

Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park

Planning Region: Gulf Coast

County: Levy

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 2599

Overview

Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park and its shoreline is among the most pristine and untouched coastal stretches in Florida. Expanses of salt marsh, winding rivers, and tree islands provide extensive paddling opportunities. Three paddling campsites are available on a first come first serve basis. The park is not accessible from land, aside from the Jungle Trail which follows a support road accessed via adjacent Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve.

Total Acreage: 34,397.02

Natural Communities	Acres
Mesic Flatwoods	168.43
Scrubby Flatwoods	0.53
Basin Swamp	383.33
Depression Marsh	11.06
Hydric Hammock	7,608.71
Mangrove Swamp	311.73
Salt Marsh	19,460.20
Blackwater Stream	13.00
Estuarine Composite Substrate	6,374.70
Estuarine Mollusk Reef	55.91

Acquisition: Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park was initially acquired on December 10, 1971 with funds from the Land Acquisition Trust (LATF) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Currently, the park comprises 34,397.02 acres.

Resource Management Component Objectives

Hydrology

- Conduct/obtain an assessment of the park's hydrological restoration needs.
- Restore natural hydrological conditions and functions to approximately 10 acres of hydric hammock natural community

Natural Communities

- Maintain 135 acres within the optimum fire return interval.
- Conduct natural community/habitat improvement activities on 40 acres of mesic flatwoods natural community.

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Imperiled Species

- Update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists for plants and animals.
- Monitor and document 5 selected imperiled animal species in the park (scrub-jay, eastern indigo snake, Florida salt marsh vole, Scott's seaside sparrow and Marian's marsh wren).
- Monitor and document 2 selected imperiled plant species in the park (coralberry and Florida Pinkroot).

Invasive and Nuisance Species

- Annually treat 10 gross acres which are equivalent to 1.5 infested acres of invasive plant species in the park.
- Prevent the introduction and spread of invasive plants into the park.
- Survey the entire park for invasives at least 1 time over 10 years.
- Implement control measures on 1 invasive animal species in the park.

Cultural Resources

- Assess and evaluate 6 of 7 recorded cultural resources in the park.
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.

Land Use Component Objectives

Conceptual Land Use

Jungle Trail

- Develop new trailhead
- Connect new approach trail to the Jungle Trail
- Extend the Jungle Trail

Designate Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park as a Wilderness Preserve

- Designate the park as a wilderness preserve

Primitive Paddling Campsites

- Maintain the campsites

Optimum Boundary

The current Optimum Boundary for Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park encompasses parcels that should protect, buffer, and preserve the pristine character of the unit. Around 400 acres of upland areas along State Road 24 were purchased by a development company but are now included in the Gulf Coast Mitigation Bank. Once the property is restored, and credits sold, it may be incorporated into public ownership. East of Waccasassa Bay Preserve State

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Park is the Florida Forever Gulf Hammock Parcel. This 25,611 acre parcel(s) protects drainage areas of Waccasassa Bay and several imperiled species. Additionally, acquisition of the numerous inholding parcels are included as these would preserve ecologically and culturally sensitive regions. For example, it would save unspoiled saltmarshes that provide habitat for the salt marsh vole. Furthermore, cultural resources such as 3 archaeological sites would receive protection. Finally, the acquisition of inholding properties would enhance the prospect that a continuous band of public land would stretch from the Big Bend Region on Florida's Gulf Coast to Yankeetown.