



St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve



Office of Coastal & Aquatic Managed Areas



These publicly owned preserve lands protect the aquatic resources of St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve. The term 'buffer preserve' describes the function of these lands to act as a safeguard to impacts on the bay from upland activity. As we all know, upland development adjacent to the bay can have detrimental effects on water quality in the form of run-off containing nutrients, sewage, silt or other pollutants. The buffer preserve lands protect an intact natural coastal landscape with one of the highest concentrations of rare plants in the southeast and will never be developed, protecting the bay's water quality, natural productivity, and critical habitat for future generations.

For questions concerning the St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve or for information on how to join the Friends of St. Joseph Bay Preserves call (850) 229-1787. www.stjosephbaypreserve.org



Rare Plants & Fire

There are over 20 species of rare, protected plants found on the St Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve lands. Frequent fire has been a natural part of these lands for thousands of years. Most of these plants have adapted to and require periodic fire to maintain their populations. However, many places in Florida, including the area around St Joe Bay, have suppressed the natural fire cycle to protect people and their property. The lack of frequent fire results in unnaturally high levels of fuels available for destructive wildfire. Prescribed burning takes place on buffer preserve lands to keep the natural communities of plants and animals healthy and help prevent destructive wildfires.



Archeological Resources & Research

St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve contains 20 known archaeological and historical sites, dating from prehistoric times to the 20th century. Indigenous Americans have harvested food, manufactured tools, and lived, at least seasonally, on sites near the bay for thousands of years. One of the most significant shell-tool manufacture sites in the region is located on preserve lands. The preserve supports academic research to learn more about these peoples and help guide management decisions regarding the sites. Other research involving geology, fire history, botany and herpetology continues to be supported at the buffer preserve. These partnerships help with the restoration and management of the preserve.



Recreational Use

St Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve lands provide the opportunity for natural resource-based recreation. There are four access points to our multi-use trails system in the form of sandy woods roads. The trails are available to hiking, biking, horseback riding, bird watching, photography and nature study. Dogs on leashes are welcome. A kayak launch may be found on Cape San Blas. Make sure to bring plenty of water as cell phone reception is spotty. Some roads may be seasonally flooded and biting insects may be numerous in the warmer months. Preserve lands are open to the public from sunrise until sunset daily.

