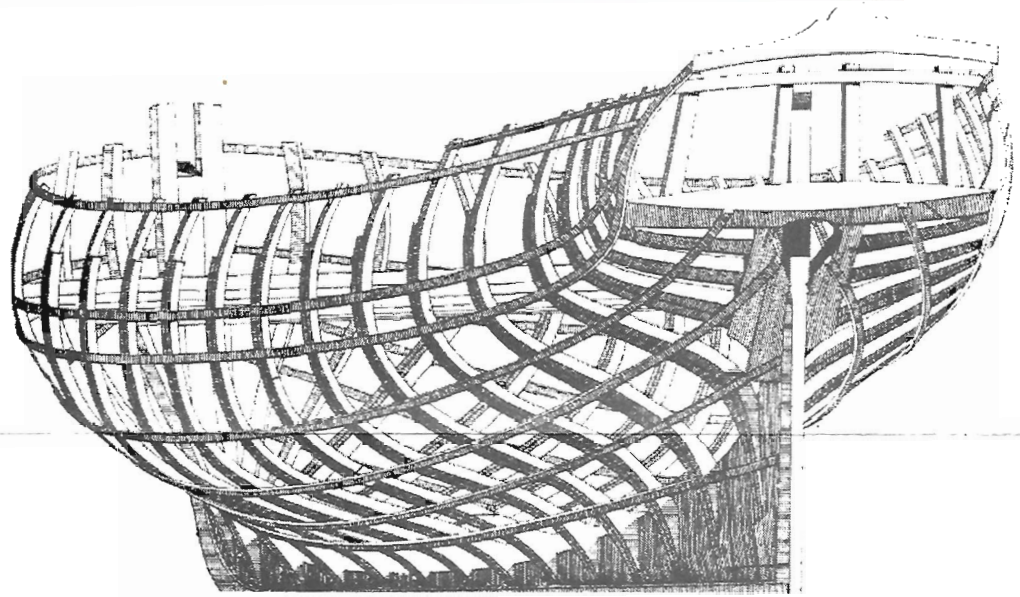




## Naval Live Oaks



### Wooden Walls

President John Adams called the U.S. Navy “Wooden Walls” and considered the Navy the first line of defense from foreign invasion. Renowned for their resistance to disease and incredible density, live oak trees provided durable wood for the construction of navy vessels. The first tree farm in the United States was developed at this location in 1828 for the single purpose of using live oak timber for shipbuilding. The Naval Live Oaks Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore now preserves 1,400 acres for educational and recreational opportunities.

### Great Live Oaks

The oak family with over 450 species is known for its durable wood. From a small acorn comes the great live oak tree (*Quercus virginiana*). Draped at times in Spanish moss, these huge trees can grow up to 50 feet in height and live as long as 300 years. A cubic foot of live oak can weigh as much as 75 pounds compared to a white oak that weighs 56 pounds.

Live oak leaves fall throughout the year. However, a tree never loses all of its leaves at once. This evergreen appearance gives the live oak its name.

Shipwrights, also known as *live oakers*, located and felled massive branches and trunks to provide the specific shapes needed for sections of ships. About one thousand trees were used to build just one wooden vessel.

The *U.S.S. Constitution* or “Old Ironsides” gained fame when cannon balls bounced off the sides of its live oak walls. The *U.S.S. Constellation* was also constructed with live oak. Although neither ship was originally constructed with live oak from this area, timbers from the Pensacola area were used for the 1929 restoration work of “Old Ironsides.”

### Park Facilities

#### Naval Live Oaks Visitor Center

The visitor center is open daily (except Christmas Day) and offers a closed-caption 12-minute orientation film on the natural, cultural and recreational aspects of Gulf Islands National Seashore. A short interpretive trail located behind the center explains the use of live oaks for shipbuilding in the 1800’s. Contact 850-934-2600 for ranger-led programs and events.

#### Picnic Pavilion

A covered picnic pavilion is located east of the visitor center. The picnic area is on a first come, first serve basis. However, groups of over 25 should contact the Naval Live Oaks Visitor Center at 850-934-2600.

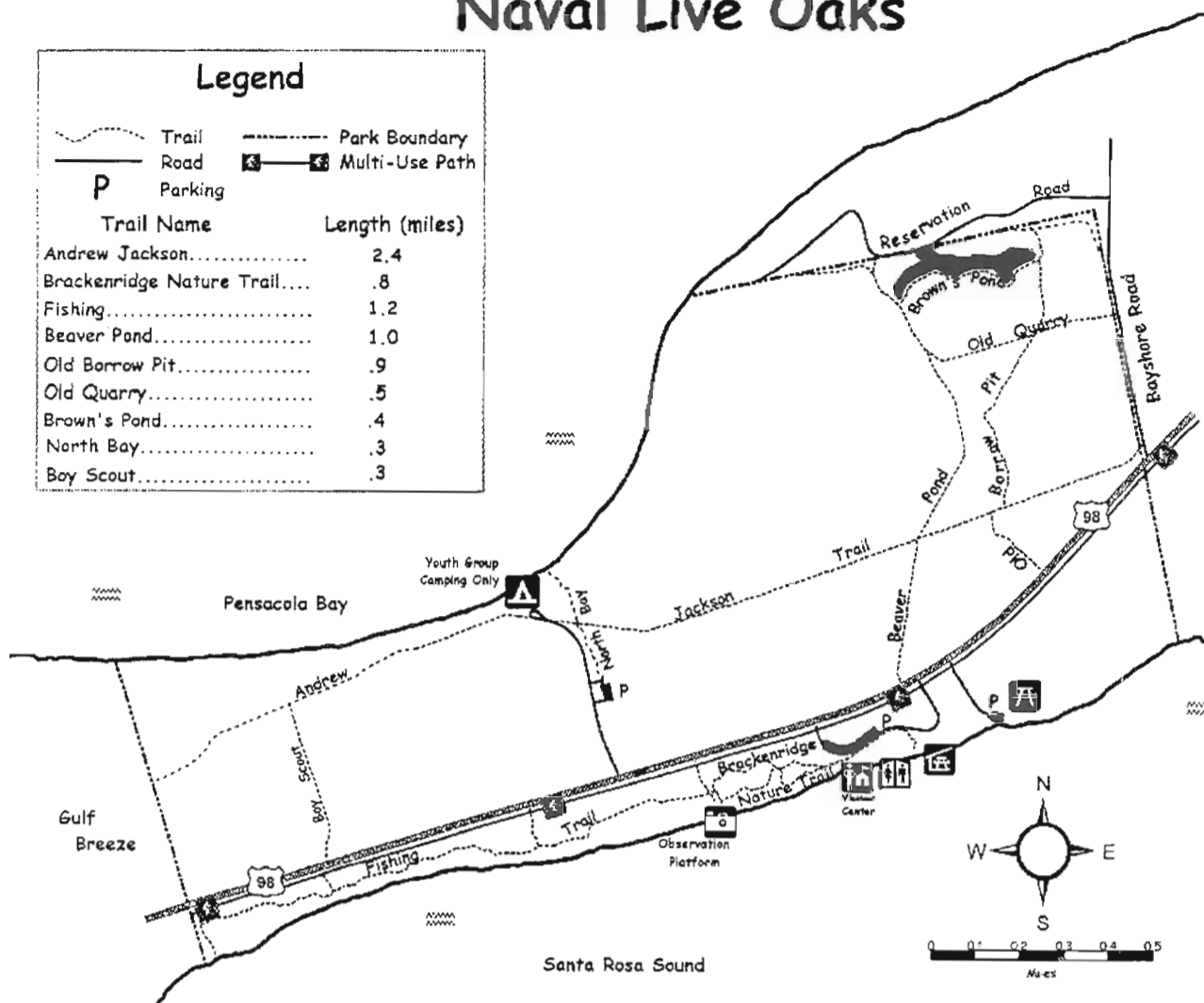
#### Picnic Area

Open from 8:00 a.m. until sunset this accessible picnic area offers walkways through the trees, outdoor showers, restrooms, swimming and parking. The shoreline is popular for people with small children who want to avoid the rough surf at the beach. A saltwater fishing license is required for out-of-state visitors.

#### Group Camping

A group tent camping area, located on the northside of the Naval Live Oaks Area, is available for organized youth groups. A covered pavilion offers accessible restrooms and picnic tables. Call Fort Pickens Campground Registration at 850-934-2622 to make required reservations.

# Naval Live Oaks



## Naval Live Oaks Trails Guide

### Brackenridge Nature Trail

Earning \$400 a year Henry Marie Brackenridge cultivated live oak trees as Superintendent of the Naval Live Oaks Reservation. Exhibits on the trail identify plants and describe how live oaks were used in shipbuilding. The trail consists of a "figure 8" path with an observation deck at the far end. Fallen trees are the result of Hurricane Ivan.



Live Oak

### Andrew Jackson Trail

Also known as the Pensacola-St. Augustine Road, this trail was the first road connecting East Florida with West Florida. Congress provided \$20,000 for construction of the road in 1824 when Florida was still a territory.

### Beaver Pond Trail

The Beaver Pond Trail traverses through several plant communities typical of southeastern forests. A beaver dam can be seen at the northern end of the trail. When active, the beaver dam maintains the water level even during times of drought, attracting a variety of wildlife. Watch out for snakes. Bug repellent is advised.

### Old Borrow Pit Trail

Sand from the borrow pit was used for the construction of U. S. Highway 98. The trail leads through longleaf and sand pine communities. Hikers on this trail will notice the benefits of a prescribed fire that rejuvenated the forest. Burns were conducted in 2000 and 2002 which reduced fuel loads to prevent wildfire and enhanced habitat for plants and animals.

### Secondary Trails

Several secondary trails can be used for additional hiking.

## For Your Safety

The sun and heat can be intense! Wear a hat and sunglasses. Drink plenty of water. Watch out for snakes, poison ivy, chiggers and ticks.

When hiking, leave hiking plans and estimated return time with a friend or relative. For emergency call (850) 934-3010 or 911. Cell phone users call \*55.