

For Immediate News Release

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BIO-DIVERSE WALTON COUNTY ATTRACTS TRAVELERS

Seaside, Fla. – (October 2008) –Located along the Northwest Florida Gulf Coast, Walton County is among the most bio-diverse locations in North America. The local ecosystem is highlighted by coastal dune lakes found only in several locations worldwide. These rare lakes are located near crystalline bays, pristine gulf waters, dense woodlands, beautiful quartz sand coastline, inland rivers, arid terrain and vast protected lands. There are more than 225,000 acres of protected and maintained local parks and preserves in this community.

Visitors may enjoy activities such as sailing, nature hikes, snorkeling, eco-swims, photography, and bird watching, most importantly, a background in biology is not necessary. There is an even a 19-mile bike path that follows Scenic Hwy 30-A, which is just as perfect for a casual stroll.

The area's beaches provide a clean and safe haven for sea turtles and other marine life. The South Walton Turtle Watch volunteers monitor the environment to ensure that the endangered hatchlings make it back to sea during nesting season.

From a basic introduction to nature for young children up to serious sportsman pursuits, this region offers an activity to suit any level. Local outfitters, guides and services are available for a wide variety in interests. At Topsail Hill State Preserve, guided-tours each Saturday invite families to learn about a variety of topics ranging from reptiles to shore birds. With so many activities to choose from, selecting just one is challenge, but a peaceful kayak paddle through a rare coastal dune lake may top the list.

Recently, more and more travelers cite an eco-friendly location as a major factor in destination consideration. The last survey conducted by the Walton County Tourism Development Council published a new record high rating of nearly 33% citing "Nature Based" as very important. In this community with more than 40% of the area preserved for outdoor pursuits, travelers seeking eco-tourism are sure to find it.

(more)

Media Images Available Upon Request

Local Outfitters and Guides

Blue Sky Kayak Tours	850-368-3155
Wetland Wilderness Adventures	850-534-0107
Sundancer Adventures	850.217.5121
Big Daddy's Bike and Beach	850-622-1165
Island Winds Sailing	850-259-8982
Not a Dog Charters	850-267-2514
Dead Fish Charters	850-837-6860
Trigger Happy Fish Charter	850-685-6787
Nature Tours by Alan	850-862-3498
Terrie Cosson Nature Tours	850-685-8137 or 850-231-7130
Marsh Hen River Tours	850-267-6940
Choctawhatchee Delta Tours	850-835-2541
Osprey Charters	850-233-1959 or 850-814-8016
Ryno – Surf and Skim Lessons	850 267-5646
Butterfly Bike & Beach Rentals	850 231-2826
Yellow Fin Ocean Sports	850-231-9024

State Parks and Forests

Topsail Hill State Preserve	850-267-0299
Deer Lake State Park	850.231-4210
Point Washington State Forest	850-231-5800
Eden State Gardens	850-231-4214
Grayton Beach State Park	850-231-4210

Cottage Rental Agency, Seaside

The premier provider of area rental properties for more than 20 years, Cottage Rental Agency, Seaside (CRA), manages nearly 300 idyllic places along the scenic route 30-A beach community. CRA is part of Intrawest – a world leader of development and management of experiential destinations in such places as Whistler Blackcomb, in British Columbia, Steamboat Springs in Colorado, Tremblant in Quebec and Sandestin in FL. For reservations at Seaside, call (800) 277-8696 or visit CottageRentalAgency.com.

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Intrawest ULC is a world leader in destination resorts and adventure travel. The company has interests in 10 resorts at North America's most popular mountain destinations, including Whistler Blackcomb, a host venue for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. Intrawest owns Canadian Mountain Holidays, the largest heli-skiing operation in the world, and an interest in Abercrombie & Kent, the world leader in luxury adventure travel. The Intrawest network also includes Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in Florida and Club Intrawest—a private resort club with nine locations throughout North America. Intrawest develops real estate at its resorts and at other locations across North America and in Europe. Intrawest is headquartered in Vancouver, British Columbia. For information, visit Intrawest.com

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