

## **Fort George Island Cultural State Park**

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**Planning Region:** Atlantic Coast

**County:** Duval

**Lease/Management Agreement Number:** 3784

### **Overview**

Fort George Island preserves copious cultural resources, providing an extensive cross section of Florida's unique history. The world's largest and most complex shell ring is also protected in the Rollins Bird Sanctuary. A natural dune formation in the park's maritime hammock, Mount Cornelia, is considered one of the highest points along the Atlantic seacoast south of New Jersey.

**Total Acreage:** 820.64

| <b>Natural Communities</b> | <b>Acres</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Depression Marsh           | 1.34         |
| Hydric Hammock             | 1.16         |
| Maritime Hammock           | 576.40       |
| Salt Marsh                 | 119.03       |
| Shell Mound                | 36.65        |
| Xeric Hammock              | 8.73         |

  

| <b>Altered Landcovers</b> | <b>Acres</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Developed                 | 6.58         |
| Ruderal                   | 70.75        |

**Acquisition:** Fort George Island Cultural State Park was initially acquired on June 29, 1989, with Conservation and Recreational Lands (CARL) funds. Currently, the park comprises 820.64 acres. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) hold fee simple title to the park and on August 22, 1989, the Trustees leased (Lease Number 3784) the property to the Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) under a 50-year lease. The current lease will expire on August 3, 2039.

### **Resource Management Component Objectives**

#### **Hydrology**

- Assess the park's hydrological restoration needs.
- Restore natural hydrological conditions and functions to approximately 3 acres of Depression Marsh natural community.

#### **Imperiled Species**

- Develop/Update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists for plants and animals.

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- Continue existing monitoring protocols for 2 selected imperiled animal species (Worthington's marsh wren and MacGillivray's seaside sparrow).
- Monitor and document 2 selected imperiled plant species in the park (Godfrey's swamp privet and low peperomia).

### **Invasive and Nuisance Species**

- Annually treat 4 gross acres equaling 1 infested acre of invasive plant species.
- Implement control measures on 1 invasive animal species.

### **Cultural Resources**

- Assess/evaluate 39 of 39 recorded cultural resources in the park.
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.
- Bring 1 of 39 recorded cultural resources into good condition (McGundo midden, DU07511).

## **Land Use Component Objectives**

### **Conceptual Land Use**

#### Chappelle House

- Conduct a condition assessment and complete a historic structure report.
- Seek historic preservation funding.
- Remove the garden storage structure.

#### Ribault Clubhouse

- Formalize the paddling launch with stabilization and demarcation measures.
- Relocate parking adjacent to the paddling launch.
- Provide vegetative buffering around the proposed parking area.

#### Point Isabel

- Remove seawall.
- Plan and implement a living shoreline restoration.

#### Trails

- Provide interpretation at strategic locations.

#### Batten Island Entrance and Island Roads

- Collaborate with stakeholders to improve traffic flow and create a new park entrance.
- Coordinate with City of Jacksonville to make feasible improvements to city roads.

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### Neff House

- Consult with the Bureau of Natural and Cultural Resources and DHR to develop an appropriate management strategy.

### **Optimum Boundary**

Several parcels have been identified for Fort George Island's optimum boundary. These parcels will create a continuous park boundary, retain wildlife habitats, and preserve buffering between residential development and the proposed park entrance and road. Many of these parcels consist of vacant wetlands which would be restored and preserved to enhance habitat and watershed protection for the surrounding salt marsh system.