

Dickerson Bay/Bald Point

Substantially Complete

Franklin and Wakulla Counties

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1996
<i>Project Acres</i>	24,390
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	21,819
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$47,996,365
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	2,570
<i>2023 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$15,945,685

Purpose for State Acquisition

On the coast of Wakulla and Franklin counties, the shallow Gulf of Mexico laps against the westernmost Big Bend salt marshes and the easternmost white sand beaches of the Panhandle. The St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge already protects much of this coast; the Dickerson Bay/Bald Point project will protect more, including areas critical to the survival of the endangered Kemp's Ridley Sea turtle. In so doing, it will also protect the fishery in the area by protecting its foundation - rich mud flats and seagrass beds - and will add land to Mashes Sands County Park where people may enjoy the beauty of this little-disturbed coast.

General Description

The project is comprised of three separate areas, including uplands around Dickerson, Levy and Ochlockonee Bays. These bays provide foraging habitat for juvenile Kemp's Ridley Sea turtles, the world's most endangered sea turtle, and other state or globally rare birds and turtles such as wood stork, bald eagle and loggerhead sea turtles. The uplands surrounding the three bays are an intricate mosaic of lakes, depression marshes and mesic flatwoods (high quality to disturbed) that support populations of rare animals such as Sherman's fox squirrel and gopher tortoise. Scrubby flatwoods and scrub relate to the marine communities by numerous tidal creeks, salt flats and salt marshes. The Bald Point site includes beach dunes that support and maintain the quality of marine communities and are used by many species of shore birds. Natural upland communities adjoin similar communities in St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge to the north and west. Twelve archaeological sites are known from Bald Point. The Bald Point site is threatened by development.



FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Kemp's ridley sea turtle	G1/S1
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Loggerhead sea turtle	G3/S3
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Lobeless spiny burrowing beetle	G1/S1
<i>Godfrey's blazing star</i>	G2/S2
<i>fever tree</i>	G4/S2
<i>Florida milkvetch</i>	G3G4/S2S3
<i>Gulf Coast lupine</i>	G3T3/S3
Scott's seaside sparrow	G4T3/S3
Merlin	G5/S2

Public Use

The southern part of this project (i.e., Bald Point and southern Dickerson Bay) is designated for use as a state park that will augment the recreational opportunities of the adjacent Mashles Sands County Park with areas for picnicking, hiking, camping and canoeing. The beaches of Bald Point are suitable for swimming and other activities. The northern part of this project will be incorporated into the St. Marks Wildlife Refuge, and the Florida Forest Service and Division of Recreation and Parks will provide recreational opportunities within a 17,041-acre addition made to the project in 2016. Access to Ochlockonee Bay, Alligator Harbor Aquatic Preserve and several of the ponds provide opportunities for paddling and fishing. The extensive network of wooded roads can easily accommodate hiking, biking and nature studies. The extensive highway frontage expands the possibilities for siting of a campground and visitor center.

Acquisition Planning

1996

The essential parcels are McMillan, Brunstad, Nichols, JDN Enterprises, Meara, Cobleigh, Panacea Coastal Properties and Metcalf. Piney Island, also an essential parcel, was donated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1996. All Bald Point parcels are essential. The LGR Investment Fund, LTD. parcel has been acquired.

1998

On October 15, 1998, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council designated the Jer Be Lou Development Co. parcel as essential. The parcel has been acquired. Initial acquisition started in 1999 with funds from the Conservation and Recreational Lands/Preservation 2000 acquisition program along Apalachee Bay.

1999

On August 30, 1999, the BOT purchased 1,349 acres in Franklin County from The Trust for Public Land which later became the Bald Point State Park.





On December 9, 1999, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council removed 3,840 acres owned by The St. Joe Company and placed them in the St. Joe Timberland project.

2003

In 2003, Bald Point State Park was expanded when 3,485 acres were purchased from the St. Joe Company.

2006

As of January 2006, Bald Point State Park contained 4,859 acres and is jointly administered with Ochlockonee River State Park.

2011

On September 6, 2011, the Division of Recreation and Parks purchased to manage 0.77 acres (Kennedy-\$67,500).

On December 9, 2011, the Acquisition and Restoration Council placed this project in the Climate Change Lands category.

2016

In October 2016, the Acquisition and Restoration Council approved the Bluffs of St. Teresa project and immediately amended that project into the Dickerson Bay/Bald Point project. This added 17,041 acres adjacent to Bald Point State Park, across the Ochlockonee River from the Ochlockonee River State Park and adjacent to the Tate's Hell State Forest. If acquired, this land would be managed by the Florida Forest Service as part of Tate's Hell State Forest and by the Division of Recreation and Parks as part of Bald Point State Park.

2020

On October 1, 2020, the Bluffs of St. Teresa tract was acquired in fee from Ochlocknee Timberlands, LLC. The acquisition contains 16,971.6 acres and was purchased for \$43,000,000 with \$38,562,000 in Florida Forever funds and \$4,438,000 in federal funding. This was the largest Florida Forever acquisition in over a decade. The property, located in Franklin County and part of Wakulla County, will be managed in part by the Florida Forest Service as part of Tate's Hell State Forest, and the Division of Recreation and Parks as part of Bald Point State Park and Ochlockonee River State Park.

The Dickerson Bay/Bald Point Florida Forever project is now more than 85 percent complete. It was moved into the Substantially Complete category by the Acquisition and Restoration Council in December 2020.

2021

DEP acquired fee simple 0.15 acres from the Price Family that will be managed as an addition to Bald Point State Park.

2023

In October 2023, the Acquisition and Restoration Council voted to remove approximately 1,796 acres from the project that were deemed unsuitable for State acquisition.





Coordination

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is an acquisition partner and coordination between the state and federal governments should be maintained. On August 27, 1998, a portion of the Bald Point project was selected to receive Florida Communities Trust grant funding.

Management Policy Statement

The primary objectives of management of the Dickerson Bay/Bald Point project are to maintain and restore the natural communities around Dickerson and Levy bays and to give the public an area for hiking, fishing, camping and other recreation compatible with the protection of the natural resources. Protecting the natural communities of the area is critical to the survival of the endangered Kemp's Ridley Sea turtle and will also help protect habitat for wading birds and shore birds. It will also help protect a recreational and commercial fishery that depends on the marine life of the bays. The project should be managed under the single-use concept: management activities should be directed toward the preservation of the salt marshes, flatwoods and other communities around the bays. Consumptive uses such as hunting or logging should not be permitted. Managers should control public access to the project; limit public motor vehicles to one or a few main roads; thoroughly inventory the resources; burn the fire-dependent flatwoods in a pattern mimicking natural lightning-season fires, using natural firebreaks or existing roads for control; and monitor management activities to ensure that they are actually maintaining or improving the quality of the natural communities. Managers should limit the number and size of recreational facilities, such as hiking trails, ensure that they avoid the most sensitive resources, and site them in already disturbed areas when possible.

The project includes nearly all of the undeveloped, privately-owned land along Dickerson and Levy Bays and adjoins the Mashles Sands County Park on its southeast border. It, therefore, has the configuration and location to achieve its primary objectives.

Manager(s)

The Division of Recreation and Parks will manage that portion of the project in Franklin County; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wakulla County will separately manage individual parcels in Wakulla County.

Management Prospectus

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

The property will be a high-need management area. Public recreational use and development compatible with resource management will be an integral aspect of management.

Management Implementation, Public Access, Site Security and Protection of Infrastructure

Upon acquisition and assignment to the Division of Recreation and Parks, public access will be provided for low-intensity, non- facility related outdoor recreation activities. Also, management will concentrate on site security, fire management and developing a resource inventory and public use plan. Vehicle access by the public will be confined to designated points and routes. Protecting the adjacent marine environment will be a primary focus for the property. Over the long term, however, a wide range of





resource-based recreation and environmental education facilities may be promoted. The nature, extent and location of the infrastructure will be defined by the management plan for the property. Restoring and maintaining natural communities will be incorporated into long-range management efforts and disturbed areas will be restored to conditions that would be expected to occur in natural systems, to the extent practical.

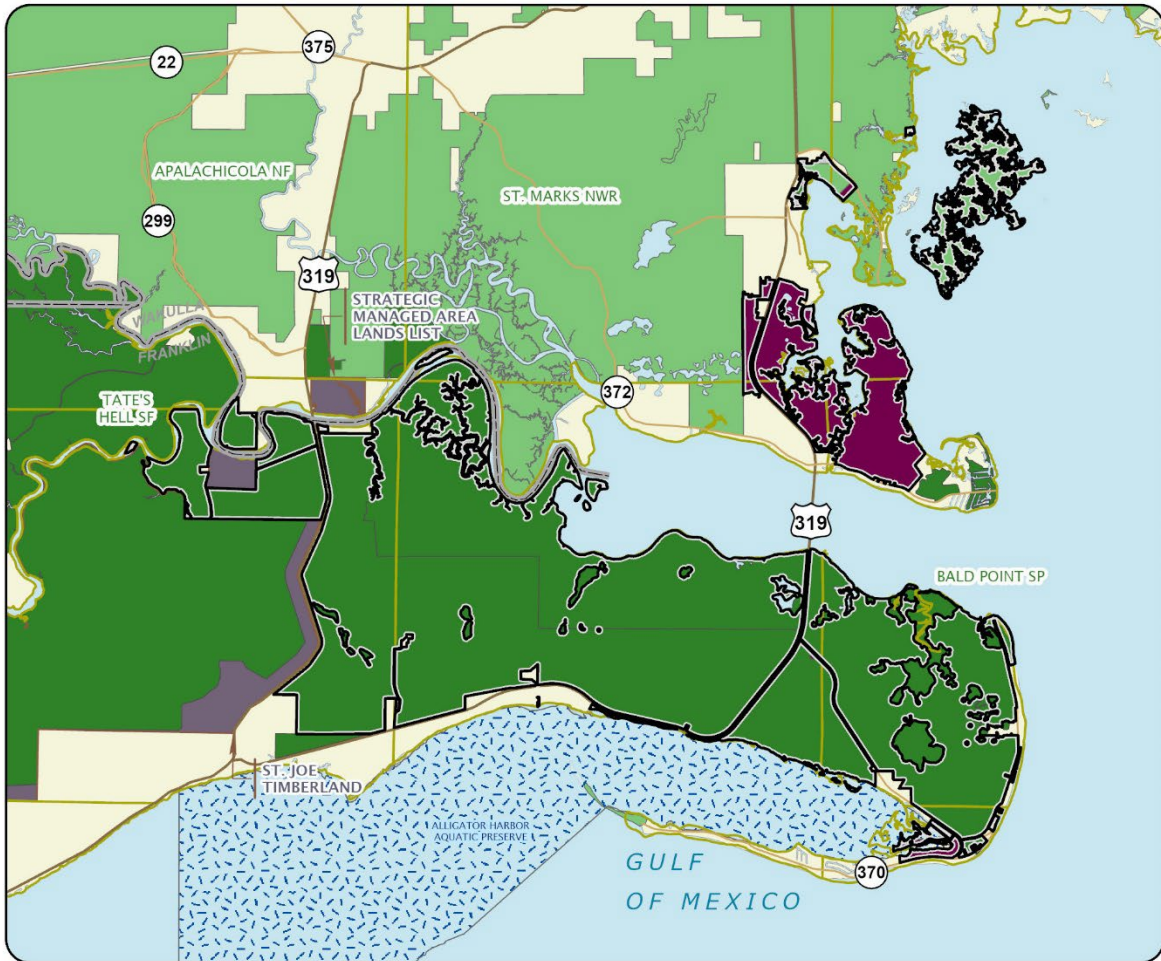
Revenue-generating Potential

No significant revenue is expected to be generated from this property initially. After acquisition, it will probably be several years before any significant public facilities might be developed. The amount of any future revenue will depend on the nature and extent of public use in the management plan for the property. The property has the potential for generating local economic benefits. The pine plantation that covers a large portion of the Bald Point project will be managed with the assistance of the Florida Forest Service. The site has considerable value and can be expected to provide significant revenue if acquired with the land. No other significant revenue would be expected over the short term after acquisition. The amount of future revenues from other than timber sales will depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities developed.

Cooperators in Management Activities

Due to the potential for enhancement of the adjacent county park by this project area, coordination of management efforts may be desirable. On the Bald Point site, the Florida Forest Service will be consulted on forest management and timber issues related to the planning and implementation of a forest resource management plan. Other federal, state and local government agencies will be consulted, as appropriate, to further resource management, recreational and educational opportunities, and the development of the project lands for state park purposes.





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