

Archeology kayak tour to launch in Gulf Breeze

Hana Frenette, pnj.com 9:56 a.m. CDT August 17, 2015



(Photo: John Blackie/jblackie@pnj.com)

On any given day of the year, a handful of historical tours zig-zag through Pensacola's streets and across the town, informing tour-goers of ghosts, old brothels, notable Pensacolians, military battle grounds and Spanish heritage.

In September, a new tour will make its debut in the waters of Pensacola Bay.

The Florida Public Archaeology Network is teaming up with Pensacola Paddlesport to offer a guided kayak tour on Sept. 24 of Deadman's Island, a small barrier island located off the northwest coast of Fairpoint Peninsula.

"We've been looking to do a kayak tour for awhile now," said Mike Thomin, Destination Archaeology Resource Center manager. "We've just never been able to find a good place to launch the kayaks, that wasn't too far of an excursion for people to get out to, and Deadman's Island just kind of fit."

The two-and-a-half hour long paddle and hike will be led by underwater archaeologists Nicole Grinnan and Della Scott-Ireton from the Archaeology Network.



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"What's nice about Deadman's Island is that there are so many different time periods involved with the site that people can experience," Nicole Grinnan said. "Bits and pieces of artifacts will still wash up on the island from time to time."

The site has produced artifacts from the 19th and 20th centuries and excavations have continued on and off throughout the years.

The island also has been the subject of several environmental restoration efforts in recent years involving sea grass plantings and oyster bed implantation. A portion of the tour will also educate participants on what they can do to help preserve the environment of the island.

"We're really hoping this can become a regular program that we can run," Thomin said. "Our mission is really to educate people on our local resources and why we should take care of them."



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The Florida Archaeology Network already offers several walking and biking tours, and the kayak tour would be a welcome addition for the summer time.

The tour is \$30 and is limited to 20 people at a time. The tour fee includes the kayak rental, and guests will have a choice between single and tandem kayaks.

"There really isn't any shade for most of the tour so people are encouraged to bring hats and plenty of sunscreen and water," Grinnan said.

To reserve a space for the upcoming kayak tour call Pensacola Paddlesport at 255-5423.

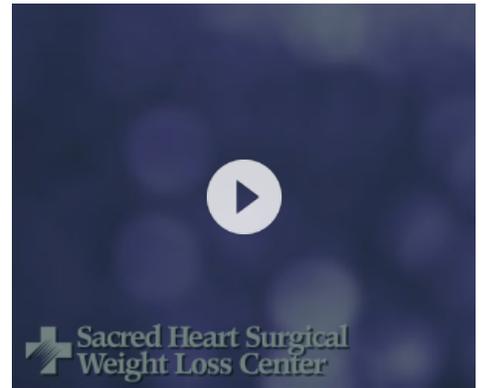
Program Schedule

•**10 a.m.**: Participants will meet inside the classroom at the Gulf Breeze Community Center, 800 Shoreline Drive, Gulf Breeze, for a presentation on Deadman's Island history and archeology by Dr. Della Scott-Ireton.

•**11 a.m.**: Meet Florida Public Archaeology Network and Pensacola Paddlesport staff at the Wayside Park West boat launch by the three mile bridge in Gulf Breeze to obtain kayaks and basic paddle instruction.

•**11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**: Participants will be led on a guided kayak tour to the site. Through hiking and snorkeling, participants will explore the area and learn what they can do to help preserve and protect this nonrenewable cultural and environmental resource.

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