

ITEM 5:

Consider an update to the Hugh Taylor Birch State Park Management Plan (Lease No. 3624).

LOCATION:

Broward County

APPLICANT:

Florida Park Service

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

Background

Hugh Taylor Birch State Park (HTBSP) is in Broward County. Access to the park is from East Sunrise Blvd., off State Road A1A. HTBSP was initially acquired on December 31, 1941 with funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF). Currently, the park comprises 175 acres. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) hold fee simple title to the park and on January 23, 1968 the Trustees leased the property to the Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) under a 99-year lease (Lease Number 3624).

The purpose of HTBSP is to protect the natural resources and cultural history of this Atlantic Coastal Lowland barrier island for resource-based recreation in a populous and fast-growing region of Florida. The park protects an area of estuarine tidal swamp, coastal strand, and maritime hammock, which are among the largest remaining examples of these natural community types in southeast Florida, providing a subtropical oasis in the urban setting of Fort Lauderdale between the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway.

Management Plan Overview

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) has identified five distinct natural community types at HTBSP. They also identified two altered landcover types. The predominant natural communities are maritime hammock and estuarine tidal swamp. Five species of imperiled plants and sixteen species of imperiled animals have been identified at HTBSP.

The Division of Historical Resources (DHR) maintains a Master Site File that documents many of Florida's archaeological and historical features. A review of information obtained from the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) disclosed one resource group, twenty-four historic structures, and one historic railroad within the park.

HTBSP has a variety of resource-based recreational opportunities such as beach access, bicycling, camping, paddling, kayaking, fishing, hiking, swimming, wildlife viewing, and interpretive activities. The park offers several interpretive programs on Fridays and Saturdays. These programs include Live Animal Presentation, Mangrove Habitat Walk, Mid-Trail Walk, Coastal Dune/Residual Slough and Historical Homes Lake Walk, Beach Hammock Trail and Sensitive Habitats Walk, Beach/Dune Habitat and Coastal Walk, and a Mid-Trail Audio Tour (available at all times). The park also has a visitor center with interpretive exhibits on the history of the area and environmental displays on the unique ecosystems.

The Florida Legislature requires that all land management plans include long and short-term (ST) goals. These goals must be measurable objectives, and ST goals must be achievable within a two-year planning period. Pursuant to changes to Section 253.034, F.S., the Division of State

Lands tracks the status of short-term goals in each land management plan approved since July 1, 2016. The short-term goals from this management plan are included as part of this item.

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

Public Involvement

DRP solicited public input by conducting a public workshop and advisory group meeting on February 27th, 2020. The purpose of the workshop was to present the management plan to the public. The purpose of the advisory group meeting was to provide the Advisory Group members the opportunity to review and discuss the management plan.

New recreational opportunities and facilities have been proposed that are appropriate for this park and consistent with the DRP mission. These include:

- A new pedestrian path from East Sunrise Blvd. to the ranger station
- Historic preservation of the Terramar House
- Renovation of existing trestle of North Bridge to include new boardwalk and observation deck
- A new interpretive seating area near the south end of Long Lake
- Playground and pavilion improvements parkwide
- Road maintenance of parks two-mile loop
- Replacement of culverts bordering the Intracoastal Waterway
- General flood adaptations at the north end of park

Surplus Lands

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

State Land Management Review Team

This property has not been subject to a recent review by an interagency land management review team.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the management plan.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

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

Hugh Taylor Birch State Park

Land Management Plan Short Term Goals

| Goal (ST) | Details of Goal | Objective | Details of Objective | Measures |
|-----------|---|-----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| VII | Provide public access and recreational opportunities in the park. | C | Develop 2 new educational programs. | Number interpretive / education programs. |

Source: Florida DEP, Office of Environmental Services, Revised 2019.

Hugh Taylor Birch State Park

Lead Agency: Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Common Name of Property: Hugh Taylor Birch State Park

Location: Broward County

Direct Economic Impact: FY 18-19 \$36,630,616 and 513 jobs added to local economy

Acreage: 175.24 Acres

Acreage Breakdown

| Natural Communities | Acres |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Beach Dune | 0.21 |
| Costal Strand | 5.61 |
| Estuarine Tidal Swamp | 56.77 |
| Maritime Hammock | 60.72 |
| Marine Unconsolidated Substrate | 1.01 |

Lease/Management Agreement Number(s): 3624

Use: Single Use

Management Responsibilities

Agency: Dept. of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks

Responsibility: Public Outdoor Recreation and Conservation

Designated Land Use: Public outdoor recreation and conservation is the designated single use of the property

Sublease: None

Encumbrances: See Addendum 1 for details

Type of Acquisition(s): 1 (see Addendum 1 for details).

Unique Features

Overview: Hugh Taylor Birch located in urban downtown Ft. Lauderdale; considered a barrier island, the park is situated between the Intracoastal Waterway and A-1-A.

Hugh Taylor Birch State Park

The purpose of Hugh Taylor Birch State Park is to preserve and interpret the historic structures built by Mr. Hugh Taylor Birch. As well, the park protects rare natural communities such as the tropical maritime hammock.

The park was acquired in 1941, from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund.

Natural: Hugh Taylor Birch State Park contains the last remaining tropical maritime hammock in South Florida, a rare natural community. Additional natural features at the park include mangroves which provide habitat for herons and other shoreline animals. Additionally, the park contains mangroves which provides habitat for herons and other shoreline animals. The park also contains a freshwater lagoon named Long Lake, which spans almost the entirety of the park.

Archaeological/Historical: The park has a rich history dating back to 1893 when the land was purchased by Mr. Hugh Taylor Birch, an attorney from Chicago, who started to build on the property to be his new residence. Mr. Birch built many now recorded cultural sites such as the Terramar House, which became his final residence along with the Gardeners Cottage. Additional cultural sites include the Elks Group Camp, Original Entrance Station and Birch Scenic Railroad Trestle.

Management Goals, Objectives and Actions

Measurable objectives and actions have been identified for each of the Division's management goals for Hugh Taylor Birch State Park. Please refer to the Implementation Schedule and Cost Estimates in the Implementation Component of this plan for a consolidated spreadsheet of the recommended actions, measures of progress, target year for completion and estimated costs to fulfill the management goals and objectives of this park.

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

The work plans provide the Division with crucial flexibility in its efforts to generate and implement adaptive resource management practices in the state park system. The work plans are reviewed and updated annually. Through this process, the Division's resource management strategies are systematically evaluated to determine their effectiveness. The process and the information collected is used to refine techniques, methodologies and strategies, and ensures that each park's prescribed management actions are monitored and reported as required by Chapters 253.034 and 259.037, Florida Statutes. The goals, objectives and actions identified in this management plan will serve as the basis for developing annual work plans for the park. Since the

Hugh Taylor Birch State Park

plan is based on conditions that exist at the time the plan is developed, the annual work plans will provide the flexibility needed to adapt to future conditions as they change during the ten-year management planning cycle. As the park's annual work plans are implemented through the ten-year cycle, it may become necessary to adjust the management plan's priority schedules and cost estimates to reflect these changing conditions.

Natural Resource Management

Hydrological Management

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

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

Natural Communities Management

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

- Objective: Conduct natural community/habitat improvement activities on 7 acres of the ruderal lake natural community.

Imperiled Species Management

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

- Objective: Develop/update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists for plants and animals.
- Objective: Monitor and document 4 selected imperiled animal species in the park.
- Objective: Monitor and document 3 selected imperiled plant species in the park.

Exotic Species Management

Goal: Remove exotic and invasive plants and animals from the park and conduct needed maintenance control.

- Objective: Annually treat 60 acres of exotic plant species in the park.
- Objective: Implement control measures on 2 nuisance animal species in the park.

Hugh Taylor Birch State Park

Cultural Resource Management

Cultural Resource Management

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

- Objective: Assess and evaluate all recorded cultural resources in the park except for the Elks Youth Camp Bathhouse which was removed ca. 2013
- Objective: Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources
- Objective: Bring all existing cultural resources to at least good condition

Ten-Year Implementation Schedule and Cost Estimates: See Table 5, pages 85-87.

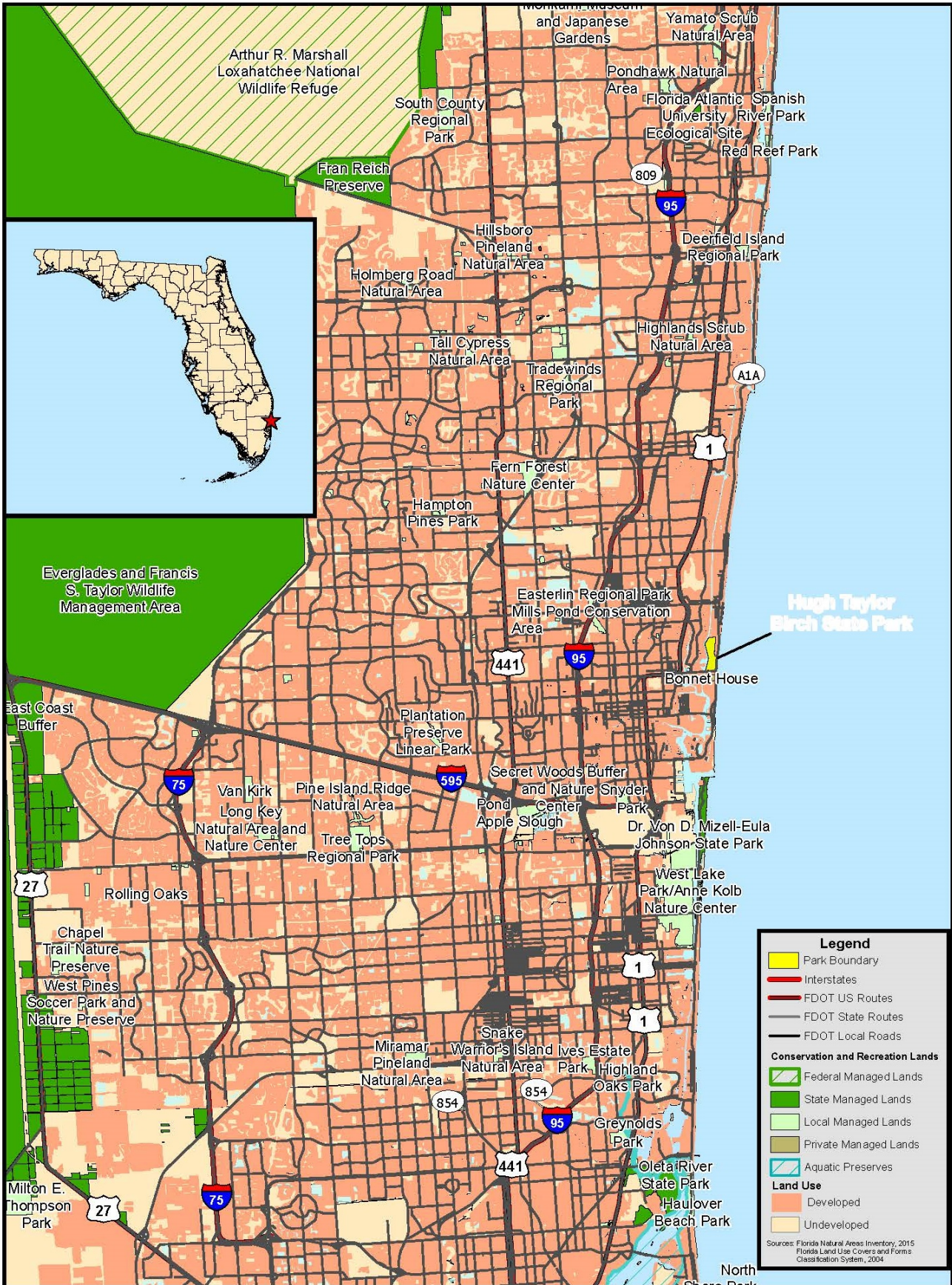
Acquisition Needs/Acreage: No lands are considered for the optimum boundary for Hugh Taylor Birch State Park.

Surplus Lands/Acreage: No lands are considered surplus to the needs of the park.

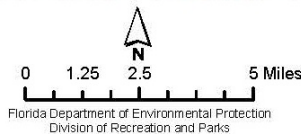
Public Involvement: DRP solicited public input by conducting a public workshop on Thursday, February 27, 2020. The purpose was to present the management plan to the public. On Thursday, February 27, 2020, an Advisory Group meeting was held. The purpose of this meeting was to provide the Advisory Group members the opportunity to review and discuss the management plan (see Addendum 2).

Summary of Conceptual Land Use Proposals

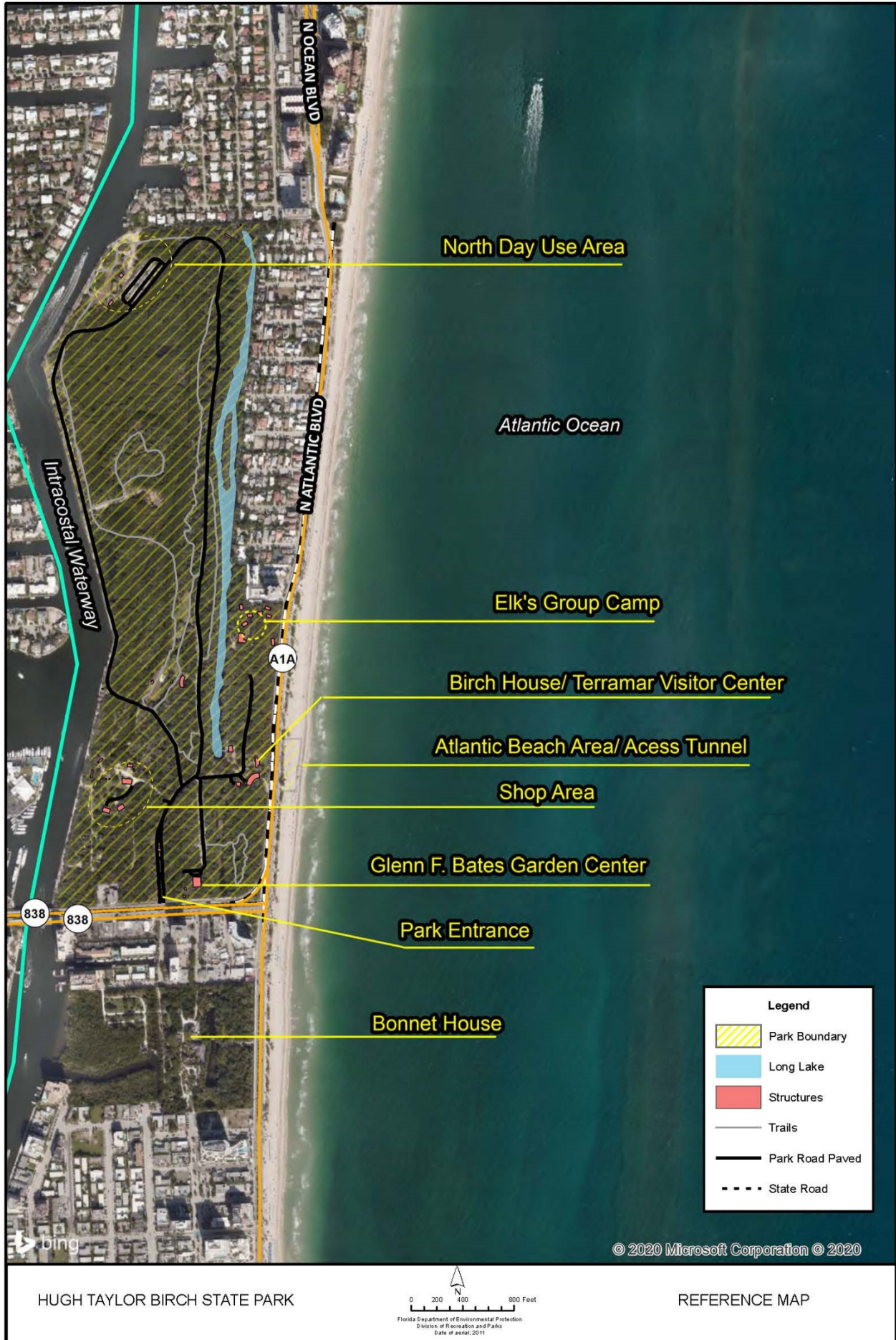
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HUGH TAYLOR BIRCH STATE PARK



VICINITY MAP



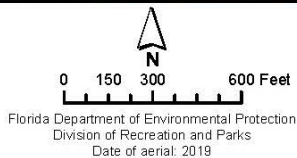


| Legend | |
|--------|---|
| | BD - Beach Dune - 0.21 ac |
| | CS - Coastal Strand - 5.61 ac |
| | ETS - Estuarine Tidal Swamp - 56.77 ac |
| | MAH - Maritime Hammock - 60.72 ac |
| | MUS - Marine Unconsolidated Substrate - 1.01 ac |
| | CD - Canal/ditch - 7.20 ac |
| | DV - Developed - 31.02 ac |



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HUGH TAYLOR BIRCH
STATE PARK



NATURAL COMMUNITIES
MAP



