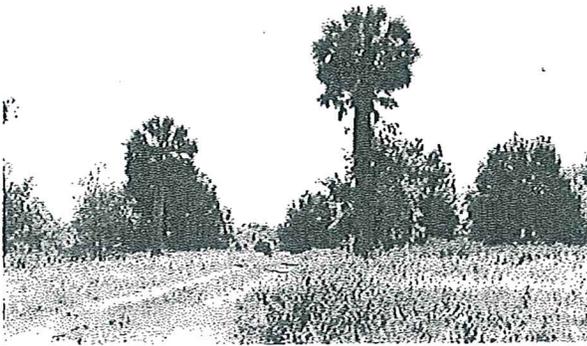


I. INTRODUCTION

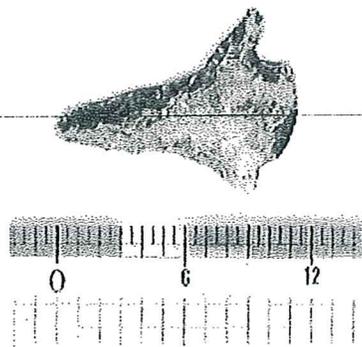
This Ferndale Preserve on Lake Apopka Management Plan is intended to describe the future use and management of the 192-acre Ferndale Preserve on Lake Apopka (FPLA). The FPLA is one of the properties ringing Lake Apopka that was sought by several entities for public ownership. Lake Apopka, which was once the second largest lake in Florida, is currently undergoing a 25 to 50 year, \$130 million dollar restoration effort by the St. Johns River Water Management District.



The FPLA will provide the only public access in Lake County to the western shore of Lake Apopka for recreation and scenic purposes. The site was once a citrus grove, but has been abandoned for approximately 15 years. Lake County will create a park/nature preserve by returning the site to a more

natural setting with an active restoration program. The site includes a portion of wetlands (45 acres) which will be protected with park designation. The site offers a full view of Lake Apopka and the surrounding unique terrain from the highest point on site at 165' above sea level. A variety of flora and fauna lend this site to multi use park development.

The site supports many active burrows for the gopher tortoise (113 burrows mapped in February 2004). The site provides excellent forage plots for the tortoise. The site is also suitable for the commensals known to inhabit tortoise burrows such as the Eastern Indigo Snake and the Gopher Frog. Bald eagles have been sited but no nests have been identified. The site contains remnants of the original residents. Native American artifacts such as arrowheads and potsherds have been found. Unfortunately there is large scale looting of artifacts along the shores of Lake Apopka. Lake County will conduct an archaeological inventory and preserve the remaining areas if indicated.



the park. A cooperative effort with the Lake County Animal Control Division will be a standard element of the procedures. Lake County will conduct a feral animal assessment of the project site within 60 days of acquiring the project site. The long term monitoring program for the removal of feral animals will be implemented by the Lake County Animal Control Division.

VI. ARCHEOLOGICAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORICAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

An Archaeological Assessment and Master Site File Evaluation was completed in accordance with the appropriate federal and State of Florida requirements. Lake County agrees in principle and practice with all the appropriate federal and State of Florida guidelines as applicable to preservation and conservation of archaeological and historical resources. If significant archaeological and/or historical resources, or human remains, are encountered on the project site, a certified professional archaeologist will be contracted and all findings will be documented to the Division of Historical Resources, State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Compliance Review section.

A partial listing of previously recorded archaeological sites located near the subject proposed FPLA site include, 8LA51, 8LA58, 8LA243, 8LA244, 8LA273, 8LA434, 8LA518, 8LA519, and 8LA543.

Lake County will enact the policy that the collection of artifacts or the disturbance of archaeological and historic sites on the project site will be prohibited unless prior authorization has been obtained from the Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. Lake County agrees that the management of the archaeological and historical resources will comply with the provisions of Chapter 267, Florida Statutes specifically Sections 267.061(a) and (b).

VII. EDUCATION SIGNS AND PROGRAMS

Lake County is committed to providing interpretive signs intended to educate visitors about the natural environment and any known archaeological and historic resources on the project site.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Lake County is committed to providing at least 24 regularly scheduled environmental or historical educational programs at the project site conducted by trained educators or resource professionals.

Types of programs intended for the site are plant and animal identification, habitat types and restoration, upland and marsh identification, weather factors, soil identification, native plant information, prescribed burns, nature crafts, nature art, bicycling, canoeing and others. Target groups for educational program would include senior citizens, special interest groups, children, school groups, scout

Outstanding Florida Waters.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 3. Will acquiring the project site protect adjacent Class I Waters, as identified by the Department of Environmental Protection, or is the project site in a locally designated wellfield protection zone? (5 points) | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|

If yes, provide a map or other documentation showing that the boundary of the project site is located adjacent to a Class I waterbody or within a wellfield protection zone.

(g) Historic Resources

- | | | |
|---|----------|----|
| 1. Does the project site contain, or is the project site within ¼ mile of, a site listed in the Florida Master Site File maintained by the Division of Historical Resources? (5 points) | Yes
X | No |
|---|----------|----|

If yes, identify the resource, its location and the Master Site File number.

The parcel is within ¼ mile of the Smith's Island Pre-Columbian midden located at T21S, R26E, S35 and identified as LA273. See Exhibit U, a letter from the Florida Master Site File letter dated 3/31/04.

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|--|-----|---------|
| 2. Will acquiring the project site protect a resource that is listed on the Florida Master Site File and also recognized by a local historic board or the Division of Historical Resources as being historically significant at the local, regional or state level? (5 points) | Yes | No
X |
|--|-----|---------|

If yes, identify the resource, its location on the project site and the Master Site File Number. Identify which governmental agency, board or expert in the field identified the resource as being significant.

- | | | |
|---|-----|---------|
| 3. Will acquiring the project site protect a resource that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service? (5 points) | Yes | No
X |
|---|-----|---------|

If yes, identify the resource and its location and document the National Register listing.

(3) COMMUNITY PLANNING SECTION

(a) Comprehensive Plan Implementation

For each of the following criteria that are furthered by the local comprehensive plan, cite no more than five (5) relevant objectives or policies in each response. If the response to a criterion is "No" move to the next question. If the response to a criterion is "Yes" cite the objective or policy number and paraphrase the plan directive, provide a brief discussion of how acquiring the site will further the cited objective or policy and include a copy of the objective or policy in Exhibit A. If a criterion addresses specific resources or facilities, these must be present on the project site in order for points to be awarded.

If the project site is located entirely in one local government jurisdiction, the local comprehensive plan of the jurisdiction within which the project site is located shall be evaluated for scoring purposes. If the project site is located in two or more jurisdictions, the local comprehensive plan of each jurisdiction shall be compared for compatibility and evaluated for scoring purposes and each jurisdiction's local comprehensive plan must be furthered for points to be awarded.

- | | | |
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| 1. Will the project provide acreage or outdoor recreational facilities necessary to maintain or improve adopted levels of service standards established in the comprehensive plan for recreation? (5 points) | Yes
X | No |
|--|----------|----|

PROJECT SUMMARY

In the space below:

1. Provide a discussion of the purposes of the project, existing and future uses, existing and proposed physical improvements, natural and historic resources, and resource protection and enhancement activities.
2. Provide a descriptive statement of how the project will benefit the community.

The 50-acre site is the gateway to the 264-acre Palatlakaha Environmental and Agricultural Reserve (PEAR) Park. The purpose of this grant request is twofold. First, the gateway, to be named PEAR Park Gateway will be the host of a river trail/boardwalk, multi use trail, and special event accommodations, nature trail and restoration areas. The second purpose is to allow direct access from U.S. Hwy 27 to the existing 264-acre park. Without a gateway, motorists must travel through a neighborhood to reach the exiting PEAR Park.

The current use of this property is unimproved pasture and marsh. Several areas are proposed for restoration including two marshes and the Palatlakaha River. Restoring the banks of the Palatlakaha River is one element of the county-wide impetuous to protect the River.

In addition to natural resources and physical improvements, historic resources are also available for protection. The Florida Master Site File, Cultural Resources Report, lists the historic Palatlakaha bridge on this 50-acre site.

The Lake County community will benefit from this project by having greater access to the existing 264-acre PEAR Park, enhanced recreation, expanded educational opportunities and on-going protection of the natural community.

Any areas of the site, including wetlands and river shoreline, infested by exotic plants, (e.g. Carolina willow, primrose willow, and cattails) will be restored with locally native vegetation (pond and bald cypress, and maintained). Exhibit K is proposed site plan.

<p>2. Will a significant portion of the degraded or altered upland communities on the project site be restored to a natural community? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes x</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Yes, a significant portion of the degraded or altered upland communities on the project site will be restored to a natural community. The approximate acreage of the upland areas that will be maintained and replanted to restore the project site to a natural community is 23.84 acres. These areas of restoration are shown on the conceptual site master plan as native tree restoration areas. Areas of the site infested with exotic and nuisance vegetation will be restored with locally native vegetation and maintained. The removal of these species will facilitate the natural recruitment of desirable species to occur and enhance the habitat available for the Sherman's Fox Squirrel.</p>		
<p>3. Will a significant portion of the degraded or altered wetland communities on the project site be restored to a natural community? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes x</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Yes, a significant portion of the degraded or altered wetland communities on the project site will be restored to a natural community. The approximate acreage of wetland areas that will be maintained and replanted to restore the project site to wetland communities is 8.36 acres, which consists of 1.06 acres along the Palatka River and 7.3 acres of freshwater marshes. Marsh wetland restoration and river shoreline restoration projects are planned with locally native vegetation. Areas of the site infested with exotic vegetation, such as Carolina and primrose willow, and cattails, will be restored also. The goal of the marsh wetland restoration will be to restore similar wetland characteristics as depicted in the 1947 and 1953 historical aerial photographs depicted in Attachment 5.</p>		

(f) Water Quality

<p>1. Will the quality of surface waters occurring on or adjacent or in close proximity to the project site be improved by the elimination of existing pollution sources from the project site, removal of impervious surfaces, or other means? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes x</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>The quality of surface waters (Palatka River (510) and freshwater marshes (641)) on the site will be improved by eliminating the agricultural practices that occurred on the property, specifically, eliminating introduction of fertilizers and pesticides that were previously applied on the site. In addition, stormwater runoff from US Hwy 27 can be addressed due to the fact that the subject parcel will provide areas for water improvement devices/filtration that will enhance the onsite freshwater marshes. The expected results would be the reduction of nutrients, pesticides and petroleum constituents for which treatment is currently not being done. In addition, by enhancing the hydrology on the subject parcel, the success of the proposed marsh wetland restoration project will be assured. The restoration of the surface water bodies and marshes will provide better quality nesting and foraging areas for amphibian and avian species. Exhibit K.</p>		
<p>2. Will acquiring the project site protect adjacent Outstanding Florida Waters, as designated by the Department of Environmental Protection? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes x</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>The boundary of the project site is located adjacent to an Outstanding Florida Water. The project site abuts the Palatka River to the north. The Clermont Chain of Lakes and the interconnecting Palatka River is considered an Outstanding Florida Water (OFW).</p>		
<p>3. Will acquiring the project site protect adjacent Class I Waters, as identified by the Department of Environmental Protection, or is the project site in a locally designated wellfield protection zone? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No x</p>
<p><i>If yes, provide a map or other documentation showing that the boundary of the project site is located adjacent to a Class I waterbody or within a wellfield protection zone.</i></p>		

(g) Historic Resources

<p>1. Does the project site contain, or is the project site within ¼ mile of, a site listed in the Florida Master Site File maintained by the Division of Historical Resources? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes x</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Yes, the project site contains a site listed on the Florida Master Site File maintained by the Division of Historical Resources. This site on the northern most border is the former railroad bed and river bridge crossing of the</p>		

Palatlakaha River and is listed as Site # 200209. Attachment 6.

<p>2. Will acquiring the project site protect a resource that is listed on the Florida Master Site File and also recognized by a local historic board or the Division of Historical Resources as being historically significant at the local, regional or state level? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Yes, acquiring the project site will protect a resource listed on the Florida Master Site File and also recognized by a local historic board as being historically significant at the local level. The Lake County Historical Society has recognized the project site as historically significant and supports the acquisition of this site as indicated by Attachment 8.</p>		
<p>3. Will acquiring the project site protect a resource that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No X</p>
<p><i>If yes, identify the resource and its location and document the National Register listing.</i></p>		

(3) COMMUNITY PLANNING SECTION

(a) Comprehensive Plan Implementation

For each of the following criteria that are furthered by the local comprehensive plan, cite no more than five (5) relevant objectives or policies in each response. If the response to a criterion is "No" move to the next question. If the response to a criterion is "Yes" cite the objective or policy number and paraphrase the plan directive, provide a brief discussion of how acquiring the site will further the cited objective or policy and include a copy of the objective or policy in Exhibit A. If a criterion addresses specific resources or facilities, these must be present on the project site in order for points to be awarded.

If the project site is located entirely in one local government jurisdiction, the local comprehensive plan of the jurisdiction within which the project site is located shall be evaluated for scoring purposes. If the project site is located in two or more jurisdictions, the local comprehensive plan of each jurisdiction shall be compared for compatibility and evaluated for scoring purposes and each jurisdiction's local comprehensive plan must be furthered for points to be awarded.

<p>1. Will the project provide acreage or outdoor recreational facilities necessary to maintain or improve adopted levels of service standards established in the comprehensive plan for recreation? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>The Leesburg Comprehensive Plan Recreation and Open Space Element, Objective B, Policy 3, establishes level of service standards for "recreation areas" (1 acre per 146 residents) and "open space" (1 acre per 578 residents). This application advances both of these standards by providing 50 additional acres that meet both criteria. Exhibit A.</p>		
<p>2. Will the project further comprehensive plan directives that ensure acquisition of natural areas or open space through public acquisition? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>The Recreation and Open Space Element of Leesburg's Comprehensive plan emphasizes the role of a partnership with Lake County for the public acquisition of natural areas and open space. Objective C states that "[t]he city shall coordinate with Lake County to expand the County's recreational function." Policy 1 further states that "[t]he city will explore opportunities to acquire land for recreation and open space." This application is the product of a partnership between Lake County and the City of Leesburg. Exhibit A.</p>		
<p>3. Will the project further comprehensive plan directives to provide new or enhanced public access to water bodies and saltwater beaches? (5 points)</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>

