

ITEM 10:

Consider a 10-year update to the Yellow River Marsh Preserve State Park Management Plan (Lease No. 4306).

LOCATION:

Santa Rosa County

APPLICANT:

Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP)

STAFF REMARKS:

Background

Yellow River Marsh Preserve State Park (YRMPSP) is located in Santa Rosa County approximately 10 miles south of Milton. Access to the park is from Garcon Point Road (State Road 191) along Dickerson City Road. YRMPSP was initially acquired in 2000 as part of the Florida Forever Garcon Ecosystem Project using funds from the Conservation and Recreational Lands Program. Currently, the park comprises 976.55 acres. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) hold fee simple title to the park and on February 2, 2002, the Trustees leased the property to DRP under a 50-year lease (Lease number 4306).

The purpose of YRMPSP is to provide visitors with the opportunity to experience one of the most abundant and diverse assemblages of carnivorous plants found anywhere in Florida. Management focus will be to provide an aesthetically pleasing natural experience for visitors through passive recreation and to promote the importance of the wet prairies.

Management Plan Overview

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory has identified eight distinct natural community types and three altered landcover types at YRMPSP. The predominant natural community is wet prairie followed by wet flatwoods. Eight species of imperiled plants and five species of imperiled animals have been identified at YRMPSP.

The Division of Historical Resources maintains a Master Site File that documents many of Florida's archaeological and historical features. One archaeological site has been identified at YRMPSP.

The existing parking lot and short nature trail off Dickerson City Road provides the only public access point for YRMPSP. The nature trail provides visitors with the opportunity to walk, hike, bird, and view wildlife. The remainder of the park is treated as a protected zone to provide habitat for pitcher plants throughout the wet prairies. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission staff occupy an office building on the park's property that is used as a research lab.

The Florida Legislature requires that all land management plans include long and short-term goals. These goals must be measurable objectives, and short-term goals must be achievable within a two-year planning period. Pursuant to section 253.034, Florida Statutes, the Division of State Lands began compiling the short-term goals from each land management plan approved since July 1, 2016. The management plan identified objectives under the following short-term goals: hydrological preservation and restoration, habitat restoration and improvement, cultural resources, public access and recreational opportunities, and capital facilities and infrastructure.

While the 10-year management plan serves as the basic statement of policy and future direction for each park, several annual work plans provide more specific guidance for DRP staff to accomplish many of the resource management goals and objectives of the park. Where such detailed planning is appropriate to the character and scale of the park's natural resources, annual work plans are developed for prescribed fire management, exotic plant management and imperiled species management. Annual or longer-term work plans are developed for natural community restoration and hydrological restoration.

Public Involvement

DRP solicited public input by conducting an advisory group and public workshop meeting on April 18, 2022. The purpose of the advisory group meeting was to provide the members the opportunity to review and discuss the management plan. The DRP staff recommended approval of the proposed management plan as presented.

Surplus Lands

An evaluation by DRP determined that no portion of the YRMPSP is recommended for potential surplus designation.

State Land Management Review Team

The YRMPSP has not been subject to a review by an interagency land management review team because it is less than 1,000 acres.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the management plan.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

- APPROVE**
- APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS:** _____
- DEFER**
- WITHDRAW**
- NOT APPROVE**
- OTHER:** _____



YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK

Draft Unit Management Plan

Executive Summary

Purpose and Significance of the Park

Park History

Yellow River Marsh Preserve State Park was initially acquired on June 12, 2000 as part of the Garcon Ecosystem Florida Forever project with funds from the Conservation and Recreational Lands (CARL) program. The park is currently 976.55 acres.

Park Significance

The preserve protects one of Florida's last remaining tracts of wet prairie, including the largest community of pitcher plants in the state. It also contains over 200 species of vascular plants, among which are five state listed species including one of the largest populations of the white topped pitcher plant. The preserve plays a significant role in protecting surface water quality and serves as a buffer to prevent low quality water from reaching the bays. Management focus will be to provide an aesthetically pleasing natural experience for visitors through passive recreation and interpretation of wet prairie importance.





YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK

Draft Unit Management Plan

Executive Summary

Park Interpretive Themes

Central Park Theme

Endlessly fascinating and increasingly rare, Yellow River Marsh Preserve State Park's signature pitcher plants are the perfect symbol for the disappearing wet prairie that thrives within the park's borders.

Primary Interpretive Themes

Unique Adaptations — The park's specific natural conditions have resulted in uniquely adapted and increasingly rare plant and animal species that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Disappearing Wetlands — Wetland habitats provide vital services such as flood protection, natural water filtration, and homes for diverse wildlife but are threatened by dredging and development.

Natural Cycles — The park's wet prairie is a highly diverse ecosystem, dependent on a delicate cycle of fire and flooding.





YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK
 Draft Unit Management Plan
 Executive Summary
Park Quick Facts
Natural Community Composition

- ◆ **Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection - Division of Recreation and Parks
- ◆ **Acreage :** 976.55
- ◆ **Location:** Santa Rosa County
- ◆ **Lease Management Agreement Number(s):** 4306
- ◆ **Use:** Single
- ◆ **Responsibility:** Public Outdoor Recreation and Conservation
- ◆ **Sublease:** None
- ◆ **Encumbrances:** See Appendix 1 for details
- ◆ **Public Involvement:** See Appendix 2 for details
- ◆ **Optimum Boundary:** Approximately 3,606 acres

Natural Communities	Acreage	Percentage
Blackwater Stream	2.15	<1%
Wet Flatwoods	357.04	36.56%
Dome Swamp	11.04	1.13%
Shrub Bog	14.88	1.52%
Alluvial Forest	8.13	<1%
Mesic Flatwoods	39.62	4.05%
Wet Prairie	514.09	52.64%
Estuarine Unconsolidated Substrate	0.89	<1%
Borrow Area	1.50	<1%
Developed	2.88	<1%
Successional Hardwood Forest	24.37	2.50%
Total Acreage	976.55	100%



YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK

Draft Unit Management Plan

Executive Summary

Park Accomplishments: 2008 — 2021

Ten-Year Planning Period Objectives

Previous Accomplishments

Since the 2008 Unit Management Plan the park has made significant accomplishments in terms of resource management and continued protection of the park. The park completed a shoreline stabilization project to protect park property, installed fire lines in 7 management zones, installed interpretive signage at the trailhead, and surveyed and documented flatwoods salamander.

Future Objectives

Moving forward throughout the next 10 years of this Unit Management Plan, the park plans to continue resource management efforts by assessing the hydrological restoration needs, restoring function to 879 acres of wet prairie and wet flatwoods, and conducting prescribed fire on 922 acres. To improve visitor use, the park will be making additions to 1 use area and expanding the trail network.





YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK

Draft Unit Management Plan

Executive Summary

Management Goals & Objectives

Hydrological & Natural Communities

Objective: Assess hydrological restoration needs and restore natural hydrological function to 879 acres of wet prairie, wet flatwoods, dome swamp, and dome strand communities. To restore hydrological function to these natural communities, a parkwide hydrological restoration plan will be developed as well as installing culverts, low water crossings, and better firebreaks to allow for better access to sensitive management areas.

Objective: Complete a floral and fauna survey to update the plant and animal list and apply prescribed fire to 922 acres.

To restore and improve the natural communities, steps include completing a comprehensive survey of the flora and fauna at the park and updating the species lists for the park. Additional steps include developing and implementing the annual burn plan by burning between 263-461 acres annually as well as any applicable mechanical treatment needed to thin the area and make it safer for the application of fire.





YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK

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Executive Summary

Management Goals & Objectives

Imperiled & Exotic Species

Imperiled Species Management

Goal: Maintain, improve, or restore imperiled species populations in the park.

Objective: Update imperiled species occurrence inventory lists and *monitor and document 6 plant and animal species in the park.*

Develop monitoring protocols and conduct surveys for the flatwoods salamander, white topped pitcher plant, panhandle lily, yellow fringeless orchid, and parrot pitcher plant.

Exotic Species Management

Goal: Remove exotic and invasive species and conduct needed maintenance.

Objective: *Annually treat 10 acres of exotic plant species in the park and implement control measures on exotic animals in the park.*

Implement annual work plan by treating exotic plants and conducting surveys for feral pigs.





YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK

Draft Unit Management Plan

Executive Summary

Management Goals & Objectives

Recreational Use & Infrastructure

Recreation and Facilities Management

Goal: Develop and maintain use areas and support infrastructure

Objective: Improve 1 use area and construct 1 new use area and 3 miles of trails.

To improve and expand visitor use at the park, plans include the improvements below:

Main Day Use Area

- Add Observation Platform

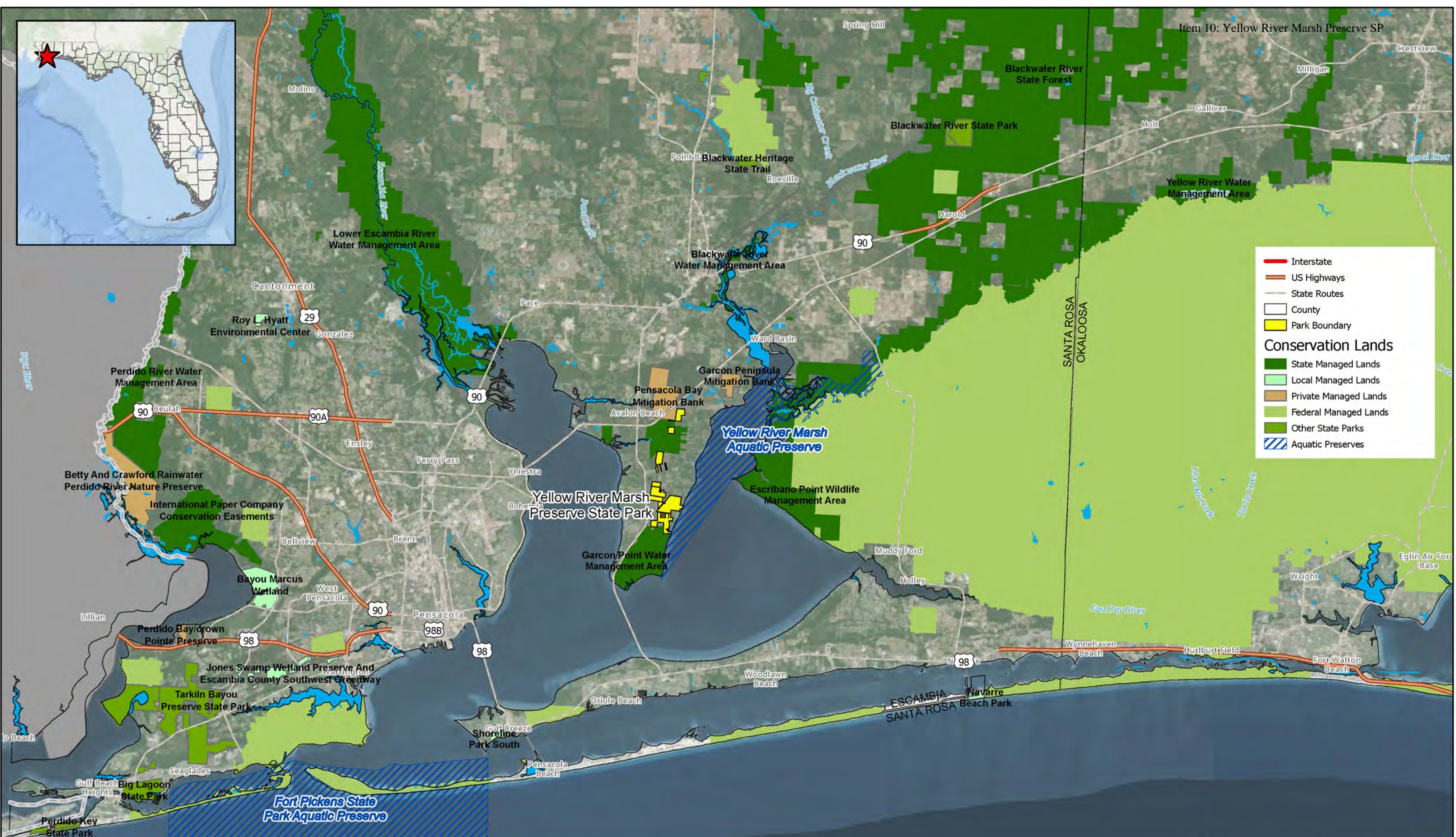
Trails

- Add Nature Trail
- Add Interpretive Signage

Trailhead Improvements

- Expand Parking
- Add Interpretive Kiosk
- Add Small Picnic Shelter
- Add Vault Restroom





Legend

- Interstate
- US Highways
- State Routes
- County
- Park Boundary

Conservation Lands

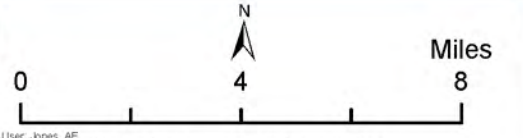
- State Managed Lands
- Local Managed Lands
- Private Managed Lands
- Federal Managed Lands
- Other State Parks
- Aquatic Preserves

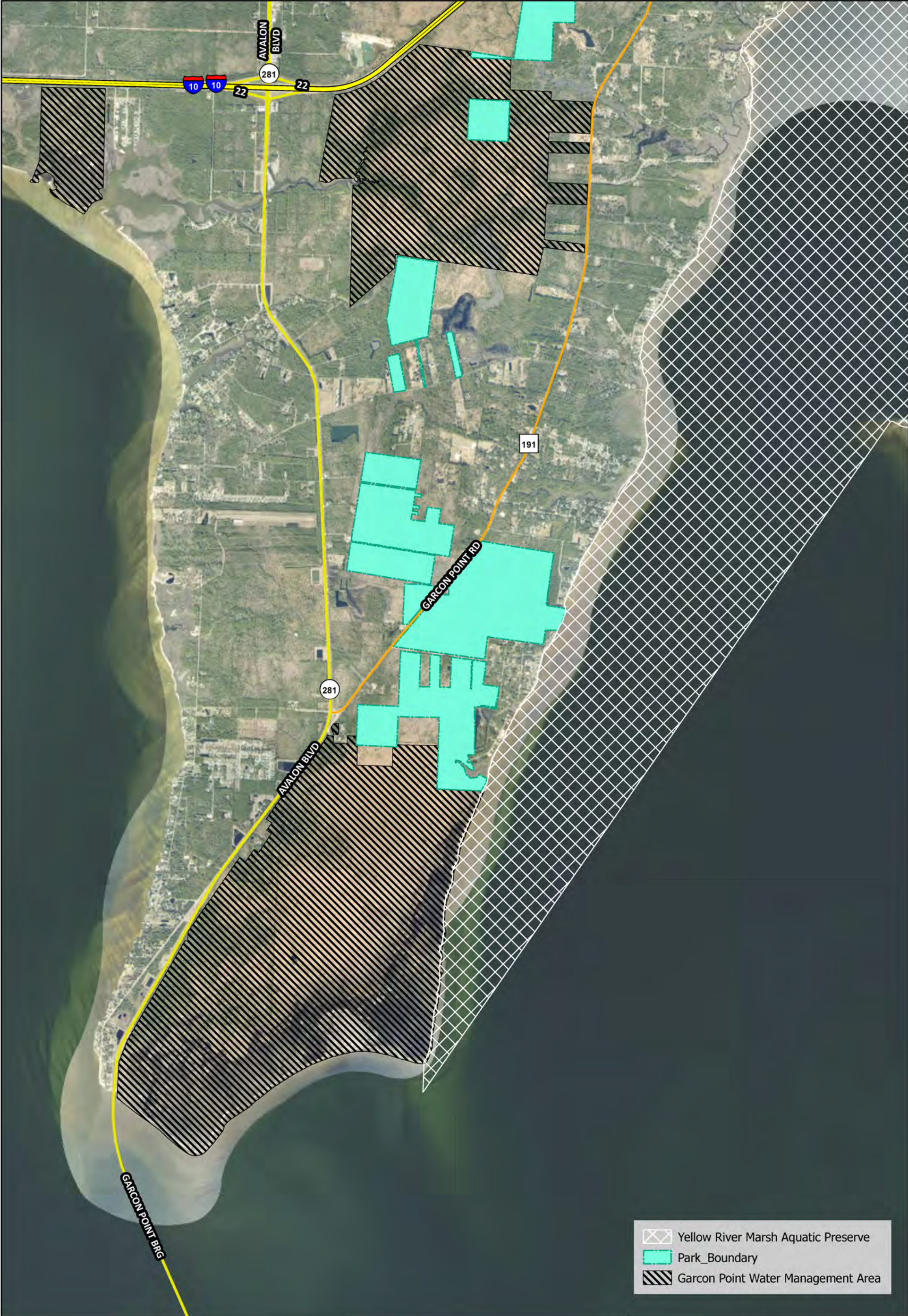


YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK

Vicinity Map

August 2022 ARC Meeting





	Yellow River Marsh Aquatic Preserve
	Park_Boundary
	Garcon Point Water Management Area



YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK
Reference



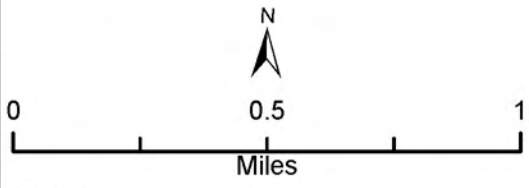
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Management Zones
Park Boundary



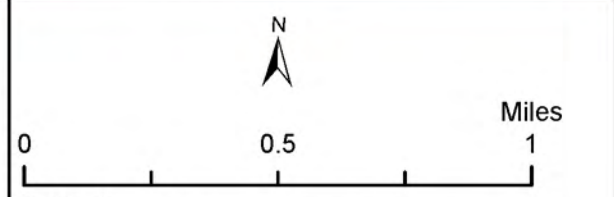
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Management Zones



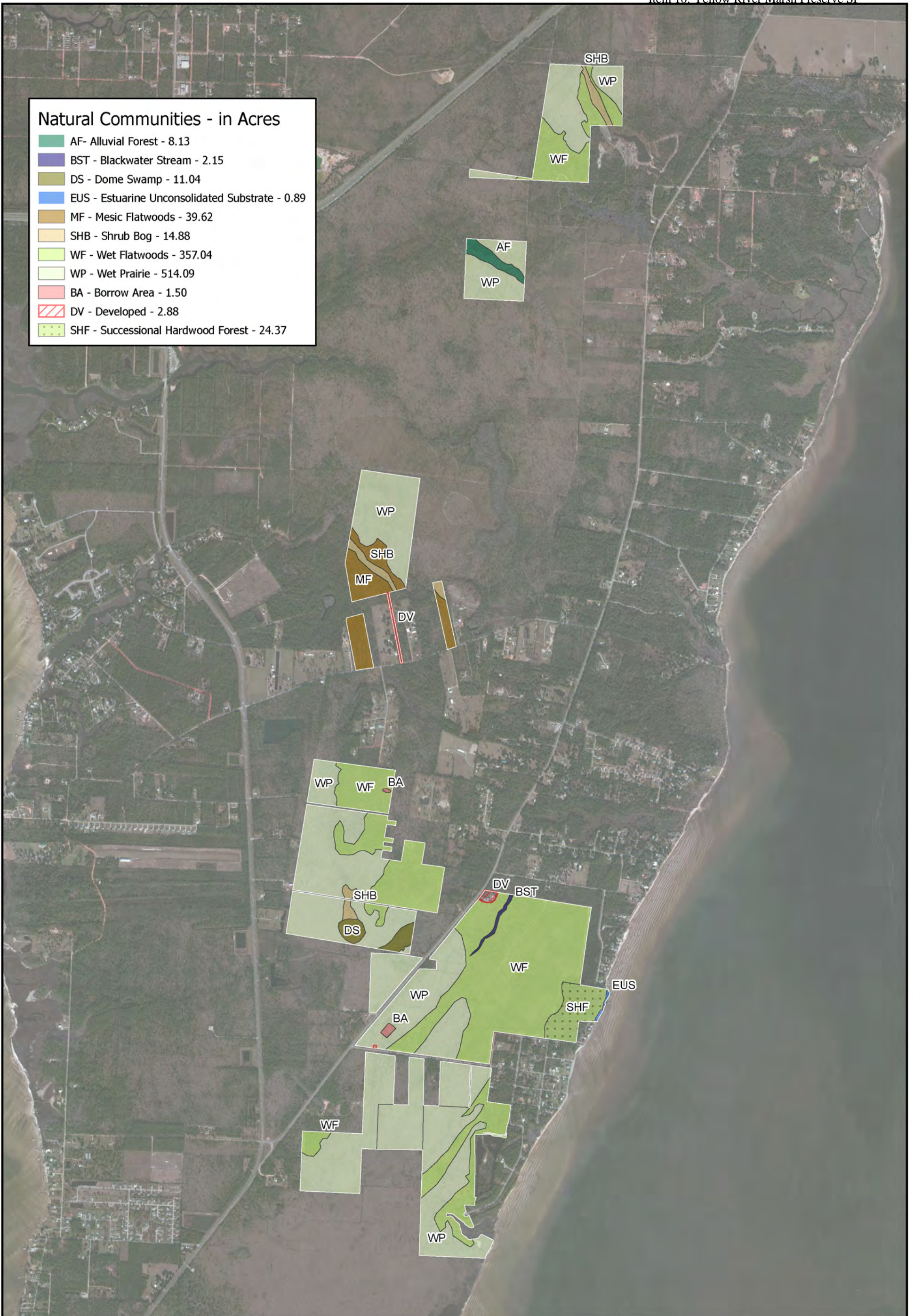
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Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection
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Soils



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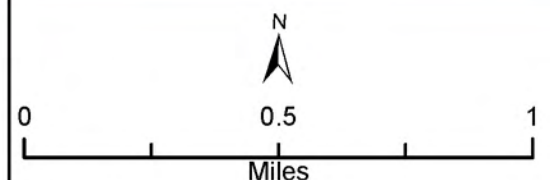


Natural Communities - in Acres

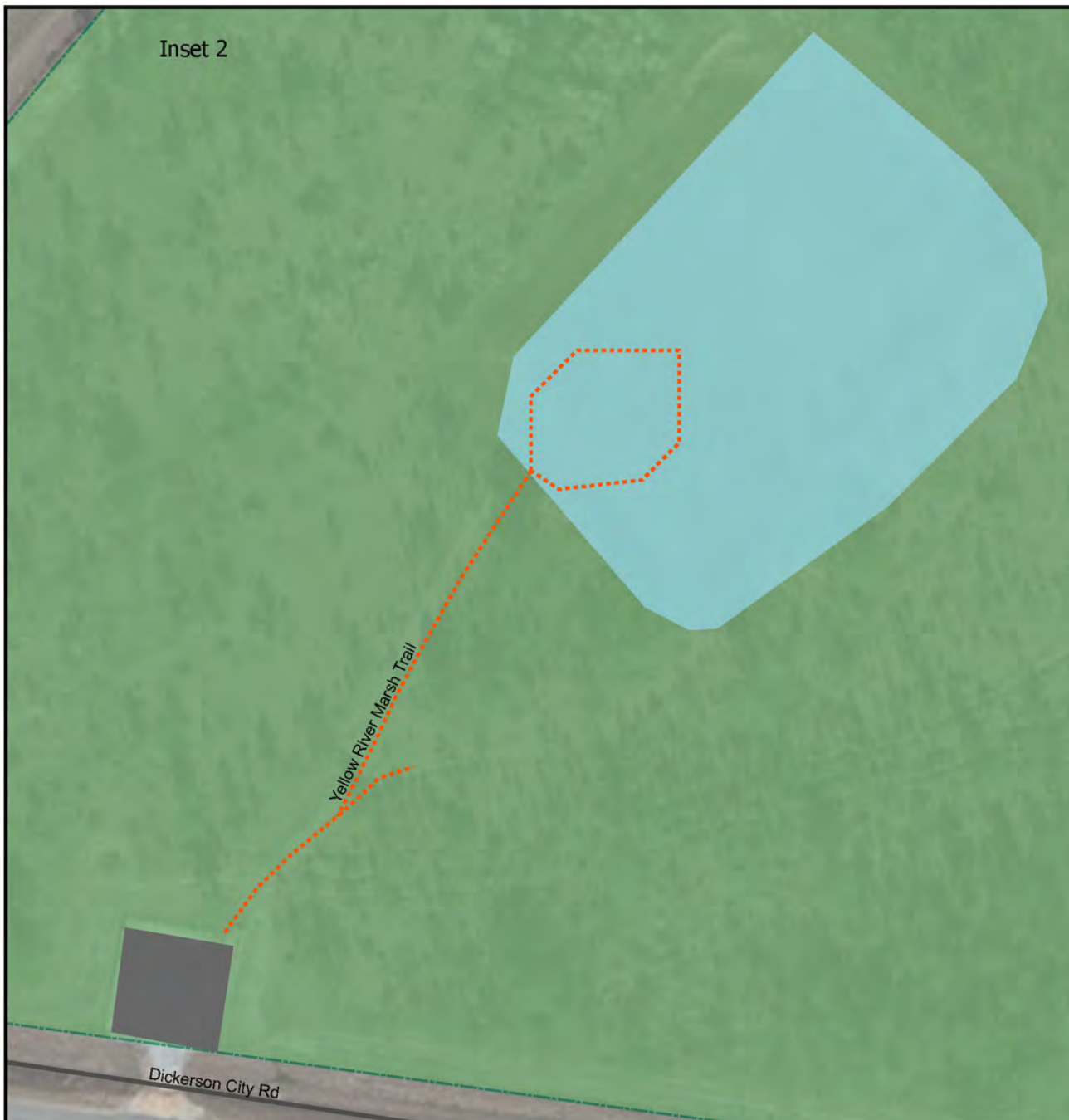
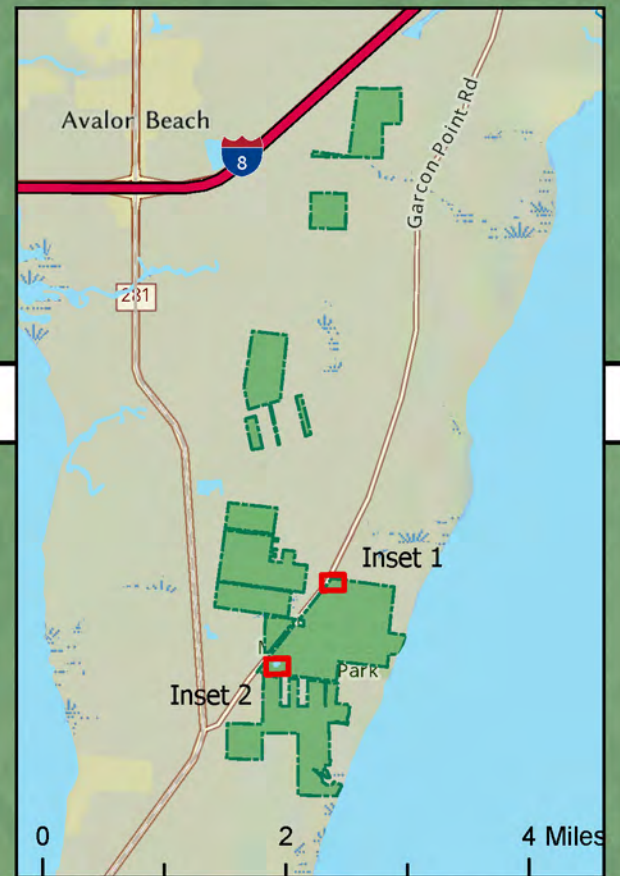
AF	Alluvial Forest	8.13
BST	Blackwater Stream	2.15
DS	Dome Swamp	11.04
EUS	Estuarine Unconsolidated Substrate	0.89
MF	Mesic Flatwoods	39.62
SHB	Shrub Bog	14.88
WF	Wet Flatwoods	357.04
WP	Wet Prairie	514.09
BA	Borrow Area	1.50
DV	Developed	2.88
SHF	Successional Hardwood Forest	24.37



YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK
Natural Communities - Existing Conditions



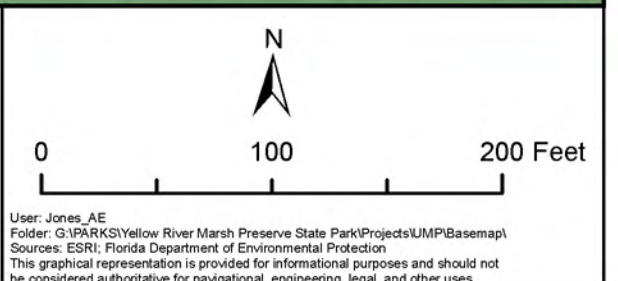
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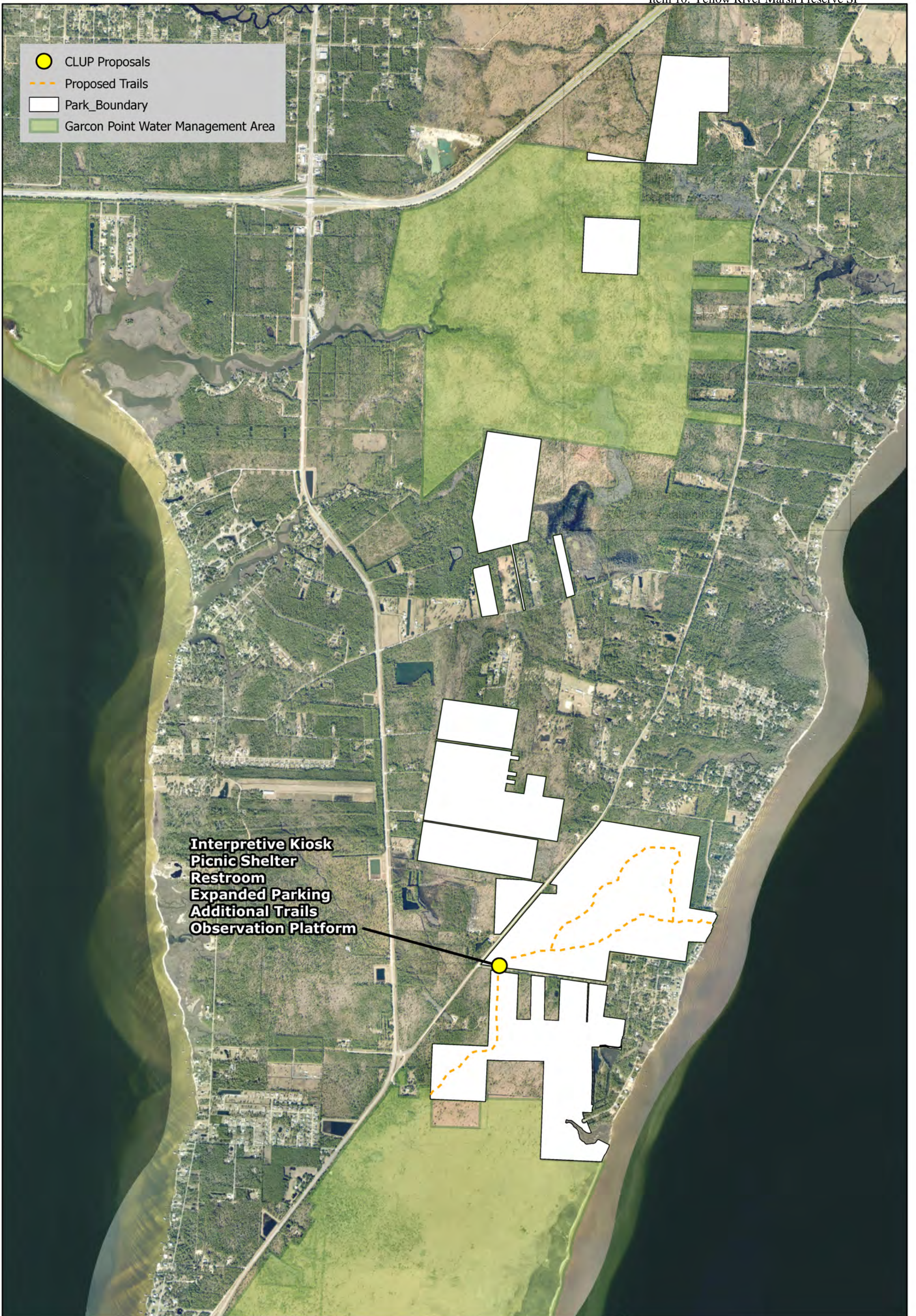


- - - Walkways
- - - Hiking
- Interstate
- State Road
- County Road
- Park Road Stabilized
- Structures
- Parking Lots
- Water Bodies
- Park Boundary



YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK Base Map

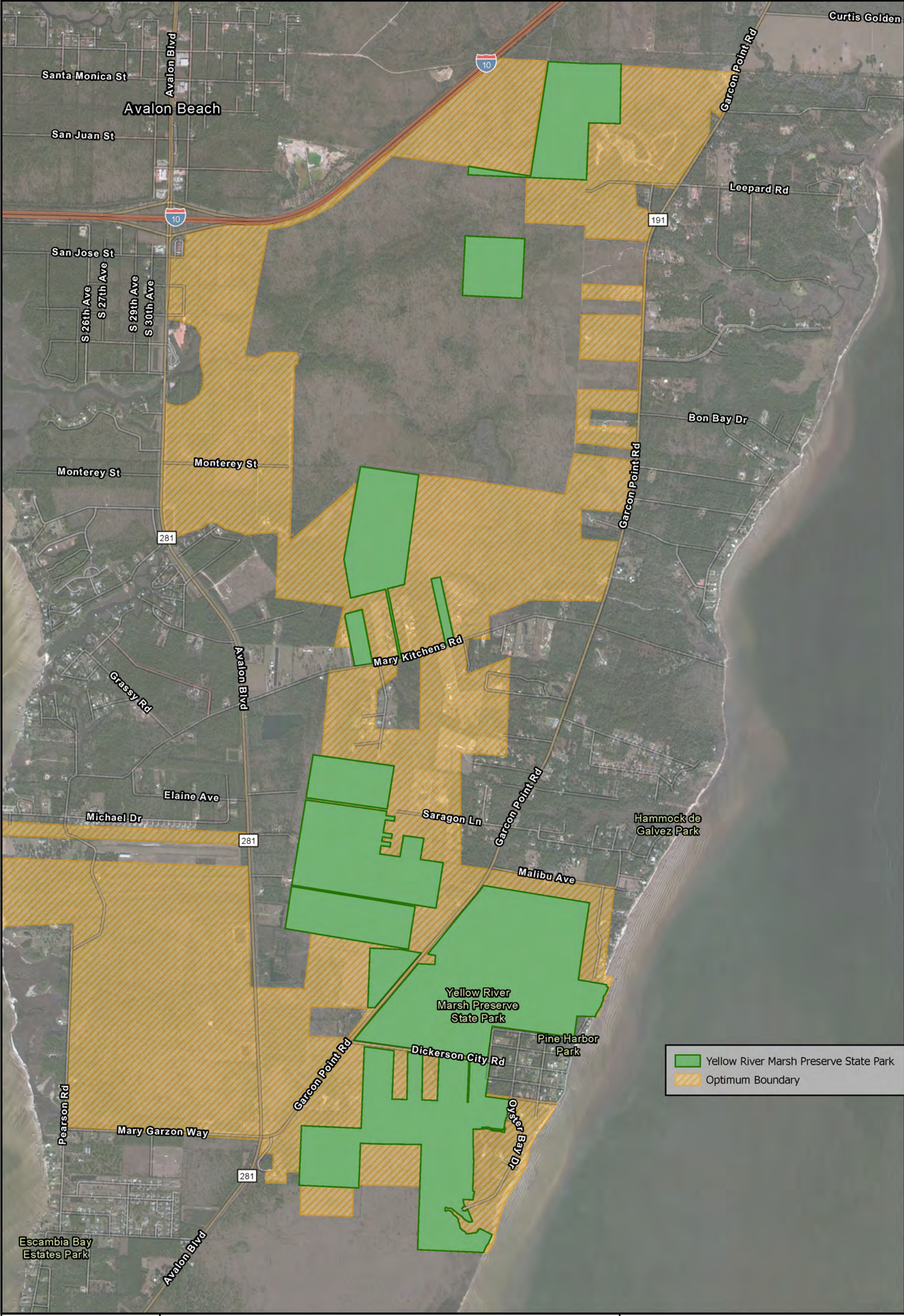




YELLOW RIVER MARSH PRESERVE STATE PARK
 Conceptual Land Use Map



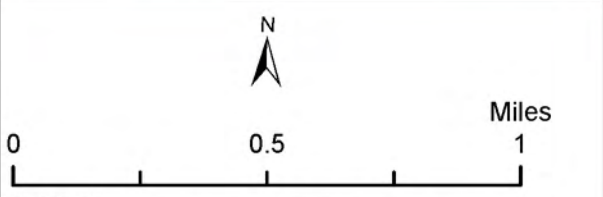
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Yellow River Marsh Preserve State Park
 Optimum Boundary



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