

FACTS & TALKING POINTS

South Walton consists of a collection of 16 beach neighborhoods in Northwest Florida, between the Gulf of Mexico to the south, the Choctawhatchee Bay to the north, Destin to the west and Panama City Beach to the east.

MIRAMAR BEACH · SEASCAPE · SANDESTIN · DUNE ALLEN · GULF PLACE · SANTA ROSA BEACH · BLUE MOUNTAIN BEACH · GRAYTON BEACH
WATERCOLOR · SEASIDE · SEAGROVE · WATERSOUND · SEACREST · ALYS BEACH · ROSEMARY BEACH · INLET BEACH

South Walton is home to **26-miles of sugar-white sand, four state parks, one state forest and 15 coastal dune lakes***.

The South Walton area is less developed than neighboring cities, with **more than 40% of the land area in conservation (more than 25,000 acres!)** and towns built to be walkable and bike-friendly. Many of the nation's best examples of "New Urbanism**" are here in South Walton, including Seaside, Alys Beach and Rosemary Beach.

There are **more than 200 miles of hiking and biking trails** in South Walton.

Regional Beach Access Points (from west to east):

- Miramar Beach Regional Beach Access 
- Dune Allen Regional Beach Access 
- Fort Panic Regional Beach Access 
- Ed Walline Regional Beach Access 
- Gulfview Heights Regional Beach Access
- Blue Mountain Beach Regional Beach Access
- Van Ness Butler, Jr. Regional Beach Access 
- Santa Clara Regional Beach Access 
- Inlet Beach Regional Access 

More information about beach wheelchairs at
[VisitSouthWalton.com/Beach-Safety](https://www.Visitsouthwalton.com/Beach-Safety)

Lifeguards are stationed at South Walton's **nine regional beach accesses year-round**.

Two additional lifeguard stations are located at Geronimo Street Neighborhood Beach Access and Grayton Dunes Neighborhood Beach Access.

Highway 30A runs along the coast for about two-thirds of the width of South Walton.

The uniqueness of the beach neighborhoods along this stretch of highway have led to the term "30A" being adopted as a lifestyle brand popular among residents and frequent visitors to the area.

Along this two-lane highway beachfront construction heights are limited, which precludes high-rise construction along this portion of beachfront. Higher construction is allowed in the western portion of South Walton, including Sandestin and Miramar Beach, making way for all-inclusive resorts and sweeping views of the Gulf of Mexico.

**Coastal Dune Lakes are very rare natural phenomenon, defined as a freshwater lake that periodically breaks through the coastal dunes to mix with saltwater. Coastal Dune Lakes occur in very few places in the world, including this part of Florida, New Zealand, Australia, Madagascar, north Africa, and the Pacific Northwest.*

***New Urbanism is an approach to design that promotes a sense of community and environmentally friendly habits by creating walkable neighborhoods built on a human scale.*

Air and Water Temperatures:

Month	Avg. High	Avg. Low	Water Temp.
January	61°	42°	64°
February	63°	45°	64°
March	70°	52°	66°
April	77°	60°	72°
May	83°	66°	78°
June	87°	71°	81°
July	89°	74°	83°
August	90°	74°	85°
September	87°	70°	84°
October	80°	60°	81°
November	69°	50°	72°
December	63°	44°	64°

Summer is considered the high season in South Walton, meaning that most vacations are planned during that time. This also means that accommodation prices are generally highest during the summer season, and that visitors seeking longer stays, lower rates, or smaller crowds can often find great opportunities by visiting during the late fall, winter, and early or late spring.

Many of the area's most popular events are held during the shoulder seasons, giving visitors additional reasons to visit year-round, and helping support our local businesses, employees and economy.



The South Walton Artificial Reef Association (SWARA) has placed a series of nearshore and offshore snorkel, fishing and diving reefs, and partnered with the **Cultural Arts Alliance to create the USA's first Underwater Museum of Art.**

Nearshore snorkeling reefs form the outline of local marine life when viewed from above:

The reef off Grayton Beach State Park is shaped like a sea turtle; the reef off Miramar Beach is shaped like a dolphin, the reef off Topsail Hill Preserve State Park is shaped like a seahorse, and the reef off Inlet Beach is shaped like a cobia.



Four species of sea turtle nest along South Walton Beaches
Loggerhead, Leatherback, Green, and Kemp's Ridley

Sea turtle nesting season is from May 1 through October 31.



The Value of SOUTH WALTON VISITORS

Over **4 million visitors** come to South Walton each year, spending **over 3.5 Billion dollars**, making **tourism** WALTON COUNTY'S **most important economic driver**.



OF ALL TAXES
saving Walton County households
**AN AVERAGE OF
\$1,354**



23,000
jobs created **BY TOURISM**



There are over **14,000 rental units** available across South Walton, *including beach cottages, boutique and resort hotels, bed & breakfasts, and condo units.*



82%
DRIVE



18%
FLY

82% of visitors to Walton County drive to the destination; 18% arrive by plane to Northwest Florida Beaches Airport (ECP) or Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS)

From VPS to Miramar Beach is **22 miles**; from ECP to Rosemary Beach is **19.5 miles**.

TOURISTS *fund* TOURISM

The Walton County TDC (or Visit South Walton) is 100% funded by a “bed tax,” paid by visitors staying in short-term accommodations in South Walton County.



SHORT-TERM VISITORS FUND
the Tourist Development Council through a
5% BED TAX
OR TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX

THE WALTON COUNTY TDC'S MISSION IS TO *protect and promote*
the resources that support **OUR AREA'S #1 ECONOMIC DRIVER - TOURISM.**

By state law, these funds must be used to support visitation to the area in which they are collected.

The great majority of the South Walton TDC's budget is split fairly evenly between beach maintenance and improvement projects, and marketing the area.



TOTAL TDC BUDGET

\$26 MILLION

Find more information at VisitSouthWalton.com