

Tiger Island/Little Tiger Island

Climate Change Lands

Nassau

| | |
|---|-------------|
| <i>Year Added to Priority List</i> | 2001 |
| <i>Project Acres</i> | 1,463 |
| <i>Acquired Acres</i> | 809 |
| <i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i> | \$4,184,000 |
| <i>Remaining Project Acres</i> | 655 |
| <i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i> | \$87,292 |

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Tiger and Little Tiger Island project will connect a network of national and state preserves and parks that stretch from St. Andrews Sound in Georgia to the St. Johns River in Florida. The project will protect estuarine tidal marsh along the St. Mary's River, Amelia River, and a network of smaller connecting rivers and creeks as well as maritime hammock on the elevated islands in the extensive tidal marsh ecosystem.

The project area is known to have one of the highest nesting concentrations of Worthington's marsh wren and MacGillivray's seaside sparrow along the Florida coast and provides critical habitat for wintering populations of the piping plover. The project will protect important cultural resources that document pottery-making aboriginal populations inhabited the coastal islands as early as the second millennium B.C.

General Description

The predominant natural communities of Tiger Island and Little Tiger Island include estuarine tidal marsh, maritime hammock, coastal strand, and beach dune. The marsh and adjoining sand and mud flats within this project are important feeding and nesting areas for many species of shorebirds, wading birds, and songbirds. A recent survey by FNAI biologists showed Little Tiger Island to have one of the highest nesting concentrations of Worthington's marsh wren and MacGillivray's seaside sparrow along the Florida coast. FWS has proposed to designate the Cumberland Sound side of Tiger and Little Tiger Islands as critical habitat for the wintering populations of the piping plover. The Tiger Islands have been occupied since aboriginal times and archaeological excavations in the area show that pottery-making aboriginal populations inhabited the coastal islands as early as the second millennium B.C. The primary challenges facing these islands have been rampant looting of archaeological sites.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

| FNAI Elements | Score |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Piping plover | G3/S2 |
| Florida manatee | G2G3T2/S2S3 |
| Worthington's marsh wren | G5T3/S2 |
| Macgillivray's seaside sparrow | G4T3/S2 |
| Painted bunting, eastern population | G5T3Q/S1S2 |
| Wood stork | G4/S2 |
| Atlantic salt marsh mink | G5T3/S3 |
| American oystercatcher | G5/S2 |
| Snowy egret | G5/S3 |
| Osprey | G5/S3S4 |
| White ibis | G5/S4 |

Public Use

Potential recreational and public uses of the land include walking trails, picnicking, primitive camping, shoreline fishing and environmental education. The surrounding marshes with their intertwining creeks could provide a system of canoe or kayak trails.

Acquisition Planning

2001

On January 21, 2001, ARC added the Tiger Island/Little Tiger Island project to Group B of the Florida Forever 2001 Priority list. This fee-simple acquisition project, sponsored by the owners' representative, Jacobs and Associates PA, consisted of approximately 1,280 acres and multiple owners. All parcels were identified as essential except the eastern half of New Island, which was used as a spoil site. TNC donated the western half of the island to the State in the 1970s. In 2001, the project had an estimated tax assessed value of \$3,598,894.

2002

In June of 2002, the project was moved to Group A of the Florida Forever Priority List.

2011

On December 9, 2011, ARC placed this project in the Climate Change Lands category.

Coordination

The City of Fernandina voted April 10, 2001 to approve a \$6 million bond initiative for conservation lands. Nassau County had a November 2001 initiative for \$3 million a year bond issue for conservation land acquisition. Both city and county could have been able to contribute some funding for the acquisition of this project.



Management Policy Statement

The land in this project will, when acquired, be managed to conserve and protect environmentally unique and irreplaceable lands. These lands contain native, relatively unaltered flora and fauna representing a natural area unique to, or scarce within, a region of the state or a larger geographic area. Another goal is to conserve significant habitat for native species or endangered and threatened species. This project will also conserve, protect, manage, or restore important ecosystems, landscapes, and forests, to enhance or protect significant surface water, coastal, recreational, timber, fish or wildlife resources. A final goal is to preserve significant archaeological or historical sites.

Manager(s)

The DRP would manage the project if acquired.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation

The project is composed of several islands interspersed within a salt marsh system just west of Fort Clinch State Park and partially adjacent to Fort Clinch State Park Aquatic Preserve. It has the capacity to provide protection of marine communities and provide resource-based recreational opportunities. As such the project would be suitable as an extension of Fort Clinch State Park.

Conditions affecting intensity of management

The project will be a high-need management area. Public recreational use and development of compatible facilities on the islands will be an integral aspect of management.

Management goals and implementation

Upon fee acquisition, management will concentrate on site security and development of a resource inventory. As a part of Fort Clinch State Park, hunting, an activity presently allowed on the uplands, will not be allowed. Access to the islands will be confined to designated points and routes. Low intensity outdoor recreation will allow for compatible public access. Long-term management may include a range of resource-based recreational and associated facilities. High impact recreation areas will be discouraged because of possible adverse effects on the natural systems.

Revenue-generating potential

DRP expects no significant revenue from this property immediately after acquisition and the amount of any future revenue will depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities developed.

Cooperators in management activities

DRP will, as appropriate, cooperate with local governments, other state agencies, and the water management district to further resource management, recreational and educational opportunities, and the development of the lands for state park purposes.

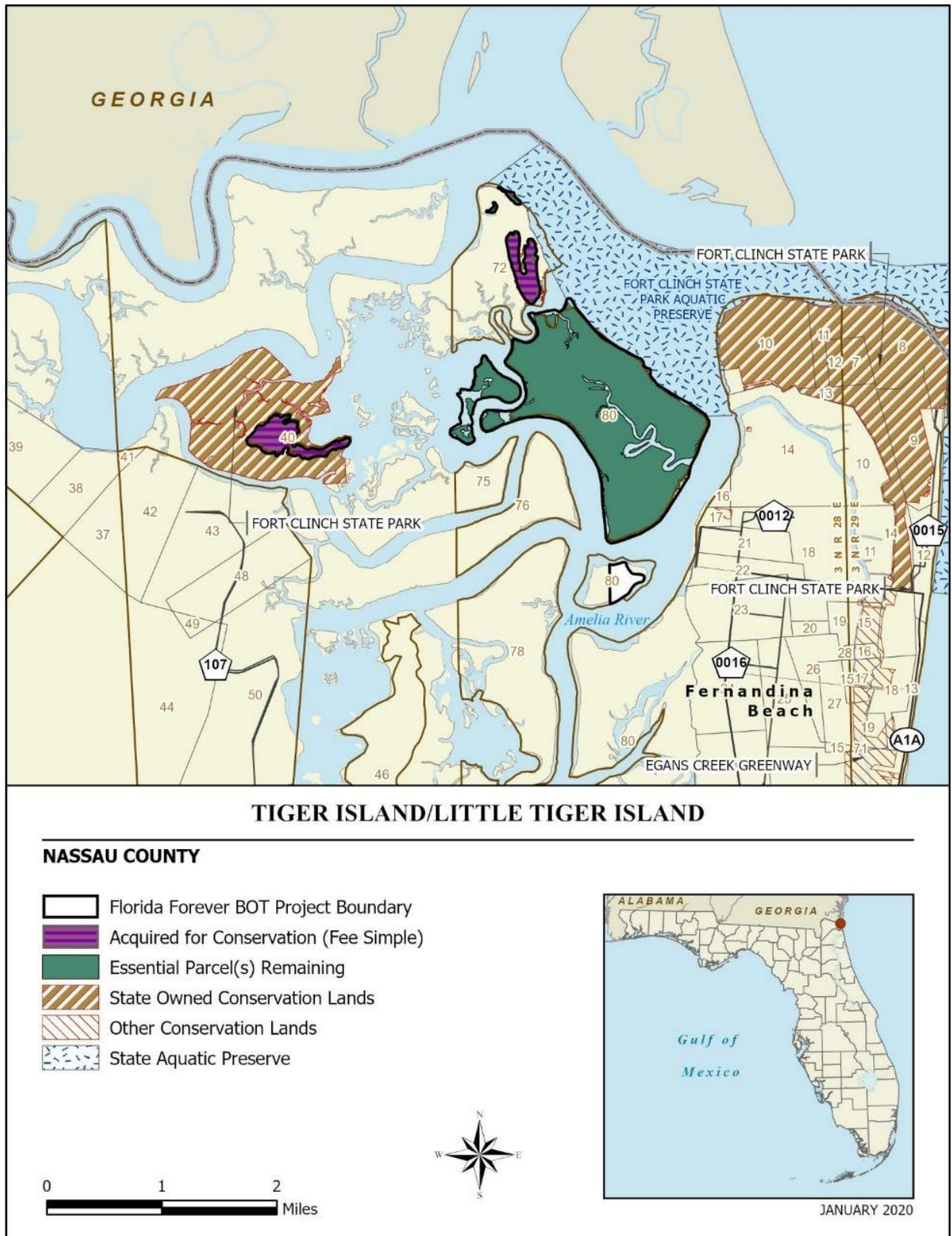


Management Cost Summary

| <u>DRP</u> | <u>Startup Recurring</u> | |
|------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Expense | \$20,000 | \$25,000 |
| OCO | \$50,000 | \$22,000 |
| OPS | \$4,500 | \$32,500 |
| TOTAL | \$79,500 | \$32,500 |

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





Map 1: FNAI, January 2020

