

ITEM 19:

Consider a 10-year update to the Hontoon Island State Park Management Plan (Lease No. 2468).

LOCATION:

Volusia and Lake counties

APPLICANT:

Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP)

STAFF REMARKS:

Background

Nestled between the St. John's and Hontoon Dead rivers, Hontoon Island State Park's (HISP) 1,648 acres protect a wide variety of natural communities, including hydric hammocks and upland woodlands, while allowing visitors a wide variety of recreation opportunities including hiking, fishing, and paddling. Hontoon Island has a rich Native American history evident with shell mounds dispersed all over the island. On May 12, 1967, 28.84 acres of Hontoon Island State Park was initially acquired with funds from the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials (FBPHM). Later, the remaining portions of the island were acquired from the City of Deland by donation to the Board of Trustees and Internal Improvement Trust Funds (Trustees). On October 12, 1970 the Trustees leased the Property to DRP under a 99-year lease (Lease No. 2324). In 1988, the Trustees assigned a new lease number (2468) to Hontoon Island State Park without making any changes to the terms and conditions. The lease will expire on January 23, 2068.

HISP is classified as a state park in the DRP's unit classification system. In the management of a state park, a balance is sought between the goals of maintaining and enhancing natural conditions and providing various recreational opportunities. Natural resource management activities are aimed at management of natural systems. Development in the park is directed toward providing public access to and within the park, and to providing recreational facilities, in a reasonable balance, that are both convenient and safe. Emphasis is on interpretation on the park's natural, aesthetic, and educational attributes.

Management Plan Overview

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory has identified twelve distinct natural community types and three altered landcover types at HISP. The predominant natural community is floodplain swamp followed by floodplain marsh. Five species of imperiled plants and seven species of imperiled animals have been identified at HISP.

The Division of Historical Resources maintains a Master Site File that documents many of Florida's archaeological and historical features. Fifteen archaeological sites have been identified at HISP.

Visitor access to the park is only available by ferry service or personal motorboat, where overnight boat slips are available for rent. Popular recreational activities at HISP include paddling, camping, and hiking. A concession operation offers souvenir sales, camping supplies, and paddling rentals. The various options for camping include renting a primitive cabin, tent camping, and youth camping for larger groups. Paddling can be done on the St. John's River and

along the island itself. A 1.5-mile nature trail takes visitors from the beginning of the park along the Hontoon Dead River. Six miles of multi-use trails allow for additional hiking and biking around the island. The day use area overlooking the St. John's River provides a location for picnicking. A visitor center with a museum showcases displays about the islands first inhabitants and the island's natural habitats. Visitation at the park tends to increase starting late October until the end of April and remains steady throughout the year.

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, imperiled species habitat maintenance, enhancement, restoration or population restoration, invasive and non-native species maintenance and control, and public access and recreational opportunities.

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 June 21, 2022. The purpose of the advisory group meeting was to provide the members the opportunity to review and discuss the management plan. Based on the results of these meetings, staff recommendations to the draft plan include making editorial revisions to the plan.

Surplus Lands

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

State Land Management Review Team

A Land Management Review (LMR) was conducted in October 2018. The review team found that the property is managed in accordance with the purposes for which it was acquired and the management practices, including public access, are in compliance with the management plan. Four consensus recommendations were offered:

- 1) The team recommended DRP update the timber assessment since it has been over 10 years from previous assessment and there is a need for timber management.
- 2) The team recommended DRP seek funding to aid in invasive plant management.
- 3) The team recommended DRP continue spring vent and run erosion solutions. Make it a priority to see funding for bank stability.

The 2018 LMR notes were reviewed as part of developing this plan and the agreed upon changes and recommendations were made to this management plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the management plan.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE

APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS: _____

DEFER

WITHDRAW

NOT APPROVE

OTHER: _____



HONTOON ISLAND STATE PARK

Draft Unit Management Plan

Executive Summary

Park History

Park Significance

Park History

On May 12, 1967, 28.84 acres of Hontoon Island State Park was initially acquired with funds from the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials (FBPHM). Later, the remaining portions of the Island was acquired from the City of Deland by donation to the Board of Trustees and Internal Improvement Trust Funds (Trustees). The park is currently 1,648.16 acres.

Park Significance

Nestled between the St. John's and Hontoon Dead River, Hontoon Island State Park's 1,648 acres protects a wide variety of natural communities, including hydric hammocks and upland woodlands, while allowing visitors a wide variety of recreation opportunities including hiking, fishing, and paddling. Hontoon Island has a rich Native American history evident with shell mounds dispersed all over the island.





HONTOON ISLAND STATE PARK

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Executive Summary

Central Park Theme

Park Interpretive Themes

Central Park Theme

Nestled between two rivers, Hontoon Island State Park's secluded hammocks uncover the craftsmanship and shell middens of the Native American tribe that once lived there.

Primary Interpretive Themes

Habitats-Seasonal floods and fires maintain wide -ranging ecosystems that are home to diverse terrestrial and aquatic wildlife

Recreational Opportunities - Responsible recreation on the island and its surrounding waterways protects the park's archaeological resources from erosion and ensure wildlife safety.





HONTOON ISLAND STATE PARK

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Executive Summary

Park Quick Facts

Natural Community Composition

- **Agency:** Department of Environmental Protection - Division of Recreation and Parks
- **Acreage :** 1,648.16
- **Location:** Volusia and Lake County
- **Lease Management Agreement Number(s):** 2468
- **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:** 370 Acres

Natural Communities	Acreage	Percentage
Floodplain Swamp	853.08	51.8%
Floodplain Marsh	269.42	16.3%
Mesic Flatwoods	240.92	14.6%
Hydric Hammock	160.14	9.7%
Altered Landcover Types	37.96	2.3%
River Floodplain Lake	18.47	1.1%
Blackwater Stream	14.42	0.87%
Basin Swamp	13.14	0.79%
Mesic Hammock	39.51	0.75%
Depression Marsh	8.85	0.52%
Scrubby Flatwoods	8.42	0.51%
Shell Mound	4.84	0.29%
Dome Swamp	1.59	0.15%
Total Acreage	1,648.16	100%



HONTOON ISLAND STATE PARK

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Executive Summary

Park Accomplishments: 2005 — 2021

Ten-Year Planning Period Objectives

Previous Accomplishments

Since the 2005 Unit Management Plan for Hontoon Island, the park has made significant accomplishments in terms of resource management and continued protection of the park. The park exceeded its target goal for exotic aquatic plant removal, met all of their prescribed fire goals from 2014 - 2018, and decreased the overall population of the invasive armadillo.

Future Objectives

Moving forward throughout the next 10 years of this Unit Management Plan, the park will continue the prescribed fire program, along with removal of exotic and invasive plant and animal species. To continually enhance the visitor experience, improvements will be made to all current use areas. A waiting shade pavilion will be added at the parks landing area across the island, day use area proposals include the addition of a small fishing pier, and restroom replacement. Two new trail connections will be developed within the existing six mile trail system to provide visitors with a new loop. General maintenance is recommend the park marina, and the addition of two new primitive cabins within the campground.





HONTOON ISLAND STATE PARK

Draft Unit Management Plan

Executive Summary

Management Goals & Objectives

Natural Communities Management

Hydrological Management

Goal: Protect water quality and quantity in the park, restore hydrology to the extent feasible and maintain the restored condition.

Objective: Conduct / obtain an assessment of the park's hydrological restoration needs

The road between the use area and campground should be monitored to determine impeding water flow and to address any issues.

Natural Communities Management

Goal: Restore and maintain the natural communities / habitats of the park.

Objective: Maintain 250.26 acres of the parks fire type communities with the optimum fire return interval

Hontoon Island State Park contains three fire dependent natural communities including: depression marsh, scrubby flatwoods, and mesic flatwoods. Between 106 - 211 acres of these communities are to be burned annually.

Objective: Conduct natural community restoration on 155 acres of Floodplain Marsh

Efforts will done to remove hardwoods encroaching into the freshwaters of the park. A restoration project done with herbicide and prescribed fire will be done to restore freshwater marshes.

Natural Community Improvement

Goal: Restore and maintain the natural communities / habitats of the park.

Objective: Conduct natural community restoration on 75 acres of Mesic Flatwoods

Efforts will done to reduce the number of encroaching wetland trees not removed by prescribed fire along the wetlands using chainsaws.



HONTOON ISLAND STATE PARK

Draft Unit Management Plan

Executive Summary

Management Goals & Objectives

Hydrological & Invasive Management

Invasive Species Management

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

Objective: Annually treat 2 infested acres of invasive plant species

Annual maintenance will be performed removing invasive plants on the island including: water lettuce, water hyacinth, and para grass.

Objective: Implement control measures on 2 invasive animals species

Control and removal measures will be focused on the nine - banded armadillo, known to cause significant ground disturbance on the island and the feral hog.

Imperiled Species Management

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

Objective: Monitor and document 1 selected imperiled animal species.

The gopher tortoise will be monitored, mapped, and actively monitored post prescribed fire. Baseline surveys should be updated every 5 years

Objective: Monitor and document 1 imperiled plant species.

Monitoring protocols will be developed and implemented for the plume polypody.

Objective: Research the history of hooded pitcher plants on park property

A literature search on the history of the hooded pitcher plants will be conducted on the hooded pitcher plants in the area. Later, if appropriate, a feasibility study will be conducted on the appropriateness to reintroduce the plant to the park.

Hontoon Island State Park provides habitat and protection for 12 imperiled plant and animal species including:

- Catesby / pine lily
- American alligator
- Wood stork
- Rose pogonia
- Little blue heron
- Florida manatee



HONTOON ISLAND STATE PARK

Draft Unit Management Plan

Executive Summary

Management Goals & Objectives

Cultural Resource Management

Cultural Resource Management

Goal: Protect, preserve and maintain the cultural resources of the park.

Objective: Assess and evaluate 15 of 15 recorded cultural resources in the park

Within the park boundary, there are 15 recorded cultural sites that are listed within the Florida Master Site File. During this unit management plan, the cultural resource objectives include assessing and evaluating all recorded cultural resources. Sites that are located within areas of public use will be given priority, and implementation of continued monitoring for erosion at Hontoon Dead Creek Mound will be done.

Objective: Compile reliable documentation for all recorded and historic archeological resources

A level one archeological survey will be performed for high propriety areas, and all known sites will be updated within the Florida Master Site File as needed.

Objective: Bring 5 of 15 recorded cultural resources into good condition of possible

A monitoring program will be developed and implemented for all sites, and a special emphasis on the sites located near heavily visited areas of the park by visitors.





HONTOON ISLAND 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 7 use areas

Parking Area

- Add new waiting pavilion
- Volunteer Site (1)

Campground

- Two new primitive cabins
- Renovate / replace bathhouse

Day Use Area

- New Fishing Dock
- Replace Restroom
- Playground Covering

Park Trails

- Develop two new trail connections

Park Marina

- Electrical Upgrades
- Re-deck Marina
- Staging Area
- Seawall Maintenance

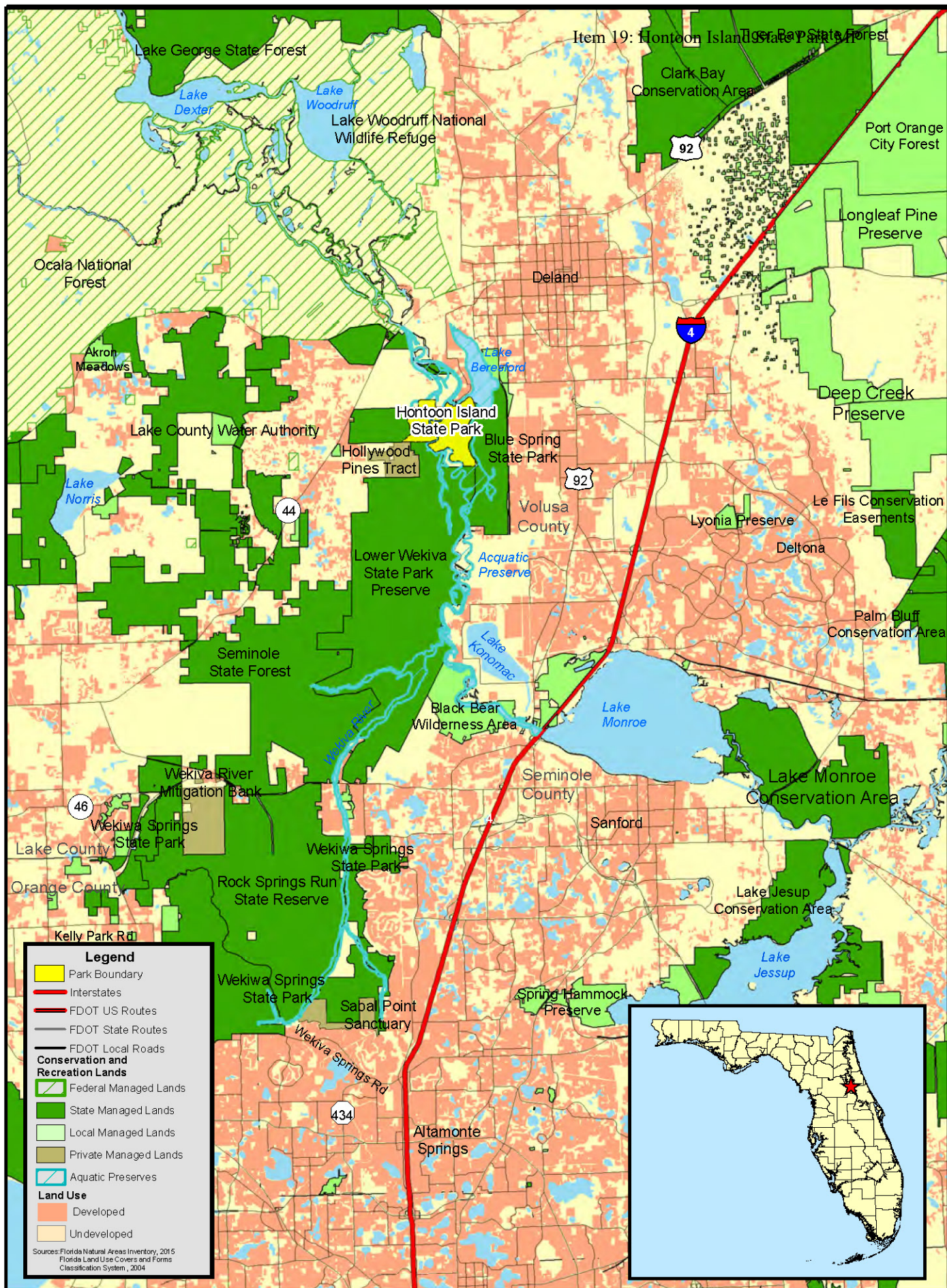
Ranger Station

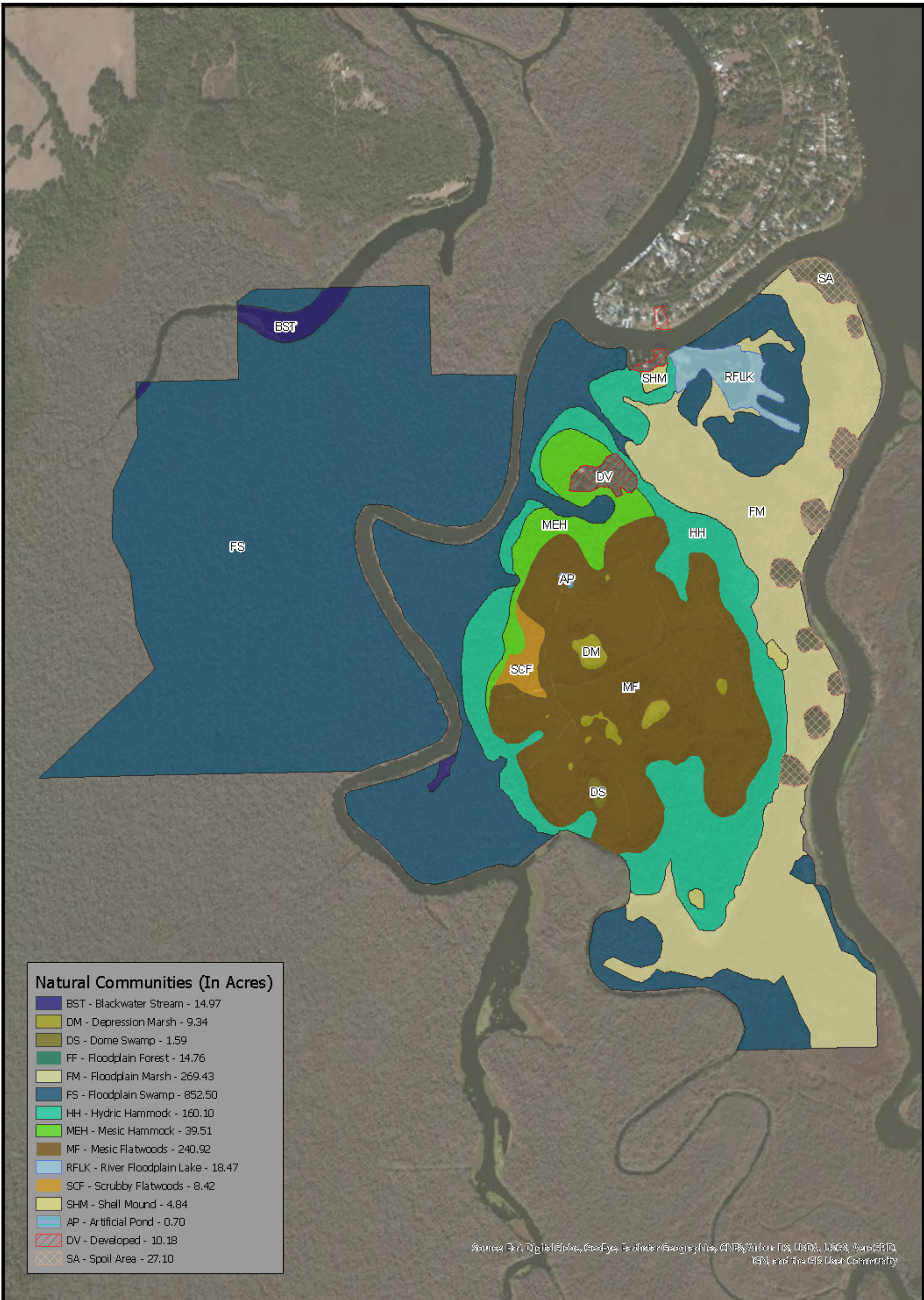
- New roof
- Update plumbing

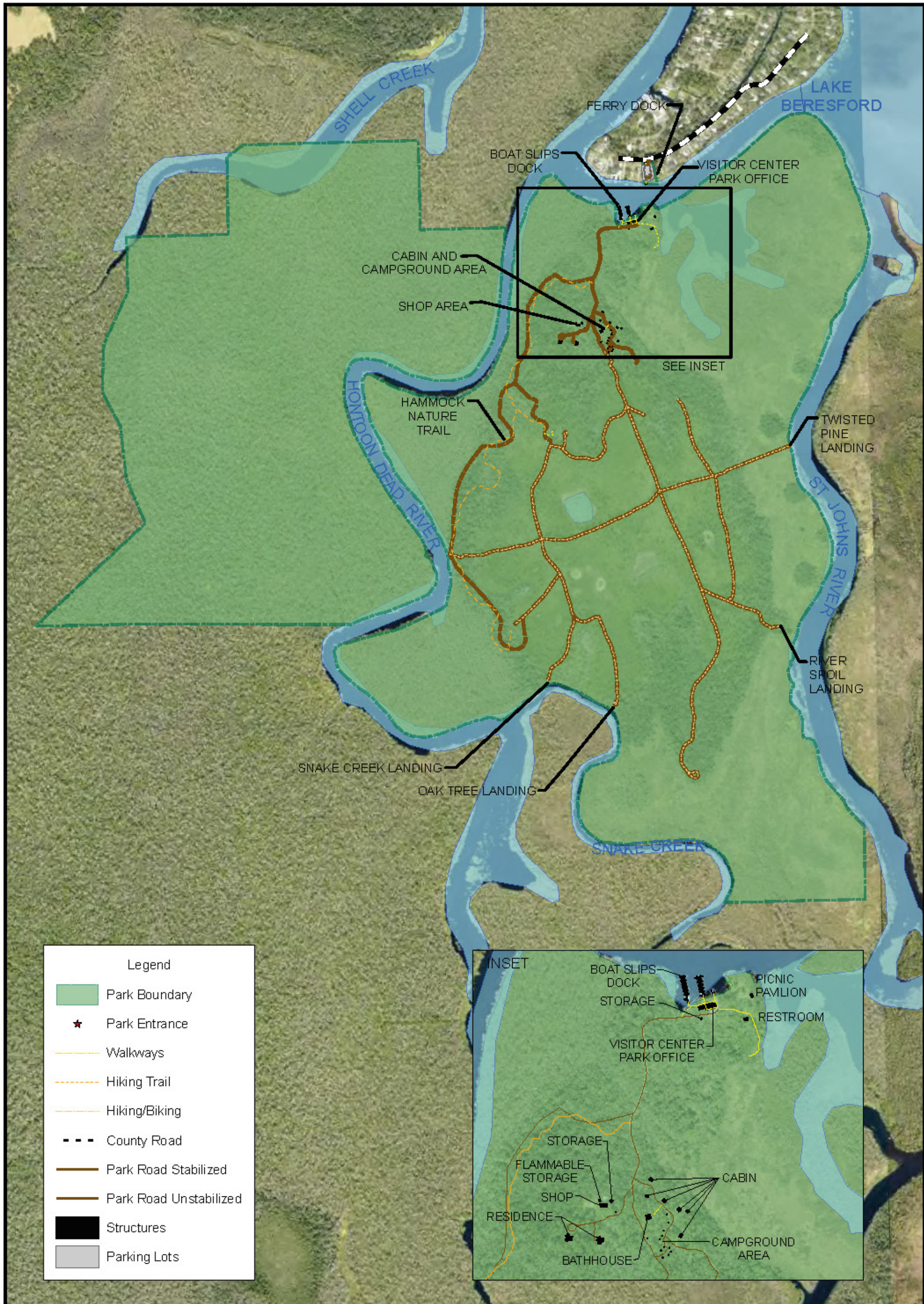
Support Area

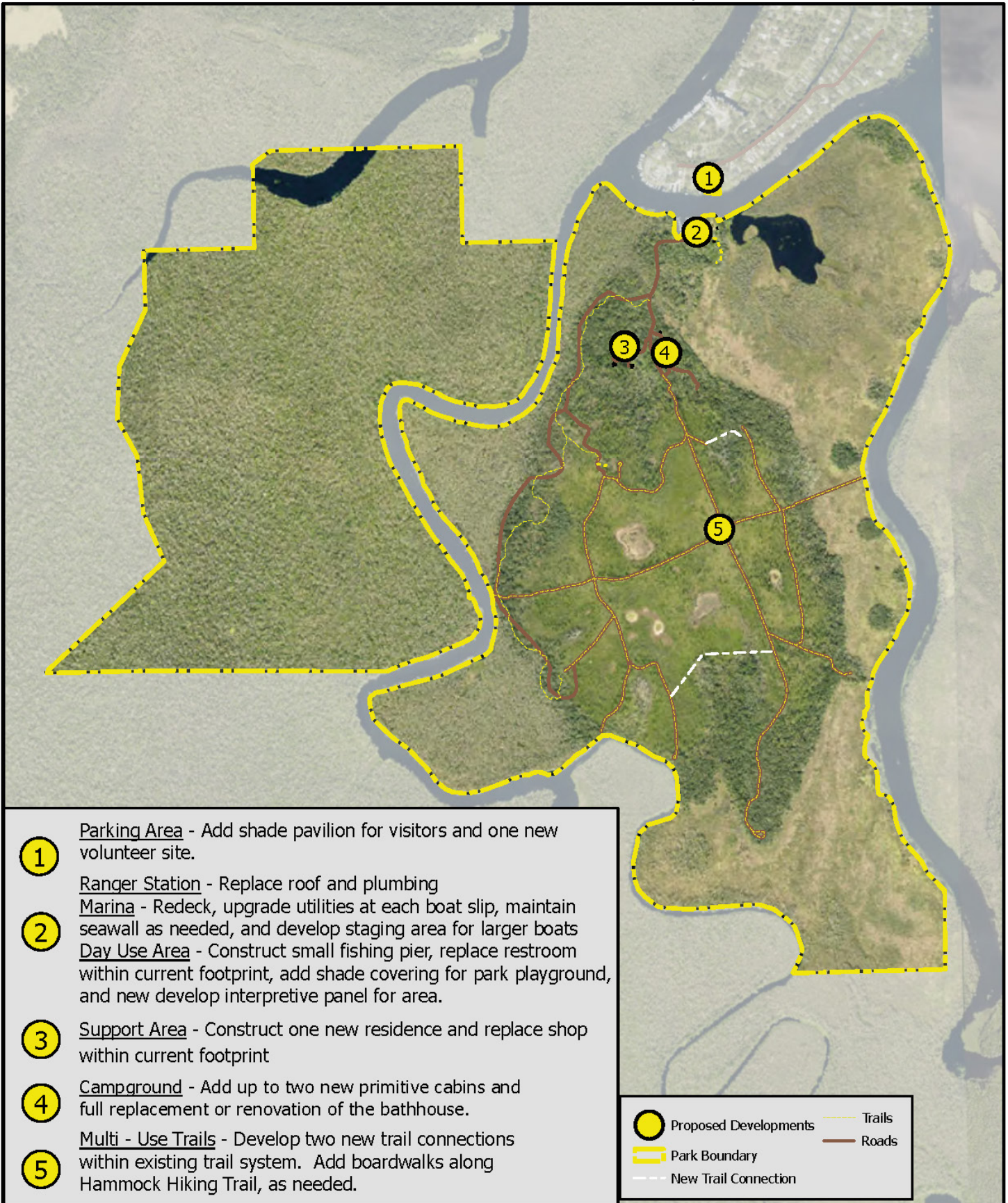
- Shop Replacement
- New Residence (1)









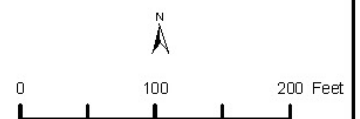


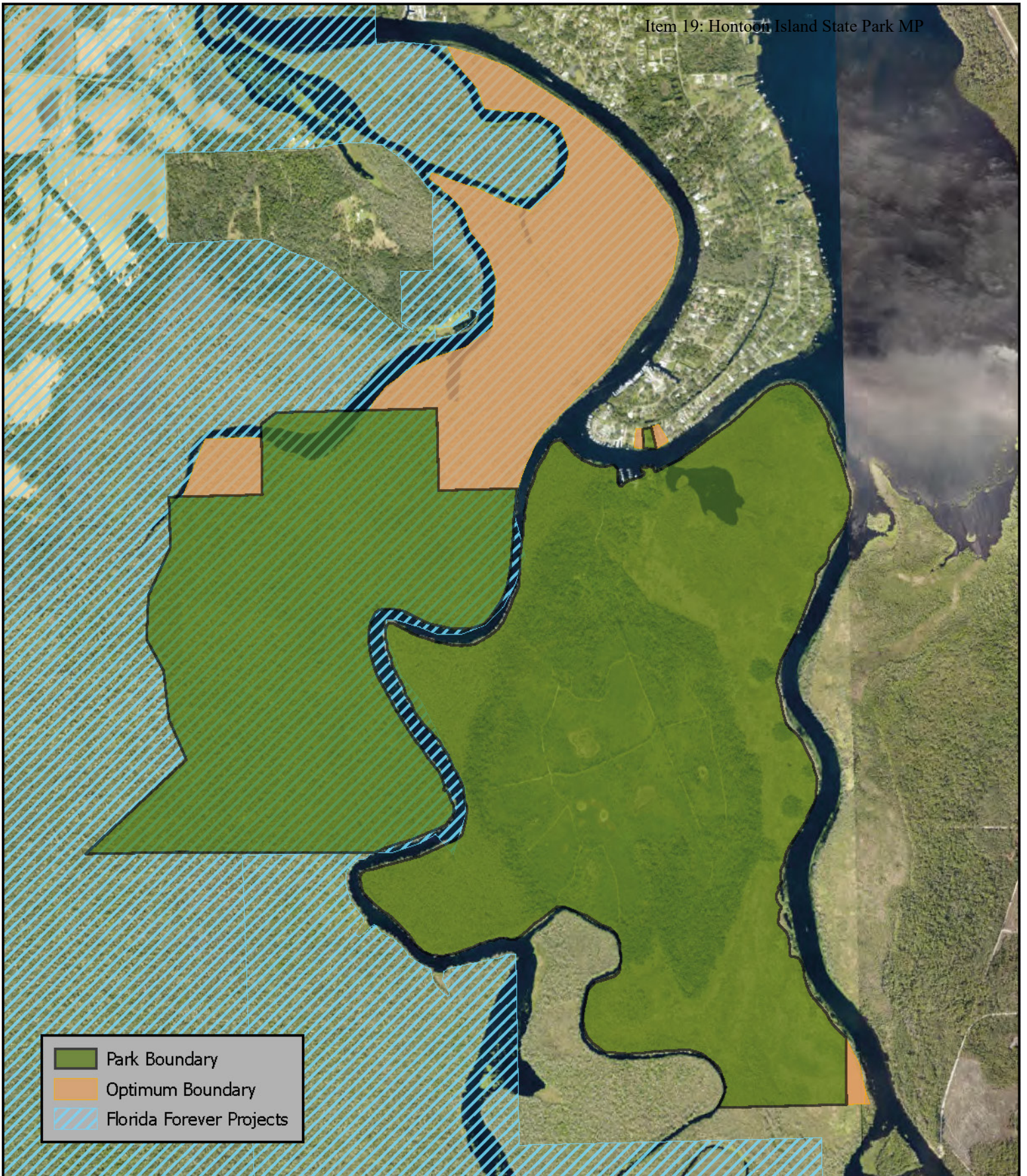
- 1 **Parking Area** - Add shade pavilion for visitors and one new volunteer site.
- 2 **Ranger Station** - Replace roof and plumbing
Marina - Redeck, upgrade utilities at each boat slip, maintain seawall as needed, and develop staging area for larger boats
Day Use Area - Construct small fishing pier, replace restroom within current footprint, add shade covering for park playground, and new develop interpretive panel for area.
- 3 **Support Area** - Construct one new residence and replace shop within current footprint
- 4 **Campground** - Add up to two new primitive cabins and full replacement or renovation of the bathhouse.
- 5 **Multi - Use Trails** - Develop two new trail connections within existing trail system. Add boardwalks along Hammock Hiking Trail, as needed.




	Proposed Developments		Trails
	Park Boundary		Roads
	New Trail Connection		



HONTOON ISLAND STATE PARK Conceptual Land Use Plan





	Park Boundary
	Optimum Boundary
	Florida Forever Projects



Hontoon Island State Park Optimum Boundary Map

October 2022 ARC Meeting

