

Ford Marsh

Climate Change Lands

Volusia County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2023
<i>Project Acres</i>	1,200
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	28
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	1,172
<i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$385,238

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Ford Marsh project will help protect the fragile coastline and wetland areas of Volusia County along the Tomoka River. This property will provide a path for salt marsh migration as sea levels rise. Ford Marsh’s proximity to other conservation areas and state parks expands public recreation including paddling and hiking trails once restored. There are three known cultural sites on the property that will be protected if acquired.

General Description

The Ford Marsh project contains 10 parcels, totaling 1,204 acres in Volusia County. Acquisition of Ford Marsh will expand wildlife corridors due to its proximity to other conservation lands. The project is adjacent to North Peninsula State Park and Tomoka Marshes Aquatic Preserve and contiguous to Bulow Creek State Park. This property shares its northern border with the Flagler County Blueway Florida Forever project. The predominant natural communities found at Ford Marsh include salt marsh, estuarine, hydric hammock and mollusk reef.

Acquisition of Ford Marsh will help to further the goals of the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative by enhancing the long-term abundance, health, and resilience of 1 million acres of estuarine salt marshes in the South Atlantic. This project, if acquired, also increases climate resilience by creating a path for upland salt marsh migration in response to sea level rise.

In the 1950’s, Ford Marsh was channelized, and impoundments were created on the property for mosquito control efforts. Restoration of the wetlands on Ford Marsh can become habitat for a variety of imperiled species including the diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*) and the Atlantic saltmarsh snake (*Nerodia clarkia taeniata*). Wetland restoration will also expand public recreation opportunities by allowing visitors to paddle through the property.

There are three known archaeological sites found on Ford Marsh, dating to the pre-Columbian and pre-historic periods. Additional sites near the property have the possibility of undiscovered artifacts on Ford Marsh. It’s estimated that these sites represent at least 3,000 years of Florida





history. The acquisition of this property will help to protect and preserve these unique sites and Florida’s cultural history.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Wood stork	G4/S2

Public Use

If acquired, Ford Marsh will be managed by the Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) as a part of Bulow Creek State Park and will expand the park’s hiking and paddling trail systems.

Acquisition Planning

2023

On October 13, 2023, the Acquisition and Restoration Council voted to add Ford Marsh to the Climate Change Lands category of the 2024 Florida Forever Priority List.

Coordination

This project was proposed by DRP. The Volusia Forever program, Ducks Unlimited, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Resilient Florida are potential partners in the acquisition of Ford Marsh. The St. Johns River Water Management District and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission have been identified as potential partners in restoration of the property.

Management Policy Statement

The primary management goals of Ford Marsh are to protect and restore wetlands; to expand connectivity between conservation lands; to preserve cultural and archaeological resources; to provide appropriate nature-based recreation that offers public enjoyment of the site without damaging the unique natural habitats; and to periodically review, evaluate and modify the management of the Ford Marsh property.

Manager

DRP is the identified manager for Ford Marsh.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for State Designation

Acquisition of Ford Marsh is desirable due to its connectivity between multiple state parks and the opportunity to restore the estuarine and salt marsh habitats on the property.





Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

A large portion of Ford Marsh is made up of salt marsh that has been impacted by the dredging of canals. The creation of dikes has also disrupted the daily tidal flushing and sediment deposition. There are invasive species on the property that will need managed. The acquisition of this project will require restoration and mitigation.

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

Multi-use activities on the property will be implemented pursuant to Chapter 258 of Florida Statutes, and Chapter 62D-2 of the Florida Administration Code. The primary objective will be to protect and restore the resources on-site while providing access and compatible recreation opportunities to the public. Once the property is acquired, resource management activities would be carried out by assigned park staff who would work closely with other DRP land managers and the managers of other adjacent conservation lands. Recreational development could occur quickly and would focus on the passive recreational elements discussed above. Hiking and paddling access would need to be sensitive to preserving integrity and ecological function of the estuarine environment.

DRP will ensure the protection and security of the resources and infrastructure of the property. A complete inventory of the site would occur once the property is acquired. A complete survey and subsequent fencing of critical property boundaries will be a top priority. Further long-term and short-term plans for management of the property would be addressed in the unit’s management plan.

Revenue-generating Potential

Bulow Creek State Park generates revenue through pavilion rentals.

Cooperators in Management Activities

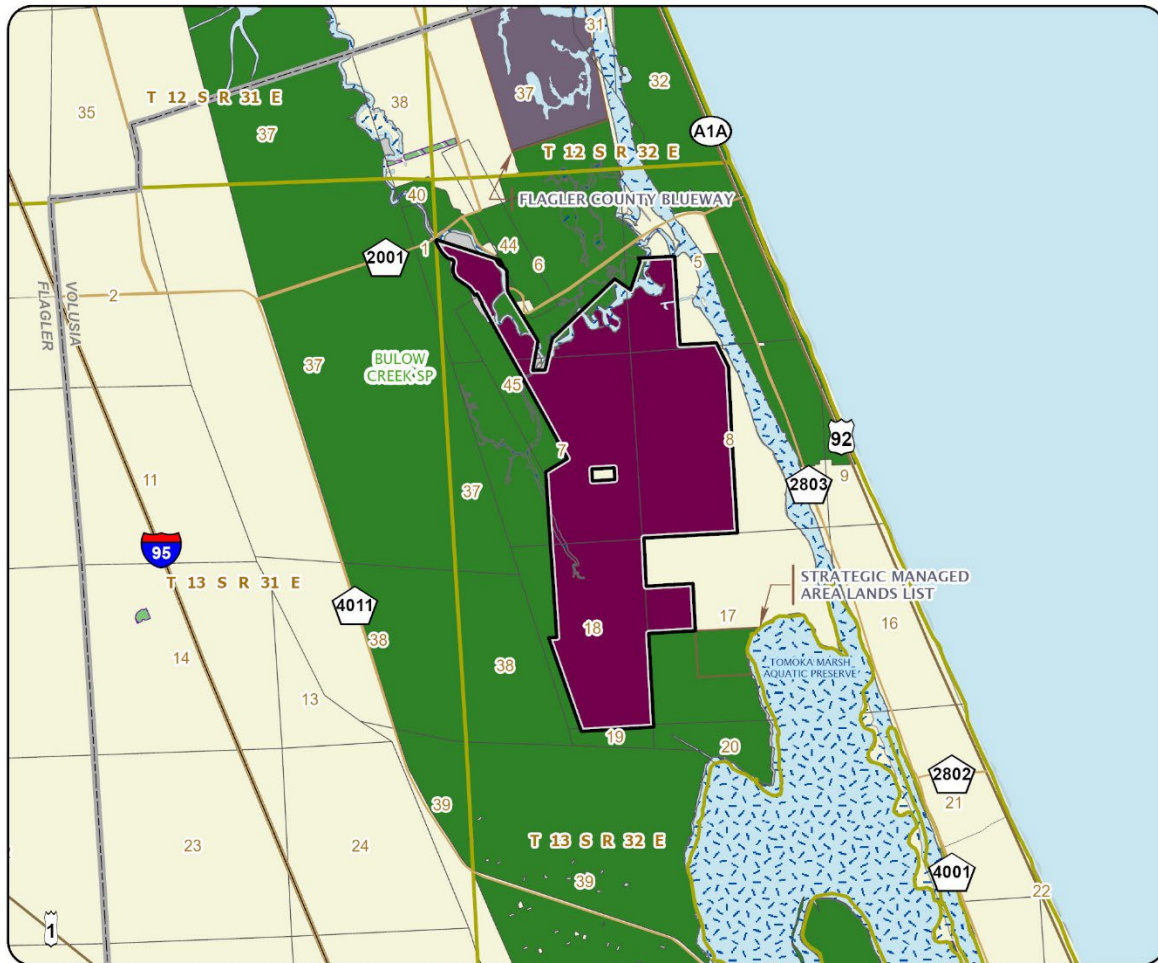
The management strategy includes potential partnerships with state agencies for restoration and monitoring. The management strategy also identifies the USFWS and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as potential funding sources.

Management Cost Summary

DRP	Startup	Recurring
Source	not provided	not provided
Salary (3 FTE)	\$150,200	not provided
OPS (10 OPS)	\$234,000	not provided
Expense	\$15,000	not provided
OCO	Not provided	not provided
FCO	\$25,000	not provided
TOTAL	\$424,200	not provided

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted.





FORD MARSH

VOLUSIA COUNTY

- Florida Forever Project Boundary
- Essential Parcels Remaining
- Other Florida Forever Projects
- State Conservation Lands
- Other Conservation Lands
- Other Public Lands
- Less-Than-Fee Acquisition
- State Aquatic Preserve

