



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gulf Islands National Seashore
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Gulf Islands News Release

Release Date: Immediate

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Recovery and Stabilization Efforts Underway at National Seashore

Gulf Breeze, Fla. – The National Park Service has mobilized the Eastern Incident Management Team to Gulf Islands National Seashore in response to the effects of Hurricane Sally. Responders began arriving at the park on Monday and immediately set to work addressing critical needs to assess damage, stabilize facilities, and begin the process of restoring visitor access. A total of 38 National Park Service employees from 22 parks and programs have responded to the national seashore to assist in these efforts.

As a critical roadway for the community, the national seashore's top priority is to clear and provide some access along J. Earle Bowden Way (Hwy 399 between Pensacola Beach and Navarre Beach). An initial assessment of the road indicates significant damage along sections of the road and portions of Fort Pickens Road. Efforts to clear both roads have been hampered by ongoing weather which has saturated sand and flooded roadways again. Despite these challenges, significant progress has been made since last weekend when work began.

A structural engineer has begun to evaluate the condition and integrity of J. Earle Bowden Way and will move on to Fort Pickens Road once it is cleared. Based on this evaluation plans for temporary limited access and long-term repairs to restore the roadways to full capacity will be implemented. Reopening dates for either road are not available at this time.

In addition to roadway damage several structures and facilities within the Fort Pickens Area have visible damage. Full assessments began today. These assessments will be used to prioritize and request funding for repairs.

The National Park Service closed all areas of the national seashore prior to Hurricane Sally making landfall along the Gulf Coast. The category two storm severely impacted the island areas of the park and the surrounding community. All areas of the national seashore in Florida remain closed as a result of the storm. These areas are closed to all access including vehicles, bikes, and walkers. Entering these areas at this time is unsafe and delays the ongoing work to reopen. In Mississippi, on Ship Island remains closed, all other areas and islands have reopened.

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A full list of closures and impacts can be found at www.nps.gov/guis/learn/news.htm. Park status updates will be posted online at www.nps.gov/GulfIslands, www.facebook.com/GulfIslandsNPS, and www.Twitter.com/GulfIslandsNPS.

About Gulf Islands National Seashore: *Created in 1971, the national seashore stretches 160 miles along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico in Florida and Mississippi, and includes barrier islands, maritime forests, historic forts, bayous, and marine habitat. Visit us at www.nps.gov/guis, on Facebook www.facebook.com/GulfIslandsNPS, Twitter www.twitter.com/GulfIslandsNPS, Instagram www.Instagram.com/GulfIslandsNPS.*

About the National Park Service: *More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 421 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Visit us at www.nps.gov, on Facebook www.facebook.com/nationalparkservice and Twitter www.twitter.com/natlparkservice.*

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