

Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem

Partnerships and Regional Incentives

Martin County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1995
<i>Project Acres</i>	14,403
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	6,225
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	8,179
<i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$198,711,730

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem project will conserve some of the last remaining scrub, pine flatwoods, marshes and South Fork’s floodplain along the St. Lucie River. The project contributes to the protection of the quality of water in the St. Lucie and Loxahatchee River basins and will provide the public with the opportunity to enjoy the original landscape of this fast-growing area.

General Description

Mesic to wet flatwoods, which cover almost half of the project, extend from the floodplain forest along the South Fork St. Lucie River east to two ridges. One of the largest remaining islands of Atlantic Coastal Ridge scrub occupies these ridges. Most of the rare species associated with the project inhabit the scrub, including the Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) and extremely rare and federally listed perforate reindeer lichen (*Cladonia perforata*). However, scrub habitat is being lost to development. The area also includes the headwaters of the South Fork St. Lucie River (a part of the drainage basin of the Loxahatchee River) which is important for Martin County’s water supply. No archaeological sites are known to occur in the project.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Florida sandhill crane	G5T2/S2
<i>perforate reindeer lichen</i>	G2G3/S2S3
<i>nodding pinweed</i>	G3/S3
<i>Piedmont jointgrass</i>	G3/S3
Bald eagle	G5/S3

Public Use

This project is designated as a state park with uses such as picnicking, hiking, fishing and canoeing.



Acquisition Planning

This project consists of 28 ownerships (with five relatively large ownerships). Essential parcels are those on the eastern project boundary including Davis, Shaw and Commercial Bank Medalist (acquired under contract by the South Florida Water Management District; SFWMD). Mobil-Seawind (acquired) is also an essential tract.

1995

On February 14, 1995, the Governor and Cabinet directed the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council to hold a public workshop with Martin County, SFWMD, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, interested environmental and economic development organizations, private landowners and interested citizens to establish a workplan for this project. Further, the Governor and Cabinet directed that the "Conservation and Recreation Lands Program committee report to the Cabinet with their determination prior to any purchases on that particular tract of land." Public meetings were held on June 12, 1995, and October 5, 1995.

On October 30, 1995, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council removed approximately 480 acres from the project boundary due to input received at the public meetings. The tracts had been recently developed.

1996

On July 16, 1996, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council added 41 acres to the project boundary and approximately 2,118 acres were marked as the minimum acceptable acquisition boundary for the Mobil (Seawind) ownership within the project boundary.

1998

On October 15, 1998, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council designated the Phase II corridor to Jonathan Dickinson State Park as essential.

1999

On October 21, 1999, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) added 598 acres to the project boundary as essential parcels.

2000

On August 22, 2000, ARC added 1,920 acres to the project boundary.

2005

On February 11, 2005, ARC approved adding 304 acres in 16 parcels (Kitching Creek Addition) to the boundaries of the project.

2006

On December 8, 2006, ARC approved moving the project from Group B to Group A of the Florida Forever Priority List.

2008

On July 16, 2008, Martin County acquired the Canopus property (5.75 acres) for access to Kitching Creek.





2009

On April 24, 2009, Martin County acquired the Datillio property (44.98 acres).

2010

On February 19, 2010, ARC approved removing 1,532 acres, disturbed by development and no longer desirable for state acquisition (just tax value of \$489,091,150), from the project boundary.

2011

On December 9, 2011, ARC placed this project in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category.

Coordination

SFWMD is an acquisition partner.

Management Policy Statement

The goals of management of the Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem project are to conserve and protect environmentally unique and irreplaceable lands that contain native, rare and imperiled species; to conserve, protect, manage or restore ecosystems; to enhance or protect significant natural resources which local or state regulatory programs cannot adequately protect; and to provide areas for recreational uses.

Manager(s)

The Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Recreation and Parks is the recommended manager for this project.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for State Designation

This project has the size and quality of resources desired for management under the state park system.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

The Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem project is a high-need management area requiring intensive resource management and protection. Depending on the types of public use, there may be additional needs for management of public use activities and facilities.

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

After acquisition, management activities will concentrate on site security, natural resource protection and efforts to develop a plan for long-term public use and resource management consistent with the stated goals and objectives of the approved Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem Project Assessment.

Revenue-generating Potential

No significant revenue is expected to be generated initially. After the initial acquisition, it will likely be several years before any significant public-use facilities are developed. The degree of any future revenue generated would depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities. Revenue generated by the nearby Jonathan Dickinson State Park for Fiscal Year 1993-94 was \$364,711.





Cooperators in Management Activities

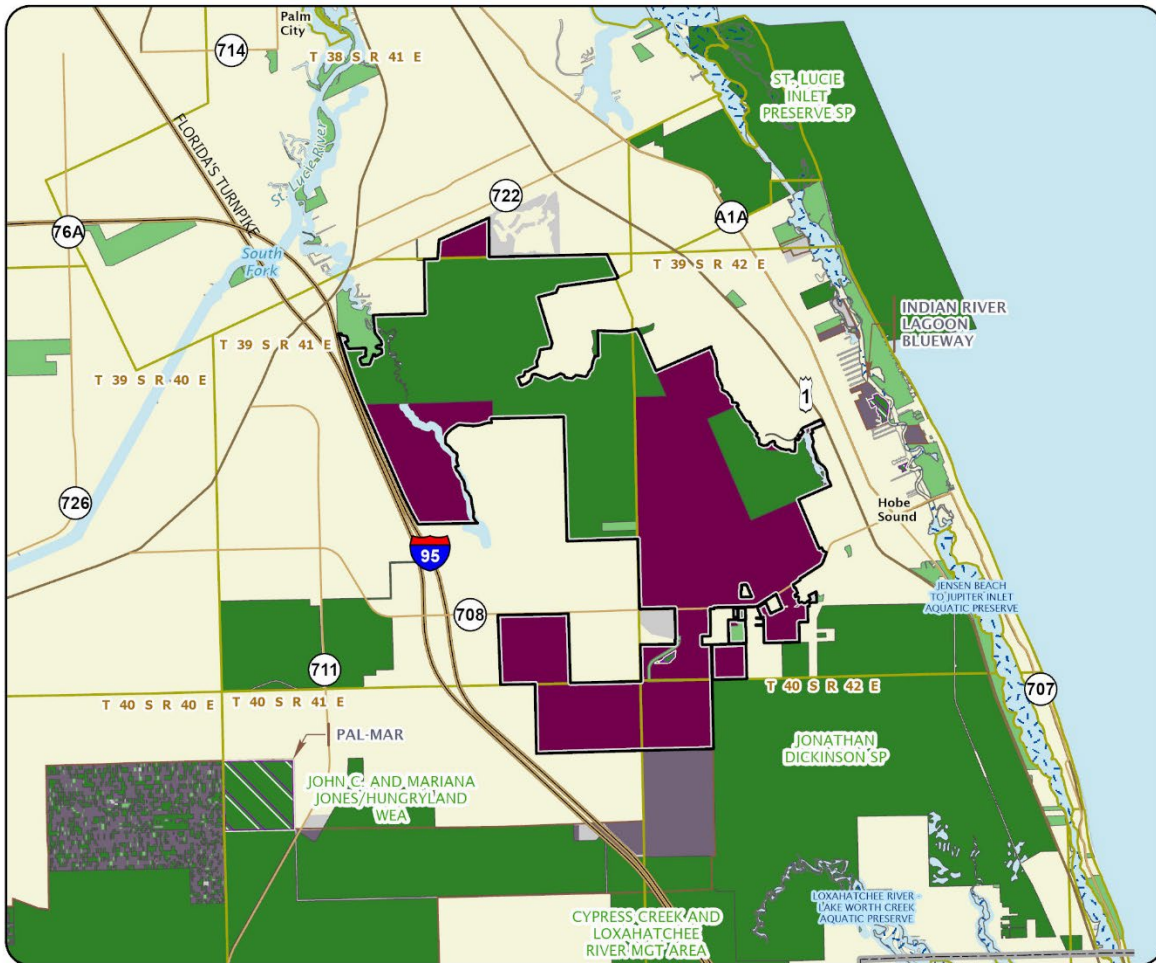
No local government or others are recommended for management of this project.

Management Cost Summary

<u>DRP</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	LATF	LATF
Salary	\$52,994	\$52,994
OPS	\$8,000	\$8,000
Expense	\$26,307	\$26,307
OCO	\$129,212	\$129,212
TOTAL	\$216,513	\$216,513

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





ATLANTIC RIDGE ECOSYSTEM

MARTIN COUNTY

