

ADMIRAL MASON PARK

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The new **Admiral Mason Park**, recently unveiled by the City of Pensacola, is located in the Hawkshaw Lagoon area along Pensacola Bay, at the intersection of 9th Avenue and Bayfront Parkway. From the 1950s to the early 80s it was the site of a baseball stadium called *Admiral Mason Park*. The ballpark was named in honor of Charles P. Mason, a Vice Admiral in the United States Navy and two-time Mayor of Pensacola. In January 1991 the City of Pensacola appropriated land of the former stadium's site for the planned *Wall South* memorial, a half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The remaining property was recently transformed from a passive recreational field into a beautiful 2.35-acre pond, with two fountains, walkways, and dozens of trees and other landscaping. The park's pond serves as a stormwater treatment facility for the surrounding 31 acres, protecting Pensacola Bay from untreated stormwater runoff.

While in the Hawkshaw Lagoon area, please also visit the **HAWKSHAW LAGOON Missing Children Memorial** across from the *Veterans Memorial Park*. A quarter-mile inlet on Pensacola Bay - adjacent to Bayfront Parkway, across from Veterans Memorial Park and just east of the Seville Historic District in Pensacola. The Hawkshaw Lagoon Missing Children Memorial was developed in 2002 through a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization (Hawkshaw Lagoon Missing Children, Inc.). In cooperation with local governments, area businesses, civic organizations, and individuals, the Memorial was designed and designated to serve as the National Memorial to Missing Children. Today, this special location with a rich history serves as a place of solace for families and friends of missing children, as well as an open classroom for Pensacola's historic waterfront and unparalleled natural environment.



The inspiration for this powerful memorial, which blends poignant sculpture with its natural setting, is Kathy Gaut-Price - the mother of a missing daughter, Joanna. Kathy and her path of healing provided much inspiration toward the successful completion of this project. Through the support of many community-minded individuals such as Clark Thompson, Scott Holland, and Regina Baniakas, the group was able to secure the help of acclaimed sculptor Sam Nettles to co-create this inspirational and peaceful environment.

The park currently includes a pedestrian bridge spanning Hawkshaw Lagoon, which was created by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) as mitigation for the installation of Bayfront Parkway, and an observation deck that serves as a platform for Nettles' bronze memorial sculpture "The Sanctuary." It provides an ideal observational site for the study of the lagoon's ecosystem including plants, birds and aquatic life. Today the Hawkshaw Lagoon Missing Children Memorial Park is an important part of Pensacola's rich waterfront and a place of beauty and peace for all to enjoy.