Spruce Creek

Substantially Complete
Volusia

Year Added to Priority List	*1990*
Project Acres	*2,841*
Acquired Acres	*2,483*
Cost of Acquired Acres	*$19,118,050*
Remaining Project Acres	*358*
2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres	*$6,688,388*

Purpose for State Acquisition

Natural areas along the coast of Volusia County are becoming scarce as residential developments expand from Daytona Beach and New Smyrna Beach. The Spruce Creek project will protect one of the largest tracts of undeveloped land left in this region along the estuary of Spruce Creek and will maintain the water quality of the creeks and bays, thus protecting the fishery. Additionally, this project will conserve what may be the site of Andrew Turnbull's 18th–century plantation and provide a recreation area for cultural and environmental education, hiking, and fishing.

General Description

The original Spruce Creek project area, north and west of Strickland Bay, contains good estuarine tidal swamps, hammocks, scrub, and flatwoods. It protects habitat for endangered or threatened species such as bald eagles, wood storks and manatees. The addition, between U.S. 1 and Turnbull Bay, contains good Maritime or Xeric Hammock, with live oaks, cabbage palms, and several tropical shrubs near their northern limits. Flatwoods also cover a large part of the addition, and tidal marsh with remnants of black mangrove. Disturbed areas include a historic house at the north end and the remains of a fish camp and marina east of U.S. 1. The area is adjacent to several Outstanding Florida Waters, and the aquatic resources Florida Waters, and the aquatic resources are important to both recreation and commercial fisheries. There are two archaeological sites recorded within the project area: Spruce Creek Mound site, a prehistoric and historic burial mound; and J. D. site, a prehistoric and historic shell midden and burial site. The project may also contain historic archaeological sites related to the British Colonial Period occupation in this area of Northeast Florida (ca. 1763–1783 AD). The area is experiencing significant growth and the land is threatened by development.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Florida scrub-jay	G1G2/S1S2
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Florida beargrass	G3/S3
Bald eagle	G5/S3

Public Use

This project is designated as a recreation area with uses such as cultural and environmental education, hiking, fishing, camping and picnicking.

Acquisition Planning

1989

On December 1, 1989, the LAAC added the original Spruce Creek project to the CARL Priority list. This fee-simple acquisition, sponsored by Volusia County, consisted of approximately 1,718 acres, nine owners, and a 1989 taxable value of $2,675,000.

1990

On December 7, 1990, an owner-sponsored 54-acre parcel was added to the boundary.

1992

The project was removed on December 10, 1992 due to unwilling sellers. At that time, it was less than 90 percent complete.

1994

On December 6, 1994, the LAAC added the current Spruce Creek project to the 1995 CARL Priority list. This fee-simple proposal was sponsored by Volusia County, as the previous one had been, and had the same name, but consisted of 524 acres -a 208-acre portion of the original project and a 316-acre addition and had a 1993 taxable value of $2,124,141. The project boundary, as approved by the LAAC, however, included the portions of the 1989 project that had already been acquired. The resulting project acreage equaled 1,593 acres with a taxable value of $3,406,991.

2002

On October 24, 2002, the ARC approved a fee-simple 648-acre addition to the project boundary. It was sponsored by Volusia County and consisted of five owners.

2009

On October 9, 2009, the ARC voted to remove six sites with 54 individual parcels (97 acres) containing residential and commercial buildings or infrastructure. The total acreage removed had a just value of$9,166,381.

2011

On December 9, 2011, the ARC placed this project in the Substantially Complete category of Florida Forever projects.

Coordination

Volusia County is a partner in the acquisition of this project as well as being identified as the manager. SJRWMD and City of Port Orange are acquisition partners also.

Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Spruce Creek project are to conserve, protect, manage, or restore important ecosystems, landscapes, and forests, in order to enhance or protect significant surface water, coastal, recreation, timber, fish or wildlife resources which local or state regulatory programs cannot adequately protect; to provide areas, including recreation trails, for natural resource-based recreation; and to preserve significant archaeological or historical sites.

Manager(s)

Volusia County is the recommended manager.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation

The Spruce Creek Recreation Area has the size, natural, cultural, and recreation resources, and surrounding population density to qualify as a State Recreation Area.

Conditions affecting intensity of management

The project includes moderate-need tracts requiring more than basic resource management and protection. These lands will contain more highly developed resource-related recreation facilities. Large portions of the property, however, would be considered low-need tracts requiring only basic resource management and protection. Recreation use will be incorporated but in a more dispersed and less intensive manner.

Management implementation, Public access, Site security and Protection of infrastructure

Within the first year after acquisition, management activities will concentrate on site security and resource inventory. Volusia County will provide appropriate access to the site to maintain existing and historic uses while protecting sensitive resources on the site. The site's natural resources and listed plants and animals will be inventoried, recreation opportunities and uses identified, and a management plan formulated. Long-range plans for Spruce Creek will be specified in the management plan and will generally be directed as follows: Development of recreation facilities, a comprehensive trail management program, a comprehensive educational and interpretive program, and a comprehensive historic resource management program; restoration of disturbed areas; maintenance of natural communities through a program of selected harvest and fire management; and habitat enhancement for listed species.

Revenue-generating potential

This will be determined by the concepts in the Management Plan. Some revenues will probably be generated by user and concession fees at recreation sites. Some revenues may be generated through sale of forest products, but any such revenues will be minimal. Use of small portions of the area as mitigation for development elsewhere would not only restore damaged areas on-site but would yield revenue as well. It will be several years before potential revenue sources could be fully developed.

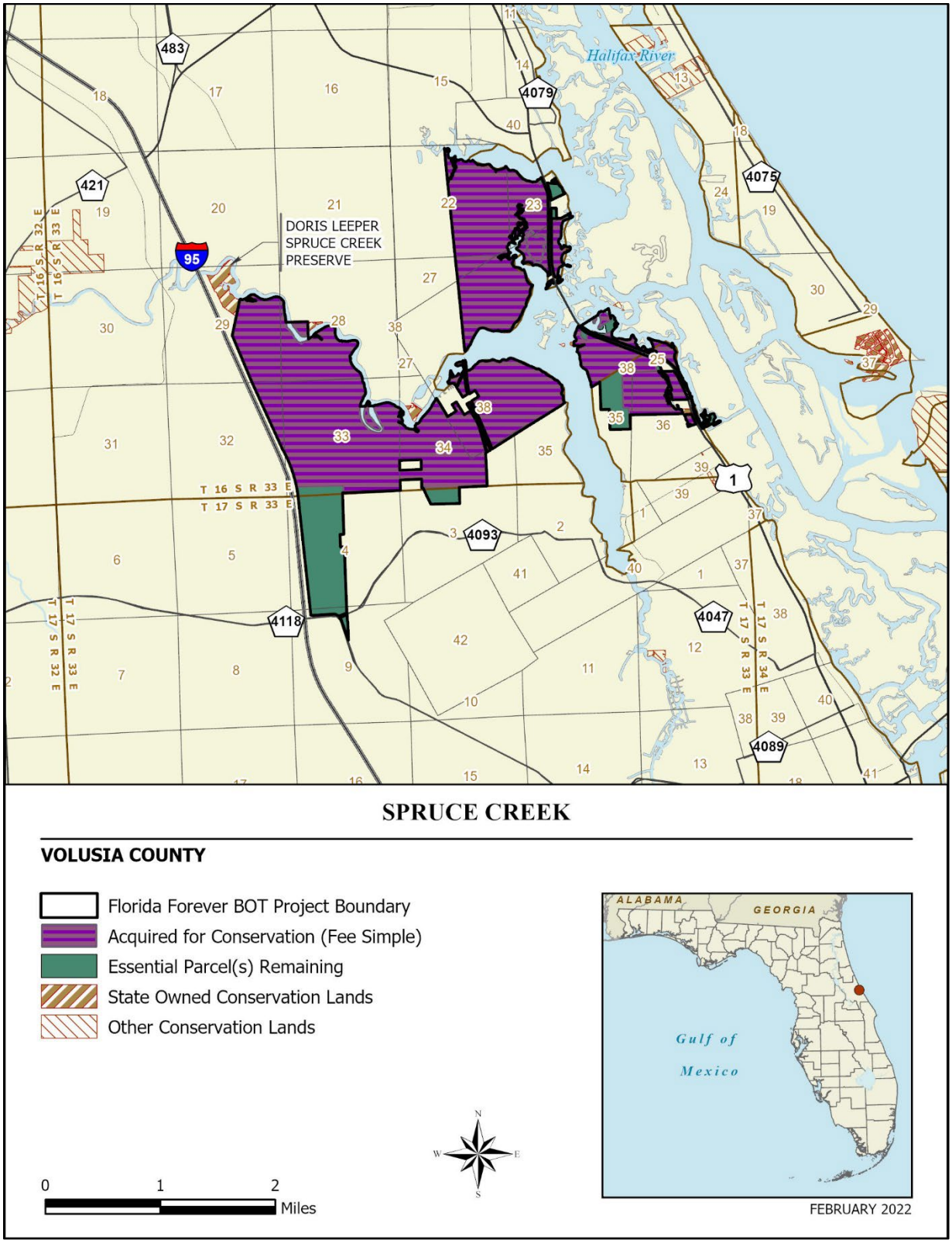
Cooperators in management activities

Port Orange and New Smyrna Beach both will be involved in the planning of the project. The Museum of Arts and Sciences and the Atlantic Center for the Arts may prove to be valuable partners in optimizing the educational and interpretive opportunities on this site. The Nature Conservancy still owns the 150 acres that is managed by the Museum of Arts and Sciences. The Environmental Council and Sierra Club have played important roles in the early protection of the creek including sponsoring Outstanding Florida Waters status in 1986. The Southeast Volusia Historical Society and Volusia Anthropological Society have had long-standing interest in protection and interpretation of the cultural, historical and archaeological resources located on the project site. Volunteers will be invaluable in developing, managing, and interpreting the site.

Management Cost Summary

Volusia County	1996/97	1997/98
Source of Funds	Volusia County	Volusia County
OPS	$0	$0
Expense	$0	$0
OCO	$0	$0
FCO	$0	$0
TOTAL	$6,240	$6,240

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted



Map 1: FNAI, February 2022