area's Mardi Gras season by hosting the first Mardi Gras parade of the year. The Island Mystics Society parade is the following Saturday. Thousands of people come from Mobile and Baldwin Counties and line the streets of Bienville Boulevard to catch beads, toys, and candy.

Battle of Mobile Bay 5k Run

The Battle of Mobile Bay 5k Run is held by the Port City Pacers and began in 1997 with the proceeds going to support Historic Fort Gaines. The annual run is held in February.

Colonies of the Gulf Coast

The annual “Colonies of the Gulf Coast” is held each year at Historic Fort Gaines. Visitors explore life on Isle Dauphine in the 1700-1800's. French, British, and Spanish soldiers demonstrate their military and camping skills along with live re-enactments. There is also candle making, open-hearth cooking, basket weaving, Indian pottery, and blacksmith demonstrations during this weekend long event. This event began in 1990 and is held every year in March.

Dauphin Island Sea Lab Discovery Day

Each April, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab and the George F. Crozier Estuarium hosts Discovery Day, an environmentally-themed educational event for families and children, designed to promote public awareness and education to the local flora and fauna. The event includes free children's admission to the Estuarium, an open house with exhibits at the research laboratories, a variety of children's activities, U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Training Unit Water Rescue demonstrations and boating safety and hurricane preparedness information. The Mobile Police Department and other local agencies, including the Alabama Department of Marine Resources, also provide children's activities and local conservation information. Hundreds of people visit Dauphin Island to attend this event every year and to learn about the Island's diverse habitats, plants, and animals.

Dauphin Island International Migratory Birdfest

The Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, in partnership with the Town of Dauphin Island and the local Chapter of the Audubon Society, welcomes thousands of birders to the Island from mid-April through mid-May to observe the magnificent spring migration of over 348 species of neo-tropical migrant birds, see *Figures 56 & 57*. While the migration spans over the course of two months, sponsors host special events for one week, usually in April, to kick off the migration. Events include a meet-and-greet breakfast, day festival at Cadillac Park, and a dinner fish fry. Scheduled bird watching outings and tours are also provided for groups or individuals. The number of participating birders grows every year.

Figure 56: Audubon Bird Sanctuary



Source: *Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board*

Figure 57: Great White Herons on Dauphin Island



Source: *SARPC*

Dauphin Island Sailboat Regatta

The Dauphin Island Sailboat Regatta is described as the largest single day point to point sail race in the U.S. It is held in late April with hundreds of sailboats participating every year. The Dauphin Island Regatta race began in 1957 and has received continuous support from the four local Mobile Bay yacht clubs. Mobile, Fairhope, Lake Forest, and Buccaneer Yacht Clubs alternate as the host of the Dauphin Island Regatta.

The race starts in Mobile Bay located in the exact center of all four yacht clubs and ends on Dauphin Island, in Aloe Bay. In 2008, the 50th Annual Regatta had approximately 300 hundred boats participate in the race with over a thousand crew members from eight states. The activities begin with a warm-up race held the Sunday before the regatta. After the Saturday race, and following the awards ceremony, a party is held on Dauphin Island. A return race on Sunday concludes the regatta.

Dauphin Island Art Festival

The Annual Dauphin Island Art Festival is held at historic Cadillac Square Park in May. Approximately 60,000 feet of park space is set aside for around 50 or more artists from throughout the southeast region to set up. This festival features an array of artwork including, paintings and drawings, woodworking, pottery, metalwork, jewelry and sculptures. This event features a food court by local restaurants, light music, and children activities.

Farmer's Green Market

Cadillac Square hosts the annual Green Market throughout the summer growing months of May to September. Local farmers from Mobile County sell their wares of fresh fruit, vegetables, jam and honey on a weekly basis to Island residents and visitors. Green Market is held every Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Annual Crawfish Boil

The Annual Crawfish Boil is hosted by the Island Mystics and held every May in Cadillac Park. The event occurs on a Saturday and vendors sell all varieties of crawfish cuisine into the late afternoon. Live entertainment is provided by local musicians.

Stripers Fishing Rodeo

The Stripers Fishing Rodeo is an annual event held in the month of June on Dauphin Island. Anglers fish the waters off the coast of Dauphin Island during the one-day event and compete for the winning catch. Weigh-in occurs in the late afternoon followed by an awards ceremony.

Fourth of July Celebrations

In honor of our Nation's Independence, the Town sponsors and hosts a spectacular fireworks show. Thousands of visitors gather on the Island to enjoy the magnificent firework display over the water. The show can be seen from many vantage points on and off the Island, including by boat.

Roy Martin Young Anglers Tournament

The Roy Martin Young Anglers Tournament is an annual fishing tournament for children that takes place every July, just prior to the island's annual Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo. Sponsored by Exxon – Mobil, the Roy Martin Young Anglers Tournament began as a way to promote family values, good sportsmanship and healthy competition among the youth. All of the proceeds from the Roy Martin Young Angler's Tournament go toward the annual Children's Christmas Shopping Tour sponsored by the Mobile Jaycees.

Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo

The annual Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo is held every July on Dauphin Island and is hosted by the Mobile Jaycees. The Rodeo began in 1928 and is the largest and oldest saltwater fishing tournament in the nation. Each year it attracts approximately 3,200 fisherman and over 100,000 spectators to the island. Fishermen compete in 30 different categories of both inshore and offshore species.

The Dauphin Island Sea Lab also participates in the event by collecting valuable scientific data on numerous species of fish which supports future education conservation efforts in fishery management. The Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo contributes to the local community by donating a portion of the proceeds to the Department of Marine Sciences at the University of South Alabama. The rodeo has also set up two scholarships totaling \$1,500 in the name of Dr. Gary Nelson, who collected scientific data at the event from 1984 to 1997. In 2011, the Rodeo was declared the World's Largest Rodeo by Guinness Book of World Records Officials.

Conde Cavalier Fishing Rodeo

The Conde Cavalier Fishing Rodeo is held every year on Dauphin Island in August. The two day tournament allows anglers to compete for the winning catch by fishing the waters off the coast of the Island. An award ceremony is held at the end of the second day.

Alabama Coastal Birdfest

The Alabama Coastal Birdfest is held every year in mid-October at the 5 Rivers, Alabama's Delta Resource Center at the northern point of Mobile Bay between Mobile and Baldwin Counties. The event coincides with the fall migration of neo-tropical migrant birds from breeding grounds in the northern part of the globe to their wintering grounds in Central and South America. The event also supports the designated Alabama Coastal Birding Trails by providing guided birding tours through the two county region, including the eight identified Alabama Coastal Birding Trails on Dauphin Island. Birders and environmentalists from across the Country can learn about the importance of conserving coastal habitats and establishing bird sanctuaries, see *Figure 58*. The event also features guest speakers and educational

***Figure 58: Great Blue Heron,
Dauphin Island***



Source: SARPC

classes at the 5 Rivers facility. The event is sponsored by many public and private entities throughout the State including the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, The Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, NOAA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Thousands of birders visit Dauphin Island throughout the month of October, especially during the Alabama Coastal Birdfest, to observe over 348 species of birds from neo-tropical migrant species to coastal water species. Proceeds from the Alabama Coastal Birdfest are used to preserve and protect bird habitat on the Alabama Gulf Coast. Registration for this event typically occurs in July.

Hurricane Run

The annual Hurricane Run 5K and Fun Run, coordinated by the Port City Pacers, begins and ends at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. The event, which is held every September, began in 1981, two years after Hurricane Frederic devastated much of Dauphin Island and Mobile County. Proceeds benefit the Dauphin Island Fire and Rescue Department. In 2011, the race attracted over 300 runners for the 5K run.

Colonial Isle Dauphine

The “Colonial Isle Dauphine” is a living weekend at historic Fort Gaines featuring life on the Gulf Coast before Fort Gaines was built. The event began in 1993 and draws hundreds of visitors to the Island every year. Over the course of the two day event, Fort Gaines comes to life with re-enactors dressed in pre-1840 attire and conducting daily activities of colonial life as it was in the 1800s.

Renaissance Festival “GATALOP 25”

The Gatalop Renaissance Festival is held every October at Historic Fort Gaines. This two day event transforms the Fort into a medieval castle under siege over 700 years ago. The event includes knights and ladies, flying banners, and festive pavilions with re-enactment battles, archery and weapon competitions, blacksmithing, and other demonstrations that portray life in the Middle Ages. The festival, which began in 1983, draws hundreds of visitors to the Island every year to celebrate local Renaissance history.

Christmas at the Fort

Christmas at the Fort is an annual event held at Historic Fort Gaines. It is a traditional Christmas celebration patterned after a letter written home by James M. Williams with the 21st Alabama Infantry Volunteers stationed at Fort Gaines in 1861. This event features seashell ornament making, a visit with father Noel, cooking demonstrations, candle dipping, and blacksmithing. The event began in 1984 and kicks off the Island’s Christmas festivities the first weekend of December.

Dauphin Island Christmas Parade and Christmas Pageant

The Dauphin Island Christmas Parade and Pageant are held annually in December. The Dauphin Island Christmas Parade route starts at Cadillac Square Park, travels west down Bienville Boulevard and ends at the Little Red School House. Hundreds of Island residents and visitors line the parade route to catch holiday candy and favors. The Dauphin Island Christmas Pageant, held the same weekend of the parade, has several categories and titles. There is Little Miss Dauphin Island (Ages 5-

7), Sweet Miss Dauphin Island (Ages 8-10), Jr. Miss Dauphin Island (Ages 11-13) and Miss Dauphin Island (Ages 14-18). The competition rules vary within the different categories and from year to year.

Attractions

The Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Estuarium

The George F. Crozier Estuarium, housed at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, is located at 101 Bienville Boulevard on 36 acres of land on the northeast end of the Island. The public aquarium showcases Mobile Bay, the fourth largest estuary system in the United States, and includes the plants, animals, and other natural resources found in the Estuary and its surrounding marine habitats. The facility is open seven days a week and includes a 10,000 square foot exhibit hall with live animals, bookstore, gift shop and a living marsh boardwalk. The Estuarium is part of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Alabama's primary marine educational research facility. More information on the Sea Lab can be found in the Community Facilities and Services section of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Estuarium welcomed over 69,550 visitors in 2011. Visitors and students generate a considerable amount of revenue for the Town of Dauphin Island. The Sea Lab and Estuarium continue to grow and thrive as one of the top Marine Science Institutions along the Gulf Coast.

Cedar Point Fishing Pier

The Cedar Point Pier is not actually on Dauphin Island but is located north of the Island, on a small strip of marsh land called Bay Point, or Cedar Point, in between the southern tip of Mobile County, called Heron Point, and the Dauphin Island Causeway and Bridge. The Cedar Point Fishing Pier boasts as the longest privately owned fishing pier on the Gulf Coast and has been in place for over 40 years, even though it has been reconstructed many times due to hurricanes.

Thousands of residents and tourist visit the pier every year for some of the best fishing the Bay has to offer. The pier is open year round, seven days a week, 24 hours a day and requires no individual fishing license. Amenities include a boat launch, restrooms, bait and tackle, expert fishing advice, and a convenience store with food, drinks, and ice. Cedar Point is also recognized as a great place to observe water and migratory birds.

Classifications and Level of Service

Park Classification and the Level of Service Standards provide communities with a method of assessing their current park and recreational inventory and projecting improvements based on future growth. This method is based on the National Park and Recreation Association (NPR) guidelines which consider the type, use, size, and service area of parks and recreational facilities. Future demand for parks and recreation facilities is based on comparing projected populations with recognized level of service standards and responding to changing trends. Future needs are also directly influenced by population characteristics of the community. For example, communities with more children require more outdoor recreational opportunities within a comfortable walking

distance from home. Communities with more seniors can benefit from having more passive parks near residential areas, senior centers, and transit to accommodate their activities.

Park Classifications and Types

The following park classifications were based on the NPRA standards and modified to accommodate Dauphin Island's current park and recreational inventory as well as future goals for improvements.

- **Mini-Parks** – Mini parks or “pocket parks,” serve a limited or concentrated population, usually a neighborhood, residential district, or commercial area and provide an urban green space within a densely developed area. Amenities might include a walking path, landscaping, park benches, and picnic tables. The service area is usually less than ¼ mile radius.
- **Neighborhood Parks** – Neighborhood parks serve residential neighborhoods in developed areas and are intended to receive a high level of use. They typically have a landscaped walking path that can withstand the impacts of heavy foot traffic and should be connected to the community's sidewalk network. Amenities might include an open grass lawn, playgrounds, basketball courts, pool, tennis court, pavilions, etc. The service area is usually less than ½ miles radius. The desirable size of the park is between 5 and 20 acres.
- **Community Parks** – Community parks are large parks intended to serve the entire community and meet the recreational needs of multiple neighborhoods. They should be located adjacent to major arterials or other collector streets to provide easy vehicular and pedestrian access. They should be connected to linear trails and greenways throughout the region and developed around the natural resources of the community. Amenities include sports complexes, ball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, playgrounds, splash pads, pavilions, disc-golf course, etc. The service area is usually a one to two mile radius.
- **Regional Parks** – Regional parks are large recreational areas usually developed around an area's natural resources and they serve entire regions, including several municipalities. They may be county, state, or federally operated, but should connect to smaller community parks via greenways or trails to create regional linkage. Amenities include sports complexes, ball fields, tennis courts, pool, playground, hiking trails, mountain biking trails, camping facilities, disc-golf course, etc. The service area is usually at least a five mile radius or more.
- **Linear Parks, Greenways and Trails** – provide linkages between other parks and/or points of interest. The service area and size varies from neighborhood greenways to regional pedestrian, bicyclist, and equestrian trails.