

## WILDERNESS CURRICULUM GUIDE

### WEB I: WHAT IS WILDERNESS?

#### INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY 1: WILDERNESS: WHAT IS IT?

**GOAL:** To gain an understanding that wilderness is a place predominantly influenced by the forces of nature (Carhart K-6, p.5)

**BACKGROUND:** According to the Wilderness Act of 1964, wilderness, “in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” In a wilderness area, change occurs primarily through natural forces rather than as a result of human activity.

Gulf Islands National Seashore, including land and waters in Mississippi and Florida, is part of the National Park Service system. Four islands off the Mississippi coast are part of Gulf Islands National Seashore: Petit Bois, Horn, East and West Ship Islands. While all four of these islands (along with property at Davis Bayou in Ocean Springs and sites in and around Pensacola) are federally-owned and managed by the National Park Service, Horn Island and Petit Bois Island received a special wilderness designation by Congress in 1978. Under the Wilderness Act of 1964, federally-designated wilderness areas are managed by a federal agency like NPS in ways that minimize human impact within the wilderness area in order to preserve it as a place where natural rather than human forces are the primary influence.

**MATERIAL:** Gulf Islands National Seashore *Wilderness* slide program

#### SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

- Identify Gulf Islands National Seashore as a part of the National Park Service managing National Park Service land at Davis Bayou in Ocean Springs and four barrier islands off the Mississippi coast (Petit Bois, Horn, East and West Ship) as well as sites near Pensacola.
- Ask students if they have visited any part of Gulf Islands National Seashore. Let them share their memories of the park.
- Show the **Gulf Islands National Seashore *Wilderness* slide program.**
- Ask students what wilderness is and why it is important to preserve wilderness areas such as those within Gulf Islands National Seashore. Ask them to identify what islands within Gulf Islands National Seashore have been designated as wilderness.

#### ENRICHMENT EXTENSION:

- Ask students to draw a picture of what they think a wilderness barrier island looks like. As they share their drawings, ask them to explain what makes their island a wilderness area.