



A1A SCENIC & HISTORIC COASTAL BYWAY FIELD GUIDE



welcome to...

A1A SCENIC & HISTORIC COASTAL BYWAY FIELD GUIDE

Mission

To protect, promote, and enhance the outstanding scenic, historic, natural, recreational, and cultural resources of the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway in a manner that provides a unique experience for visitors, and maintains for the communities along the byway an unhurried lifestyle and ambiance of “Old Florida” for all.

Core Values

- Resource Protection
- Transportation Planning and Safety
- Community and Government Support and Participation
- Education and Communication
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Organizational Development and Sustainability



Byway History

History

The A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway stretches 72-miles from Ponte Vedra to Flagler Beach along the east coast of North Central Florida. Situated between the Intracoastal Waterway and the Atlantic Ocean, the Byway offers visitors a variety of natural, archaeological, historic, recreational, and cultural resources. Along the way, travelers are treated to some of the most pristine and natural vistas that American roads have to offer. Visitors also have the opportunity to retrace the steps of America's history. From early human settlements to the establishment of America's oldest European city, St. Augustine in 1565; the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway truly takes one on a journey through time and place. Traveling along the Byway gives visitors an introduction to the beautiful coastal environment, which supports the area's diverse and fragile ecosystem.

The Byway route expresses the sentiments of the surrounding region; a perfect blend of old-Florida ambiance and an unhurried lifestyle. At the end of the Civil War, and the beginning of the twentieth century, northeasterners flocked to Florida's Atlantic beaches. Resorts and amenities were developed by Henry Flagler in St. Augustine and George Moody in Flagler Beach, among others. Remnants still remain of bungalows and cottages from several turn of the century communities that dotted the landscape. Crescent Beach and Summer Haven are just two examples of old-Florida resort communities that hosted visitors from the northeast U.S. and beyond.

Today, this mostly two-lane stretch of road is still the path to relaxation and recreation for visitors and residents alike. Along the Byway travelers can enjoy surfing, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, camping, picnicking, art and cultural attractions, marine exhibits, archaeological digs, interpretive educational and historical sites, birding and wildlife viewing, unspoiled nature preserves, or just a day of relaxation on the coquina sand beaches. The Byway is home to numerous Florida State Parks, unique and varied dining, shopping, and accommodations. While travelers have endless options of places to visit and things to do, the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway is truly not about a particular destination, but about the journey ahead.



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Bird Island Park



Bird Island Park is a 4.2 acre park located in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL. The park has been designed to reflect the ecosystem of north Florida, including an upland hammock, coastal strand, and a freshwater marsh, pond and rookery. All of these environments serve as examples of sustainable landscaping practices. The park features a two acre pond with a boardwalk and viewing pavilion. The park's amenities are numerous, and include: a unique turtle shaped maze, sculptures, a story telling area, a children's playscape, benches, gazebos, and informational signage located throughout the park. Bird Island Park also features ADA, eco-interpretive walkways that facilitate intergenerational learning and explorative opportunities set among First Coast native vegetation and animal habitats.



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Mickler's Landing



As the first public beach in Ponte Vedra, Mickler's Landing is a local favorite famous for its pink, coquina-sand stretches of beach. Visitors can turn onto Ponte Vedra Boulevard to access the beach. Mickler's Landing offers bathroom facilities, outdoor showers, and an ADA walkway, which winds through twenty-foot high sand dunes. Travelers can also review informational signage about the threatened and endangered species they may encounter while visiting the beach. Located two blocks east of A1A at the last traffic light for 20 miles, Mickler's Landing is truly a hidden gem on the Byway.



GTM Research Reserve



The Guana Tolomato Matanzas (GTM) Research Reserve protects 73,352 acres of salt marsh and mangrove tidal wetlands, oyster bars, estuarine lagoons, upland habitat and offshore seas. The Reserve is dedicated to conserving natural biodiversity and cultural resources and is home to 580 different species of plants. GTM also hosts an abundance of animal species, including 44 mammals, 358 birds, 41 reptiles, 21 amphibians, and 303 fish. The Reserve is also a sanctuary for 48 protected animal species and 8 protected plant species. A significant feature of the Reserve is its state of the art Educational Center and museum. The facilities include classrooms, an auditorium for lectures and symposiums, and outdoor amphitheaters. The GTM Research Reserve hosts numerous environmental workshops, trainings, and learning laboratories.

The Reserve is separated into a northern and southern component, with the City of St. Augustine dividing the two segments. The northern portion of the Reserve, typically referred to as Guana, is associated with the Tolomato and Guana River estuaries. This northern segment features: the Guana River Marsh Aquatic Preserve, Guana River Wildlife Management Area, Stokes Landing Conservation Area, and Deep Creek State Forest. At the north beach parking facility, a beachside kiosk and statue commemorate the approximate landing site of Ponce de Leon on the shores of Florida. The southern component is associated with the Matanzas River and consists of: Pellicer Creek Aquatic Preserve, Faver-Dykes State Park, Washington Oaks Gardens State Park; Moses Creek Conservation Area, Pellicer Creek Conservation Area, Fort Matanzas National Monument, Matanzas State Forest, Princess Place Preserve, River to Sea Preserve at Marineland, and other state sovereign submerged lands adjacent to the Matanzas River within its boundary.



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Nease Beachfront Park

Nease Park is located one mile north of the St. Augustine Inlet on the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway. Formerly the home of Florida restoration and conservationist Allen Nease, Nease Park is a 3.2 acre saltwater marsh community home to several state listed species of special concern, including the white ibis, snowy egret, tri-colored heron, and little blue heron. Nease Park also provides habitat for the endangered wood stork.

Within the Florida Forever Northeast Blueway Phase II, the site is a focal point of federal, state, and local initiatives to preserve, protect, and maintain natural resources along the Intracoastal Waterway. Nease Park is a wonderful opportunity for bird watchers and nature enthusiasts. In addition, recreational and cultural opportunities are planned for the park's future, including: bocce ball; horseshoe pits; multi-use area; picnic and outdoor grilling area; nature trails and a trail head; and a scenic wildlife observation platform. Educational workshops and field trips for students are offered by St. Johns County during the school year.

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Davenport Park

Located at the corner of San Carlos and San Marco Avenue, Davenport Park features a restored antique carousel offering rides seven days a week. The park also has a playground area and picnic tables shaded by a tree canopy. The playground, known as Kourtney's Korner, is ADA accessible and offers open and closed slides, monkey bars, and other play and exercise equipment. The play area is named after Kourtney Nicole Schmidt, the result of her parent's efforts to establish a foundation in Kourtney's memory to benefit the community.

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St. Augustine/St. Johns County Visitor Information Center



The St. Augustine/St. Johns County Visitor Information Center has been the first stop for travelers enjoying a vacation in the Nation's Oldest City for half a century. The center provides visitors with information on special and cultural events, brochures and guidebooks for area attractions, restrooms, and a gift shop. A parking garage is located adjacent to the center at 10 S. Castillo Drive. Tour guides are available to provide information on museums, tours, accommodations, restaurants, shopping, and attractions. The visitor center offers travelers the opportunity to view special changing exhibits that celebrate the area's heritage from a variety of different time periods. Visitors can also view the Sister City Fountain and the Zero Marker designating the original Old Mission Road extending from St. Augustine to San Diego. Viewable from the visitor's center, Huguenot Cemetery was a Protestant burial ground from 1821 until its closing in 1884. The cemetery is steeped in local lore and ghost stories.

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Castillo de San Marcos



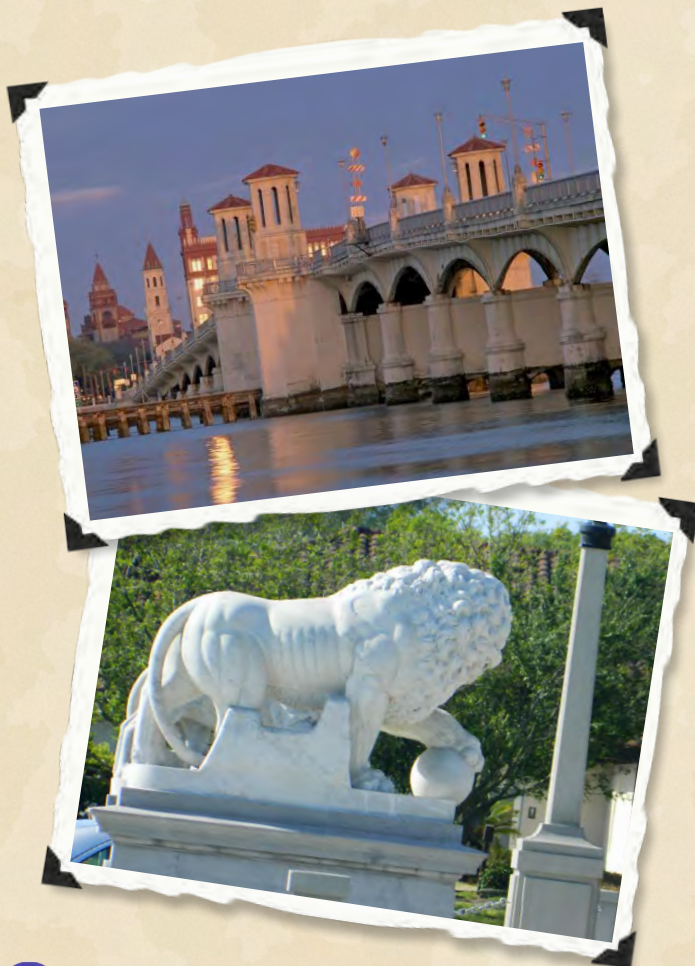
St. Augustine's most historically significant structure and a National Monument, the Castillo de San Marcos is a fort constructed by the Spanish between 1672 and 1695. The fort, though having flown the flag of several different countries (Spain, Britain, Confederate States of America, and the United States), was never taken by force. Changes in occupation occurred only as a result of military agreements or political treaties. After Florida became a territory of the United States, the fort was renamed Fort Marion (1825 to 1942) in honor of the Revolutionary War General Francis Marion. Castillo de San Marcos was constructed using coquina rock, a shell stone indigenous to the area. The National Park Service operates the fort, which is open daily.



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Bridge of Lions



One of St. Augustine's most noteworthy structures and visible in almost every view of the St. Augustine skyline, the Bridge of Lions is a double lead, drawback Bascule Bridge connecting Anastasia Island to Downtown St. Augustine. The bridge spans St. Augustine's Intercostal Waterway over Mantanzas Bay. Built in 1926, the bridge is named for the stone lions at the west end of the bridge. The lions were the creation of Italian sculptor Romanelli and donated by Dr. Andrew Anderson who was a close friend to Henry Flagler. The bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was recently restored to its former glory.



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St. Augustine Lighthouse



The St. Augustine Lighthouse's story dates back to the late 1500's when an original structure served as a Spanish watchtower. The watchtower became Florida's first lighthouse in 1824, but by 1870 the tower's integrity was severely compromised by shoreline erosion, and construction began on the current lighthouse. Today, the St. Augustine Lighthouse is the City's oldest surviving brick structure. It stands 165 feet above sea level and contains 219 steps to the top where a twelve foot tall Fresnel lens consisting of 370 hand-cut glass prisms is a beacon for ships. In July 2002, the U.S. Coast Guard transferred the deed for the tower to the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum, Inc. through the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000.

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10 *Anastasia State Park*



Featuring more than 1,600 acres of pristine Atlantic beaches, tidal salt marsh, and a maritime upland hammock, Anastasia State Park provides visitors with recreation and relaxation opportunities. Anastasia State Park is also home to the endangered Anastasia Beach Mouse, found only along this stretch of A1A. The park also features an archaeological site where coquina rock was mined to create the Castillo de San Marcos. The park offers a full-facility campground, located within walking distance of the beaches. Other amenities include a self-guided nature trail through a maritime hammock along ancient sand dunes, fishing, swimming, windsurfing, hiking, wildlife viewing, boating, and picnicking. Canoe, sailboard, paddleboat, and kayak rentals are also available onsite.

11 *St. Johns County Pier & Park*



The St. Johns County Pier & Park is a gathering place for locals and visitors alike. The park hosts a weekly farmer's market event with fresh produce, food vendors, unique arts and crafts, and jewelry. A recurring concert series, Music by the Sea, is also held weekly from May through September. The Pier is home to a four-acre beachfront park with a number of amenities, including: splash park and playground; picnic tables; covered pavilion; restroom and shower facilities; and lighted beach volleyball courts. The Pier is also well known as a fishing hotspot, with bait, tackle, and ice available for purchase on-site.



12 *Frank B. Butler Beach & Park*



Named in honor of the prominent St. Johns County businessman Frank. B. Butler, the park features the best of both the Atlantic Ocean and Intracoastal. Mr. Butler hosted Martin Luther King, Jr. and his associates at his hotel during Dr. King's 1964 visit to St. Augustine during the height of the Civil Rights movement. Located on Anastasia Island, two miles south of St. Augustine Beach, Butler Beach features a scenic shoreline and picnic facilities for a perfect day of fishing, swimming, surf, and sun. The beach's environmentally sensitive dune system is home to gopher tortoises and the native Anastasia Beach Mouse. Butler Park West is home to similar, stunning views and amenities. The park has four covered pavilions, BBQ grills, restrooms, and a boat ramp providing easy access to the Intracoastal for a day on the water. Along with the park's memorable scenery and convenient, family-friendly amenities, the park represents the area's connection to African-American history.

13 *Matanzas Inlet*



The Matanzas Inlet is a channel that connects the Atlantic Ocean and the Matanzas River. Spanned by a bridge on Florida State Road A1A, the inlet is located 14 miles south of St. Augustine in St. Johns County. The Inlet is extremely unique because it is not stabilized by jetties. Historic maps show that Matanzas Inlet has shifted hundreds of yards south of its original location in the 1700s and is in a constant state of flux. Matanzas translated into English refers to "the place of many slaughters" and is derived from the root word "mata", meaning to kill. This reference reflects on the slaughter of French prisoners by Spanish soldiers. Today, Matanzas Inlet is a recreational haven for paddleboarders, anglers, and kayakers. Matanzas Inlet Restaurant is a local meeting point for residents and visitors who enjoy fresh, local seafood. The Inlet is also well known as a shelling destination and is home to the albino Florida Horse Conch, Crown Conch, and the Eastern Banded Tulip.



Fort Matanzas



Fort Matanzas was designated as a national monument in 1924 and is maintained by the National Park Service. The fort commemorates the Spanish period of Colonial history in Florida. In 1569, a wooden watchtower and thatched hut were built north of Matanzas Inlet to house six Spanish soldiers. These soldiers would scan the surrounding Atlantic waters for enemy ships. The eventual stone structure, built using coquina rock, was constructed in 1740 by order of Spanish Governor Manuel de Montiano as a result of a failed attempt by English forces to siege St. Augustine. Fort Matanzas was built on an island consisting of less than two acres. Over 250 years later, Rattlesnake Island is now over 200 acres, due to time, tides, and man's intervention. Visitors access the fort using the Matanzas Queen II, a ferry boat that makes daily trips from the Visitors Center to the fort. Over 50,000 travelers visit the site every year to take in this significant piece of American and Colonial American history and enjoy the site's abundant nature trails.



Town of Marineland



Marineland was founded in 1938 to foster the preservation and protection of marine life; utilizing interactive education, enhanced by on-site research, inspiring visitors to value and respect marine mammals and their environment. Originally Marine Studios, the facility was purposed for Hollywood film makers creating underwater footage of marine life in movies. Over the years, Marineland has pioneered studies in marine science, animal training, and water chemistry, among others. The facility was the first to successfully breed and train Atlantic bottlenose dolphins. Marineland scientists were also pioneers in discovering dolphin echolocation, social behavior, and communication. After nearly 70 years of operation, Marineland facilities underwent a dramatic modernization in 2004. A 1.3 million gallon tank redesign was opened in 2006, better suited for the behavioral needs of the animals, the viewing capabilities of the scientists, the logistical needs of trainers, and for the education of visitors. Today, Marineland Dolphin Adventure, a subsidiary of the Georgia Aquarium, hosts summer camps, school field trips, weddings, corporate functions, and community meetings. Recently, a memorabilia museum has been added underneath the modern pools and displays represent the bygone days of Marine Studios along with marine species on display.



Washington Oaks Gardens



Located two miles south of Marineland on A1A, Washington Oaks Gardens encompasses two Florida State Parks, Washington Oaks Gardens and Faver-Dykes. The formal gardens are the centerpiece of the park, which is also famous for its coquina rock formations that line its Atlantic Ocean shoreline. Situated between the Atlantic and the Matanzas River, Washington Oaks preserves 425 acres of coastal scenery. Originally owned by distant relatives of George Washington, the gardens were established by Louise and Owen Young who purchased the property in 1936 and donated most of the land to the State of Florida in 1965. Within the park's lush hammock, the gardens encompass 20 acres of native and exotic species, including azaleas, camellias, towering oaks, hickory, magnolia, and the bird of paradise. Washington Oaks Gardens also has the distinction of being designated to the National Registry of Historic Places in 2009. Park visitors have an array of recreational opportunities from picnicking and fishing to hiking or bicycling on trails. Local festivals and education workshops are held throughout the year.

17 *Mala Compra Plantation Archaeological Site: Bings Landing*

The Mala Compra Plantation ruins site is a significant archaeological resource located on the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway. In operation from 1816 to 1836, Mala Compra was originally part of northeast Florida's largest plantation system. The site was the former plantation of General Joseph Martin Hernandez, the first Hispanic to serve as a Delegate in the U.S. Congress and a Brigadier General of the East Florida Militia. Hernandez also served as the President of the Florida Territorial Legislative Council and Mayor of St. Augustine until departing for Cuba in the 1850s. During its operational period, Mala Compra played an important role in the cotton industry. The site was visited by John James Audubon, who created a painting depicting a water bird at Mala Compra. The plantation was burned by the Seminole Indians during the Second Seminole War. Today, visitors have the opportunity to view the archaeological dig while enjoying the natural beauty of the former plantation site. The plantation is located inside of Bings Landing County Park, an expansive facility with docks, pavilions, trails, and a restaurant. Interpretive signage along the trails explains the Hammock's history and habitat. Opposite the park is one of Flagler County's many cycling trails where some of the area's original coquina quarries may be viewed along the Malacompra Greenway Trails.



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River to Sea Preserve Park



The River to Sea Preserve Park is located on both sides of A1A, showcasing unique and beautiful landscapes from the Atlantic Ocean to the Matanzas River. The preserve protects rapidly disappearing maritime scrub environments and spans 90 acres owned jointly by Flagler County and Marineland. The park offers numerous amenities, including walking trails, nature vistas, ecological education opportunities, and public access to the area's pristine beaches. The beachside boardwalk offers memorable beach and ocean views. Visitors can enjoy a relaxing day of wandering through oak scrub and hardwood hammock on the park's west side, picnic at the pavilion, and take in the abundant bird and plant life. Other recreation opportunities are offered at the canoe and kayak launch, providing access to the Intercoastal Waterway.

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Town of Beverly Beach



The Town of Beverly Beach, Florida, incorporated in 1955, has not grown from its original size of one square mile. Beverly Beach is home to approximately 500 residents, 335 of those residing in the community year-round. Beverly Beach's population is actively involved in wellness programs, many of which involve active resident participation in maintaining their community. The Town's eastern and western boundaries are the Atlantic Ocean and Intracoastal Waterway, respectively. A1A is the Town's main street, stretching 1 mile north to south. Beverly Beach's Town Hall is a local landmark and a perfect fit to the community's character. The Town received the Quality of Life Award in 2013 from the Northeast Florida Regional Council. Beverly Beach is well known in Flagler County as a great place to view whales. Former Mayor James Ardell describes the Town as "simple pleasure" void of intrusive billboards and strip malls.



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Flagler Beach Historical Museum



The Flagler Beach Historical Museum offers a physical and social archive for the preservation of the history of Flagler Beach and surrounding areas. Museum visitors can experience local history from “the Stone Age to the Space Age.” Collections are varied, ranging from prehistoric bones and remains to the NASA displays, including the flag that accompanied the Space Shuttle Endeavour into space and the always popular dehydrated astronaut food. The Flagler Beach Museum also features mill and plantation artifacts, documents and memorabilia from the late 1800s and early 1900s. Other artifacts include local nostalgia, early advertising brochures, pavers from the county’s Old Brick Road, World War II items, and pieces from the Flagler Beach Hotel.

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Flagler Beach Pier and Veterans Park



Originally known as “Ocean City Beach” Flagler Beach was founded in 1909 by Issac I. Moody and J.F. Lambert under the Bunnell Development Company. Parcels of land were sold on the 169 acres of homesteaded land. The area’s first home was built in 1914 and the Ocean City Casino was constructed shortly thereafter, in 1916. The casino became a major attraction for the area along with the Flagler Beach Hotel. Ocean City Beach became Flagler Beach in 1925 when the city applied for a new postal permit and were denied because of the preexistence of Ocean City, New Jersey and Ocean City, Maryland. Today, the Flagler Beach Pier features many popular dining and recreation options for visitors. Whether relaxing and taking in the scenic views of the area, or spending the day fishing, residents and travelers will have a unique and enjoyable experience. During their stay, visitors can also spend time at Veterans Park, located in front of the Flagler Beach City Hall. The park’s amenities include shuffle board courts, benches, nighttime lighting, and beautiful ocean views. Veterans Park also hosts several special events in the city.

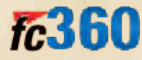
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Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area at Flagler Beach



Situated between the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway is an ideal spot for visitors to relax or enjoy a variety of recreational activities. The State Park is named for Florida folk singer Gamble Rogers and features public access to one-half mile of coquina sand beaches. A full-facility campground is located on the dune, above the Atlantic Ocean. The Intracoastal Waterway portion of the park provides several recreational activities including a nature trail that winds through a coastal scrub oak and saw palmetto forest. Boaters, canoeists, and kayakers can utilize the boat ramp on the Intracoastal to access the water. Other activities that travelers enjoy while at the park include: birding; bicycling; fishing; interpretive exhibits; and wildlife viewing.



A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway MOBI TOUR on the First Coast 360 APP

Visitors can access the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway MOBI TOUR through the First Coast 360 APP on both their iPhone and Android devices.

Friends of A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway

2175 Mizell Road, St. Augustine, FL 32080
www.scenicA1A.org or 904-425-8055

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches

20 Airport Road, Suite C, Palm Coast, FL 32164
www.flaglerchamber.org or 386-437-0106

St. Augustine & St. Johns County Visitor Information Center

10 Castillo Drive, St. Augustine, FL 32084
www.floridashistoriccoast.com or 904-484-5160

Ponte Vedra Beach Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Information Center

115 Professional Drive, Suite 107, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
www.floridashistoriccoast.com or 904-285-2004



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