



Gulf Coast
Breeze

2023

Visitors Guide produced by *The* Wakulla 

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Welcome to Wakulla County



William Snowden
Editor & Publisher
The Wakulla Sun

Welcome to Wakulla County, on Florida's Forgotten Coast.

Wakulla County has so much to offer visitors – an unspoiled coastline, Old Florida fishing villages, Wakulla Springs, state and national forests, the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

There's recreational opportunities for freshwater and saltwater fishing, boating, biking, birding, swimming – or visiting some of the historic sites, such as the St. Marks Lighthouse, the remains of the old Spanish Fort San Marcos in St. Marks, the old mineral springs in Panacea, or the restored railroad depot in Sopchoppy.

While you're visiting, stop by our local restaurants for some fresh seafood or down home cooking.

This visitors guide only touches the surface of what Wakulla County has to offer – including its unspoiled natural beauty.

For more information on Wakulla County, go to visitwakulla.com.

For more on news and events in Wakulla County, pick up a copy of The Wakulla Sun, or check out our website at thewakullasun.com.

Cover photo of the St. Marks Lighthouse by Sean Ogden.

Welcome to the Gulf Coast Breeze

We took the name of our visitors guide from one of the old newspapers – the Gulf Coast Breeze, founded in May 1897 by R. Don McLeod Jr., the son of Judge R. Don McLeod Sr. – he of the legendary court ruling dealing with fishing for mullet that, because mullet have gizzards like chickens, they are fowl not fish and therefore exempt from state fishing regulations.

There's a monument to the judge's ruling in Hudson Park, and it's why a mullet tops the old courthouse weathervane.

According to local historian Betty Green, McLeod Jr. was only 14 years old when he started the Gulf Coast Breeze.



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10 historic Wakulla County landmarks

By RIDDHI PATEL

1. St. Marks Lighthouse

The St. Marks Lighthouse is 179 years old, the second oldest lighthouse in Florida. It's 87 feet tall, and the foundation is 12 feet deep on solid rock — the first tower was built in 1830 and it was structurally unstable, as was the second. The tower built in 1842, three years before Florida became a state, still stands because they used hard rock from the Spanish fort built in the 1600s at the confluence of the Wakulla and St. Marks rivers.

The U.S. Coast Guard transferred ownership of the lighthouse in October 2013 to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which operates the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

You can visit the lighthouse and tour the lighthouse keepers' quarters. Admission fees to the refuge apply. Contact the refuge at (850) 925-6121 for information.

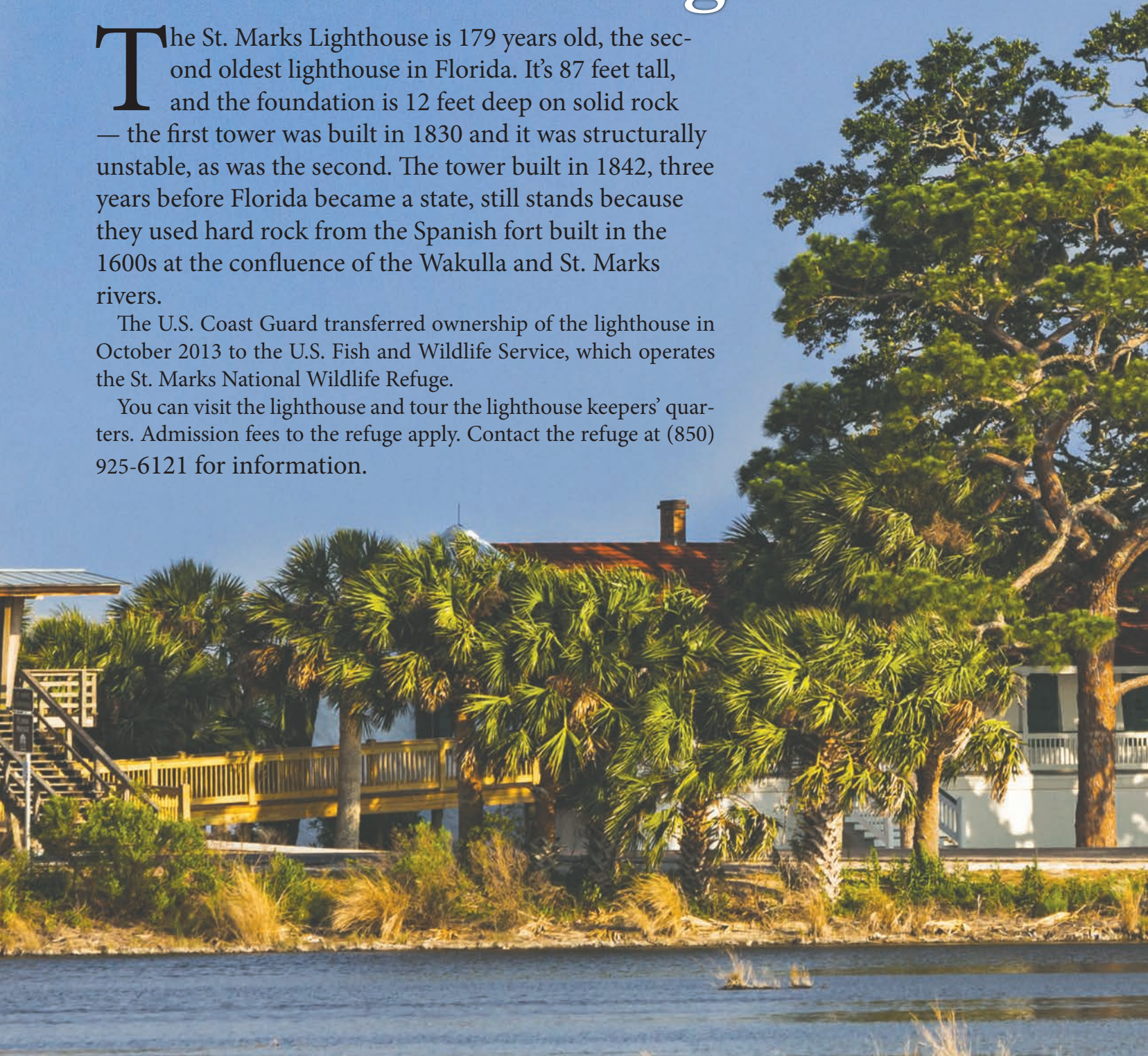




Photo by Sean Ogden

Photo by Sean Ogden

2. Wakulla Springs



The historic Wakulla Springs Lodge at Wakulla Springs State Park was built in the 1930s by Ed Ball.



Photo by Richard Brunck from the book "Art and Marble in a Florida Swamp: A New Deal for Wakulla" by Madeleine Hirsiger-Carr

The painted beams in the historic Wakulla Springs Lodge.



Photo by Sean Ogden

The observation deck at Wakulla Springs with a boat tour of the river.

In 1937, a few years following Edward Ball's purchase of the Wakulla Spring property, The Lodge at Wakulla Springs was built featuring a Mediterranean Revival architectural style. The lodge itself is two stories, and still serves as a hotel today.

The main lobby features a fireplace, marble-topped checker tables, an "Old Joe" exhibit about a famous alligator who was tragically murdered, and an overall grand and historic ambiance. There is a glass enclosed space looking out towards the springs, a restaurant, and a giftshop. Within the giftshop is a space to purchase snacks and ice cream/soda creations, and according to the official brochure about the Edward Ball

Wakulla Springs State Park, the marble counter is one of the longest in the world. The ceilings of the lobby include extensive designs featuring wildlife and folk art.

The lodge is surrounded by the state park which includes walking trails, guided boat tours, a swimming area, scenic views, and plenty of local flora and fauna. As of 1993, The state park as a whole was added to the National Register of Historic Places and designated as a National Natural Landmark. For more information about the Lodge at Wakulla Springs, which is located at 550 Wakulla Park Dr., visit www.thelodgeat-wakullasprings.com.

3. Fort San Marcos



A museum is built on the limestone ruins of the old Spanish fort at the confluence of the Wakulla and St. Marks rivers.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, the land which is currently the San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park, was inhabited by the Apalachee. Eventually around 1660, years after Spanish explorers first arrived in Florida, Fort San Marcos de Apalache was built as a Spanish fortification in St. Marks at the Wakulla and St. Marks river junction.

Over the years, the fort faced pirate raids, and changed hands from the Spaniards to the British to the Americans. The fort has been around for the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. From raids and battles to hurricanes, there were many reasons why the fort needed repair and restoration often. Eventually, the Spanish rebuilt the fort and made it out of limestone instead of wood – some of the limestone fort ruins can still be seen in the state park today. A museum is located above some of the ruins

in which visitors can find the information provided above and more including timelines, artifacts, a video, interactive displays, dioramas, and a plethora of history about the fort and the people who inhabited the area.

The fort, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, is currently a set of ruins which lies within a state park located at 148 Old Fort Road. In addition to the museum, the fort ruins are surrounded by the park, a self-guided interpretive trail, a picnic area, and scenic views. The park is open Thursday through Monday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and though there is no entrance fee for the park, there is a \$2 admission fee for the museum. More information can be found at <https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/san-marcos-de-apalache-historic-state-park>.



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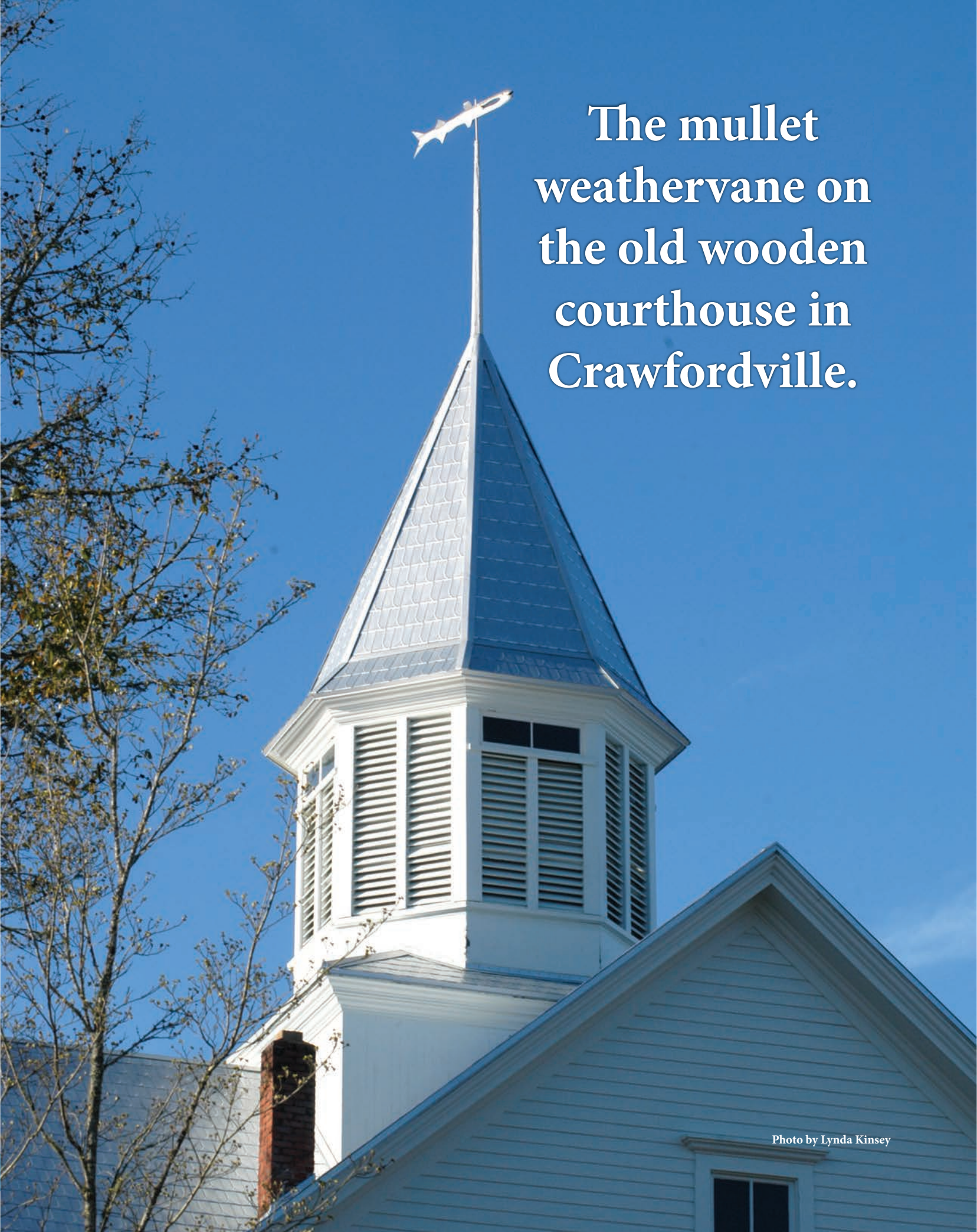
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The mullet
weathervane on
the old wooden
courthouse in
Crawfordville.

Photo by Lynda Kinsey

4. The old courthouse

Located on the south side of Courthouse Square in the heart of Crawfordville, is the Old Wakulla County Courthouse. Built around 1893 after the previous courthouse burned down in an arson case in 1892, the wooden courthouse is three stories tall with a cupola on top of the third floor.

Wakulla County Historical Society president Brent Thurmond said the building features high ceilings which were common back then and a long hallway with north, south, east, and west ends which was designed for cross-ventilation. He said the first and second floors have been restored and that the second floor held the old courtroom, but that the third floor and cupola are generally not open to the public.

Though not Wakulla's first courthouse, it has been thought, including by Thurmond, that the building is the oldest wooden courthouse that is still preserved in Florida – a fact that can also be found in a brochure detailing the history of the building. The brochure also mentioned that the building itself was built with quality pine wood.

Atop the building is the iconic cypress, mul-

let-shaped weathervane which relates to the famous “a mullet is a bird” ruling made by Judge R. Don Mcleod in that very courthouse. (In the controversial case, the judge found that since mullet, a local food fish, have gizzards, they aren't fish but are birds and not subject to state regulation.) Thurmond said many notable Wakullans practiced law in the building, and that courtrooms often played a major role within society.

The old courthouse was in use until 1948 when a new courthouse was commissioned in conjunction with a county jail, and the building was then moved 500 ft to where it stands today. The building, now located at 23 High Dr., was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

Thurmond said that the building has been used in the past for civic organization meetings and as the county library, and that it has been a part of the emergency plan for alternative courtroom space. Currently, the Wakulla County Chamber of Commerce utilizes the first floor of the building.



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5. The Courthouse



The Wakulla County Courthouse in Crawfordville, the county seat. It was built in 1949.

The current Wakulla County Courthouse was originally built around 1949 along with the Old Wakulla County Jail, to replace the wooden courthouse. It was built of brick and not wood so as to limit the issue of fires.

Though originally made in the Art Deco style similar to the old jail, Thurmond said after many renovations the building now resembles more of a masonry style.

Originally a two story, L-shaped building, around 1990 an additional wing and story was added to make the building three stories tall and U-shaped. Thurmond said there were

more renovations around 2010.

From a net ban case to a trial in which the presiding judge went into labor, the currently in-use courthouse has had its share of interesting cases and events.

As the building, located at 3056 Crawfordville Hwy, is still used as a courthouse, there is sure to be more news from the courtroom for years to come.

Additionally, annual ceremonies to commemorate Memorial Day and Veterans Day are held on the courthouse grounds.

6. The old jail

The Old Wakulla County Jail was built around 1949 at the same time as the Wakulla County Courthouse. According to Thurmond, it was built in the Art Deco Style – a style that was popular for the time. Historical Society treasurer Debbie Jay highlighted the faux columns, archways above the doors, and the roof as examples of the architectural style.

Originally built as a jail with a residence, it had concrete walls and segregated spaces. Downstairs was the residence and office for jailor Deputy R.E. Whaley, and his wife, Miss Dean while upstairs were the jail cells.

After the jail was closed, the building housed many county offices including Wakulla EMS up-

stairs and veteran's services downstairs. Thurmond said the historical society, which was formed around 1991, began using the building around 1998. Following years of restoration efforts, the museum was able to be opened around 2009.

Today the Old Wakulla County Jail is the Wakulla Historical Society Museum, and it contains a variety of exhibits about Wakulla County's history including notable people, artifacts, locations, and events. The building is located at 24 High Dr., and the museum is open Thursday and Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. More information about the historical society and museum, and about Wakulla history, can be found at wakullahistory.org.



Photo by Riddhi Patel

The old jail, located behind the Courthouse, is home to the Wakulla County Historical Society Museum and Archives.



7. Sopchoppy Depot

The Sopchoppy Depot is the last surviving depot on the rail line of the old GF&A Railroad.

Originally built around 1891 as a part of the Carrabelle, Tallahassee and Georgia (CT&G) Railroad, the Historic Sopchoppy Depot is a reflection of the place that railroads held within the history of Sopchoppy and Wakulla County as a whole. According to Depot Committee member Nelson Martin, much of the town was surveyed and laid out around the Depot. He said, by 1905, “It really became the center of commerce in the whole county.”

Around 1906, the Depot was bought by the Georgia, Florida and Alabama (GF&A) Railroad. According to Martin, the depot ended its tenure with the railroad in the 1940s, and it was used by Myron Hodge as a grocery store with a gas pump in the 1960s and then a warehouse for a beekeeper. Around 1993, Martin started the Gopher, Frog and Alligator Corporation, based on the what the GF&A Railroad was referred to as, and purchased the depot.

Eventually, through a federal program and grant, the ownership of the depot was transferred to the City of Sopchoppy – the Sopchoppy Depot was restored by around 2010 and is maintained by the city. “It really gifted it to the community,” said Martin about the

grant.

The building, located at 34 Rose St., was added to the National Register of Historic Places around late 2017. About the building itself, Martin noted that the double scalloped siding is unique and that the decks were built to the same height as a boxcar so people could easily enter and exit the trains. Pigs, benches, and barrels with names of common supplies that were transported on the trains were added to the exterior of the building. For years, the Depot has featured a wood shingle roof; however, it was recently changed to a metal roof.

Inside the building is a museum on the history of the Depot and of Sopchoppy. Within the museum, there is an original typewriter, a 1928 Depot Agent’s Manual, part of the original telegraph, and more. Outside the depot bathrooms, is an installed mural of a train and information about its history.

Martin said the museum is definitely open on Sopchoppy Community Market Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and that they hope to start opening again every Saturday – they may be able to accommodate other times by appointment.

8. Sopchoppy School/Gym

Directly across the street from each other, you can find the Historic Old Sopchoppy High School Gymnasium and Sopchoppy School. According to the Historical Marker Application for the school, the school itself was originally constructed in 1924 as an H-shaped, six-classroom, one-story building.

Starting around 1933, because of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), limestone buildings were added on the school, including more classrooms, auditorium space, indoor bathrooms, the historic gymnasium across the street, and more. The limestone is native to the area, and the accent features like the flooring and door/window frames were made of wood.

The high school, located at 164 Yellow Jacket Ave,

was the first high school built in Wakulla County and was eventually used for other purposes like an elementary school. The gymnasium, located at 159 Yellow Jacket Avenue, was built in the Spanish Mission architectural style in 1935, and the building was restored in 1998.

Though built later, the gymnasium was added to the National Register of Historic Places first – it was added to the list in 1990 while the school itself was added to the register in 2001.

Today, the gymnasium can be rented out from the City of Sopchoppy for events like reunions and wedding receptions. The Sopchoppy Opry hosts events in the historic school's auditorium.

The Sopchoppy School, at right, before a recent benefit concert. And Sopchoppy Gym, below, which is across the street.



Photo by Lynda Kinsey



Photo by Riddhi Patel

9. Harper House



Built around 1865, the Harper House is an old Wakulla residence that can be found in the middle of Crawfordville across from county government offices. The Harpers were not the original owners of the home but were likely the most notable. Around 1910, it was bought by Dr. Joseph Harper who used it as his doctor's office and a home for him and his family. Current owner of the building Skip Young said the building

was used as a residence until he bought it in 1986.

According to Young, the building had four fireplaces, two upstairs and two downstairs, that all connected to the same chimney. Porches can be found both upstairs and downstairs in the front and back of the building. Over time, portions of the residence like the barn and stables, separate kitchen, and breezeways were torn down in renovations, burned down, or closed off.

According to an old Magnolia Monthly article by Elizabeth Smith, Harper was referred to as the "horse and buggy doctor," and he was known to have helped Wakulla residents with a variety of ailments. Records have indicated that he likely delivered over 5000 babies in Wakulla County.

Since the late 1980s, Young has used the building as a funeral home. The building is currently home to Family Funeral Home and Cremation Services. Whether in birth or in death, the Harper House has been a part of the lives of many Wakullans since the early 1900s. "We're proud to be able to keep it in the condition we do," said Young about the building which is located at 3106 Crawfordville Hwy.

10. Hudson House



Built around 1906, The Hudson House is also an early Wakulla home that has remained in decent condition over time, and it is currently used as leased of-

fice space. Current owner of the building, Young, noted special features like the breezeway with rooms on the left and right and hardwood floors.

Local attorney and entrepreneur Jewel Hudson owned it as a home. He is the namesake of the nearby Hudson Park. Eventually, the building was bought by Wakulla Bank, and in 2014, it was bought by Young who used the building for a few years as a funeral home.

Since moving his funeral home back into the Harper House, Young has leased the Hudson House to two different real estate companies. The building is located at 84 Ochlockonee St. in Crawfordville behind the TCC Wakulla Center.

"I'm proud to own both of them and be able to maintain them," said Young about the Hudson and Harper Houses. "They're landmarks!"

The old Harvey vehicles in Medart. Photo by Lynda Kinsey



Welcome to Wakulla County

Nestled just South of the capital city of Florida is a slice of paradise named Wakulla County. A place that you can see wildlife in its own surroundings. A place where you can catch supper and a lifetime of memories. A place where at just the right moment you get to enjoy a family meal of fried mullet and cheese grits. A place where you can get lost in the same magic of the setting from a Tarzan movie or finally get up the nerve to take the plunge into the world's most beautiful spring.

From boating in our waters, to kayaking with a manatee, biking on our trails, or maybe you just want to curl up with a book on one of our beaches and watch the sunset. Staycations are what we do best. The balance of a thriving community where the locals will help you find your next adventure while telling you why this is home is what makes

us so special.

We hope that you take the time to find out for yourself what they mean when they refer to us as “mysterious waters” and leave with a sense of keeping that mystery unsolved while finding all the answers in the serenity that you uncover while you're here.

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Quincee Messersmith

Quincee Messersmith
Wakulla County Commission Chairman

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Crawfordville

Nestled at the heart of all of Wakulla County's natural splendor is the charming town of Crawfordville. Named for a prominent doctor and farmer in the area during the late 1800's, Senator John Lovic Crawford, the bustling town is the center of local government and business, large enough to offer large chain stores and franchised restaurants and pharmacies, while maintaining the feel of a small southern town where merchants and small businesses still thrive. Small locally owned galleries, shops, stores and restaurants together with the surrounding natural springs, sinkholes and forests offer many treasures to be discovered and explored.

Downtown you will find Wakulla's historic wooden courthouse, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and the only one still in use - one of only three remaining wooden courthouses in Florida. The courthouse was built from solid heart pine in 1892, and has a cupola adorned with a cypress weathervane hand-carved into the shape of a mullet in honor of the historical significance of the fish to the fishing industry in Wakulla County.

The historic wooden courthouse was replaced with the current courthouse in the 1940s, to which a third story was added in the 1980s.

Directly across the street from the historic wooden courthouse is the Old Jail House, home of Wakulla County Historical Society's Old Jail Museum and Archives. The fully functioning museum boasts the museum gift shop, a genealogy suite and historical displays and exhibits that celebrate the rich history of Wakulla County.

Crawfordville also has three wonderful parks to explore. Centrally located downtown is Crawfordville's oldest park, Hudson Park, which is often the site of festivals, large gatherings and community activities due to its location and large open expanse of land. The park currently offers restroom facilities, a covered stage and picnic area, but is undergoing a renovation project to add walking trails, workout stations and an area for food trucks. Across the street is Azalea Park, which has lighted walking trails, workout stations, playground areas, restroom facilities, and a gazebo at each end of the park. Many local children call this the lion park because it is guarded by a stone lion that overlooks Crawfordville Highway. And finally, Hickory Park has restroom facilities, a covered picnic area, hiking/biking trails, tennis courts, and a playground for the kids.

Crawfordville has been home to a satellite campus of Tallahassee Community College since 2006. The college refers to this, and the more recent addition of the Wakulla Environmental Institute, as "Two gateways in Wakulla County." The Wakulla Environmental Institute is a 158-acre state of the art facility that brings education, conservation, and recreation together to stimulate local economic development. It is a world class learning lab that serves the community by giving students real life, hands on educational opportunities that promote environmental responsibility.

There are several not-to-be-missed attractions only a short drive from Crawfordville. There is the popular jungle cruise down the Wakulla River at the famous Wakulla Springs State Park, or for a more adventurous view of the river, canoes or kayaks are available for rent from T-N-T Canoe Rentals. Nearby Panacea offers the finest local seafood and fishing opportunities, while the St Marks National Wildlife Refuge is home to the beautiful and historic lighthouse.

Whether it's a relaxing visit to one of several local coffee shops, an educational tour of the history museum, souvenir shopping in local galleries, a stroll around the park trails, hiking in the forest, swimming in bone-chilling spring waters or taking photos at the lighthouse, Crawfordville and the surrounding areas offer activities for everyone, regardless of interest and activity level.

-Krystal Sheppard

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Wakulla calendar of events

From Worm Gruntin' to Blue Crabs to Christmas in Panacea, Wakulla County celebrates its holidays and other annual traditions like no other place on earth. With nearly 40 festivals each year, there's something for everyone - every month.

JANUARY

• Arbor Day Celebration

Sponsored by the Iris Garden Club of Wakulla

Date: 3rd Saturday in January

Location: Drive-thru event at extension office in Crawfordville

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wakulla County's Arbor Day Celebration has been going on for more than a decade and features artisan and craft vendors, nature art and countless interesting outdoor yard and lawn items for sale. Local Wakulla County Green Guides and other nature-based businesses typically attend to showcase their unique products and services.

FEBRUARY

• St. Marks NWR Wildlife Heritage & Outdoor Festival

Sponsored by St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Date: 1st Saturday in February

Location: Visitor's Center at St. Marks NWR

Time: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Seeking to "Connect People with Nature," the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge's Heritage and Outdoors Festival has grown into one of Wakulla County's largest displays of outdoor culture every year. From wildlife exhibits and dog-hunting demonstrations, to turkey call contests and fly fishing or archery tutorials, this festival has a little bit of everything. Local food vendors and nature-based businesses are always on hand, and each festival features live music and wildlife artwork from area artists.

• Rotary Valentines Celebration

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Wakulla

Date: Saturday before (or on) Valentine's Day

Location: Azalea Park in Crawfordville

Time: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Participate in the fun and excitement of the Valentine's Celebration and contribute in a very special way to the community's effort to raise money for Wakulla County charities. Fun parade begins at 10 a.m., along with arts & crafts and food vendors. Entertainment begins on the stage at 11 a.m. Lots of heart-filled fun for the entire family!

• Stone Age and Primitive Art Festival

Date: Periodically check website for date:

www.floridastateparks.org

Location: Ochlockonee River State Park, 429 State Park Road in Sopchoppy

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wakulla County's homage to the stone age and primitive times, this annual event offers guests demonstrations on primitive weaponry, the art of arrowhead making, hide tanning, basket weaving, pottery making and lessons in carving shell, bone, antlers or wood. The festival also offers several kinds of ancient contests, such as an archery/atlatl competition, for guests to participate in.

• African American Heritage Celebration

Sponsored by Wakulla County Christian Coalition

Date: 3rd Saturday in February

Location: Hudson Park in Crawfordville

Time: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This celebration is Wakulla County's tribute to African-American culture and coincides with America's annual recognition of Black History Month. From ethnic food to African American arts and crafts and live performing artists, there's never a dull moment. The event always features an African American-themed parade, complete with the sounds of local high school marching bands.

MARCH

• Lion's Club St. Patrick's Day Celebration,

Sponsored by Crawfordville Lions Club

Date: Saturday before St. Patrick's Day

Location: Hudson Park in Crawfordville

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Lion's Club's annual St. Patrick's day celebration is a mix of live folk music, Irish food and beverage offerings -- and a sea of green and gold arts and crafts merchandise. The Lion's Club St. Patrick's Day Celebration is preceded by an eclectic parade that streams through downtown Crawfordville.

APRIL

• Low Country Boil

Sponsored by Wakulla County Chamber of Commerce

Date: First Saturday of April

Location: 3Y Ranch, Crawfordville

Time: 6-10 p.m.

No one does a Low Country Boil quite like Wakulla County! This annual festival is easily one of the area's most popular events because of its wealth of live music and great food, featuring an enormous pot of a traditional low country boil -- with favorites like shrimp, sausage, crawfish, potatoes and corn on the cob.

• Sopchoppy Worm Gruntin' Festival

Date: 2nd Saturday in April

Location: Downtown Sopchoppy

Time: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The Sopchoppy Worm Gruntin' Festival has easily become one of Wakulla County's most popular and largest events each year. The celebration draws thousands from Wakulla County and the surrounding areas who come to see the famed Sopchoppy worms rise from the ground and crown a new Gruntin' King.

Continued on Page 26



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Calendar of Events

From Page 24

This all-day celebration begins bright and early with a 5K race, then features a “Worm Gruntin’” demonstration and competition in the afternoon, and ends with live music late into the night. The event attracts nearly 100 food, arts and crafts vendors every year, and the evening culminates with the Annual Worm Grunters’ Ball, featuring a slew of live performances from local artists.

• Stephen C. Smith Memorial Regatta

Sponsored by Shell Point Yacht Club and the Shell Point Sailboard Club
Date: Last weekend of April
Location: Shell Point Beach
Time: Sat. 8 a.m. to 8: p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

As Wakulla County’s longest-running festival, the Stephen C. Smith Memorial Regatta benefits the American Cancer Society and is held each year in memory of a local sailor who died from a rare form of leukemia at the age of 29. With hundreds of thousands of dollars raised for charity over the years, the nationally renowned event – which began in 1973 – features races for yachts, sailboats, catamarans and windsurfers. The festival attracts local food and art vendors, and is also highlighted by an enormous auction each year with prizes donated by local Wakulla County businesses.

• Rock the Dock Fishing Tournament

Sponsored by Panacea Waterfronts Florida Partnership
Date: Last Weekend in April
Location: Rock Landing Marina in Panacea
Times: Captains’ Meeting: Friday night; 7 p.m.
Weigh-in: 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Satur-

day; 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday

Founded in 2009, this saltwater in-shore fishing tournament was created to benefit the city of Panacea and to promote the excellent fishing and boating opportunities in and around Wakulla County’s famed coastal community. The two-day tournament routinely pays out thousands in cash and prizes and features several fishing categories, including youth, master’s, recreational, women’s and kayak.

MAY

• Panacea Blue Crab Festival

Date: 1st Saturday in May
Location: Woolley Park in Panacea
Time: 10 a.m.

One of the oldest and longest running festivals on the Wakulla County landscape, the Panacea Blue Crab Festival gives Wakulla County an opportunity to celebrate and thank the city of Panacea for one of its most precious commodities. Started in 1975, the festival begins each year with a parade down U.S. Highway 98, then the party really begins at Woolley Park on the waterfront with live music and clog dancers, local arts and crafts vendors and all the fresh Wakulla County blue crab – and all types of other seafood – you could ever desire. And don’t forget to enter the famed “Blue Crab Pickin’ Contest” to become the next Panacea Blue Crab Festival champ!

• Free Kid’s Fishing Clinic

Date: 2nd Saturday of May
Location: Woolley Park in Panacea
Time: Weigh-in begins at 1 p.m.

Teaching children a lifelong hobby, instilling appreciation for marine environment and providing fun, family outings are the objectives for the Kid’s Fishing Clinic. In partnership with

the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Kid’s Fishing Clinic provides each participant a free rod & reel and opportunity to learn and practice their new skills.

• Sharks & Chablis Fundraiser

Date: Contact Gulf Specimen for specific dates
Location: Gulf Specimen Marine Lab in Panacea
Time: 2 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Website: www.gulfspecimen.org

This annual benefit for one of Wakulla County’s most prized attractions, the Gulf Specimen Marine Lab, is a celebration fundraiser that also honors the life, work and activism of Dr. Anne Rudloe, co-founder of the Gulf Specimen who died of cancer in 2012. The event features a seafood buffet, wine tasting, silent auction and live music, as well as guided tours of the Gulf Marine Specimen Lab’s aquariums.

• Children’s Fishing Tournament

Sponsored by the Wakulla County Sheriff’s Office
Date: 3rd Saturday in May
Location: Woolley Park in Panacea
Time: Weigh-in from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

With nearly two decades of service to the children of Wakulla County, the Children’s Fishing Tournament puts new rods and reels into the hands of hundreds of kids and gives them a chance to compete in either the freshwater or saltwater categories for prizes. Games, rides, exhibitions and food vendors are on hand in the park all afternoon prior to the weigh-in and trophy presentation.

JULY

• Sopchoppy 4th of July Celebration

Date: Closest Saturday to July 4th.

Calendar of Events

Time: 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Location: Myron B. Hodge City Park in Sopchoppy.

Contact: Sopchoppy City Hall at (850) 962-4611.

Another of Wakulla County's oldest traditions is the Sopchoppy 4th of July Celebration in the heart of downtown Sopchoppy. The festivities begin with a parade, followed by an all-day and all-night festival – complete with arts and crafts and food vendors – at Sopchoppy's Myron B. Hodge City Park on the Sopchoppy River. The evening is then capped with a spectacular fireworks display.

SEPTEMBER

• Wakulla County Coastal Cleanup

Date: 3rd Saturday in September

Location: St. Marks Wildlife Refuge/Shell Point Beach/Mashes Sands/Panacea

Time: 8 a.m.

Visit www.kwcb.org

This program is run by volunteers who make it their goal to both beautify the area's beaches and coastlines and educate about how to keep Wakulla County clean and litter-free. Cleanup culminates with a celebration at noon at Woolley Park in Panacea.

• Fall Wildflower Walk at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Date: Last Saturday in September

Location: St. Marks Wildlife Refuge

Time: 9 a.m. to Noon

Contact: (850) 925-6121 or saintmarks@fws.gov

This is a one-of-a-kind Wildflower walk offered during spring and fall blooming seasons. Featured is a

nature walk "Behind the Gates" to areas not usually open to the public. Wildflower experts identify species and give an oral history of Wakulla County's area wildflowers.

OCTOBER

• Monarch Butterfly Festival

Date: 4th Saturday in October

Location: St. Marks Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center

Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Contact: (850) 925-6121 or saintmarks@fws.gov.

Wildlife seekers can come watch the migrating monarch butterfly pass through the Wakulla County coast around this time, specifically at the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

NOVEMBER

• Community Thanksgiving Dinner

Sponsored by the Wakulla Senior Citizens Center.

Date: TBA

Location: Senior Citizens Center

For the past several years, the Wakulla Senior Citizens Center has given back to the community by offering a community Thanksgiving Dinner with turkey and dressing, cranberry sauce and lots of pie.

DECEMBER

• Christmas in the Park

Sponsored by the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office

Date: 2nd Saturday in December

Location: Community Center in Crawfordville

Time: 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.

This annual event put on by the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office is a way to give back to the kids in the

community. An arrangement is made by the WCSO for Santa Claus to pop by Hudson Park for pictures with children and to accept gift wish-lists. There will also be games, prizes and train rides, as well as a host of vendors with holiday-themed products.

• Christmas in Panacea

Sponsored by Panacea Waterfronts Florida Partnership

Date: 1st Saturday in December

Location: Downtown Panacea

Time: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Panacea-Waterfronts-Florida/178566238854726>

What started in 2005 as a way to lift spirits after the town of Panacea was rocked by Hurricane Dennis, the event has grown into an annual affair. The Panacea Christmas celebration will include snow to play in, children's activities and a bounce house, vendors and entertainment, free admission to Gulf Specimen Marine Lab (2 p.m.-5 p.m.), and the annual parade down U.S. Highway 98 at 6:30 p.m., complete with decorated boats sponsored by local businesses and civic organizations.

• Christmas in Sopchoppy

Date: 2nd Saturday in December

Location: Downtown Sopchoppy

Time: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The city of Sopchoppy opens its doors for the holidays when this festival gets under way every year. Local arts and crafts retailers with festive seasonal merchandise, along with food vendors and live Christmas music, make up just a few of the features. And, of course, Santa Claus pops in for a few hours for a visit each Christmas to spend time with area children.

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Welcome to Wakulla County

Wakulla County is such a beautiful place, and we are all so proud to call it home. We want you to have the best time you could possibly have here during your visit. Whether you plan on staying a while or you are just passing through, there are so many wonderful things to do and see here in Wakulla County.

The Wakulla County Sheriff's Office is here to help you at all times. You will see us out and about in our patrol vehicles or on the water in our Sheriff's Office boat. We ask that you stay safe and follow all Florida laws during your stay or visit here in Wakulla County.

Please if you have any questions at all do not hesitate to call us at (850) 745-7100 or (850) 926-0800. One of our Dispatchers or Deputy Sheriffs will happily help you in any way that they can.

We love our community and we love visitors in our community. If you see one of us during your travels, stop and say hello. You'll find that our deputies are easy to talk to and full of information about the area.

We hope you enjoy your visit here to Wakulla County, drive slowly and keep your eyes open because there are many beautiful things here you don't want to miss.

Sincerely,

Jared F. Miller

Jared F. Miller
Sheriff of Wakulla County

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*Photo-Wakulla River
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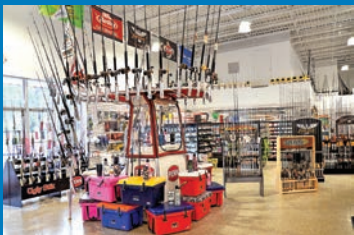
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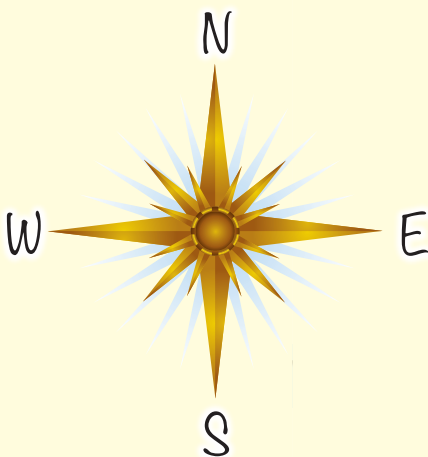
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Wakulla Beach Rd.

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Shell Point

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Welcome to Sopchoppy

Dear Visitors,

Welcome to Wakulla County! I hope you are ready for a wonderful time in our neck of the woods!

Stop by and visit our great little town of Sopchoppy, Yes.. Sop-chop-py! Say it fast or we will know you are not from around here, but still be happy that you stopped by.

Our City has several amazing events throughout the year. In addition to many community events, we have our annual Worm Grunting Festival every April and our HUGE July 4th Celebration with fireworks over the river.

While in town be sure to visit the Sopchoppy Train Depot, originally built in 1891 and carefully rebuilt in 2010. The curators of the depot have filled it with hundreds of locally found items that depict some of the history of our town along with pictures of lifelong residents whose families go back many generations.

Be sure to stroll across the street and visit the native wildflower gardens at Depot Park. All the flowers and plants are native to this area and are labeled to give you more information.

Our newest business, CIVIC Brewery is open and family friendly if you are looking for a cold beverage and a place to relax.

If you would rather picnic, head into Sopchoppy Grocery and find everything you need, including local Tupelo honey and farm fresh eggs.

After lunch take a short drive to City Park where you can kayak, just put your feet in the refreshingly cold Sopchoppy river or jump in and go for a swim. Bathrooms and showers are nearby for our campers and visitors.

Don't forget to visit George Griffin Pottery on Sopchoppy Hwy, he has a beautiful collection of art, plates, vases, platters and much more all made on site!

Wherever you go in Sopchoppy, slow down and enjoy the ride because Sopchoppy and easy living go together!

Thanks for stopping by!

Lara Edwards

Lara Edwards, Mayor
City of Sopchoppy

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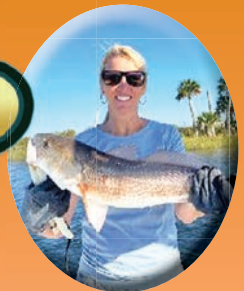


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Welcome to St. Marks

Photo of the St. Marks River by Lynda Kinsey

As Mayor of the City of St. Marks, and on behalf of my fellow Commissioners and the Community, I invite you to visit St. Marks and enjoy all its amenities where the St. Marks River and Wakulla River meet.

Our City began in 1527. The rich history began when Spanish explorer Panfilo de Narvaez arrived in search of gold. The Fort San Marcos de Apalache has the wonderful history of the area that once flew the flags of five countries. Take a leisurely walk through history.

The Tallahassee to St. Marks Historic Railroad is now the first State Rail-Trail. It was used to transport cotton, turpentine and other goods from Tallahassee to Europe and other East Coast markets. You can now take the same trail from Tallahassee to St. Marks by bike, or hike, jog, horseback or skate.

Nineteen miles south of Tallahassee, it is the closest location to put your boat in for fresh water and salt water fishing. There are three boat ramps to launch from. Fishing, kayaking and paddle boarding are some of the popular sports enjoyed from our shores.

Shields Marina is a full service marina, Shell Island

Fish Camp is a marina and fish camp with a motel and cabins for a rustic overnight stay, Lynn's Riverside Marina hauls and repairs boats and St. Marks Outfitters has you covered for your paddle needs. The Sweet Magnolia Bed and Breakfast is a quaint inn where you can relax after the day on the water.

Early spring and summer bring various activities, such as boating and scalloping.

The Wakulla River and the St. Marks River each have a park. They can be reserved through City Hall. After a full day of history, hiking, biking and fishing, visit our restaurants, Riverside Cafe, Cooter Stew and The Shack – and Ouzts Too in nearby Newport. Fresh seafood can be purchased to take home at Lynn Brothers, Tooke Seafood and Lighthouse Seafood.

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Paul Shedd, Mayor
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Photo by Lynda Kinsey

Spring Creek

Spring Creek, a small town known for fresh seafood and named for its freshwater submarine springs, is a special gem in Wakulla.

Maintaining the charm of an old Florida fishing village, the town is surrounded by marshlands and small creeks that lend to the feeling that it has somehow escaped modern development. The beautiful and unspoiled natural landscape is filled with sable palms scattered among ancient live oak trees whose branches are draped in Spanish moss. Nestled among these are small, charming cottages called home by generations of fishermen and oystermen.

The springs, which supply more fresh water than any other set of submarine springs in Florida, often visibly “boil” at the surface of Spring Creek Rise. This is a small area where billions of gallons of fresh water enter the Gulf of Mexico daily. The fresh and salt waters blend together to create the perfect environment for seafood to thrive, and locals continue to harvest this seafood in the tradition of their ancestors.

– *Krystal Sheppard*



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Monday: Sometimes Tuesday: Maybe
Wednesday: Possibly
Thursday ~ Saturday: 10ish to 5ish

(850) 817-0132

1349 Coastal Highway, Panacea FL 32346



Marker 11
CONSIGNMENTS & FINDS

~Vintage



Wakulla Senior Citizens Council, Inc.



Our primary mission at Wakulla Senior Citizens Council, Inc. is to enable seniors to age in a friendly and secure environment to prevent premature admission to nursing home or other institutions.

What We Offer



Lunch Served Daily

Line Dancing

Exercise Classes



Health Fair



Blood Pressure Checks

Creative Writing

Pickin' & Grinnin' Band

Bingo



Holiday Events



And much more !

COME JOIN US!

Monday - Friday

10am- 1pm

33 Michael Drive

Crawfordville, FL

32327



Find us on
Facebook

Wakulla Senior Center

For More Information 850-888-1023 www.wakullaseniorcenter.com



Ochlockonee Bay

Photo by Lynda Kinsey

Ochlockonee Bay is a quiet community that sits at the mouth of the Ochlockonee River south of Wakulla County. The natural landscape here offers much to explore, with unspoiled forests of the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, the beaches of Mashas Sands and untamed marshland. Fishing and boating enthusiasts will find public boat ramps and

a fishing pier, as well as paved cycling/walking and paddling trails to explore.

Wakulla County Regional Airport, Wakulla County's only airport, is located in Tarpine, a fly-in community.

-Krystal Sheppard

IMAGINE A SHORT DRIVE JUST A LITTLE SOUTH OF THE CAPITAL CITY OF FLORIDA AND BEING ABLE TO ACTUALLY DIVE INTO THE MAJESTIC WATERS OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST AND DEEPEST FRESH WATER SPRING NAMED WAKULLA SPRINGS.

EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK IN WAKULLA, THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE WILD ABOUT. WAKULLA COUNTY IS JUST ONE OF THOSE PLACES. WE ARE SURROUNDED BY NATURE COMBINED WITH A NURTURING SPIRIT FOR THOSE THAT LIVE HERE AND THOSE THAT VISIT.

WE HAVE A LOT TO OFFER AND A LOT TO GIVE BACK TO THOSE THAT CAME BEFORE US AND THOSE THAT WILL BE HERE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. WE HOPE THAT YOU LEAVE WITH MEMORIES FROM YOUR BEST FISHING DAY EVER, OR TRY TO REPLICATE ONE OF OUR DELICIOUS SEAFOOD RESTAURANTS PRIZED DISHES.

CATCH A GLIMPSE OF A SEA COW, WATCH AN OSPREY IN FLIGHT OR SEE A MONARCH FLUTTER IN OUR REFUGE. WHATEVER OUTDOOR ADVENTURE YOU CHOOSE, WE HOPE YOU WILL SEE WHY WE ARE ALL WILD ABOUT WAKULLA.

*To All Of Those Who Love Wakulla County,
I'm Quincee Messersmith*

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Photo of St. Marks Lighthouse