

**STEPHEN FOSTER FOLK  
CULTURE CENTER  
STATE PARK**  
Park Chapter

SUWANNEE RIVER PLANNING REGION







# STEPHEN FOSTER FOLK CULTURE CENTER STATE PARK

HAMILTON COUNTY, FLORIDA

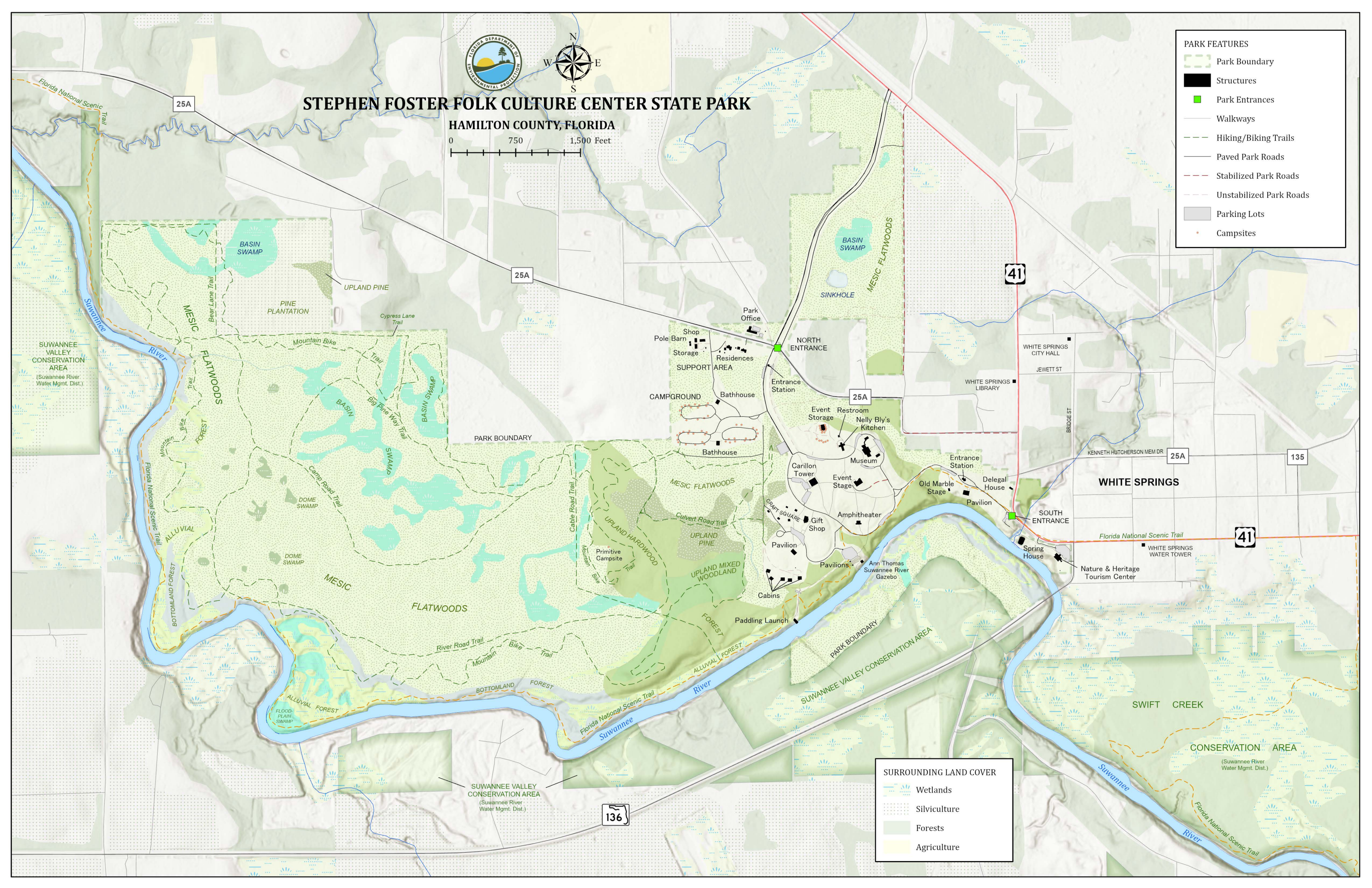
0 750 1,500 Feet

### PARK FEATURES

- Park Boundary
- Structures
- Park Entrances
- Walkways
- Hiking/Biking Trails
- Paved Park Roads
- Stabilized Park Roads
- Unstabilized Park Roads
- Parking Lots
- Campsites

### SURROUNDING LAND COVER

- Wetlands
- Silviculture
- Forests
- Agriculture









# INTRODUCTION

## **LOCATION AND ACQUISITION HISTORY**

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park is located in Hamilton County (see Vicinity Map). Access to the park is from U.S. Highway 41 and State Road 136. The Vicinity Map also reflects significant land and water resources existing near the park.

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park was initially acquired July 1, 1979, with funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF). Currently, the park comprises 903.9 acres. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) hold fee simple title to the park and on April 26, 1984, the Trustees leased (Lease No. 3346) the property to the Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) under a 50-year lease. The current lease will expire on April 25, 2034. Additionally, the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) currently leases 652.41 acres to DRP with a lease expiring on May 12, 2029.

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park is designated single-use to provide public outdoor recreation and conservation. There are no legislative or executive directives that constrain the use of this property (see Addendum 1). A legal description of the park property can be made available upon request to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

## **SECONDARY AND INCOMPATIBLE USES**

In accordance with 253.034(5) F.S., the potential of the park to accommodate secondary management purposes was analyzed. These secondary purposes were considered within the context of DRP's statutory responsibilities and resource values. This analysis considered the park's natural and cultural resources, management needs, aesthetic values, visitation and visitor experiences. It was determined that timber harvesting and hardwood removal could be accommodated in a manner that would be compatible and not interfere with the primary purpose of resource-based outdoor recreation and conservation.

DRP has determined that uses such as water resource development projects, water supply projects, stormwater management projects, linear facilities and sustainable agriculture and forestry (other than those management activities specifically identified in this plan) would not be consistent with the management purposes of the park.

In accordance with 253.034(5) F.S., the potential for generating revenue to enhance management was also analyzed. Visitor fees and charges are the principal source of revenue generated by the park. Generating revenue from consumptive uses or from activities that are not expressly related to resource management and conservation is under consideration.

## **PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARK**

### **Park Purpose**

The purpose of Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park is to provide resource-based recreation opportunities, with an emphasis on Florida folk life, for Florida residents and visitors, and to manage conservation efforts for the park's natural and cultural resources.

### **Park Significance**

- Stephen Foster, the composer of Florida's official state song, "Old Folks at Home," is memorialized at the park through the dedication of a museum and a working carillon tower on the bank of the Suwannee River.
- The park's establishment inspired the creation of the Florida Folk Festival and its celebration of diverse people, music, dance, crafts, food, and other traditions throughout the state of Florida.
- From the mid-1800s to the 1920s, the town of White Springs was a popular tourist destination due to the alleged medicinal properties of the local White Sulphur Springs. A springhouse was built around the springs in 1901. Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Ford are among the most famous visitors.
- Within the park, 15 distinct natural communities and 23 imperiled plant and animal species have been recorded. These include the hooded pitcher plant (*Sarracenia minor*), Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) and wood stork (*Mycteria americana*).
- Resource-based recreation opportunities available to the public include camping, primitive camping, canoeing/kayaking, fishing, cycling, and hiking. The park is designated as a gateway to the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail, with riverside cabins available for paddlers.

### **Central Park Theme**

What began as a memorial to a renowned songwriter, Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center has evolved into a legendary celebration of the diverse people and traditions that continue to build Florida's living folk culture.

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park is classified as a state special feature site in the DRP unit classification system. A special feature site is a discrete and well-defined object or condition that attracts public interest and provides recreational enjoyment through visitation, observation and study. A state special feature site is an area which contains such a feature, and which is set aside for controlled public enjoyment. Special feature sites for the most part are either historical or archaeological by type, but they may also have a geological, botanical, zoological or other basis. State special feature sites must be of unusual or exceptional character or have statewide or broad regional significance. Management of special feature sites places primary emphasis on protection and maintenance of the special feature for long-term public enjoyment. Permitted uses are almost exclusively passive in nature, and program emphasis is on interpretation of the special feature. Development at special feature sites is focused on protection and maintenance of the site, public access, safety, and the convenience of the user.



## **OTHER DESIGNATIONS**

The unit is not within an Area of Critical State Concern as defined in section 380.05; Florida Statutes and is not presently under study for such designation. The park is a component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System, administered by the DEP Office of Greenways and Trails.

All waters within the park have been designated as Outstanding Florida Waters, pursuant to Chapter 62-302, Florida Administrative Code. Surface waters in this park are also classified as Class III waters by DEP. The park is not adjacent to an aquatic preserve as designated under the Florida Aquatic Preserve Act of 1975 (Section 258.35, Florida Statutes).

## **PARK ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Secured funding from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to remove 120 acres of invasive plants during the 2018-19 fiscal calendar year.
- Eight staff were recertified in Archeological Resource Management training.
- Replacement of amphitheater roof
- Purchased new strike covers and conducted asbestos removal through property improvement funding.
- Began restoration and repair work for the carillon tower.



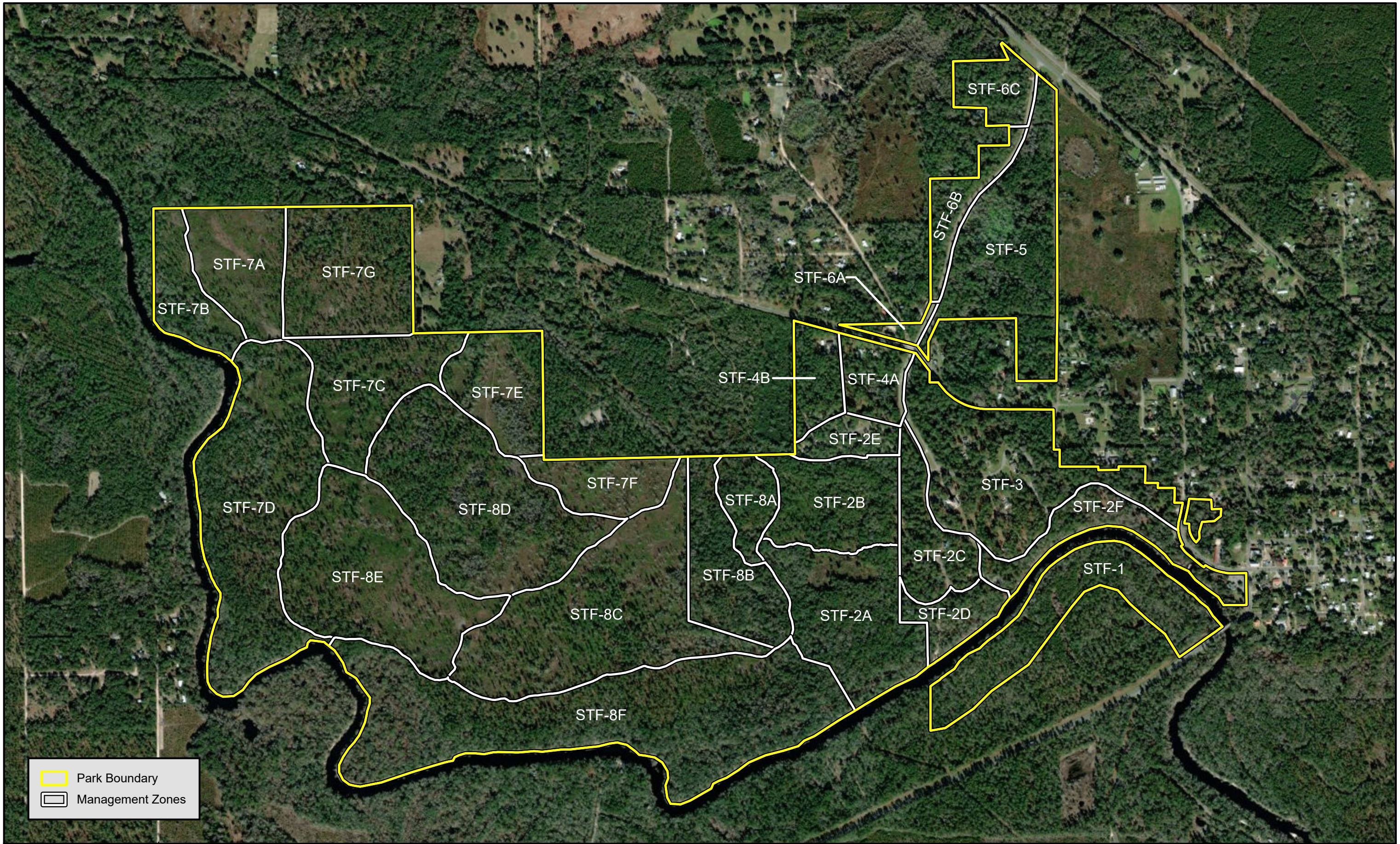


## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMPONENT

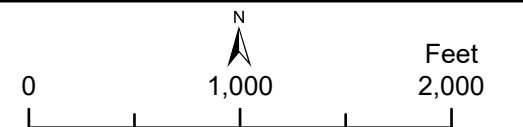
<b>Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park Management Zones</b>			
<b>Management Zone</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Managed with Prescribed Fire</b>	<b>Contains Known Culture Resources</b>
STF-1	38.3	Y	N
STF-2A	41.47	Y	Y
STF-2B	28.07	Y	N
STF-2C	18.83	Y	Y
STF-2D	11.09	Y	Y
STF-2E	8.88	N	Y
STF-2F	20.51	N	Y
STF-3	57.4	Y	Y
STF-4A	12.06	Y	Y
STF-4B	11.59	Y	N
STF-5	48.93	Y	Y
STF-6A	2.87	N	N
STF-6B	12.1	Y	N
STF-6C	11.54	Y	N
STF-7A	25.75	Y	N
STF-7B	17.16	Y	N
STF-7C	31.71	Y	N
STF-7D	73.21	Y	N
STF-7E	23.69	Y	N
STF-7F	16.9	Y	N
STF-7G	40.66	Y	N
STF-8A	11.38	Y	N
STF-8B	26.88	Y	N
STF-8C	74.29	Y	N
STF-8D	67.94	Y	N
STF-8E	61.88	Y	N
STF-8F	108.81	Y	N







STEPHEN FOSTER FOLK CULTURAL CENTER STATE PARK  
Management Zones



Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
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## **TOPOGRAPHY**

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park is located within the Northern Physiographic Zone of the state. Two topographic regions meet near Stephen Foster, the Gulf Coastal Lowlands and the Northern Highlands. A topographic break called the Cody Scarp separates the two regions. In certain places, the Gulf Coastal Lowlands extend into the Northern Highlands along major rivers and streams; here they are called the River Valley Lowlands (Ceryak et al. 1983). The lower elevations in the park are located in this River Valley Lowlands region, while the higher elevations are part of the Northern Highlands.

## **SOILS**

Fifteen mapped soil types occur within the park (see Soils Map). A complete description of these soils is attached in Addendum 4. Soils range from the well-drained sands of the uplands to the frequently flooded, hydric soils of the floodplains and basins. Clear-cut operations in the 1980s disturbed the surface soils in much of the Carter Camp Tract. Efforts to control infestations of southern pine beetles in the late 1990s also disturbed limited areas in the remainder of the park. Small borrow pits were created alongside roads in the Carter-Camp Tract to provide fill for the roads, and firebreak preparation and fire suppression activities have caused some additional soil impacts. Significant areas of erosion still exist along the river levees where park visitors traverse the steep banks of the Suwannee River. One extreme example of this occurs at the Cable Crossing primitive camp area. This site features a very steep descent to the river where surface water runoff and visitor access trails have carved out gullies and created a serious erosion issue. Erosion is also an issue on the service roads within the Carter-Camp Tract, particularly on the slopes north of the primitive group camp. The ravine slopes along the seepage stream that runs adjacent to the Spring House have also experienced erosion. Immediately upslope of this stream is an unpaved parking area that requires periodic stabilization and erosion prevention measures. In 2003, the park constructed a concrete ramp to stabilize a majority of the canoe launch area. However, the lower end of the launch below the concrete ramp is exposed during low water periods. Visitor access problems occur as a result. As of 2011, the walkway had also begun to show serious signs of degradation in places, with cracks and openings appearing that occasionally require repairs. The concrete ramp also appears to have been partially undermined in some areas from water runoff. The steep slope behind the State of Florida's Nature and Heritage Tourism Center has also been vulnerable to severe erosion. In 2003, the park ameliorated erosion issues there, largely by using geo-textile stabilizing fabric, strategically located retention systems and vegetation plantings. The park monitors this location regularly to assess the need for any additional stabilization efforts.

In 2014 a similar project was completed to stabilize the riverbank and slopes along the park drive at the site of the scenic overlook. Geo-textile cloth, riprap, and vegetation plantings along with a reworking of the roadside swales and drainage patterns were used to stabilize and restore the area. Management activities will follow generally accepted best management practices to prevent further soil erosion and to conserve soil and water resources on site.

## **HYDROLOGY**

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park is located immediately adjacent to the Suwannee River along Reach 1 of the river's upper basin in southern Hamilton County. The Upper Suwannee River basin begins in the Okefenokee Swamp in southeast Georgia and northeast Florida and extends just past the White Springs area, encompassing more than 2,400 square miles (Hornsby et al. 2003). From its

headwaters in the Okefenokee, the Suwannee River meanders along a southwesterly course for about 245 miles before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico (Ham and Hatzell 1996). The mean annual flow rate of the Suwannee River at White Springs is 2,357 cubic feet per second (U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 2011). In the upper reaches of the Suwannee, stream flow is primarily dependent on surface water runoff. Below White Springs, the river is increasingly fed by groundwater.

Three aquifers exist in the Upper Suwannee basin. The surficial or water table aquifer is composed of Miocene-age and younger sands and clayey sands that range in thickness from 20 to 150 feet. The water level lies at or near land surface and often coincides with that of swamps, lakes and ponds. The surficial aquifer is recharged directly by rainfall. Natural discharge occurs through evapotranspiration, lateral seepage and percolation into underlying aquifers via breaches in the confining beds.

The intermediate aquifer, which sporadically underlies the surficial aquifer, ranges from about 80 feet to over 230 feet in thickness. This regional formation lies primarily within the Hawthorn Group.

Seepage from the surficial aquifer recharges the intermediate aquifer, which in turn recharges the underlying Floridan aquifer through permeable or fractured beds. In addition, the intermediate aquifer discharges laterally along the Cody Scarp and within streams that have eroded through confining strata.

The Floridan aquifer, which is up to 1,100 feet thick near the park, is composed of carbonates deposited during the Tertiary Period. Recharge of the Floridan aquifer in this area is primarily by percolation through fractures in the semi-confining beds of the Hawthorn Group. Recharge also occurs during flood stage of the Suwannee River, when the stream rises above the potentiometric surface of the aquifer.

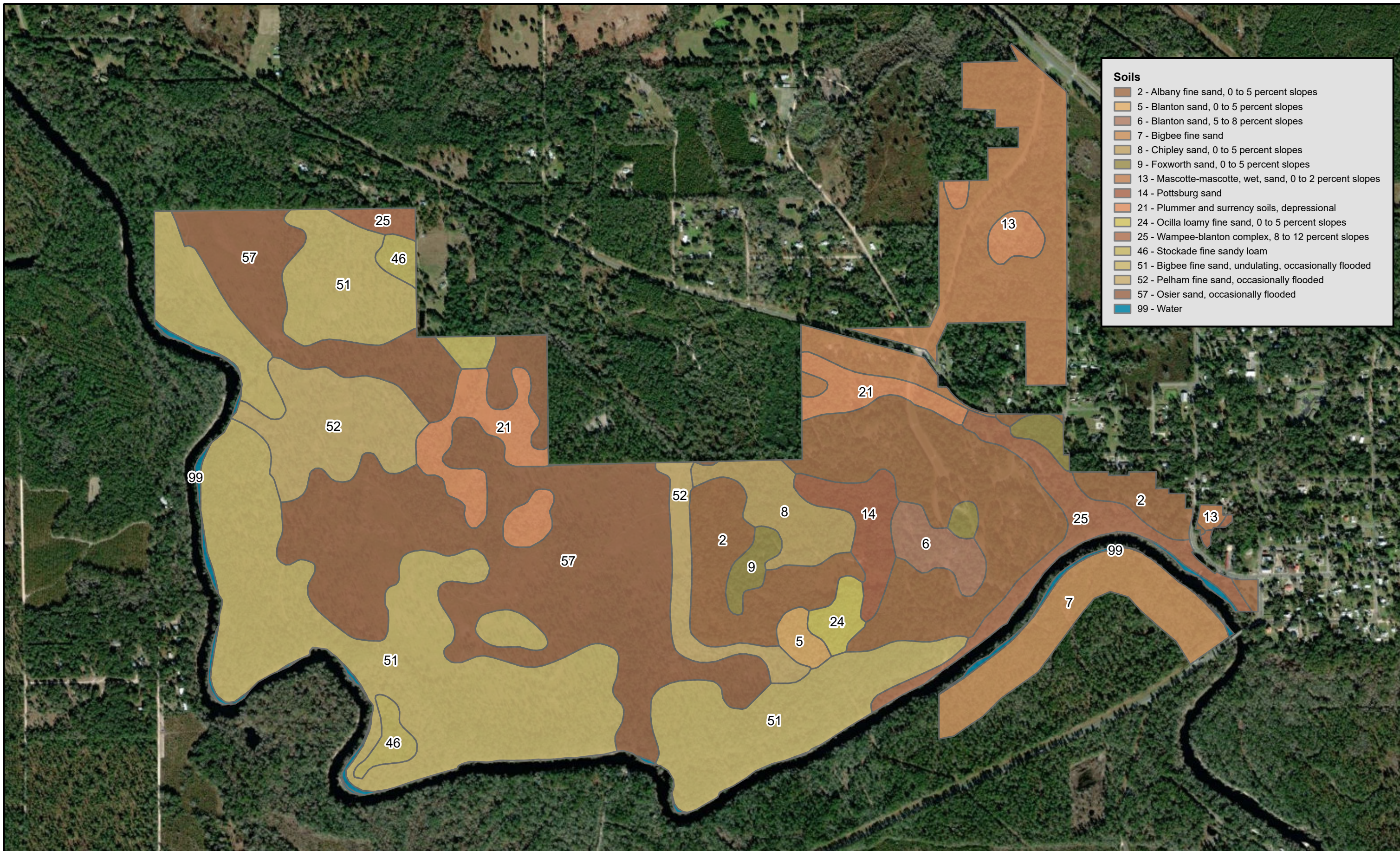
Normally, however, the river stage is lower than the potentiometric surface, resulting in a net discharge from the aquifer. Most of the discharge from the Floridan aquifer occurs through spring vents and from seepage flow along the course of the river.

According to the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD), White Sulphur Springs is one of the most important surface water bodies within the park (Hornsby and Ceryak 1998; Ceryak and Mirti 1999). The spring, at one time considered second magnitude, was a popular destination for tourists seeking to restore their health in its mineral-rich waters (Rosenau et al. 1977). White Sulphur Springs is considered Florida's first tourist attraction (Verdi and Tomlinson 2009).

Throughout its early history, interrupted only by periodic inundations from the Suwannee River, White Sulphur Springs continuously produced clear running groundwater, which then immediately mixed with the adjacent tannin-stained waters of the Suwannee River. In 1906, a permanent structure, the Spring House, was built to encircle the spring vent, creating a bathing area for visitors that functioned as a health sanatorium. This springhouse constrained all of the spring's flow and channeled the discharge through an adjustable weir system. The bottom elevation at the Spring House sill is at 52.45 feet mean sea level.

The cave system that lies beneath White Sulphur Springs runs south and west from the cave entrance underneath the Suwannee River. Cave divers have accessed approximately the first 1,000 feet of the main conduit, which extends to a depth of 147 feet (Butt and Morris 2012). At the time of the last dive in August 2012, water clarity was impaired with tannin-stained surface water. The earliest measurement of the White Sulphur Springs discharge, 72 cubic feet per second, was taken in 1907. The table below summarizes a sample of the available discharge data for White Sulphur Springs (SRWMD 2016).

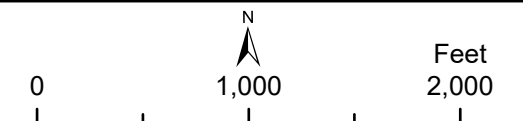




- Soils**
- 2 - Albany fine sand, 0 to 5 percent slopes
  - 5 - Blanton sand, 0 to 5 percent slopes
  - 6 - Blanton sand, 5 to 8 percent slopes
  - 7 - Bigbee fine sand
  - 8 - Chipley sand, 0 to 5 percent slopes
  - 9 - Foxworth sand, 0 to 5 percent slopes
  - 13 - Mascotte-mascotte, wet, sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes
  - 14 - Pottsburg sand
  - 21 - Plummer and surrency soils, depressional
  - 24 - Ocilla loamy fine sand, 0 to 5 percent slopes
  - 25 - Wampee-blanton complex, 8 to 12 percent slopes
  - 46 - Stockade fine sandy loam
  - 51 - Bigbee fine sand, undulating, occasionally flooded
  - 52 - Pelham fine sand, occasionally flooded
  - 57 - Osier sand, occasionally flooded
  - 99 - Water



STEPHEN FOSTER FOLK CULTURAL CENTER STATE PARK  
Soils



Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
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<b>Summary of White Sulphur Springs and Suwannee River Discharge Data</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>White Spring Discharge (cfs)</b>	<b>Suwannee River Level (ft)</b>	<b>Suwannee River Discharge (cfs)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Feb. 13, 1907	72	51.04	99	
May 8, 1927	67.2	50.82	73	
Nov. 4, 1931	36.2	50.41	7.1	Major drought 1931-1935
March 17, 1932	46.44	50.46	31	
May 17, 1946	62.7	55.41	1790	
April 25, 1956	7.51	49.57	160	Major drought 1949-1957
Nov. 22, 1960	10.3	51.00	495	
April 10, 1973	no data	88.54	38100	Most severe flood
June 6, 1975	40.4	53.14	1120	
Summer 1977	0			First time spring ceased flowing
March 7, 1985	4.37	50.78	453	
Sept. 26, 1990	no data	49.72	2.8	Major drought 1989-1992; Second lowest historic Suwannee flow
July 1, 1997	7.2	54.57	1720	Clear groundwater
Sept. 25, 1997	69.7	49.40	148	Clear groundwater
May 11, 1998	84.4	53.27	1040	Clear groundwater
Sept. 14, 1998	12.8	51.24	583	Clear groundwater
Feb. 4, 1999	16.6	53.09	985	Clear groundwater
Feb. 16, 1999	4.2	52.92	938	Clear groundwater
Oct. 15, 2003	6.7	50.77	416	
April 2, 2004	7.6	51.32	600	
Nov. 23, 2004	58.3	53.35	1160	Surface/ground mixture
Jan. 31, 2006	39.9	54.99	1540	Surface/ground mixture
June 14, 2006	3.8	49.97	257	Surface/ground mixture
<b>Summary of White Sulphur Springs and Suwannee River Discharge Data</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>White Spring Discharge (cfs)</b>	<b>Suwannee River Level (ft)</b>	<b>Suwannee River Discharge (cfs)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
May 13, 2009	9.6	54.64	973	Surface/ground mixture
July 9, 2009	0	52.83	499	Surface/ground mixture
April 22, 2010	8.7	53.84	754	Surface/ground mixture
May 9, 2010	0	52.85	505	Surface/ground mixture

June 24, 2011	0	49.28	1.7	Major drought 2010-2012; Lowest historic Suwannee flow
				Specific conductivity (SC) began in 9/2011
July 27, 2012	37.7	55.72	1370	Surface/ground mixture SC= 215
Aug. 7, 2012	28.0	54.85	1080	Surface/ground mixture SC= 225
Dec. 3, 2012	0	50.87	126	Surface/ground mixture SC= 140
May 31, 2013	6.46	53.90	770	Surface/ground mixture SC= 118
Nov. 24, 2013	0	51.00	171	Surface/ground mixture SC= 252
May 15, 2015	30.7	52.16	365	Surface/ground mixture SC= 256
July 22, 2015	1.99	53.74	726	Surface/ground mixture SC= 288
Oct. 27, 2015	17.5	52.42	404	Surface/ground mixture SC= 270
Jan. 13, 2016	0	51.94	327	Surface/ground mixture SC= 284

Anecdotal reports from local residents indicate that discharge from White Sulphur Springs steadily declined during the early 1970s. By the summer of 1977, flow had completely ceased for the first time on record (Mirti 2001). The SRWMD significantly increased its water quantity and quality monitoring efforts at the Spring House throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s. Through 1999, the White Sulphur Springs discharge, though variable, was still high enough to qualify as a second-magnitude spring, with clear groundwater flowing from its vent (Tom Mirti, SRWMD hydrologist personal communication; Hornsby and Ceryak 1998). From the late 2000s through the present day, however, water emerging from the spring vent has consisted of a mixture of tannic surface water and clear groundwater. Water clarity data obtained by staff at the Spring House from 2009 to the present has confirmed that discharge from the spring has not been completely clear since the 2004 assessment. In fact, the only occasions when White Sulphur Springs seems to flow anymore is when the Suwannee River floods, which causes an surge of tannic river water into the spring vent and a subsequent flushing, or discharge, from the spring when the river levels fall. The SRWMD is currently investigating the relative proportions of total spring discharge contributed by groundwater and surface water. Automated water quality and quantity measurements, including specific conductivity, began at the spring vent in 2011. Specific conductivity provides an indication of the relative levels of surface water and groundwater in the spring discharge. Lower values indicate a higher proportion of surface water.

Many water management experts now acknowledge that there has been a significant regional lowering of the Floridan aquifer in north Florida (Grubbs and Crandall 2007; SRWMD Director David Still letter to Governor Charlie Crist March 2010). Strong scientific evidence supports the hypothesis that the cessation of flow at White Sulphur Springs is due to an unfettered drawdown of regional groundwater levels (Grubbs 2011). Water managers also suggest that springshed boundaries can change dramatically over time and are especially dependent on the amount of consumptive use of groundwater that occurs in various parts of the springshed (Upchurch and Champion 2004). Unfortunately, the springshed of White Sulphur Springs is still unmapped. Initiation of dye trace work within the regional aquifer might help to rectify that situation.

Recent research has revealed that a significant area of groundwater supply in the eastern part of the SRWMD, considered a groundwater divide of sorts between the SRWMD and the St. Johns River Water



Management District (SRWMD), has declined to the extent that a westward shift in groundwater potentiometric contours has occurred. The shift appears to be in response to the artificial depletion of groundwater reserves caused by large-scale pumping in Duval and Nassau counties (Grubbs and Crandall 2007). This regional drawdown may be partially responsible for shrinking springsheds and declining spring flows within parts of the SRWMD (Mirti 2001; Grubbs 2011). Both water management districts are now attempting to coordinate more closely when issuing consumptive use permits and monitoring groundwater withdrawals.

Recent droughts and the increasing consumptive use of groundwater resources have generated strong concerns about lowered water tables and decreased spring flows throughout the Suwannee River basin. The SRWMD is responsible for prioritizing and establishing Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) for water bodies within its boundaries. It is developing a new MFL for White Sulphur Springs, with a scheduled completion date of 2026. Once an MFL is established for the spring, it is highly likely that a recovery strategy will need to be developed and implemented.

As of 2023, water quality improvement programs along the Suwannee River have focused mainly on the middle and lower basins (Hallas and Magley 2008). No Basin Management Action Plan has been developed for the Upper Suwannee River as of 2023. However, there has been extensive water quality monitoring of two potentially impacted tributaries within this section, Hunter Creek and Swift Creek, since the 1960s. The adopted TMDL for these two creeks is verified impaired for fecal coliforms. Increased nutrient loads have consistently been measured for both Hunter Creek, which discharges into the Suwannee above the park, and Swift Creek, which discharges below the park. The source of the excessive nutrients seems to be a major phosphate mining operation that discharges into these tributaries (DEP 2003). The phosphate mines are located on a large swath of land spanning several thousand acres immediately north of the park.

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

- Action 1 - Seek guidance from the SRWMD to establish meaningful MFLs for the Upper Suwannee River and White Sulphur Springs and ensure that they are restored to their historic levels.
- Action 2 - Seek assistance to conduct hydrological studies to delineate White Sulphur Spring springshed.
- Action 3 - Continue to closely monitor major phosphate mining operations in the Suwannee watershed upstream of the park and other land-use changes.

The two most significant hydrological features at the park are the Suwannee River and White Sulphur Springs, which was once a flowing, second-magnitude spring. The following are hydrological assessment actions recommended for the park.

Major ground disturbances or inadequate treatment of runoff into local streams could seriously degrade the quality of the park's resources. When appropriate, District 2 staff will provide comments to other agencies regarding proposed changes in land use or zoning. In addition, district staff will closely monitor the major phosphate mining operations north of the park for significant changes that may adversely affect the park's natural resources.

DRP will continue to work closely with the SRWMD to ensure that MFLs developed for the Upper Suwannee River and White Sulphur Springs are implemented conscientiously and that spring flows are restored to their historic levels.

**Objective B:** Restore natural hydrological conditions and functions to approximately 0.3 acres of the seepage stream natural community.

- Action 1 - Assess the hydrological impacts of a remnant concrete dam impoundment located in one of the seepage streams in the park.
- Action 2 - Backfill old fire plow scars that disrupt natural hydrological functions.
- Action 3 - Where roads alter natural hydrological patterns, initiate corrective actions such as the installation of low water crossings, fording mats or culverts.

If the assessment of the concrete dam indicates that restoration is needed, the dam will be removed and the ephemeral discharge of the system restored. The park will explore alternative options for providing visitors with access to the far side of the stream by developing plans for a bridge and trail system that would enable proper interpretation of this resource.

Staff will initiate hydrological restoration measures for other natural systems in the park where necessary. If DRP determines that roads that cut through wetlands or mesic flatwoods are significantly altering natural hydrological patterns, staff will take corrective action.

**Objective C:** Evaluate and mitigate the impacts of soil erosion in the park.

- Action 1 - Identify unauthorized trails and eliminate visitor access to them.
- Action 2 - Add stabilization measures in certain spots of the canoe launch area.
- Action 3 - Divert storm water as much as possible into surrounding woodlands to encourage natural infiltration.

DRP will investigate best management options for additional mitigation of erosion at public access points such as the primitive camping, canoe launch and Carter-Camp restoration areas.

Staff will regularly monitor areas of the park that are subject to significant erosion. Wherever necessary, the park will implement corrective measures that reduce the impact of soil erosion on water resources. Unauthorized hiking trails along the river levees may lead to a significant increase in soil disturbance. In the canoe launch area, despite significant progress by the park in rectifying key erosion issues, additional stabilization measures will be needed in certain spots.

The park will assess the extent of erosion attributable to visitor access trails and surface water runoff associated with the unpaved parking area west of the Spring House and upslope of the seepage stream. The parking area may need additional water bars designed to slow runoff and minimize erosion during strong storm events.

## **NATURAL COMMUNITIES**

### **Mesic Flatwoods**

Mesic flatwoods is the predominant natural community in the park. It is also one of the most impacted by human influences. Because of past fire exclusion, various off-site species, principally loblolly pine, have invaded this community. Timbering during earlier times, and perhaps farming, have reduced and in some instances eliminated the natural components of this system within the park. Trash dumps occur in some portions as well.

Most of the flatwoods in the Carter-Camp tract were clearcut in the mid-1980s before the SRWMD acquired the property. Approximately half of the flatwoods was roller-chopped, burned and planted with containerized longleaf pine seedlings in 1990. These areas have experienced repeated flood and drought cycles since 1990, and survivorship of the longleaf pines has been highly variable. Areas not subjected to roller-chopping or prescribed fire treatments have become dominated by loblolly pines that regenerated onsite, along with scattered slash pines. After the logging, fire-intolerant hardwoods such as laurel oak, water oak, black cherry and sweetgum invaded most of the mesic flatwoods.

The park has made substantial progress in restoring the mesic flatwoods in the Carter-Camp tract through prescribed fire. Prescribed fires have naturally thinned many of the off-site loblolly pines, reduced competition for the longleaf pines and stimulated the regeneration of groundcover species. The mesic flatwoods community in the Carter-Camp tract is currently in poor to fair condition based on recent fire history and the density of loblolly pine stands.

Infestations of southern pine beetles have also affected the mesic flatwoods, primarily in the northeastern portions of the park. Control efforts entailed the clearcutting of portions of the pine canopy in the late 1990s and again in 2001. In most cases, the trees removed were off-site loblolly pines and slash pines. Clearcut areas have been replanted with longleaf pines where appropriate and have been regularly treated with prescribed fire to control hardwood invasion. The mesic flatwoods in the easternmost portions of the park are in poor to fair condition due to fire exclusion and southern pine beetle impacts. Most of the mesic flatwoods in Carter-Camp tract were thinned beginning in late 2017 by the SRWMD to reduce the density of loblolly pines.

Although the wet flatwoods natural community probably occurs in the park, it is difficult to distinguish it from mesic flatwoods because of the large-scale clearcut operations that have taken place. The wet flatwoods community likely occurs in bands around the various basin swamps and drainage ways that lie within the mesic flatwoods, forming a transition zone between the two community types.

### **Upland Hardwood Forest**

Upland hardwood forest at the park generally occurs on levees and plateaus paralleling the Suwannee River, on moderate to steep slopes within ravines and on broad transitional slopes between the 100-year floodplain and adjacent uplands. A sizeable band of good quality upland hardwood forest occupies a transition slope in the eastern portion of the Carter-Camp tract. The only apparent adverse impact to this system over the years has been erosion caused by foot traffic on some of the steeper slopes. Preventive measures such as the strategic placement of rail fencing and restorative measures such as terracing and revegetating may help alleviate this problem. Otherwise, this community is in relatively good condition.

### Upland Mixed Woodland

A high ridge of upland hardwood forest parallels the Suwannee River in zone 8F. Just below the hardwood forest along the northern slope of the ridge is a band of upland mixed woodland that is dominated by large southern red oaks and mockernut hickories. It is likely that all of the longleaf pines were removed from this area prior to 1900, and subsequent fire suppression has caused the majority of the herbaceous species to be shaded out by hardwoods. The upland mixed woodland slopes down to an area of alluvial forest before grading into mesic flatwoods. It is likely that natural fires in the mesic flatwoods would have burned upslope into the upland mixed woodland. The upland mixed woodland appears to extend from this ridge toward the east into zone 2A. The dense hardwood growth and a lack of fire make it difficult to distinguish many of these areas from upland hardwood forest.

### Upland Pine

The upland pine natural community in the park occurs on limited areas within the uplands. Many of the areas that formerly contained upland pine either were incorporated into the developed areas of the park many years ago or are now indistinguishable from upland hardwood forest. Much of the upland pine community was logged prior to acquisition by the SRWMD, and some of the logged areas were subsequently roller-chopped before being planted with longleaf pines in 1990. Extensive restoration efforts have partially restored the upland pine areas located in management zones 2B, 2A and 8A. These areas are on a plateau that lies below a band of mesic flatwoods to the north and above the upland hardwood forest and mesic flatwoods to the south and west. Initial restoration efforts included removal of off-site hardwoods using a tree cutter and herbicides. The next steps included the application of prescribed fire and planting of longleaf pines. Native groundcover seeds, collected from a donor site outside the park, were then spread across the restoration sites and achieved good results. The areas are now considered to be in fair to good condition, depending on the health and diversity of the groundcover components.

### Alluvial Forest

The alluvial forest occurs at lower elevations within bands and sloughs that parallel the Suwannee River. The alluvial forest in the park was undoubtedly impacted during early logging efforts in the Suwannee River floodplain, but most of it now appears to be in relatively good condition. Some natural erosion occurs during flood events, but erosion of a more severe nature is apparent near the various canoe camping sites along the riverbank.

### Basin Swamp

Basin swamps are scattered throughout the park within the mesic flatwoods. The two largest basin swamps occur in the northeast and northwest corners of the park. An interconnected system of basin swamps, surrounded by wet and mesic flatwoods, occupies the central portion of the Carter-Camp tract. Cypress and gum are the dominant trees in these swamps. Past logging activities impacted the swamps to some extent, either through the direct removal of trees or from the alteration of runoff and other hydrological influences. Loblolly pines have invaded some of the swamps since the last logging operations in the 1980s. The basin swamps are in fair to good condition.

### Baygall

The one baygall identified at the park occurs as an isolated area within a drainage way in the mesic flatwoods. Ditching along the drainage way of this baygall, located on the eastern side of the Carter-Camp tract, has affected the natural hydrology of wetlands in the area. The baygall itself is in good condition.



### Bottomland Forest

Bottomland forest at the park is typically oriented parallel to the Suwannee River, and it is heavily influenced by and the river's bigger flood events. This community floods less often than the adjacent alluvial forests but more often than the mesic flatwoods or upland hardwood forests that it grades into upslope. Based on the Florida Natural Areas Inventory's (FNAI) 2010 revision of natural community descriptions, much of the primary levee along the Suwannee River is now classified as bottomland forest. It supports a diverse overstory of hardwoods and pines. The Florida National Scenic Trail passes through much of the bottomland forest in the Carter-Camp tract.

Impacts to the bottomland forest include logging in the distant past and erosion from foot traffic and river flooding. Most of the bottomland forest is considered to be in good condition, however.

### Depression Marsh

A portion of a depression marsh lies within mesic flatwoods along the park boundary in the northeast corner of the park. The edge of this marsh was impacted during efforts to control a southern pine beetle infestation. Other depression marshes are scattered amidst the flatwoods in the Carter-Camp tract. Depression marshes are important as ephemeral wetlands for many amphibian and invertebrate species. The depression marshes in the park are in fair to good condition.

### Floodplain Swamp

The floodplain swamp occurs downslope of the alluvial forest, predominantly in backwaters and low areas behind the primary river levee. These areas are frequently flooded by the river and may funnel some of the extra river flow during high water events if connections to the river exist at more than one location. Floodplain swamp is usually flooded most of the year and is dominated by cypress and other species that can withstand long periods of high water.

As in the alluvial forest, logging of the floodplain swamp at the park probably occurred relatively early in history due to the proximity of the Suwannee River. Floodplain swamp is relatively resilient, and little additional management is necessary for it to recover from historical impacts. The floodplain swamps in the park are generally in good condition.

### Flatwoods Lake

A small flatwoods lake is located in the flatwoods south of the large basin swamp in the northeast part of the park. The lake is dominated by floating aquatic vegetation, including water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*). The flatwoods lake is considered to be in fair condition.

### Blackwater Stream

The Suwannee River is a typical blackwater stream. The river is renowned worldwide, having both scenic and historic significance. The park contains 3.7 miles of frontage along the river, however only 1 mile is totally within park boundaries. A small, intermittent blackwater stream flows out of a basin swamp in the western part of the Carter-Camp tract and drains into the Suwannee River. Another small, intermittent blackwater stream originates within the baygall in the eastern part of the Carter-Camp tract and eventually seeps into the groundwater before reaching the Suwannee River. Some ditching along this stream occurred in the past.

Unfortunately, mining effluent and other pollutants are released into tributaries of the Suwannee River near the park. Regulatory agencies must continue to monitor these inputs closely to ensure that the

quality of the water entering the Suwannee River remains acceptable. The blackwater streams within the park are considered to be in good condition.

#### Seepage Stream

The courses of two seepage streams pass through the park, following the bottoms of ravines that eventually intersect with the Suwannee River. The smaller of the seepage streams is located just west of the south entrance to the park. A concrete dam in this stream, apparently constructed to create an impoundment, obstructs flow upstream from the culvert that allows the stream to pass beneath the park drive. The larger seepage stream, which originates in the town of White Springs, flows through a deep ravine before passing underneath U.S. 41 near the Spring House en route to the Suwannee. Significant impacts to this system include inputs of stormwater runoff and treated sewage effluent, both of which originate outside the park boundary. In general, the seepage streams are in fair condition.

#### Spring-Run Stream

A very short spring-run stream is associated with the outflow from White Sulphur Springs. The spring run was altered by the construction of the Spring House, and it lacks nearly all the components of a natural spring run due to its small size and the high level of disturbance. Based on these factors, along with the lack of natural flow, the spring-run stream is in poor condition.

#### Aquatic Cave

An aquatic cave of undetermined size occurs in the park. The mouth of the cave serves as the vent for White Sulphur Springs. Limited information is available about the condition or extent of the cave system. The cave extends beyond 1,000 feet in length and initially runs to the south and west underneath the Suwannee River to a maximum explored depth of 147 feet (Butt and Morris 2012).

#### Developed

Developed areas within the park include various buildings, paved roads, parking lots, a picnic area, a camping area and additional landscaped areas. A complete list of all the developed areas may be found in the *Land Use Component*.

Priority invasive plant species (Florida Invasive Species Council (FISC) Category I and II species) will be removed from all developed areas. Other management measures will include the use of proper stormwater management techniques for developed areas and the designing of future development so that it is compatible with prescribed fire management in adjacent natural areas.

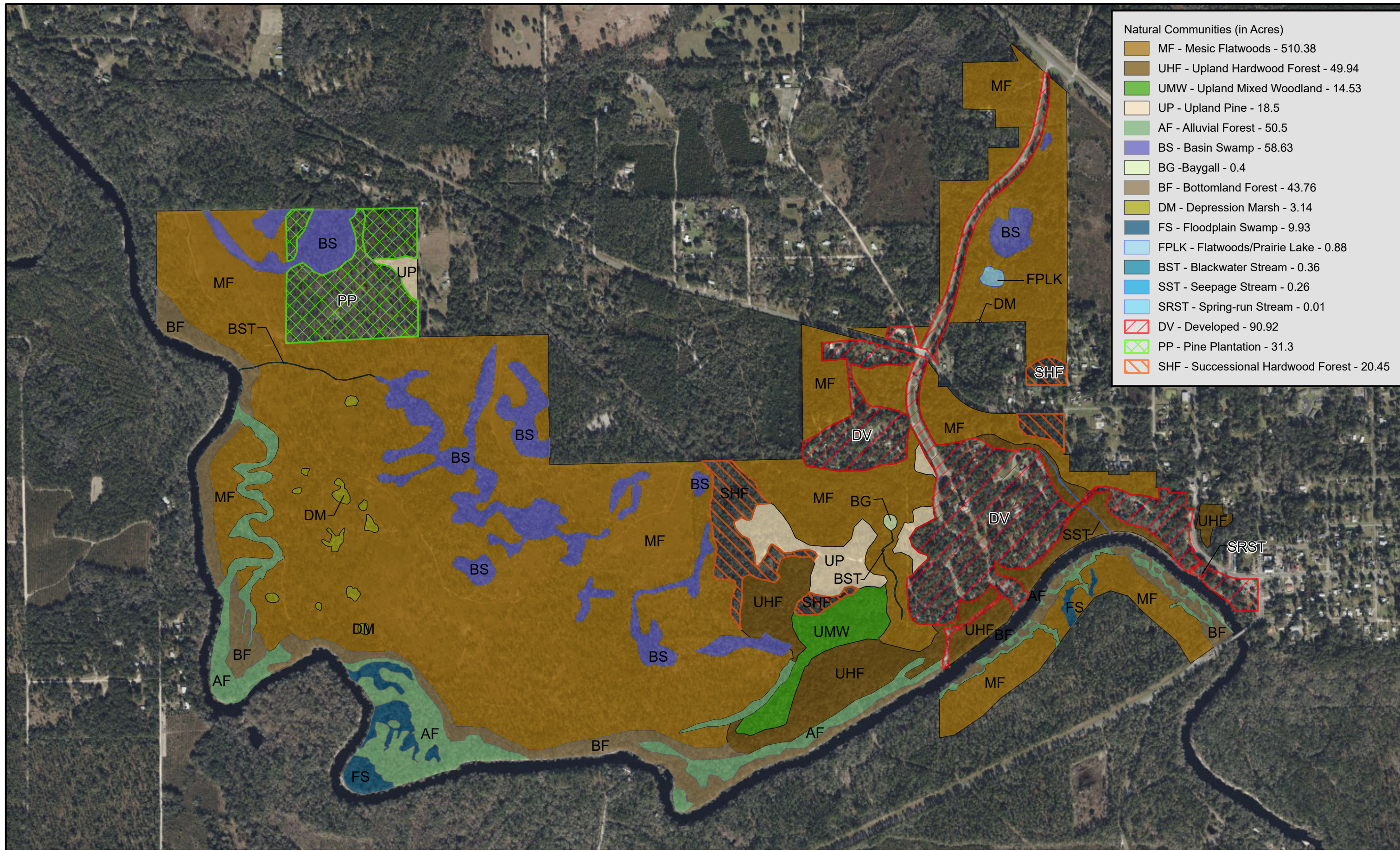
#### Pine Plantation

Management zone STF-7G contains a significant area of loblolly pine and slash pine plantation. This parcel contained a young pine plantation that was partially burned by an escaped prescribed fire in 1990. The burned area was subsequently replanted with slash pines. Most of the plantation was historically mesic flatwoods, while the northeast corner was likely upland pine. This zone was thinned by the SRWMD beginning in 2017 to reduce loblolly pine densities. The fire return interval for the pine plantation is two to 10 years.

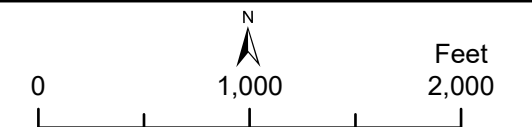
#### Road

All the paved roads within the park have been designated as roads. In most cases, unimproved service roads and firebreaks are not labeled as roads for the purposes of natural community mapping.





**STEPHEN FOSTER FOLK CULTURAL CENTER STATE PARK**  
 Natural Communities - Existing Conditions

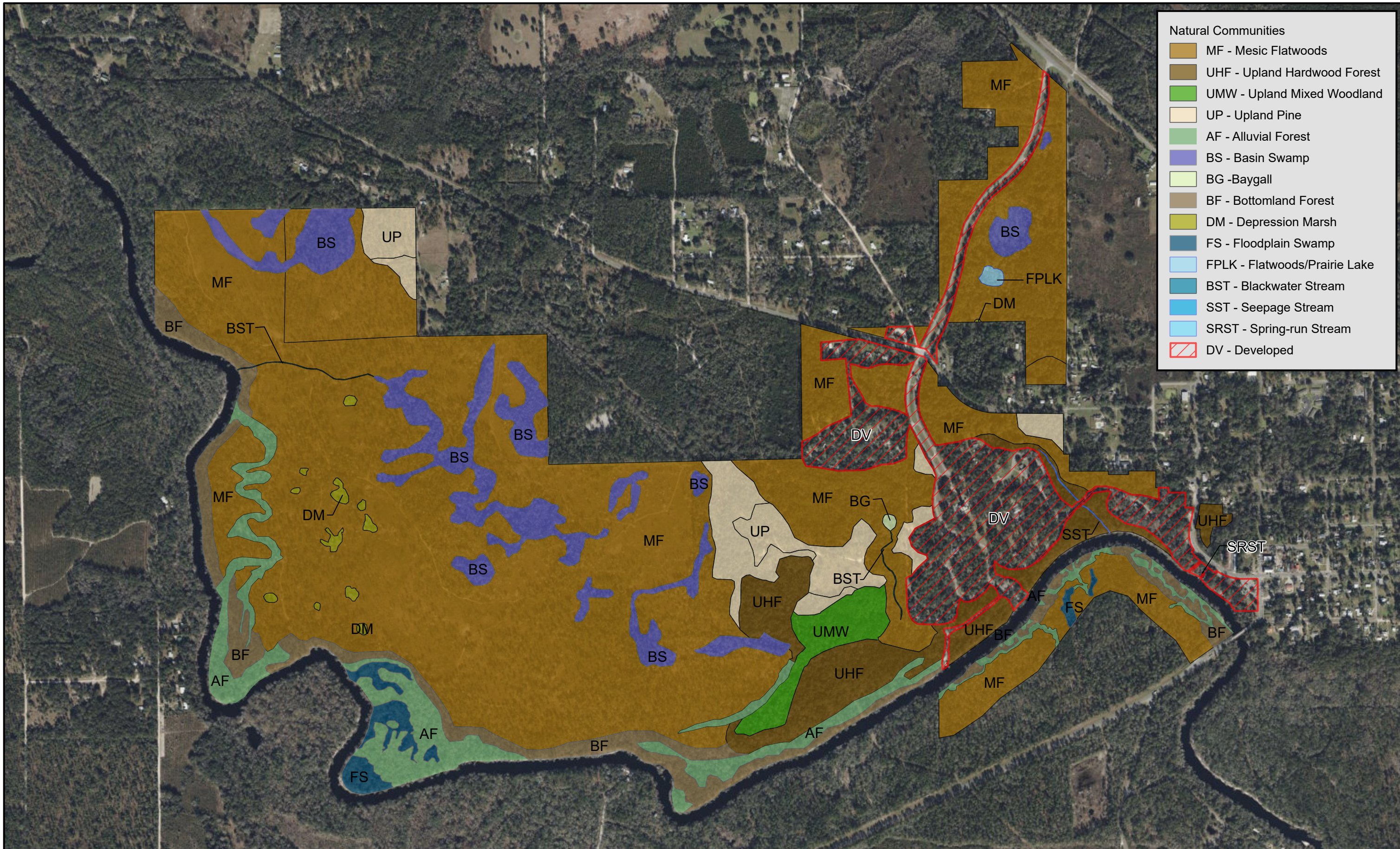


Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
 This graphical representation is provided for informational purposes and should not be considered authoritative for navigational, engineering, legal, and other uses.

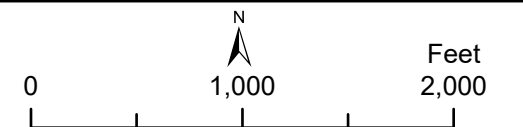








STEPHEN FOSTER FOLK CULTURAL CENTER STATE PARK  
 Natural Communities - Desired Future Conditions



Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
 This graphical representation is provided for informational purposes and should not be considered authoritative for navigational, engineering, legal, and other uses.





Successional Hardwood Forest

The abandoned horticultural area on the “nursery parcel” located along the eastern boundary of the park is considered successional hardwood forest but is likely to have once been mesic flatwoods. Another area of successional hardwood forest is located on the Carter-Camp tract adjacent to the upland pine restoration areas. These areas are likely to have been upland pine historically but were not roller-chopped or planted with longleaf pines in 1990. the optimal fire return Interval in these areas should be two to five years.

**Objective A:** Maintain 100 acres within the optimum fire return interval.

- Action 1 - Update annual prescribed fire plan.
- Action 2 - Conduct prescribed fire on 40-62 acres annually.

<b>Prescribed Fire Management</b>		
<b>Natural Community</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Optimal Fire Return Interval (Years)</b>
Mesic Flatwoods	117	2-3
Upland Pine	2.76	2-3
Depression Marsh	0.03	2-10
<b>Altered Landcover Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Optimal Fire Return Interval (Years)</b>
Successional Hardwood Forest	5.06	2-5
<b>Annual Target Acreage*</b>	40 – 62 Acres	

Fire-maintained and fire-dependent communities within Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park include mesic flatwoods, upland pine, upland mixed woodland, depression marsh, baygall and basin swamp. With the last renewal of the property lease, all prescribed fire and resource management activities on the SRWMD-owned lands leased to DRP on the Carter-Camp tract are the responsibility of the SRWMD. As such, the prescribed fire goals presented here reflect only the fire-type natural communities that are on Trustees’ lands leased to DRP. Portions of the mesic flatwoods, especially in areas outside the Carter-Camp tract, have been impacted by prolonged fire exclusion. Effects include extensive invasion by off-site hardwoods and increased fuel loading. Prescribed fire has become more difficult and potentially more hazardous. In other areas, harvest of the pine canopy during efforts to control southern pine beetle infestations has removed the major fuel source from the site. The flatwoods in the Carter-Camp tract were clearcut just before the purchase by the SRWMD. Seven zones in the tract were roller-chopped and then treated with prescribed fire in 1990 before being planted with longleaf pines. A series of floods and droughts, coupled with southern pine beetle outbreaks, reduced the windows of opportunity for conducting effective prescribed fires in the 1990s. Prescribed fires in more recent years have made significant progress in decreasing the coverage of volunteer loblolly pines, thereby reducing their competition with the restocked longleaf pines.

DRP staff revise the prescribed fire plan of the park annually and determine priorities based on a variety of parameters. The annual targeted fire acreage for the park is approximately 40 to 62 acres. Several areas within the park, including the southern pine beetle control areas, will require additional effort if restoration goals are to be met. Some of the clearcut sites will need repeated fire and subsequent

replanting with appropriate pine and groundcover species to prevent a recurrence of the loblolly pine invasions that made the sites so vulnerable to southern pine beetle infestations in the recent past.

Many species of wildlife and plants are adapted to natural communities that periodically burn. At Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park, these areas include the upland pine and mesic flatwoods natural communities. Maintenance of the gopher tortoise population in the park requires regular prescribed fire to manage the preferred habitat of abundant herbaceous groundcover under an open canopy forest. Certain amphibian species also depend on fire. One of these, the imperiled flatwoods salamander (*Ambystoma cingulatum*), may exist within the park. A priority for the park will be to use prescribed fire to maintain the natural ecotone around potential breeding wetlands in the mesic flatwoods. To avoid possible impacts to adult salamanders, the park should not roller-chop or disk near basin swamps and depression marshes in the mesic flatwoods. The park will also use prescribed fire to maintain depression marshes near gopher tortoise burrows since they may serve as breeding sites for the gopher frog.

### **IMPERILED SPECIES**

A small population of hooded pitcher plants (*Sarracenia minor*) was reported to have occurred on the Carter-Camp tract in the 1980s (Johnson 2001). Although these have not been observed recently, they may still occur in the flatwoods surrounding the scattered basin swamps and depression marshes. Previous field surveys (Johnson 2001) occurred during very dry conditions and failed to locate any of the plants. Later surveys have also failed to locate hooded pitcher plants. Future surveys will be conducted under wetter conditions and will concentrate on the margins of wetlands in the mesic flatwoods.

The yellow anisetree (*Illicium parviflorum*) has been planted as an ornamental in the developed areas of the park, although this is well outside its natural range. No special management is necessary for these introduced plants. The southern lady-fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) has been recorded in the park, but its current population status is unknown.

Gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) inhabit the drier areas of the mesic flatwoods and the upland pine areas of the park. As restoration of the upland pine community continues, the gopher tortoise population should expand. Gopher tortoises may at times also occur within developed areas of the park. Staff will continue to refer to the FWC Gopher Tortoise Management Plan (FWC 2012) to guide management of this imperiled species. Gopher frogs (*Lithobates capito*) may be found in association with the gopher tortoise burrows but require ephemeral ponds for breeding. Suwannee alligator snapping turtles (*Macrochelys suwanniensis*) and Gulf sturgeons (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) occur in the adjacent Suwannee River.

The gopher tortoise and Suwannee alligator snapping turtle were historically harvested for meat in the region. All are currently protected from harvest, and possession is prohibited without a permit from FWC. The harvest of all wildlife, with the exception of fish, is prohibited along the length of the Suwannee River where the river passes through, or along the boundary of, Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park. The area under jurisdiction of the park includes a 400-foot zone from the edge of mean high water along sovereign submerged lands of the Suwannee River. Where emergent wetland vegetation exists, the zone extends water-ward 400 feet beyond the vegetation.

An unverified record for the frosted flatwoods salamander (*Ambystoma cingulatum*) exists for the park. While there is proper habitat for this species in the Carter-Camp tract, logging operations prior to

SRWMD acquisition of the property may have negatively impacted the adult population in the mesic flatwoods. Previous roller-chopping activities may have affected the population as well.

The timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*), while not considered an imperiled species, is near the southern limit of its natural range at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park. This species has been observed on many occasions within the park.

FNAI records state that two species of dragonfly, the umber shadowfly (*Neurocordulia obsoleta*) and the smoky shadowfly (*Neurocordulia molestata*), were documented in the general area of the park between 1978 and 1982. DEP staff collected them as larvae, according to data from the Statewide Biological Database, obtained by FNAI. The collection site was presumably in the Suwannee River upstream from the park.

DRP will conduct surveys for imperiled animal species such as the frosted flatwoods salamander and gopher frog under non-drought conditions to try to locate larvae in potential breeding ponds. Surveys of avian species are conducted annually as part of the Hamilton County Audubon Christmas Bird Count. The park is included within the limits of the count circle. No other species-specific management programs for imperiled species in the park exist at this time other than routine documentation of observations of imperiled species. However, prescribed fire in fire-adapted communities in the park will be beneficial to a number of imperiled species, including the hooded pitcher plant, gopher frog, frosted flatwoods salamander, gopher tortoise, indigo snake and Florida pine snake.

Table 3 contains a list of all known imperiled species within the park and identifies their status as defined by various entities. It also identifies the types of management actions that are currently being taken by DRP staff or others and identifies the current level of monitoring effort. The codes used under the column headings for management actions and monitoring level are defined following the table. Explanations for federal and state status as well as FNAI global and state rank are provided in the appendix.

Imperiled Species Inventory						
Common and Scientific Name	Imperiled Species Status				Management Actions	Monitoring Level
	FWC	USFWS	FDACS	FNAI		
<b>PLANTS</b>						
Southern Lady-fern <i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>			LT		4,9	Tier 1
Yellow Anisetree <i>Illicium parviflorum*</i>			LE	G2,S2		
Hooded Pitcherplant <i>Sarracenia minor</i>			LT		1,4,6,7,10	Tier 2
<b>INVERTEBRATES</b>						
Smoky Shadowfly <i>Neurocordulia molesta</i>				G4,S2S3	4,9	Tier 1
Umber Shadowfly <i>Neurocordulia obsoleta</i>				G5,S2	4,9	Tier 1
<b>FISH</b>						
Gulf Sturgeon <i>Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi</i>	FT	T		G3T2T3,S2?	4,9	Tier 1
<b>AMPHIBIANS</b>						
Frosted Flatwoods Salamander <i>Ambystoma cingulatum</i>	FE	E		G2,S1	1,4,6,7,9	Tier 2
Gopher Frog <i>Lithobates capito</i>		UR		G2G3,S3	1,4,6,7,9	Tier 2
<b>REPTILES</b>						
American Alligator <i>Alligator mississippiensis</i>	FT(S/A)	T(S/A)		G5,S4	4,10	Tier 1
Eastern Indigo Snake <i>Drymarchon couperi</i>	FT	T		G3,S2?	1,6,7	Tier 1
Gopher Tortoise <i>Gopherus polyphemus</i>	ST			G3,S3	1,6,7,10,12	Tier 1
Suwannee Alligator Snapping Turtle <i>Macrochelys suwanniensis</i>	ST	PT		G2,S2	4,9	Tier 1
Florida Pine Snake <i>Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus</i>	ST	UR		G4,S3	1,6,7,12	Tier 1
<b>BIRDS</b>						



Little Blue Heron <i>Egretta caerulea</i>	ST			G5,S4	4	Tier 2
Tricolored Heron <i>Egretta tricolor</i>	ST			G5,S4	4	Tier 2
Swallow-tailed Kite <i>Elanoides forficatus</i>				G5,S2	1,6,7	Tier 1
Wood Stork <i>Mycteria americana</i>	FT	T		G4,S2	4	Tier 2

\* Introduced species out of natural range

**Management Actions:**

1. Prescribed Fire
2. Invasive Plant Removal
3. Population Translocation/Augmentation/Restocking
4. Hydrological Maintenance/Restoration
5. Nest Boxes/Artificial Cavities
6. Hardwood Removal
7. Mechanical Treatment
8. Predator Control
9. Erosion Control
10. Protection from visitor impacts (establish buffers)/law enforcement
11. Decoys (shorebirds)
12. Vegetation planting
13. Outreach and Education
14. Other

**Monitoring Level:**

Tier 1.

Non-Targeted Observation/Documentation: includes documentation of species presence through casual/passive observation during routine park activities (i.e. not conducting species-specific searches). Documentation may be in the form of Wildlife Observation Forms, or other district specific methods used to communicate observations.

Tier 2.

Targeted Presence/Absence: includes monitoring methods/activities that are specifically intended to document presence/absence of a particular species or suite of species.

Tier 3.

Population Estimate/Index: an approximation of the true population size or population index based on a widely accepted method of sampling.

Tier 4.

Population Census: A complete count of an entire population with demographic analysis, including mortality, reproduction, emigration, and immigration.

Tier 5.

Other: may include habitat assessments for a particular species or suite of species or any other specific methods used as indicators to gather information about a particular species

**Objective A:** Update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists for plants and animals.

Additional surveys for imperiled plant and animal species are needed for Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park to ensure that all imperiled species are documented. DRP will enlist the assistance of academic researchers and staff from other agencies during development of species occurrence inventory lists, especially where necessary for certain taxonomic groups.

**Objective B:** Continue existing monitoring protocols for three imperiled species (gopher frog, flatwoods salamander and hooded pitcher plant).

- Action 1 - Continue to implement existing monitoring protocols.
- Action 2 - Periodically review existing protocols.

DRP will attempt to confirm the population status of gopher frogs and frosted flatwoods salamanders within the park. Surveying ephemeral ponds used as breeding sites is one of the more effective ways to locate populations of these cryptic amphibians. Survey methods will use standard FWC survey techniques for amphibian larvae that were developed for frosted flatwoods salamanders and other pond breeding species. If necessary, assistance from FWC will be requested.

Staff will conduct additional surveys for hooded pitcher plants during non-drought conditions. The timing of the surveys will coincide with the spring flowering season to aid in the detection of the pitcher plants. Surveys should be conducted in the spring following growing season fires along the ecotones between the mesic flatwoods and basin swamps or depression marshes.

### **INVASIVE SPECIES**

DRP staff routinely survey the entire park for invasive plants. Most of the known invasive plants at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park occur within the grounds of the original park, especially in areas that adjoin the town of White Springs. A former nursery area in the park has a multi-species invasive infestation. Silverthorn (*Elaeagnus pungens*) is a species of concern in this area. Because of the succulent fruit that it produces, there is a potential for wildlife to carry it into the more natural areas of the park. Invasive plants also travel down the Suwannee River, and occasionally both Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*) and Chinese tallowtree (*Sapium sebiferum*) have appeared on the banks of the river within the park. Chinese wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*), camphor tree (*Cinnamomum camphora*) and privet species are found on the sloping banks of the river behind the former tourism center. The ornamental azalea gardens behind the museum contain coral ardisia (*Ardisia crenata*). The Carter-Camp area of the park is mostly free of invasives, but the park should monitor that area to maintain it free of invasive plants.

The park has been treating invasive plants since at least 2001. In 2008, the park began a retreatment program to control ardisia in the azalea garden adjacent to the museum. Zone SF-3 also contains an invasive species of bamboo, possibly arrow bamboo (*Pseudosasa japonica*). The park received FWC funding to remove the bamboo. Regular follow-up retreatment in this area is very important. Follow-up and retreatment of the invasive plants will need to occur on an annual basis for many years. In the future, any invasives that are likely to invade natural areas of the park should be identified and prioritized for control.

<b>Invasive Plant Species Inventory</b>			
<b>Species Name</b> <i>Scientific Name</i> - Common Name	<b>FLEPPC</b> <b>Category</b>	<b>Distribution</b>	<b>Zone ID</b>
<i>Albizia julibrissin</i> - Mimosa	I	Single Plant or Clump, Scattered Plants or Clumps	STF-2F, STF-3
<i>Ardisia crenata</i> - Coral ardisia	I	Scattered Plants or Clumps, Scattered Dense Patches	STF-2C, STF-2F, STF-3
<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i> - Camphor-tree	I	Single Plant or Clump, Scattered Plants or Clumps	STF-2B, STF-2C, STF- 2F, STF-2A, STF-2D, STF-3

Invasive Plant Species Inventory			
Species Name <i>Scientific Name</i> - Common Name	FLEPPC Category	Distribution	Zone ID
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i> - Water-hyacinth	I	Dense Monoculture	STF-5
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i> - Glossy privet	I	Single Plant or Clump	STF-2F
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i> - Chinese privet	I	Single Plant or Clump	STF-2F
<i>Lonicera japonica</i> - Japanese honeysuckle	I	Scattered Plants or Clumps	STF-2F
<i>Lygodium japonicum</i> - Japanese climbing fern	I	Single Plant or Clump, Scattered Plants or Clumps	STF-2F, STF-4A, STF-7G, STF-2D, STF-3
<i>Melia azedarach</i> - Chinaberry	II	Scattered Plants or Clumps	STF-7G
<i>Pueraria montana</i> - Kudzu	I	Single Plant or Clump	STF-2F
<i>Sapium sebiferum</i> - Chinese tallow tree	I	Single Plant or Clump	STF-3
<i>Sesbania punicea</i> - Purple sesban	II	Scattered Plants or Clumps	STF-4A
<i>Wisteria sinensis</i> - Chinese wisteria	II	Single Plant or Clump, Scattered Plants or Clumps	STF-2F, STF-2D

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park is fortunate because it has relatively few problems with invasive or nuisance animals. Invasive species present include the nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), feral hog (*Sus scrofa*) and an occasional feral cat or dog. Island applesnails (*Pomacea insularum*) were discovered in the Suwannee River near the Spring House in 2010. Staff should remove egg clusters when they are found along the shoreline. Historically, feral hogs have not been much of a problem in the park. However, staff will continue to monitor the park for signs of feral hogs, and, if conditions warrant, will use traps again in efforts to eradicate them.

In 2002, the red bay ambrosia beetle (*Xyloborus glabratus*) was first detected in the United States in southeast Georgia. The beetle carries the fungal pathogen *Raffaelea lauricola* which it transmits to red bay trees (*Persea borbonia*) and other species in the Lauraceae family, causing laurel wilt disease and death. The beetle and its associated pathogen spread rapidly, and by 2005 it had appeared in Duval County. By 2011, the disease was discovered in Hamilton County. Since that time, many of the adult red bays in the park have died. The beetle (and laurel wilt) has now spread throughout most of Florida and into many of the neighboring states. Although most of the adult red bays at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park have been top-killed, the trees continue to re-sprout from their roots. It may be that members of the Lauraceae family will continue to survive in shrub form as the remnant tree root systems continue to re-sprout. At this point, much remains unknown about the long-term impacts of this disease on red bays and other Lauraceae. The park should continue to restrict the movement of firewood into and out of the park and educate visitors about the issue.

**Objective A:** Annually treat 5 gross acres equaling approximately 2.5 infested acres of invasive plant species in the park.

- Action 1 - Annually develop invasive plant management work plan.

- Action 2 - Implement annual work plan by treating 2.5 infested acres in the park annually.
- Action 3 - Continue maintenance and follow-up treatments as needed.

As a condition of the renewed lease from the SRWMD signed in 2019, the SRWMD is responsible for all invasive plant treatments on the Carter-Camp tract. Chinese tallow tree and Japanese climbing fern are likely invaders of this area.

Staff should attempt to eradicate silverthorn from infested areas. While this species is listed as a Category II plant by FISC, it has recently appeared in other parts of north Florida as isolated individuals. This is indicative of animal dispersion. The park has achieved significant control of ardisia, and treatment of this species should continue on an annual basis.

**Objective B:** Implement control measures on three nuisance and invasive animal species in the park.

- Action 1 - Remove feral cats and dogs when encountered.
- Action 2 - Continue to trap feral hogs and monitor for hog damage.

Currently, the park has few feral hogs. If hog damage increases, the park will augment control measures.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **Pre-historic and Historic Archaeological Sites**

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park has seven archaeological sites. Four sites (HA00171, HA00172, HA00182 and HA00428) contain historic and prehistoric material and one (HA00432) contains historic material. The historic components are from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries during the developmental period of the town. Site HA00171 is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century artifact scatter and Archaic (8500-1000 B.C.) quarry. The multi-component site, HA00182, is a campsite and homestead. It contains deposits from the Archaic period and from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was investigated in association with the development of the modern campground at the park (Dickinson and Wayne 1999). HA00428 and HA00432 were recorded during the completion of the predictive model for the park (Collins et al 2012). HA00428 contains 20<sup>th</sup>-century and prehistoric late archaic artifacts, and HA00432 is the site of the remains of an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century wooden bridge. The portion of HA00432 which extends onto park property contains an earthen area and remnants of the structural timber associated with the bridge. Two other sites (HA00346 and HA00370) are exclusively prehistoric. Both prehistoric sites are primarily lithic and/or ceramic scatter sites about which very little is known. All known archaeological sites have been submitted to the Florida Master Site File (FMSF).

The Rock Island Shoals (CO00022) site is currently not mapped as being within park boundaries but is in the bed of the Suwannee River directly adjacent to the park. While this site falls outside the jurisdiction of park management, it is important to note that the site may have a land component on park property that has not yet been identified.

All archaeological sites in the park are in good condition. None of the sites show evidence of looting. The primary threat currently is the potential for disturbance during any additional planned development in the park.

The unnamed site recorded in the FMSF as 8HA00171 is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century artifact scatter and Archaic (8500-1000 B.C.) quarry and a ceramic and lithic artifact scatter that was deemed ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by the recorder and was not evaluated by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). A notice in the Stith/Barnett Drugstore (8HA00172) site file comments, "According to James Pochurek, an isolated human tooth associated with historic debris (without evidence of it being of Native American origin) was found and reburied at this site." The prehistoric artifact scatter and historic building remains, and the dumpsite's unmarked human remains will be respected, although the recorder determined the site ineligible for the NRHP, and the site was not evaluated by the SHPO. Despite evidence of occupation by people during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and during the American, prehistoric ceramic, and preceramic Archaic periods, Stephen Foster Campground's homestead and artifact scatter (8HA00182) was deemed ineligible for the NRHP by the recorder, and the SHPO cited insufficient information to determine the site's eligibility for listing. Both the recorder and SHPO found the Cane Crusher site's lithic and ceramic artifact scatter ineligible for the NRHP. Neither the recorder nor the SHPO evaluated the park amphitheater project (8HA00370) for listing on the NRHP.

No National Register-listed or eligible resources warranting higher profile monitoring or measures to stabilize and mitigate deterioration and disturbance have been recorded within the park. DRP staff will locate, visit and regularly monitor all recorded sites and take necessary steps to conserve their integrity. Evidence of previously unrecorded sites will be documented, and newly discovered sites will be recorded to Division of Historical Resources (DHR)/FMSF standards. Boundaries of sites will be redefined as appropriate.

Currently, all the archaeological sites are in desired future condition. To maintain these sites in this condition, the park will continue to monitor them on at least an annual basis. This will allow the park to identify threats before they become serious issues.

### **Historic Structures**

The park contains 19 known historic structures and resource groups that are recorded in the FMSF. The town of White Springs was established prior to the Civil War. From the mid-1800s to the 1920s, the town was a popular resort and health spa because of the presence of White Sulphur Springs on the north bank of the Suwannee River. The Spring House, built around the spring circa 1901, served as the focal point for the resort and surrounding town. While there were numerous resort hotels within White Springs during the resort spa period, the sole remaining historic hotel from that era is the Telford Hotel. Many historic structures from that era remain in the town, including some that are located within the park.

In 1938, 5 acres of private property and 100 acres owned by the town of White Springs were donated for the creation of a memorial to Stephen Foster, composer of the famous song "Old Folks at Home." This was an attempt to revitalize the depressed tourism industry. The state of Florida opened the Stephen Foster Memorial to the public in 1950. The Florida Park Service assumed management of the Memorial in 1979.

Two National Register nominations have been prepared that indicate the entwined history of the park and the town of White Springs. The first resource group nomination encompasses the historic structures in the park that relate to the memorial (HA0005). The original nomination was never completed. The second is the White Springs Historic District (HA00316), which is on the National Register of Historic



Places and represents structures in the park and in the town. In addition, individual historic structures that fall within the park boundary are recorded with the FMSF.

Within the original boundary of the Stephen Foster Memorial are the following historic structures: the south park entrance (8HA00287), museum building (8HA00288), carillon tower (8HA00289), marble stage (HA00422), Nelly Bly's Restaurant (HA00420), shop building (HA00423) and toilet building (HA00421), which were built in the 1950s. The current park boundary also includes historic structures from the era when the town was a health resort. The Delegal Service Station (HA00244), constructed in 1912, was the first building in town built to accommodate what was then a relatively new aspect of travel, the motor vehicle. The Spring House (HA007) consists of the remaining concrete coquina walls of the original resort spring house. Originally, the structure also contained wooden bathing facilities and a cupola. These features deteriorated beyond repair after the resort era waned.

In the period from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s, a nursery was constructed in an area that is now within the park. Two wood frame nursery buildings and a pump house are still present (HA00424, HA00425 and HA00426), all of which have been recorded with the FMSF.

Five historic structures in the park either were removed with DHR permission or consist of little to no building remains (HA00192 Suwannee River Motel, HA00243 Edgewood Hotel site, HA00286 Colonial Hotel site, HA00415 log cabin and scenic overlook (HA00427). The scenic overlook, a marble bench with marble pavers perched above the Suwannee River, was constructed in the 1950s. It was undermined by erosion and destabilized to the extent that it was a safety hazard. It was removed as part of a larger project to stabilize the slopes above the Suwannee River along the park drive in 2014. All known structures have been submitted to the FMSF.

The White Springs Historic District (HA00316) covers the entire town of White Springs. Its overall condition will not be evaluated since the park buildings make up just a fraction of the entire district. The portion of the White Springs Historic District that is within the park is in good to fair condition.

All historic structures, unless specifically mentioned, are in good condition. The carillon tower (HA00289) is in fair condition due to roof leaks. An engineering assessment of the tower was done in 2011. This could serve as an important component of a Historic Structures Report. Repairs were done to address roof leaks and to re-point the masonry joints of the exterior brickwork. The carillon tower contains the world's largest carillon bell system built by the renowned J.C. Deagan, Inc. This system is original to the tower and all of its original electrical components are still intact. The bell system requires considerable maintenance on a weekly basis, as electrical parts are now rare. The park rebuilds electrical components and rewinds and tests bells and strikers weekly to maintain their good condition.

The museum (HA00288), while in good condition, will soon need to be repainted. The Spring House (HA007), which was reroofed in 2011, is in good condition. However, it needs a structural analysis, particularly with regard to the roof supports. The interior of the Nelly Bly Restaurant (HA00420) was recently remodeled, and the building is in good condition overall. The marble stage (HA00422) and the toilet building (HA00421) are both in good condition.

There are no plans to demolish any of the historic structures at this time. However, the poor condition of nursery buildings 1 and 2 and of the nursery pumphouse (HA00424, HA00425 and HA00426) indicates that DRP should document them before they deteriorate further and then consider their removal.

Four historic structures within the park are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as contributing structures to the White Springs Historic District (8HA00316) under National Register Criteria A (Event) and C (Design/ Construction). They are the Delegal Service Station (8HA00244), the south park entrance (8HA00287), the museum building (8HA00288) and the carillon tower (8HA00289). All of these buildings represent the growth of the resort and tourism trade in White Springs from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Delegal Service Station (8HA00244), located near the park's south entrance, was built in 1912 and is significant as one of the earliest buildings constructed in White Springs to accommodate motorists. The south park entrance (8HA00287), the museum building (8HA00288) and the carillon tower (8HA00289), all of which are located within the original boundary of the Stephen Foster Memorial, are significant examples of later tourism development in White Springs. They are also notable for the high quality of their unified architectural design. The carillon tower (8HA00289) is considered individually eligible for the National Register, as it has the unique distinction of housing the largest and last tubular bell carillon built by J.C. Deagan, Inc., a noted builder of tubular bell carillons from 1916-1958.

The Suwannee River Motel (8HA00192) was also listed as a contributing building to the White Springs Historic District (8HA00316) but was demolished in 1999 to build the Nature and Heritage Tourism Center. Two sites, the Edgewood Hotel site (8HA00243) and the Colonial Hotel site (8HA00286), which were recorded on FMSF Historic Structure forms as part of the White Springs Survey in 1990, were believed by the recorder to contribute to the historic district. However, these two hotel sites were removed from the White Springs Historic District (8HA00316) National Register nomination as they contained little to no building remains. Since the Edgewood Hotel site (8HA00243) and the Colonial Hotel site (8HA00286) were recorded as part of a historic structures survey and were not actually evaluated by a registered professional archaeologist, they should be considered as not evaluated for the purposes of this plan.

A National Register nomination was prepared for the Stephen Foster Memorial (8HA00005) in 1970 but never submitted for evaluation. The DRP Bureau of Natural and Cultural Resources (BNCR) is currently in the process of updating the FMSF for the Stephen Foster Memorial (8HA00005) to delineate the district's boundaries better, establish a period of significance and define the context and criteria for National Register significance.

Three historic structures associated with the Stephen Foster Memorial were constructed in the mid-1950s and thus were less than 50 years old in 1990 when the White Springs Historic District (8HA316) nomination was prepared. They therefore were considered non-contributing structures to the district. The toilet building (8HA00421) and the Nelly Bly Restaurant (8HA00420), both constructed in 1956, were included in a 1950 plan for the park and were built to reflect the architecture of the nearby museum building (8HA00288). The marble stage (8HA00422), constructed in 1953, was the first planned outdoor performance area in the park and the site of the earliest Florida Folk Festival events. As a group, these structures should now be considered potentially eligible for the National Register as contributing structures to the Stephen Foster Memorial (8HA00005), along with the south park entrance (8HA00287), the museum building (8HA00288) and the carillon tower (8HA00289).

the log cabin (8HA00415), an 1870s structure that was moved to the park in 1978, was recorded in the FMSF in 2009 but subsequently removed with approval from DHR. Because the building had been moved from its original location and was in ruinous condition, the recorder considered the building ineligible for the National Register. Four additional structures, garage/storage (8HA00423), nursery

building 1 (8HA00424), nursery building 2 (8HA00425) and nursery pumphouse (HA00426) are in the process of being recorded and evaluated by BNCR staff for potential significance.

The park manager has implemented a routine preventative and corrective maintenance program for all the buildings in the park. This includes a monthly building inspection checklist for each building's maintenance needs. The buildings are in everyday use by staff or the public, so rigorous preventative maintenance is very important. In that respect, the park has been maintaining the buildings in their existing conditions or better.

From 2006 to 2016, the park completed corrective maintenance on multiple historic buildings. The old shop (HA00423) has been cleaned, received a new roof and was repainted. The roof of the Nelly Bly Restaurant (HA00420) was replaced and the interior was remodeled. The bathrooms in Nelly Bly, the museum building (HA00288) and the carillon tower (HA00289) were remodeled to be ADA compliant. Replacement of the spring house (HA007) roof was completed in 2011. A conservation assessment of the carillon tower (HA00289) was done in 2011 to enable and guide restoration of the tower to its original condition. Roof leaks were repaired and the brick masonry joints were also re-pointed.

Current historic structure needs include the repainting of the museum building (HA00288) and the completion of repairs in the carillon tower (HA00289). Nursery buildings 1 and 2 (HA00424 and HA00425) and the nursery pumphouse (HA00426) should be documented and removed.

### **Collections**

Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Center State Park has a large and diverse collection relating to Stephen Foster memorabilia, items from the resort tourism era centered on White Sulphur Springs, archives from events at the park including the Florida Folk Festival, and archives detailing park operations.

Objects in the collection include large mechanical dioramas depicting songs written by Stephen Foster, original watercolors of each of the dioramas, paintings by Howard Chandler Christy, Stephen Foster's desk, sheet music and other Foster memorabilia, antique pianos, a wheelchair original to the Spring House, items retrieved from the river near the Spring House, minstrel items, postcards from the resort era, photographs, films and posters, documents from the creation of the Stephen Foster Memorial to the present, and documents detailing park operations. The objects are representative of the period ranging from the late 1800s to the present.

The formal collections of the park are housed in the museum building and the main area of the Carillon Tower. Dioramas depicting Stephen Foster's songs are displayed in both areas. Four of the dioramas are in storage. Stephen Foster's sheet music and other paper memorabilia are also displayed in both locations. The pianos are in the museum.

In addition, there are two archive rooms, one in the administration building, approximately 900 square feet, and one in the carillon tower, approximately 500 square feet. While these areas are climate controlled to varying degrees, the reliability and effectiveness of the climate control system probably needs closer monitoring. At least a few collection items are stored informally in the museum attic.

Items in the collection are from various sources. The Stephen Foster Citizen Support Organization purchased the wheelchair original to the Spring House. Pianos have been donated to the museum. The

dioramas were constructed specifically for the original memorial. The park documents have been archived by park staff. Any items that are on loan to the collection need to be identified as such.

The collection has accumulated over many years. It is now quite large and includes detailed documents about the park's daily operations. The park has developed a schedule to sort, catalog and clean the archives and collection. The collection information is currently maintained using the PastPerfect museum collection software.

The condition of the collection items varies widely from poor to good. Some stored objects need to have their conditions evaluated. The displayed dioramas are in good condition. Four dioramas are not displayed. Two of these are in good condition, one is in poor condition and the condition of the fourth is unknown. The original watercolors depicting the dioramas are in good condition. The condition of the two Howard Chandler Christy paintings is good. The pianos, while old, are in good condition for their age and have recently been assessed, cleaned and tuned. The photographs and paper memorabilia range from good to poor condition. Some of the paper memorabilia has sustained water damage. The collection of minstrel items is in poor condition.

The two archive storage areas are climate controlled, but their temperature and relative humidity may vary too widely at this time. The carillon tower is not as cool as the archive room in the administration building. There may be a ductwork problem. A dehumidifier might help with the moisture. Photographs and paper memorabilia are not currently stored in acid-free archival material. This threatens their long-term preservation. Leaks in the carillon tower threaten some of the archived collection, and some water damage has already occurred. The displays do have UV light filtering film to protect them, but the film is about 15 years old and may no longer be very functional.

While the paintings and the dioramas are in good condition, a professional conservator should examine them. This would identify any needed repairs to keep them in good condition.

The two stored dioramas that are in good condition need to be cleaned and displayed in their original intended locations, which are the south park entrance ranger station and the carillon tower. They are currently stored in the new and old shops. A fourth diorama, condition unknown, is in the attic of the museum.

The significance of the current collection varies greatly. Items that are original to the Spring House, the Stephen Foster Memorial and the state park are the most significant. The dioramas of Stephen Foster's songs and the original watercolors, his desk, the Howard Chandler Christy paintings, the wheelchair original to the Spring House, and original photographs and posters all fall into the significant category. The pianos probably vary in their significance and should be assessed. Copies of original photographs and much of the paper memorabilia relating to daily park operations probably are not significant.

The park is in the process of developing a statement of collections, which will help determine the significance of specific items. It is also reviewing its current collection and determining what items should be part of the park collection. After the archives and collection have been assessed, the collections administrator should work with BNCR to develop a decision plan for objects not pertinent to the park or its interpretive mission.



In July 2011, the park implemented a new schedule to sort, catalog and clean the archives and collection. This supplemented their existing collection management measures and aided the transfer of the collection information and inventory scheduling to the PastPerfect collection software.

The park has a great deal of experience maintaining the collection, including repairing the intricate mechanisms of the dioramas. This knowledge should be compiled into a written housekeeping manual to provide future guidance. Guidelines on long-term periodic maintenance are also needed. The park also needs an updated disaster plan to protect key items in the collection in the event of hurricanes, fires or other catastrophes. It is important to develop a needs list for regular and periodic maintenance.

The ideal temperature and humidity for climate-controlled collections is 70 degrees F and a relative humidity of 50%. The climate-controlled area ideally should fluctuate no more than about 5% from this target. The temperature and relative humidity should be checked daily in the archive rooms, the museum and the carillon tower display area.

The dioramas, watercolors, Christy paintings and pianos need to be professionally evaluated for both management needs and insurance purposes.

<b>Cultural Sites Listed in the Florida Master Site File</b>					
<b>Site Name and FMSF #</b>	<b>Culture/Period</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Treatment</b>
HA005 Stephen Foster Memorial Park	Historic, mid-20 <sup>th</sup> Century	Resource Group	NR	G	RH
HA007 Spring House	Historic, 1901-1904, 1973	Historic Structure	NR	G	P
HA00171 NN	19 <sup>th</sup> Century and Archaic	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
HA00172 Stith/Barnett Drugstore	19 <sup>th</sup> & 20 <sup>th</sup> Century & Prehistoric Middle Archaic	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
HA00182 Stephen Foster Campground	Historic and Prehistoric	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
HA00192 Suwannee River Motel	Historic circa 1943	Historic Structure Demolished 1999	NE	P	NA
HA00243 Edgewood Hotel Site	Historic circa 1910	Historic Structure Only remnants remain	NE	P	NA
HA00244 Delegal Service Station	Historic circa 1912	Historic Structure	NRL	G	RH

Cultural Sites Listed in the Florida Master Site File					
Site Name and FMSF #	Culture/Period	Description	Significance	Condition	Treatment
HA00286 Colonial Hotel Site	Historic circa 1912	Historic Structure Only remnants remain	NE	P	NA
HA00287 South Park Entrance	Historic circa 1948	Historic Structure	NRL	G	RH
HA00288 Museum Building	Historic 1950	Historic Structure	NRL	G	RH
HA00289 Carillon Tower	Historic 1957	Historic Structure	NRL	F	RH
HA00316 White Springs Historic District	Historic - American Acquisition & American Civil War	Resource Group	NRL	NE	RH
HA00346 Cane Crusher Site	Prehistoric – Late Archaic	Archaeological Site	NS	G	P
HA00370 Park Amphitheater Project	Prehistoric	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
HA00415 Log Cabin	Historic circa 1870	Historic Structure Removed with DHR approval 2009	NS	P	NA
HA00420 Nelly Bly Restaurant	Historic 1956	Historic Structure	NR	G	RH
HA00421 Toilet Building	Historic 1956	Historic Structure	NR	G	RH
HA00422 Marble Stage	Historic circa 1952	Historic Structure	NR	G	RH
HA00423 Shop Building	Historic circa 1957	Historic Structure	NS	G	RH
HA00424 Nursery Building #1	Historic mid-1950s	Historic Structure	NE	P	R
HA00425 Nursery Building #2	Historic mid-1950s	Historic Structure	NE	P	R
HA00426 Nursery Pumphouse	Historic mid-1950s	Historic Structure	NE	P	R
HA00427 Scenic Overlook	Historic circa 1952	Historic Structure	NE	P	R
HA00428 Way Down Upon	20 <sup>th</sup> Century and Prehistoric – Late Archaic	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P

Cultural Sites Listed in the Florida Master Site File					
Site Name and FMSF #	Culture/Period	Description	Significance	Condition	Treatment
HA00432 Suwannee River Rustic Bridge	Historic 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
CO00022 Rock Island Shoals	Prehistoric Aboriginal	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P

**Objective A:** Assess and evaluate 21 of 26 recorded cultural resources in the park.

- Action 1 - Complete at least two Historic Structures Reports (HSRs) for historic buildings and cultural landscape beginning with the carillon tower and the Spring House. Prioritize stabilization, restoration and rehabilitation projects.

The park currently assesses its archaeological resources regularly. The seven archaeological sites are in good condition.

The park will continue its regular program of cultural site assessment. If stabilization or preservation needs arise while assessing these sites, the park will identify and prioritize those needs.

Most of the historic structures are currently in use by the park during daily operations. No buildings within the park have yet had a Historic Structures Report prepared. Historic Structures Reports are recommended for the historic structures in the following priority order: the carillon tower (HA00289), the Spring House (HA007), the museum (HA00288), the Delegal Service Station (HA00244), the south park entrance (HA00287) and the Nelly Bly Restaurant (HA00420). The park will have two Historic Structures Reports prepared.

**Objective B:** Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.

- Action 1 - Ensure all known sites are recorded or updated in the Florida Master Site File.
- Action 2 - Develop and adopt a Scope of Collections Statement and review on an annual basis.
- Action 3 - Develop a disaster plan to identify and protect key collection items.

All known archaeological sites and historic structures have been recorded with the FMSF. A predictive model for the park was completed in 2012 (Collins et al 2012).

The park needs to adopt a Scope of Collections Statement and clarify the themes that the collections will interpret. This will provide guidance in the development of any future collections and in the acceptance of donations. It will also guide the deaccession process if portions of the collections are not retained.

There is a large amount of information in the park collection relating to the park's administrative history. These memorabilia need to be narrowed to the most important items but not include all the daily park records. The Scope of Collections Statement will help guide this process.

The significance and value of some of the collection items, such as the pianos and dioramas, need to be assessed and researched.

**Objective C:** Bring one of 26 recorded cultural resources into good condition (carillon tower).

- Action 1 - Continue to regularly monitor the park's cultural sites.
- Action 2 - Create and implement a cyclical maintenance program for all the buildings in the park.

Staff will continue to monitor the park's cultural resources and implement a routine preventative and corrective maintenance program for all buildings. This includes a monthly inspection checklist for each building's maintenance needs.

Most of the park's cultural resources are currently in good condition. The exceptions are those historic structures that include building remnants or that were demolished, the nursery buildings 1 (HA00424) and 2 (HA00425) and the nursery pumphouse (HA00426), which are in poor condition, and the carillon tower (HA00289), which is in fair condition.

The carillon tower (HA00289) will be improved to good condition. The 2011 conservation assessment for the carillon tower will guide what other repairs are needed besides the repairing of leaks. The other structures will be maintained in their current good conditions.

The nursery buildings 1 (HA00424) and 2 (HA00425) and the nursery pumphouse (HA00426) should be documented and removed.





## **LAND USE COMPONENT**

### **VISITATION**

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park was created by the Florida Department of State in 1987 to honor the American composer Stephen Foster. The 903-acre park located near the town of White Springs, commemorates Foster's music through various exhibits including a museum and carillon tower that rings out many of his best-known songs. The park also hosts the legendary Florida Folk Festival and includes portions of the popular Suwannee River Wilderness Trail and the Florida National Scenic Trail. The Suwannee River, made famous through one of Foster's songs, meanders along the southern boundary of the park.

### **Trends**

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park is synonymous with the Florida Folk Festival. Every Memorial Day weekend, the park hosts a three-day celebration of the music, dance, stories, crafts and food that make Florida unique. There are generally over 300 performances highlighting Florida's folk heritage. This popular festival is rooted in Steven Foster's legacy and has achieved national prominence. Another well-attended event is the Festival of Lights. Each December, the park's focal area is illuminated with decorative lights, accompanied by music from the historic carillon tower, and features various themed displays. Both events attract large crowds from near and far. Overall, the park sees lower visitation during the summer months, but visitation picks back up during the fall and winter.

### **EXISTING FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Visitors arriving from the main south entrance are greeted by the Nature and Heritage Tourism Center and historic Spring House. The park's north entrance is open during the Florida Folk Festival weekend. Arriving from the north, visitors first encounter the majestic carillon tower before finding their way to the museum, historic structures, event sites and craft square.

Recreational use areas at Stephen Foster Folk Culture State Park are concentrated in the eastern portion of the park, while passive outdoor recreational features such as multiuse trails and one primitive campsite occur in the western portion.

Visitors can choose between two main options for overnight stays. The first is a 43-space campground with full utility connection, two bathhouses and a playground. The other option includes five cabins situated near the Suwannee River. A short trail leads from the cabin area to a paddling launch allowing direct access to the Suwannee River. A river gazebo sits adjacent to the paddling launch providing scenic views of the Suwannee River.

Support facilities are interspersed throughout the park, including a full shop compound, residence, administration building and a storage building that once served as the original park shop.

### Facilities Inventory

<i>Park Entrances</i>	
South Entrance	
Ranger Station	1
Special Events Pavilion	1
Marble Stage	1
North Entrance	
Entrance Station	1
Toll Booth	1
<i>Tourism Center</i>	
Building	1
Paved Parking Area	1
<i>Springhouse</i>	
Historic Structure	1
Interpretive Kiosk	1
Park Museum	1
Parking Area	2
<i>Delegal Service Station</i>	
Historic Structure	1
<i>Campground</i>	
Campsites	43
Bathhouse	2
Playground	1
Dump Station	1
Carter Campsites (City Owned)	10
<i>Park Museum</i>	
Parking Area	1
Museum	1
Café	1
Jeanie Dressing Room & Garage	1
<i>Cabin Area</i>	
Cabins	5
Playground	1
Parking Area	1
<i>Suwannee River Paddling Launch</i>	
Paddling Launch / Landing	1
<i>River Gazebo</i>	
Parking Area	1
Gazebo	1
<i>Parkwide Support Facilities</i>	
Support Area	
Shop Building	2

Storage Building	2
Pole Barn	1
Administration Office	1
Residence Area	
Mobile Home	2
Storage Shed	2
Old Shop Building	
Shop Building	1
Volunteer Sites	5

## **CONCEPTUAL LAND USE PLAN**

### **Detailed Conceptual Land Use Plan Objectives**

Fourteen use areas at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park are listed below for improvements to be implemented within the 10-year planning cycle. Specific plan details are available in the next section.

#### **Nature and Heritage Tourism Center**

**Objective: Reimagine use for the tourism center.**

**Actions:**

- *Evaluate adaptive reuse.*
- *Consider for concession use.*

In 1995, the Florida Park Service developed a tourism center off U.S. Highway 41 near the park entrance. The tourism center was intended to serve as a gateway to the Florida State Parks system, introducing travelers to the diversity and distribution of state parks throughout Florida. Currently, the building is underused and often sits empty throughout the year.

For this planning period, the building's use should be revisited to determine if the intended interpretive role can be successfully marketed and re-invigorated for greater success. Nestled within picturesque and historic downtown White Springs, the building is strategically located along or near major roadways where travelers enter the state, making it an ideal location for vacationers and other visitors to begin their journey into "The Real Florida." If thorough evaluation determines that a statewide interpretive use is no longer feasible, then an appropriate occupant should be recruited for adaptive reuse or potential concession opportunities should be considered.

#### **Spring House**

**Objective: Continue historic preservation**

**Actions:**

- *Update interpretive kiosk.*
- *Replace wooden stairs leading to Spring House from parking lot of tourism center.*
- *Replace footbridge.*



The Spring House is located along the banks of the Suwannee River. During the mid-1800s to 1950s, the Spring House was a center for health and wellness, as individuals came to immerse themselves in the spring waters that were believed to hold healing powers. Shops, a hotel and clinical examination rooms were connected to the main structure. The Spring House was considered Florida's first roadside attraction. Today, the original concrete wall, upper level and gate remain along with an interpretive kiosk at the entrance. Continued historic preservation of the remaining portions of the Spring House will be done in coordination with the Division of Historical Resources. The interpretive kiosk will be updated to highlight information about the Spring House's history and spring health. A set of wooden stairs from the parking area of the Nature and Heritage Tourism Center leads visitors to the Spring House. A wooden boardwalk then leads to the south park entrance. The stairs are to be replaced on an as-needed basis, and the wooden boardwalk should be replaced within its existing footprint with material to ensure longevity of the structure as it is in an area prone to flooding from the adjacent Suwannee River.

### **Delegal Service Station**

**Objective: Restoration work and adaptive reuse.**

Actions:

- *Explore options for adaptive reuse.*
- *Restore building for interpretive uses.*

The Delegal Service Station was formerly a service station in Hamilton County and is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Due to its current state, the building sits empty and needs renovations. Necessary repairs and renovations should be made, and an appropriate occupant should be recruited for adaptive reuse.

### **Park Entrances**

**Objective: Update event facilities and improve stormwater infrastructure.**

Actions:

*South Entrance*

- *Relocate the large special events pavilion to a new central location.*

*North Entrance*

- *Repave Park Road.*
- *Improve stormwater handling features.*

Located along U.S. Highway 41 in downtown Fort White, the south park entrance is the primary entrance. Visitors interface with staff at the ranger station or utilize the "iron ranger" when entering the park. There is a pull-off area for camper check-in along with a small parking area. There are several infrastructures related to the Florida Folk Festival in the vicinity of the south entrance, including the old marble stage and a large special events pavilion. Recommended improvements to the area include the repurposing or removal of the special events pavilion and continued preservation of the old marble stage. A replacement events pavilion should be constructed near the center of the park close the amphitheater to support folk festival operations.

The north entrance, also located off U.S. 41, was the original entrance of the park when developed by the Department of State in 1987. The ranger station at the northern entrance serves as a check-in area for staff and volunteers during the Florida Folk Festival but is underused for the remainder of the year. The north entrance road provides direct access to the park's main day-use area and scenic views of the historic carillon bell tower.

The segment of road leading into the park from the north entrance is in poor condition and has inadequate stormwater infrastructure. Roadside flooding is a frequent problem. A capital improvement project that includes repaving and proper stormwater handling features is needed.

### **Carillon Tower**

**Objective: Restore Carillon Tower to full functionality.**

The carillon tower is a 200-foot-high bell tower with 97 bell carillons. The tower is currently not in use. Restoration work on the tower is underway and will continue during this planning cycle.

### **Craft Square**

**Objective: Improve stormwater infrastructure.**

**Actions:**

- *Increase seating options with benches.*
- *Improve stormwater handling.*

The craft square consists of five cabins utilized by skilled volunteers to showcase homemade crafts and provides visitors an opportunity to watch and participate in craft demonstrations. Improved stormwater handling is needed in the craft square area, as some cabins are situated at the base of sloping terrain and can experience flooding. This area would benefit from more seating areas and sheltered structures, especially since there is an influx of visitors during special events.

### **Park Museum**

**Objective: Improve Park museum**

**Actions:**

- *Update live displays.*
- *Explore concession opportunities within café.*
- *Create and implement an interpretive plan to update the museum.*

The park museum was originally developed by the Department of State and houses many collections and live displays depicting representations of the songs composed by Stephen Foster. Connected to the park museum via a breezeway is a café area with a full concessions area and kitchen along with the Jeanie Dressing Room Garage. A small parking area sits in front of the museum. For this planning cycle, the live displays will be re-evaluated with emphasis on more accurately depicting the focal periods.

Overall, comprehensive interpretive planning is recommended for the museum and its relationship to other park use areas to determine the most effective way to better connect visitors to the park's significance. The type, design, quantity, and placement of interpretive elements to deepen understanding will be specified during this additional planning process.

Concessions opportunities will be considered for the park café.

### **Main Stage – Performance Amphitheater**

**Objective:**

**Actions:**

- *Replace amphitheater stage.*
- *Incorporate seating into the landscape.*

The main stage amphitheater is the primary location for performers during the Florida Folk Festival and has a vast lawn in front of the stage. The stage is currently in poor structural condition. During this planning cycle, the stage should be removed and replaced with a new stage structure to safely support the annual folk festival and other park programs. This project should include stormwater handling necessitated by the downgrade slope leading to the lawn and stage. Improved seating arrangements should be explored for the amphitheater area, with consideration for on-grade terraced seating, cut into the natural slope. Improved accessibility should also be addressed.

### **Campground**

#### **Objective: Maintain facilities at park campground**

##### Actions:

- *Upgrade utilities at each campsite and connect to local sewer.*
- *Mitigate flooding issues within the campground.*
- *Add up to 10 new campsites.*
- *Renovate bathhouses as needed.*

The park's campground contains 43 RV and tent sites, two bathhouses, one playground and a dump station. Several campsites known as the Carter Primitive Group Camp are on city property.

To improve the campground, all sites are to be connected to the local sewer and electrical connections at each site are to be upgraded. Flooding issues are present at the campground and should be mitigated. The campsites located on city property are to be redesigned and connected to the local sewer as well. Up to 10 concession-run "glamping" sites are proposed in an effort to expand and diversify camping opportunities.

### **Cousin Thelma Boltin's Gift Shop and Picnic Area**

#### **Objective: Explore concession opportunities at Stephen Foster**

##### Actions:

- *Consider concession opportunities at Cousin Thelma Boltin's Gift Shop.*

The Cousin Thelma Boltin's Gift Shop is a two-story building currently utilized as a gift shop. The building also has an event space on the second floor. A small picnic area is in an open space between the gift shop and cabins. The picnic area contains a small pavilion, four grills and one playground. The gift shop building is a possible site for future concessions opportunities for equipment rental and retail sales.

### **Suwannee River Paddling Launch**

#### **Objective: Improve paddling access.**

##### Actions:

- *Redesign paddling launch for improved functionality and ADA access.*
- *Add a small concession building.*

The park's sole paddling launch/landing is located adjacent to the cabin area and provides access to the Suwannee River. The launch needs improvements to provide accessibility for all visitors. An open field space at the beginning of the launch would serve well as a location for a small support structure for the park's concession.

### **Suwannee River Gazebo**

**Objective: Maintain gazebo and boardwalk.**

**Actions: Continue upkeep of River Gazebo**

The Suwannee River Gazebo Area consists of a parking area, large gazebo and boardwalk that provides views of the Suwannee River. The gazebo is often rented for special events and utilized during the Florida Folk Festival. Continued maintenance of the gazebo, boardwalk and stairs is recommended, as this area tends to flood from the Suwannee River.

### **Support Facilities**

**Objective: Improve support structures for park staff**

**Actions:**

- *Replace and add staff residences with improved structures.*
- *Renovate or replace shop buildings.*






For better functionality, the support area will be reconfigured to include a better parking area for staff. Two new shop buildings are needed to replace the current structures within their existing footprints. Another consideration would be the development of one larger shop building to replace both buildings. Additional secured storage shelters are also needed within the main support area.

A residence compound containing two mobile staff homes sits adjacent to the support area. Both mobile homes are to be replaced with improved structures. One additional residence is to be added.

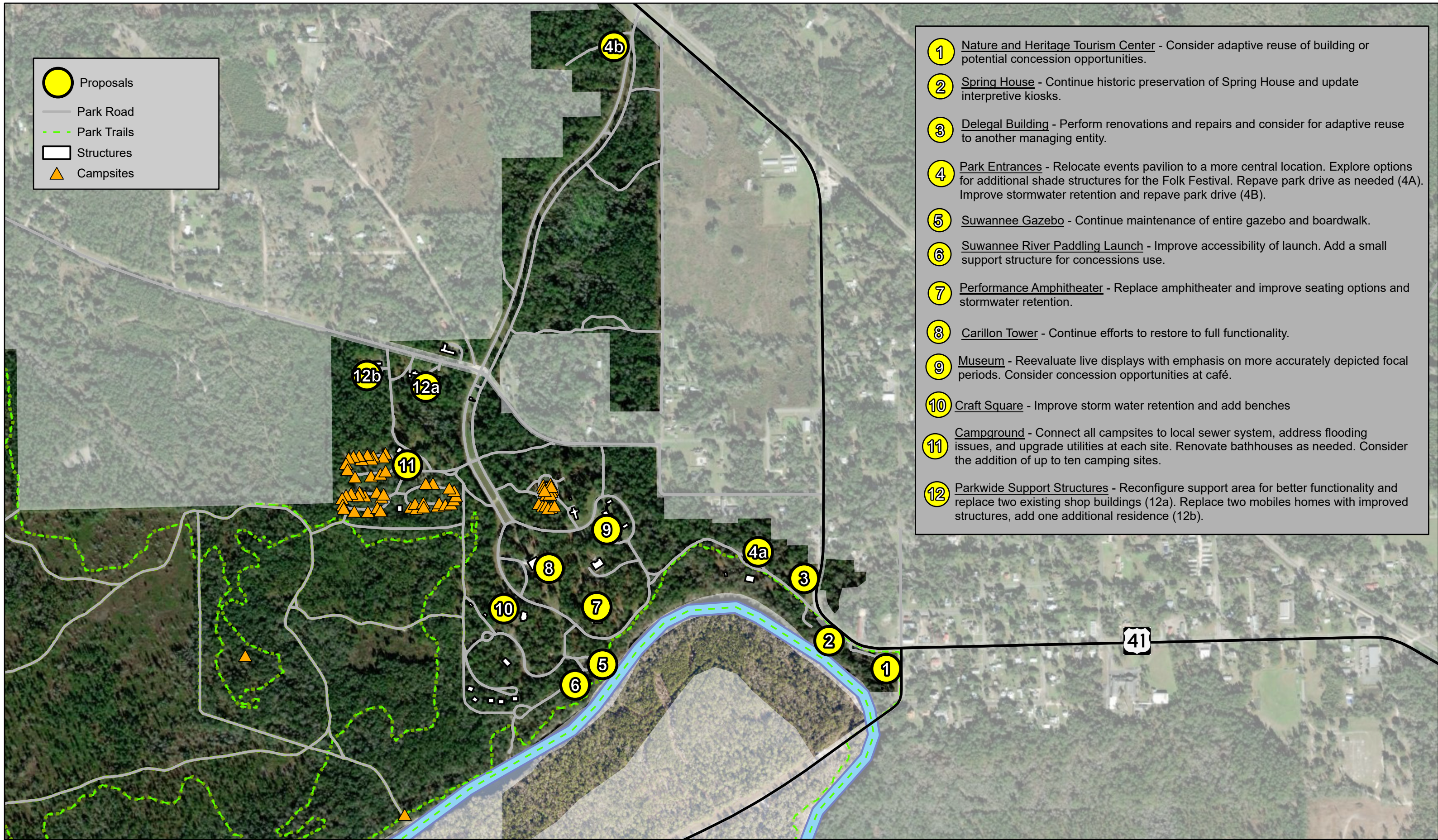
A third support building is located at the periphery of the event area. For this planning cycle, this building needs renovations including a new roof.



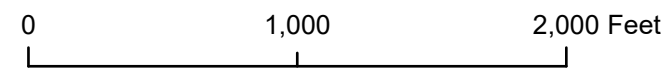


 Proposals  
 Park Road  
 Park Trails  
 Structures  
 Campsites

- 1** Nature and Heritage Tourism Center - Consider adaptive reuse of building or potential concession opportunities.
- 2** Spring House - Continue historic preservation of Spring House and update interpretive kiosks.
- 3** Delegal Building - Perform renovations and repairs and consider for adaptive reuse to another managing entity.
- 4** Park Entrances - Relocate events pavilion to a more central location. Explore options for additional shade structures for the Folk Festival. Repave park drive as needed (4A). Improve stormwater retention and repave park drive (4B).
- 5** Suwannee Gazebo - Continue maintenance of entire gazebo and boardwalk.
- 6** Suwannee River Paddling Launch - Improve accessibility of launch. Add a small support structure for concessions use.
- 7** Performance Amphitheater - Replace amphitheater and improve seating options and stormwater retention.
- 8** Carillon Tower - Continue efforts to restore to full functionality.
- 9** Museum - Reevaluate live displays with emphasis on more accurately depicted focal periods. Consider concession opportunities at café.
- 10** Craft Square - Improve storm water retention and add benches
- 11** Campground - Connect all campsites to local sewer system, address flooding issues, and upgrade utilities at each site. Renovate bathhouses as needed. Consider the addition of up to ten camping sites.
- 12** Parkwide Support Structures - Reconfigure support area for better functionality and replace two existing shop buildings (12a). Replace two mobiles homes with improved structures, add one additional residence (12b).



**Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park**  
 Conceptual Land Use Plan







### **OPTIMUM BOUNDARY**

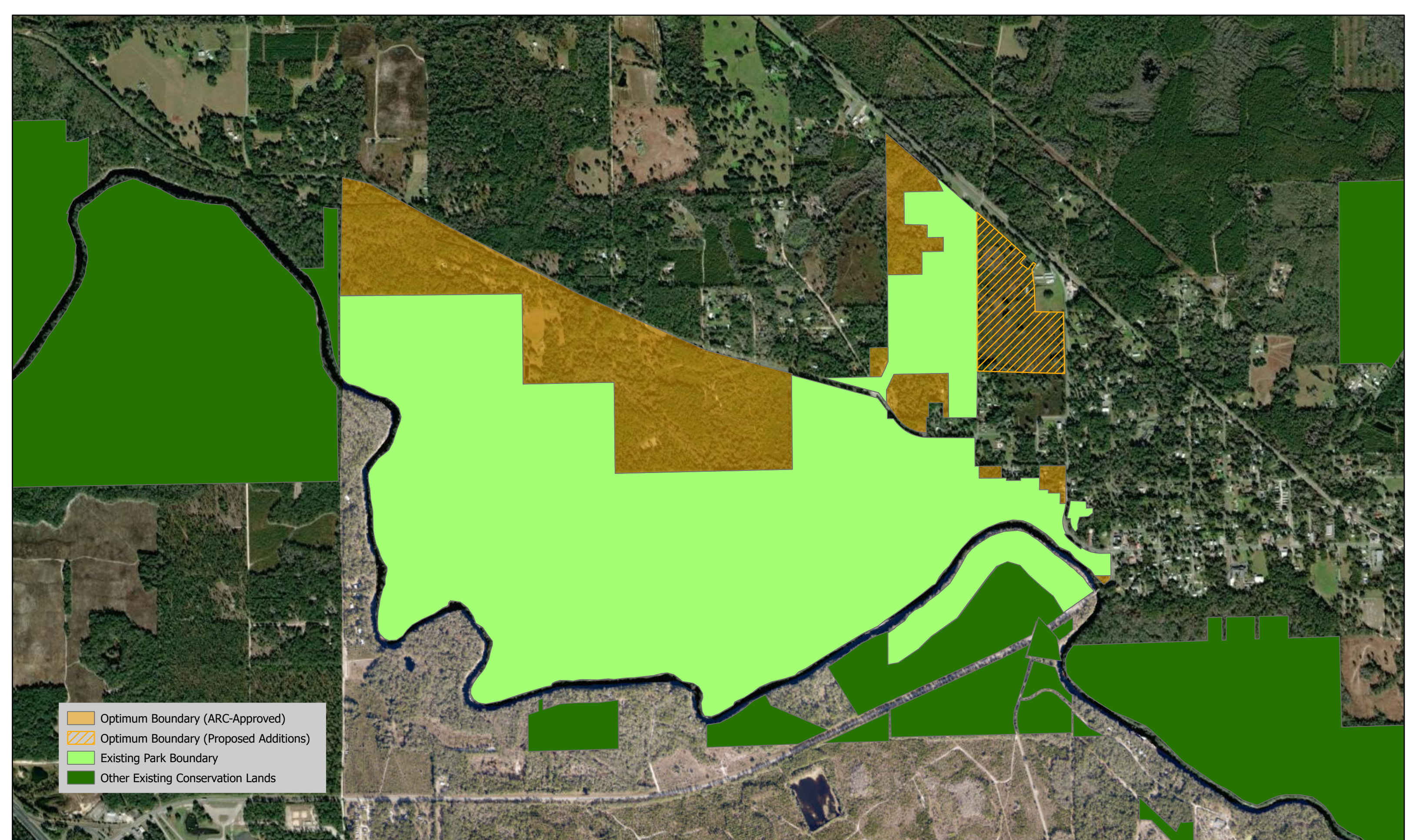
Over 250 acres of undeveloped or rural parcels around Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park have been identified as desirable for acquisition (see Optimum Boundary map). This includes a large portion of land between the park and County Road 25A. Parcels north of County Road 25A include land bordering existing park property up to U.S. 41. Property north of the park's south entrance is also included. The acquisition of these lands will add desirable natural resources and will enhance the unit's boundaries for management purposes.





An additional 43 acres, approximately, is proposed for acquisition along the northeastern boundary. These two combined parcels are currently undeveloped and contain a natural water feature.

Acquisition of these lands will provide opportunities for expanded public recreation use and will help to maintain an adequate buffer from future private development.







-  Optimum Boundary (ARC-Approved)
-  Optimum Boundary (Proposed Additions)
-  Existing Park Boundary
-  Other Existing Conservation Lands



# Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park

Optimum Boundary

