ITEM 6:

Consider a 10-year update to the Ochlockonee River and Bald Point State Park Management Plan (Lease Nos. 2469 and 4244).

LOCATION:

Franklin and Wakulla counties

APPLICANT:

Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP)

STAFF REMARKS:

Bald Point State Park and Ochlockonee River State Park are located in Franklin and Wakulla counties, respectively, with the Ochlockonee River and Ochlockonee Bay acting as the boundary between the two counties. Access to Bald Point State Park is from US 98 and Alligator Drive, while access to Ochlockonee River is from US 319.

Ochlockonee River State Park was initially acquired on May 14, 1970, from the federal government. The park is currently 546.46 acres. The Trustees hold fee simple title to the park, and on October 12, 1970, the park was leased (Lease Number 2469) to DRP under a 99-year lease. The current lease will expire on October 12, 2069.

Bald Point State Park was initially acquired on August 30, 1999, from the Trust for Public Land with Preservation 2000 funding. The park is currently 12,152.22 acres. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) hold fee simple title, and on August 30, 1999, the Trustees leased (Lease Number 4244) the property to DRP under a 50-year lease. The current lease will expire on August 29, 2049.

In 2020, the Bluffs of St. Teresa was acquired from Ochlockonee Bay Timberlands as part of the Dickerson Bay/Bald Point Florida Forever project. Of the 17,190 acres that was acquired, 6,031 acres referred to the St. Teresa Tract, was added to the lease and will be managed as part of Bald Point State Park.

Although Ochlockonee River State Park and Bald Point State Park have two separate leases and are classified as separate units in the Florida State Park system, this plan will discuss the objectives for these units in three chapters:

- Ochlockonee River chapter
- Bald Point chapter
- St. Teresa Tract (of Bald Point) chapter

Ochlockonee River State Park, Bald Point State Park, and the St. Teresa Tract total approximately 12,644 acres and include 26 natural communities and 4 altered landcovers. In addition to ongoing maintenance through prescribed fire and invasive species treatment, large-scale pine plantation restoration efforts will be pursued at each unit. The largest natural community consists of mesic flatwoods, followed by scrubby flatwoods. Together the parks are home to many imperiled species. The parks are home to seven imperiled plant species and 47 imperiled animal species.

The Florida Legislature requires that all land management plans include long and short-term goals. These goals must be measurable objectives, and short-term goals must be achievable

within a two-year planning period. Pursuant to section 253.034, Florida Statutes, the Division of State Lands began compiling the short-term goals from each land management plan approved since July 1, 2016. The management plan identified objectives under the following short-term goals: protection of water quality and quantity, habitat restoration and improvement, listed species management, public access and recreational opportunities, exotic and invasive species maintenance and control, capital facilities and infrastructure, and cultural resources.

Public Involvement

DRP solicited public input by conducting a public workshop and advisory group meeting on October 4 and 5, 2022, respectively. The purpose 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. Advisory groups for Florida State Parks consist of stakeholders – which include representatives of local, state, and federal government agencies, environmental organizations, recreational user groups, adjacent landowners, and the park's citizen support organization.

OCHLOCKONEE RIVER STATE PARK

Background

The purpose of Ochlockonee River State Park is to conserve and interpret the park's pristine longleaf pine forests, an ecosystem which used to cover much of the state. These forests provide critical habitat for rare and threatened wildlife, such as the red-cockaded woodpecker. The park also provides exceptional outdoor resource-based recreation to visitors at the confluence of the Ochlockonee and Dead rivers.

For over 50 years, Ochlockonee River State Park has provided visitors with exceptional recreational opportunities. With over 1.5 miles of scenic shoreline along the Ochlockonee and Dead rivers, the park has long been popular with boaters, paddlers, and fishermen. The land base of the park features a mosaic of carefully restored longleaf pine forests and pristine wetlands that provide an excellent setting for hiking and observation of many rare and unique flora and fauna. Additionally, the park has a 30-site campground to accommodate overnight visitors, a recently improved boat ramp and kayak launch, and a large day-use area with a dock and swimming area.

Management Plan Overview

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) has identified 13 distinct natural community types at Ochlockonee River State Park. They also identified three altered landcover types. The predominant natural community is mesic flatwoods.

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 two archaeological site and eight historic structures within the park.

Surplus Lands

The evaluation by the DRP determined that no portion of the Ochlockonee River State Park is recommended for a potential surplus designation.

State Land Management Review Team

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

BALD POINT STATE PARK

Background

The purpose of Bald Point State Park is to protect the sensitive natural communities of the surrounding coastal areas, which are home to many rare and endangered species. The park supplements the protection provided by the nearby St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge while providing resource-based recreation to Florida residents and visitors. The numerous tidal creeks and salt marshes are favored by paddlers and fisherman, while the park's upland areas and beaches provide exceptional opportunities for bird watching and wildlife appreciation.

Bald Point State Park is the largest coastal park in the Northwest Region of the Florida State Park system and offers remarkable resource-based outdoor recreation opportunities, including fishing, paddling, hiking, birding, and camping.

Located where Ochlockonee Bay and Apalachee Bay converge, Bald Point State Park has provided visitors with numerous recreational opportunities since opening in 1999. The park features miles of creeks, streams, and tidal marshes ideal for paddlers and fishermen alike, while its 4,000-plus acres of upland flatwoods and scrub provide ample opportunity for hiking and biking. The park is also a popular destination for viewing birds and monarch butterflies during their yearly migrations. Two separate beach access day use areas allow visitors to relax along the beaches of the namesake Bald Point.

Management Plan Overview

FNAI has identified 14 distinct natural community types at Bald Point State Park. They also identified three altered landcover types. The predominant natural community is mesic flatwoods.

DHR maintains a Master Site File that documents many of Florida's archaeological and historical features. A review of information obtained from the FMSF disclosed 31 archaeological sites within or partially within the park.

Surplus Lands

The evaluation by the DRP determined that no portion of the Bald Point State Park is recommended for a potential surplus designation.

State Land Management Review Team

A Land Management Review (LMR) was conducted in April 2021. The review team found that the property is managed in accordance with the purposes for which it was acquired and the management practices, including public access, are in compliance with the management plan. No consensus recommendations were offered by the team.

ST. TERESA TRACT (BALD POINT STATE PARK)

Background

The St. Teresa Tract, 6,031 acres to the west side of Bald Point State Park, is the achievement of a major land acquisition project. The property is managed as the portion of Bald Point State Park west and north of US Highway 98 in Franklin County on the peninsular formation known as St.

James Island. The purpose of the St. Teresa Tract of Bald Point State Park is to restore and maintain the natural communities surrounding Ochlockonee Bay and Alligator Harbor while providing high-quality outdoor resource-based recreation compatible with protection of natural resources. The St. Teresa Tract creates a contiguous protected landscape between Bald Point State Park and other regional conservation lands such as Ochlockonee River State Park, Tate's Hell State Forest, the Apalachicola National Forest, and the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

The addition of the St. Teresa Tract offers a substantial range of recreation, interpretation, and restoration opportunities that will bridge a connectivity gap between Ochlockonee River State Park and the prior boundaries of Bald Point. Including seven miles of intricate creek and river frontage and another four miles of open bay shoreline, the acquisition is well suited for day or overnight paddling excursions with varied estuarine scenery. Through the interior of the acquisition, two recently established loop trails and other potential trail alignments will afford hikers the opportunity to traverse more than 10 miles of sandhill, scrub, and flatwoods natural communities. Noteworthy topographic features include the bluffs site overlooking Bear Creek in the northwestern portion and several relict dunes in the southeastern portion. Several lakes, ponds, and wetlands are scattered throughout. As the majority of the interior acreage was managed for silviculture, intensive landscape scale habitat restoration will be necessary parkwide.

Management Plan Overview

FNAI has identified 20 distinct natural community types at the St. Teresa Tract. They also identified one altered landcover types. The predominant natural community is mesic flatwoods.

DHR maintains a Master Site File that documents many of Florida's archaeological and historical features. A review of information obtained from the FMSF disclosed 12 archaeological sites within or partially within the park.

Surplus Lands

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

State Land Management Review Team

This property has not been subject to a review by an inter-agency land management review team.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the management plan.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

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

Lead Agency:	Department of Environmental Protection Division of Recreation and Parks	
Common Name of Property:	Ochlockonee River State Park	
Location:	Wakulla County	
Acreage:	547.39 Acres	

Acreage Breakdown

Natural Communities	Acres
Mesic Flatwoods	155.36
Pine Plantation	128.46
Wet Flatwood	75.70
Depression Marsh	39.10
Developed	27.90
Scrubby Flatwood	24.74
Sandhill	24.39
Blackwater Stream	24.15
Floodplain Swamp	19.39
Floodplain Marsh	12.01
Alluvial Forest	7.95
Successional Hardwood Forest	3.31
Flatwood/ Prairie Lake	2.22
Borrow Area	0.94
Bottomland Forest	0.88
Baygall	0.80

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 2469

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): Initial acquisition from the Trust for Public Land in

August 1999 under Consecration and Lands (CARL). See Addendum 1.

Unique Features

Overview: The purpose of Ochlockonee River State Park is to conserve and interpret the tract of pristine longleaf pine forests, an ecosystem which historically spanned much of the state. These forests provide critical habitat for rare and threatened wildlife, such as the red-cockaded woodpecker. The park also provides exceptional outdoor resource-based recreation to visitors at the confluence of the Ochlockonee and Dead rivers.

Natural: The park is comprised of a mosaic of upland and wetland communities, dominated by mesic flatwoods. Decades of prescribed burning have rendered an excellent example of longleaf pine flatwoods management within the Florida Park Service. Additionally, the park provides habitat for several listed, threatened, or endangered species such as gopher tortoises, flatwoods salamanders, and red-cockaded woodpeckers.

Archaeological/Historic: The park preserves and interprets a wide-ranging variety of important cultural sites, including two shell midden sites.

Management Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Measurable objectives and actions have been identified for each of the management goals for Ochlockonee River 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 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.

Work plans provide the DRP 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, 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 259.032, Florida Statutes.

Goals, objectives, and actions identified in this management plan will serve as the basis for developing annual work plans for the park. Since the 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 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 A: Conduct/obtain an assessment of the park's hydrological restoration needs.
- Objective B: Restore hydrological conditions to approximately 14 acres
- Objective C: Investigate and address erosion issues on approximately 2,000 feet of Ochlockonee River shoreline
- Objective D: Address water quality issues in designated swimming area on the Dead River

Natural Communities Management

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

- Objective A: Maintain 393 acres within the optimum fire return interval
- Objective B: Conduct habitat/natural community restoration activities
 on 93 acres
- Objective C: Conduct natural communities improvement activities on 3 acres

Imperiled Species Management

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

- Objective A: Develop/Update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory for plants and animals as needed.
- Objective B: Monitor and document 2 selected imperiled animal species in the park.
- Objective C: Implement monitoring protocols for 1 selected imperiled animal species
- Objective D: Continue existing monitoring protocol for 1 selected imperiled plant species
- Objective E: Develop new monitoring protocols for 6 selected imperiled plant species

Invasive and Nuisance Species Management

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

- Objective A: Annually treat 0.3 infested acres of invasive plant species
- Objective B: Implement control measures on 5 nuisance species
- Objective C: Implement control measures on 3 invasive animal species
- Objective D: Implement Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) for new invasive species

Cultural Resource Management

Cultural Resource Management

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

- Objective A: Assess and evaluate 2 of 2 recorded cultural resources in the park.
- Objective B: Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.
- Objective C: Monitor and conduct additional assessments for recorded cultural resources determined to be in poor condition.

Ten-Year Implementation Schedule and Cost Estimates: See page 155.

Acquisition Needs/Acreage: The optimum boundary for Ochlockonee River State Park includes seven parcels located immediately south of the park between the park and the Ochlockonee River. The two largest parcels total 324.78 acres and are zoned for agriculture. These two undeveloped parcels would feature numerous creeks and wetlands, including creeks which cross into the park's boundary. Acquiring these parcels would greatly increase the park's river frontage. The remaining five parcels are residential and total 8.9 acres and are located along Highway 319. Acquiring these parcels would buffer the park from further development along Highway 319.

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

Public Involvement: DRP provided an opportunity for public input by conducting a public open house meeting and advisory group process to present the draft management plan to stakeholders. These meetings were held on October 4, 2022 and October 5, 2022, respectively. Meeting notices were published in the Florida Administrative Register, September 28, 2022, Volume 48, Issue 189, included on the Department Internet Calendar, posted in clear view at the park, and promoted locally. The purpose of the advisory group meeting is to provide the advisory group members an opportunity to discuss the draft management plan (see Addendum 2).

Summary of Significant Changes in the Management Plan Update

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

- Improve park entrance and expand ranger station to include additional office space
- Improve configuration of boat ramp parking area
- Install climate control system within bathhouse and convert four existing RV sites located within southwest corner of the campground loop, currently 40 feet, into 30 feet RV sites
- Install cleats on Dead River floating dock, and construct new floating docks on the Ochlockonee River, towards the point of confluence of the Ochlockonee and Dead Rivers
- Develop spur trails to bypass wetland feature on the Flatwoods Trail and connect Flatwoods Trail to Scenic Drive
- Replace portable toilet with permanent restroom in an appropriate location within primitive group camp
- Construct new storage facility and new shop building within support area

Lead Agency:	Department of Environmental Protection Division of Recreation and Parks
Common Name of Property:	Bald Point State Park
Location:	Franklin County
Acreage:	6,120.33 Acres

Acreage Breakdown

Natural Communities	Acres
Pine Plantation	2,396.65
Basin Marsh	800.81
Estuarine Tidal Marsh	699.69
Mesic Flatwoods	448.92
Scrub	423.70
Wet Flatwoods	397.00
Scrubby Flatwoods	300.15
Flatwoods/Prairie Lake	280.39
Depression Marsh	104.92
Salt Marsh	64.80
Beach Dune	63.70
Baygall	37.05
Maritime Hammock	28.84
Xeric Hammock	28.46
Developed	21.46
Marsh Lake	14.38
Clearing/Regeneration	9.40

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 4244

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): Initial acquisition from the Trust for Public Lands in August 1999 under Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) see Addendum 1 for details.

Unique Features

Overview: The park is currently 12,152.22 acres. The purpose of Bald Point State Park is to protect the sensitive natural communities of the surrounding coastal areas, which are home to many rare and endangered species. The park supplements the protection provided by the nearby St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge while providing resource-based recreation to Florida residents and visitors. The numerous tidal creeks and salt marshes are favored by paddlers and fisherman, while the upland areas and beaches provide exceptional opportunities for bird watching and wildlife appreciation.

Natural: The park protects one of the largest segments of undeveloped sandy and estuarine shorelines along the Florida Panhandle. These protected communities provide important habitat for several imperiled species, including gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), American oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*), rufa red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*), Wilson's plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*), and nesting opportunities for several species of sea turtle. The park's expansive acreage also provides suitable habitat for Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*).

Archaeological/Historic: The park preserves and interprets a wide-ranging variety of important cultural sites, including Weeden Island, Deptford, and Fort Walton period shell mounds, an early-mid 20th century seineyard, a turpentine shanty, and a portion of Camp Gordon Johnston that served as a U.S. Army training camp for amphibious landing operations in preparation for the Normandy Invasion of World War II.

Management Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Measurable objectives and actions have been identified for each of the management goals for Bald Point 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 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.

Work plans provide the DRP 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, DRP

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 259.032, Florida Statutes.

Goals, objectives, and actions identified in this management plan will serve as the basis for developing annual work plans for the park. Since the 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 A: Conduct/obtain an assessment of the park's hydrological restoration needs.
- Objective: Restore natural hydrological conditions and function to approximately 83.6 acres of mesic flatwoods natural community.

Natural Communities Management

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

- Objective: Maintain 4,872.15 acres within the optimum fire return interval.
- Objective: Conduct natural community restoration activities on 2,396 acres.
- Objective: Conduct natural community improvement activities on 3,975 acres.

Imperiled Species Management

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

- Objective: Update baseline imperiled species occurrence list.
- Objective: Continue existing monitoring protocols for 11 imperiled animal species.
- Objective: Implement monitoring protocols for 6 selected imperiled animal species.
- Objective: Improve Sea Turtle nesting habitat.
- Objective: Improve shorebird/seabird habitat.
- Objective: Continue existing monitoring protocols for 1 selected imperiled plant species.

Invasive and Nuisance Species Management

Goal: Remove invasive species and conduct maintenance control.

- Objective: Annually treat 2 infested acres of invasive plant species.
- Objective: Implement control measures on 5 nuisance species.
- Objective: Implement control measures on invasive animal species.
- Objective: Implement Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) for new invasive species.

Cultural Resource Management

Cultural Resource Management

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

- Objective: Assess/evaluate 31 of 31 recorded cultural resources in the park.
- Objective: Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.
- Objective: Monitor and conduct additional assessments of recorded cultural resources determined to be in poor condition.
- Objective: Bring 3 of 8 recorded cultural resources into good condition.

Ten-Year Implementation Schedule and Cost Estimates: See Cost Estimates Table, page 155.

Acquisition Needs/Acreage: The following parcels, totaling approximately 83.9 acres, should be considered for addition to Bald Point State Park:

- Along the north side of Alligator Drive, just east of Pine Street, are 10 parcels totaling about 16.7 acres, all zoned single-family residential.
- A parcel north of the intersection of Alligator Drive and Bald Point Road totaling 2.07 acres, zoned single family residential.
- 36 single-family residential parcels located along Bald Point Road.
- Approximately 72 single-family residential parcels located in the Lakeview Drive residential development.

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

Public Involvement: DRP provided an opportunity for public input by conducting a public open house meeting and advisory group process to present the draft management plan to stakeholders. These meetings were held on October 4, 2022 and October 5, 2022, respectively. Meeting notices were published in the Florida Administrative Register, September 28, 2022, Volume 48, Issue 189, included on the Department Internet Calendar, posted in clear view at the park, and promoted locally. The purpose of the advisory group meeting is to provide the advisory group members an opportunity to discuss the draft management plan (see Addendum 2).

Summary of Significant Changes in the Management Plan Update

Park Entrance

- 1. Install park entrance sign
- 2. Construct ranger station and parking area

Chaires Creek Day Use Area

- 1. Complete construction of the previously planned and permitted restrooms and picnic pavilions
- 2. Construct sidewalk connecting day use area to bridge
- 3. Address areas of erosion around bridge

Sunrise Beach Access

- 1. Partner with Franklin County to improve pedestrian crosswalk at Bald Point Road
- 2. Construct permanent ADA parking spaces in main parking area west of Bald Point Road with sidewalk connecting to improved crosswalk
- 3. Construct permanent restroom facility in parking area west of Bald Point road

Maritime Beach Access

- 1. Develop vehicle turn-around area, possibly in partnership with Franklin County if outside entrance gate
- 2. Redevelop entrance gate to accommodate two-way traffic
- 3. Enhance landscape in parking area median, utilizing native species

North Point Beach Access

1. Construct permanent restroom facility in appropriate location Design elements should prioritize small footprint and avoiding additional clearing and ground disturbance. If feasible, the restroom should be a single unit and constructed at grade.

<u>Trails</u>

- 1. Sand Pine Trail
 - Install interpretive kiosk
 - Install potable water source
 - Stabilize and expand parking to accommodate up to 10 vehicles
 - Identify and establish new trail routes through newly added St. Teresa acquisition property
- 2. Bombing Range Trail
 - Reconstruct collapsed bridge

- 3. Tucker Loop
 - Connect Tucker Loop trail to new Chaires Creek day use are via one of the following options:
 - Construct sidewalk along park entrance road from day use area to where trail intersects the entrance road
 - Re-route the trail along management road leading to former paddling launch on Tucker Lake
 - Develop new trail through flatwoods south of entrance road
 This option may require boardwalk to traverse wet areas

Support & Residence Area

1. Construct enclosed barn/garage facility to protect equipment and vehicles from salt spray and subsequent deterioration

Alligator Harbor Shoreline

1.

1. Install signage and fencing to mitigate improper visitor access to shoreline

New Campground to Beach Access Trail

- Three potential alternatives for trail alignments:
 - Alternative 1: South of Maritime Beach Access entrance gate
 - Designate multi-use trail along existing trail/management road from proposed campground area to Maritime Beach Access
 - Design and construct trail or sidewalk along shoulder of Bald Point Road from where existing trail/management road ends at Bald Point Road to the Maritime Beach entrance gate
 - o Install pedestrian access gate at entrance gate
 - Alternative 2: North of Maritime Beach Access entrance gate
 - Designate multi-use trail along existing trail/management road from proposed campground area to Maritime Beach Access
 - Develop new trail branching northeast off existing trail/management road
 - Construct boardwalk to traverse salt marsh located west of Maritime Beach Access.

Connect trail with Maritime Beach access day use area.

- Alternative 3: Sunrise Beach Trail
 - Designate multi-use trail along existing trail/management road to Sunrise Beach day use area
- 2. Ensure that the adequate buffer between trail/trailhead and proposed campground is established to separate use areas.

Campground Loop with Bathhouse

- 1. Conduct needed repairs to Chaires Creek Bridge
- 2. Develop site plan for new 8 to 12-acre campground within disturbed area east of Chaires Creek at the end of the existing park entrance road
- 3. Preserve tree canopy and provide maximum seclusion from adjacent sites
- 4. To preserve the wilderness viewshed of the Chaires Creek corridor, no sites or built facilities should be visible from the creek or Tucker Lake. This can be achieved by concentrating all facilities to the eastern side of the existing management road extending from the existing entrance road. This area is also where the majority of the upland area suitable for campground development is located.
- 5. Designate 5 sites for park model cabins
- 6. Develop campground loop road
- 7. Install utilities
- 8. Construct bathhouse
- 9. Protect upland area northwest of campground for well-separated trail

Alligator Harbor Boat Ramp

- 1. Assess suitability of an improved boat ramp along US Highway 98 at one of two locations within park boundary: Leonard's Landing or Two Rut.
 - Site suitability studies and stakeholder engagement must be conducted prior to any development. These studies will consider factors such as visitor preference, traffic patterns on US Highway 98, and hydrological and ecological impacts.
 - Consider partnering with Franklin County to redevelop the currently existing boat launch at Leonard's Landing.
 - Parking area may potentially be developed on north side of US 98 in parcel currently owned by Franklin County (contingent on coordination).

Lead Agency:	Department of Environmental Protection Division of Recreation and Parks	
Common Name of Property:	Bald Point State Park, St. Teresa Tract	
Location:	Franklin County	
Acreage:	6,031.89 Acres	

Acreage Breakdown

Natural Communities	Acres
Pine Plantation	3,635.51
Floodplain Swamp	637.73
Floodplain Marsh	485.91
Salt Marsh	342.47
Scrubby Flatwoods	161.89
Flatwoods/Prairie Lake	129.02
Wet Flatwoods	120.11
Basin Marsh	115.4
Estuarine Substrate	114.77
Depression Marsh	93.75
Successional Hardwood Forest	5.04
Scrub	39.89
Baygall	38.13
Shrub Bog	26.85
Mesic Hammock	8.72
Mesic Flatwoods	7.88
Sandhill Upland Lake	7.78
Xeric Hammock	6.20
Upland Hardwood Forest	4.42
Marsh Lake	3.23
Sandhill	2.17

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 4244

Use: Single Use

Management Responsibilities

Agency: Dept. of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and ParksResponsibility: Public Outdoor Recreation and ConservationDesignated 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): The St. Teresa Tract was acquired and added to the lease for Bald Point State Park in September 2020. Purchase – in partnership with Florida Forever, The Nature Conservancy, and Readiness & Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) – was from Ochlockonee Bay Timberlands. See Addendum 1 for details.

Unique Features

Overview: The St. Teresa Tract, which is the achievement of a major land acquisition project, is managed as the portion of Bald Point State Park west and north of US Highway 98 in Franklin County on the peninsular formation known as St. James Island. The purpose of the St. Teresa Tract of Bald Point State Park is to restore and maintain the natural communities surrounding Ochlockonee Bay and Alligator Harbor while providing high-quality outdoor resource-based recreation compatible with protection of natural resources. The St. Teresa Tract creates a contiguous protected landscape between Bald Point State Park and other regional conservation lands such as Ochlockonee River State Park, Tate's Hell State Forest, the Apalachicola National Forest, and the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

Traverse of the tract's significant acreage provides excellent opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in Florida's natural landscape. The tract is especially well suited for long-trek hiking, cross-country cycling, and equestrian riding.

Natural: The tract helps protect the westernmost Big Bend region salt marshes and the easternmost white sand beaches of the Florida Panhandle. Restoration of thousands of acres of former pine plantation on the tract will create and protect essential upland habitat for many rare and imperiled species, such as gopher tortoises, red-cockaded woodpeckers, and black bears; forming an essential link in a regional wildlife corridor. Acquisition of this land was strategic for protection of water quality in the surrounding bays and marshes, which support local aquaculture activity and provide foraging and nesting habitat for sea turtles, aquatic birds, alligators, and even manatees.

Archaeological/Historic: The St. Teresa Tract protects a wide array of culturally significant sites. Inventory and assessment are part of an ongoing effort. Features range from prehistoric middens and artifacts scatter to modern era military training facility sites. Additional information and management needs will be identified over the duration of the planning period.

Management Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Measurable objectives and actions have been identified for each of the management goals for the St. Teresa Tract of Bald Point 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 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.

The work plans provide the DRP 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, 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 259.032, 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 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: Assess the hydrological needs of the park.
- Objective: Mitigate erosion at the Bear Creek Bluff site.

Natural Communities Management

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

- Objective: Conduct natural community restoration activities on 4,338 acres.
- Objective: During restoration activities, conduct prescribed fire on 25 acres.

Imperiled Species Management

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

- Objective: Establish baseline imperiled species occurrence list.
- Objective: Implement monitoring protocols for 7 selected imperiled animal species.
- Objective: Develop new monitoring protocols for 3 selected imperiled plant species.

Invasive and Nuisance Species Management

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

- Objective: Annually treat 0.5 acres of infestation.
- Objective: Implement control measures on 1 invasive animal species.
- Objective: Implement control measures on 5 nuisance animal species.
- Objective: Implement Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) for new invasive species.

Cultural Resource Management

Cultural Resource Management

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

- Objective: Assess and evaluate 15 of 15 recorded cultural resources in the park.
- Objective: Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.
- Objective: Monitor and conduct additional assessments of recorded cultural resources determined to be in poor condition.

Ten-Year Implementation Schedule and Cost Estimates: See Cost Estimates Table, page 155.

Acquisition Needs/Acreage: Remaining parcels along the periphery should be evaluated for acquisition. See Bald Point chapter for discussion of optimum boundary.

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

Public Involvement: DRP provided an opportunity for public input by conducting a public open house meeting and advisory group process to present the draft management plan to stakeholders. These meetings were held on October 4, 2022 and October 5, 2022, respectively. Meeting notices were published in the Florida Administrative Register, September 28, 2022, Volume 48, Issue 189, included on the Department Internet Calendar, posted in clear view at the park, and promoted locally. The purpose of the advisory group meeting is to provide the advisory group members an opportunity to discuss the draft management plan (see Addendum 2).

Summary of Significant Changes in the Management Plan Update

Shared Entrance

- 1. Install park entrance sign on US Highway 98
- 2. Coordinate with Florida Forest Service to widen and stabilize entrance road as needed

Park Entrance

- 1. Install park entrance sign
- 2. Install iron ranger
- 3. Widen and stabilize park entrance road to same standard as the shared entrance road
- 4. Install box culvert at water crossing

Lakeside Day Use Area

- 1. Construct permanent restroom
- 2. Install potable water source
- 3. Improve parking and expand as needed
- 4. Construct picnic pavilions
- 5. Develop paddling launch at the lake

Bluffs Site

- 1. Install interpretive panels
- 2. Construct covered pavilions with consideration given to preventing viewshed interruption, crowding visitors, or causing erosion issues.
- Approximately 1,200 feet northwest of the bluffs site, construct dock or paddlecraft landing area along Bear Creek with connecting footpath
- 4. Just south of the main bluffs, develop additional landing area/access point

Support Area

- 1. Construct maintenance shop, pole barn, and storage facilities
- 2. Construct ranger residence

Granit Point

- 1. Install interpretive panels
- 2. Construct pavilions

Relict Dunes

- 1. Develop hiking trails to this area
- 2. Construct small observation platform with interpretive panels

Paddle-In Primitive Campsite

- 1. Cow Creek Primitive Camping Area (western portion of the tract)
 - Select ideal campsite locations away from wet soils
 - Install picnic tables, fire rings, hammock posts, and signage
 - Construction of screened camping platforms may be considered if funding and staff management capacity are adequate.
- 2. Select site for one additional paddle-in primitive campsite with the following considerations:
 - Site should be along Ochlockonee Bay shoreline between Cow Creek primitive camping area and Chaires Creek primitive camping area at Bald Point Tract.
 - Site should be in upland area to avoid flooding, sufficiently set back from shoreline, and separated from day use areas to mitigate improper use.

Multi-Use Trails

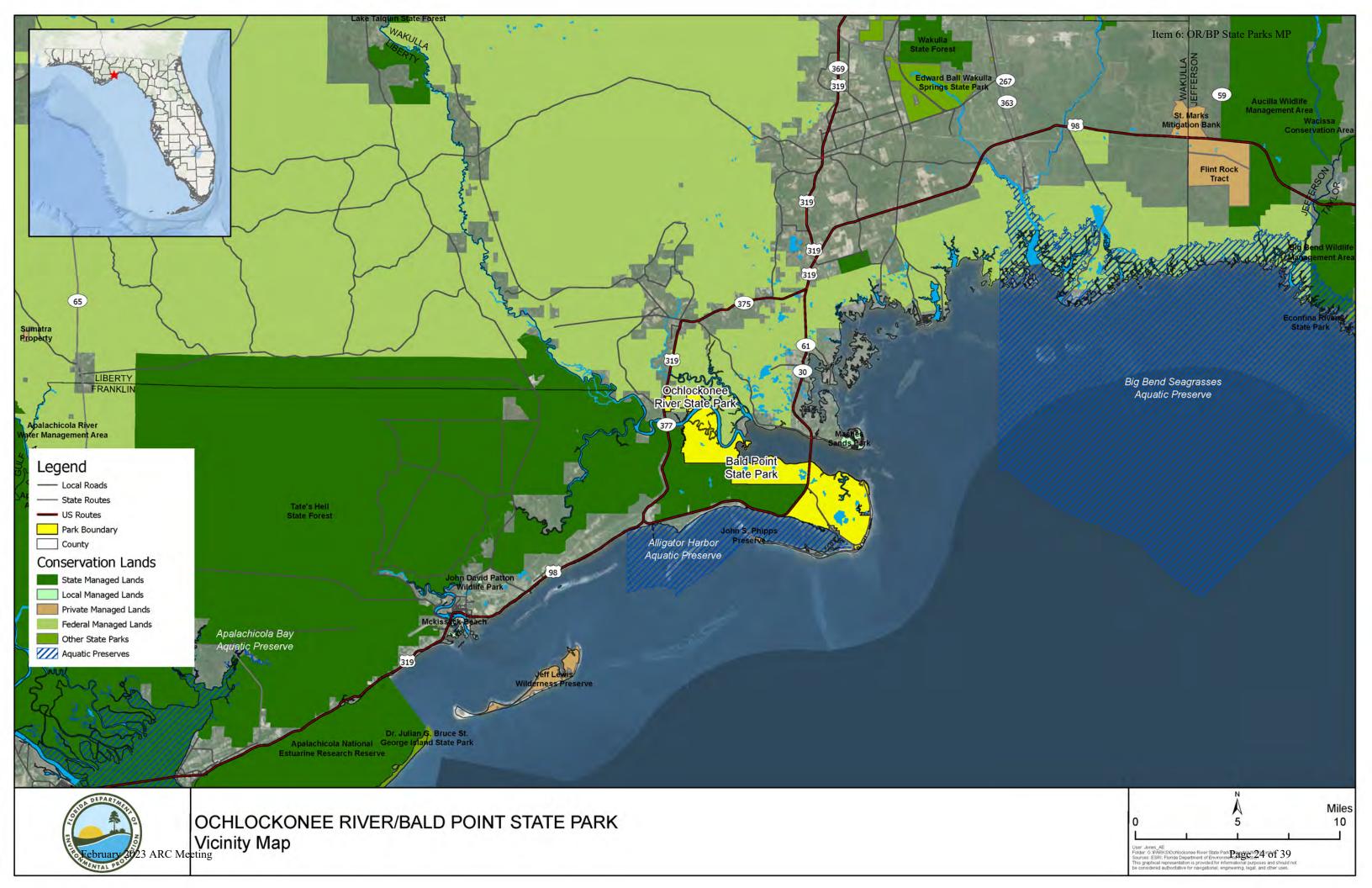
- 1. Extend hiking trails east toward Metcalf Lake and develop additional loops using existing road and trail systems.
- 2. Some trails in the park may also be used for cross-country cycling and horseback riding if no negative resource impacts are anticipated

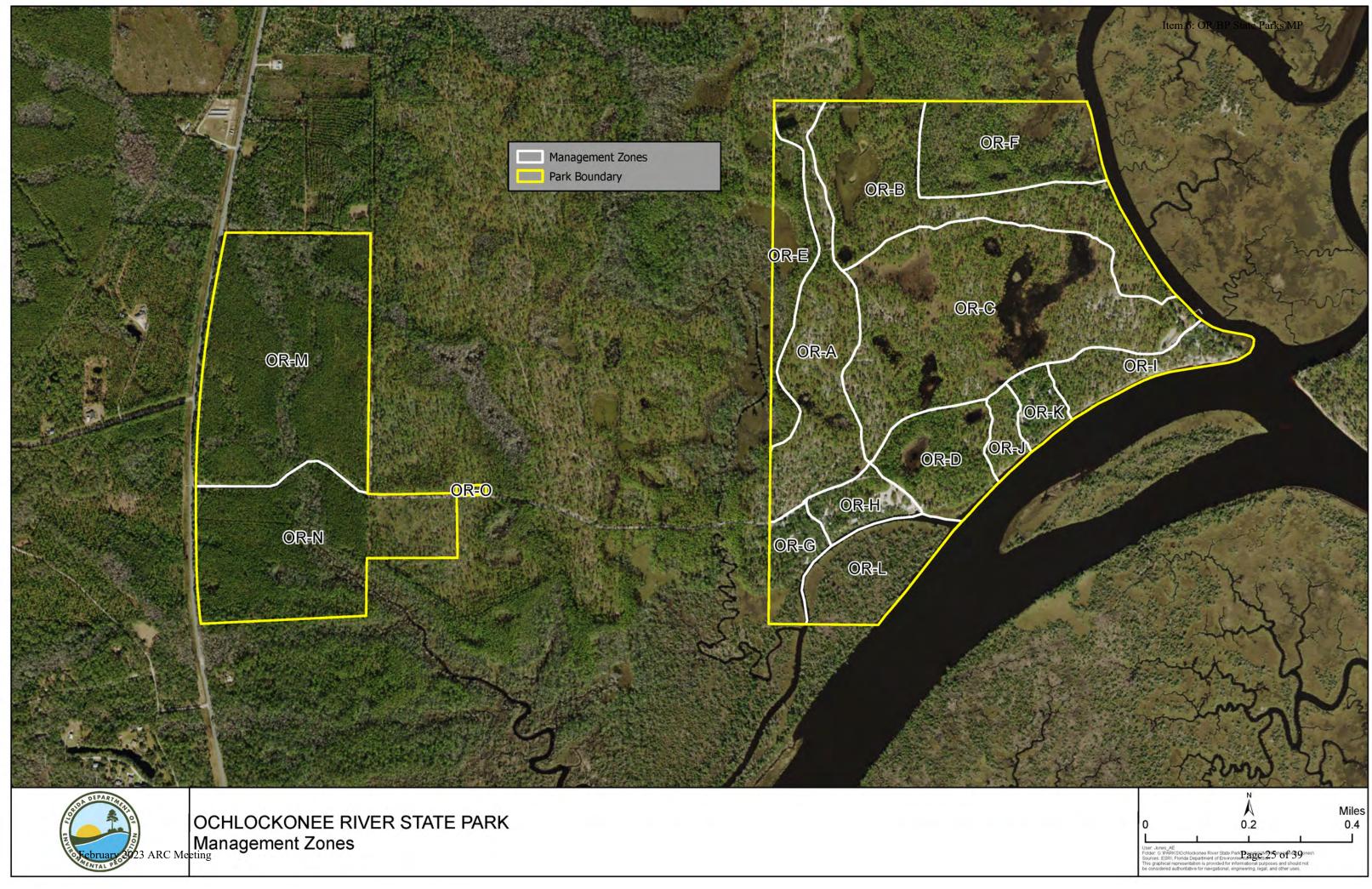
Primitive Equestrian Campground

- 1. Develop primitive equestrian campground in consideration of other infrastructural developments and access points.
- 2. Clear sites as necessary to accommodate up to 30 horse trailers
- 3. Upgrade, if appropriate, to a standard facility campground as the park is developed and if regional demand is suitable

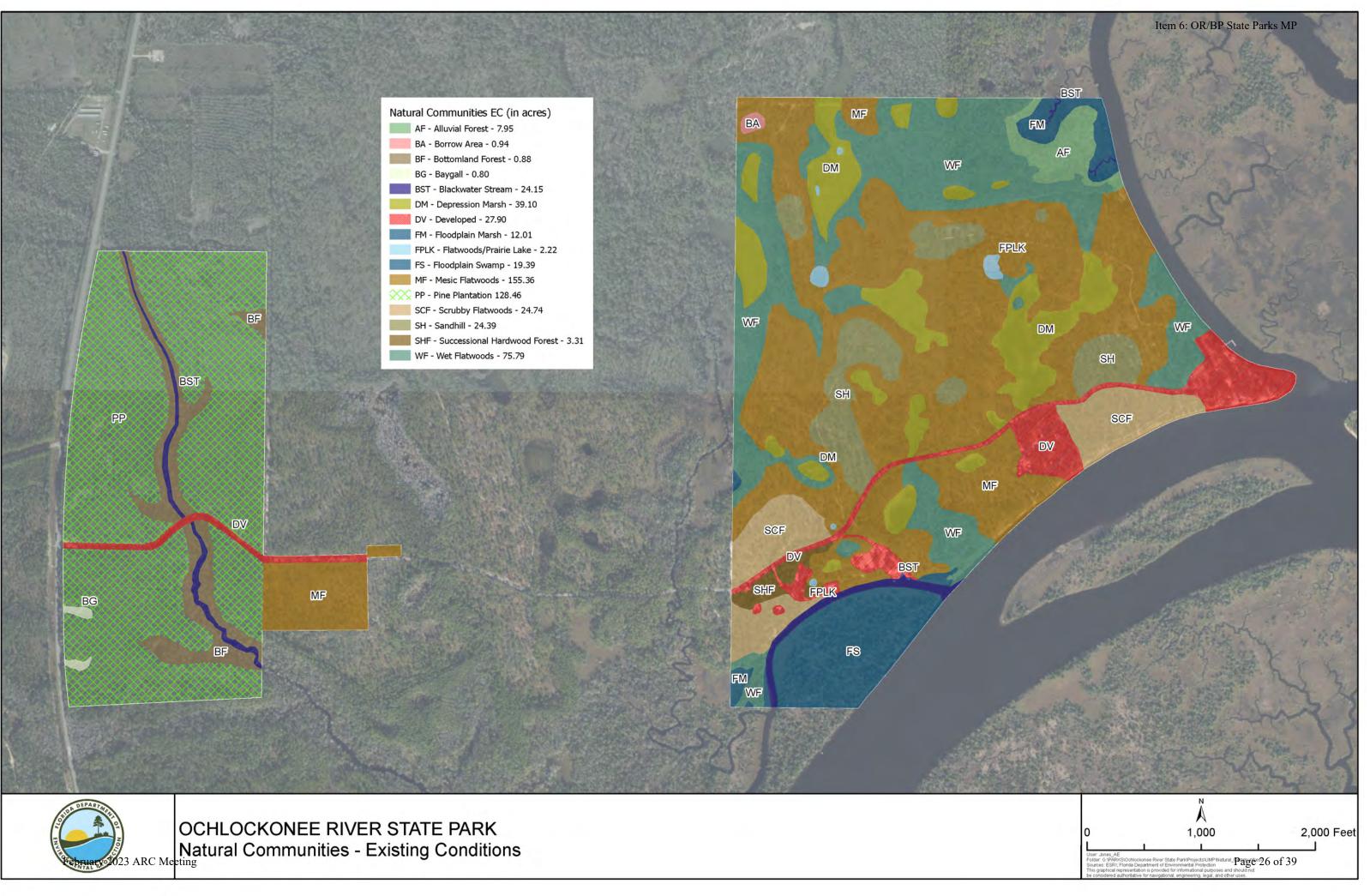
New Park Entrance and Road

- Contingent upon potential facilities, construct up to 4.5 miles of road that extends east-west on existing management roads that begins along US Highway 98 south of the Ochlockonee Bay Boat Ramp
 - a. Alignment, length, width, material, and other design elements of the road should be determined by the types (e.g., overnight vs. day use) and volume of visitor use.
- 2. Develop ranger station if necessary for visitor interface.

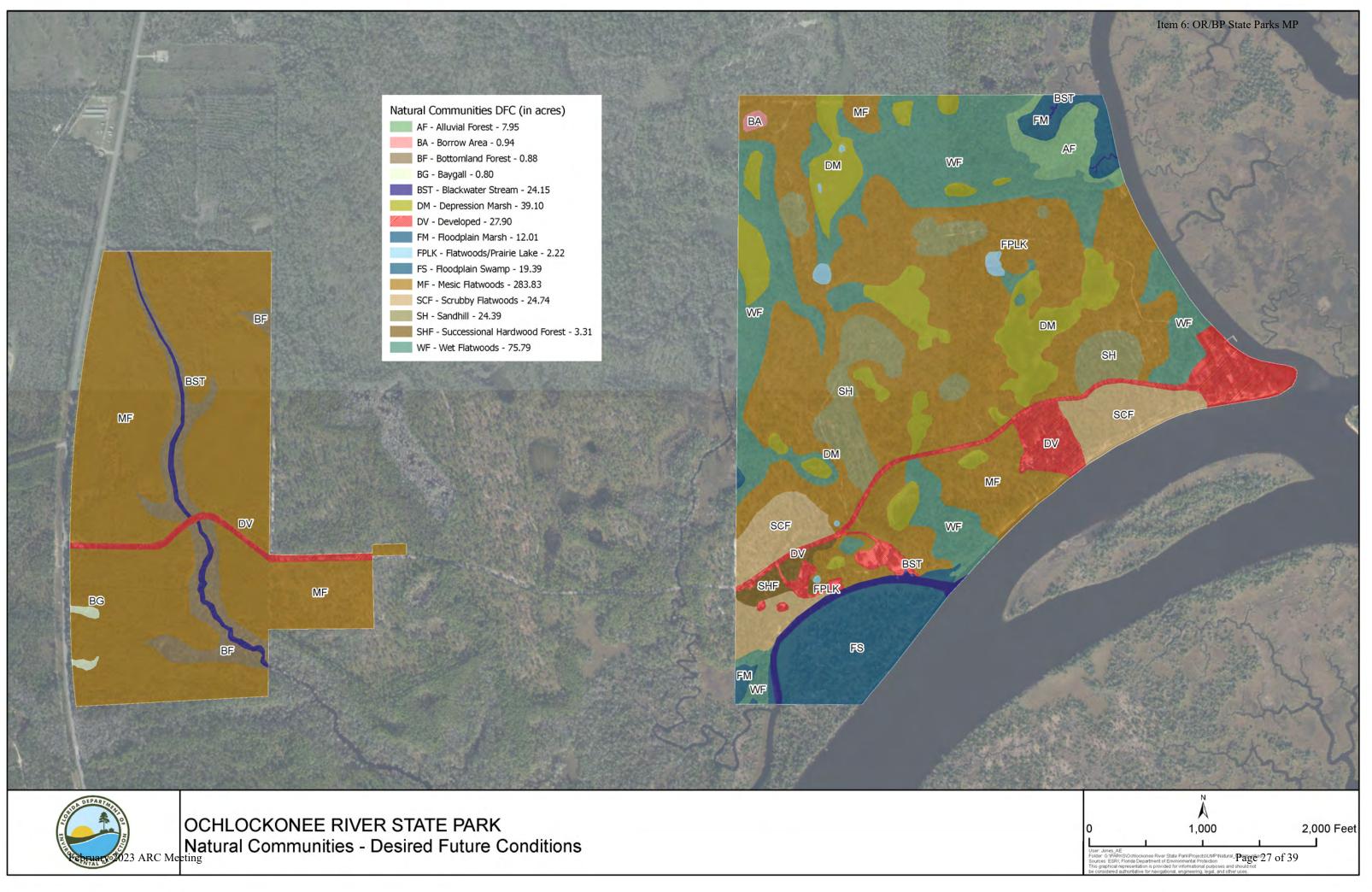




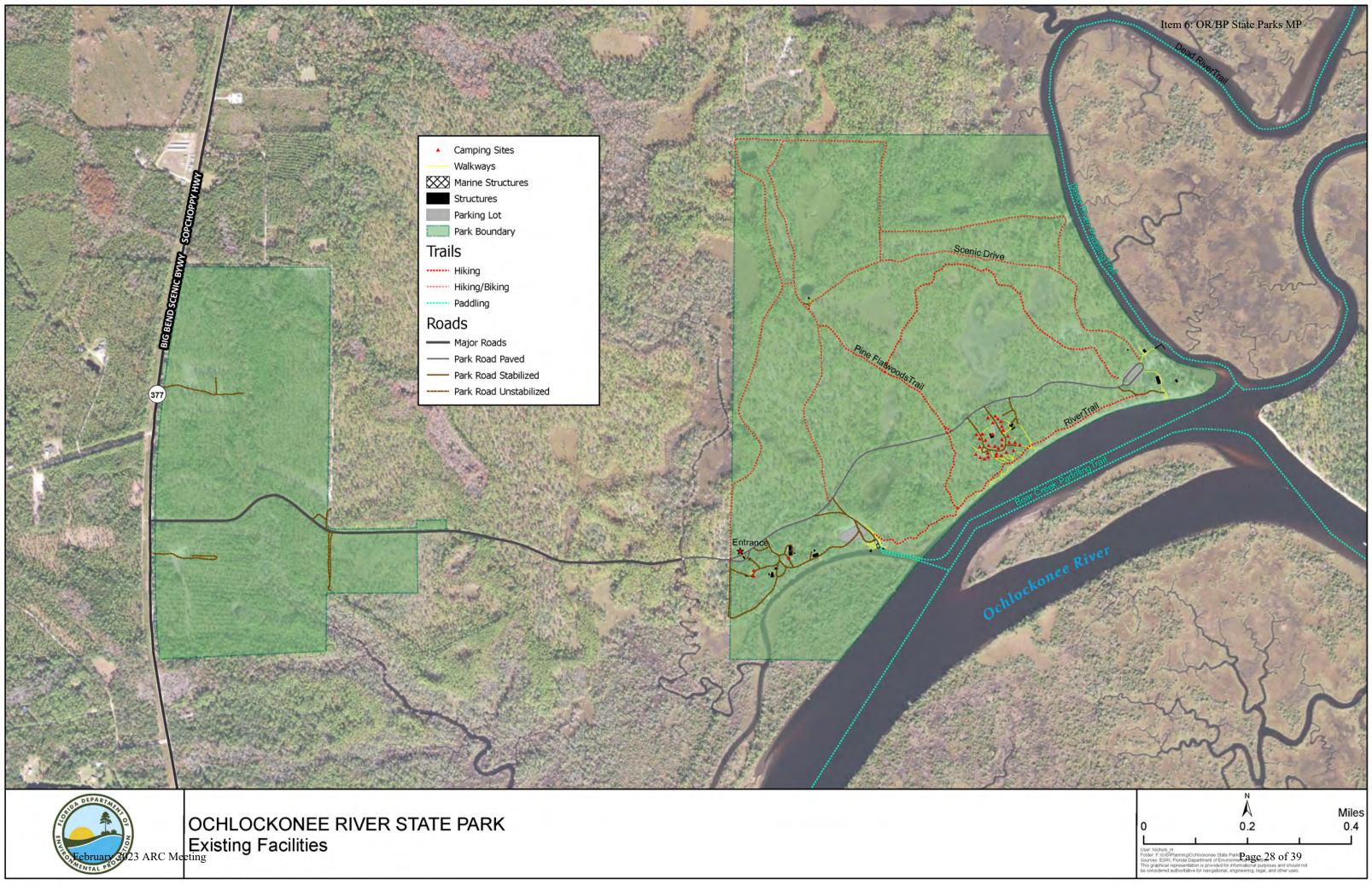




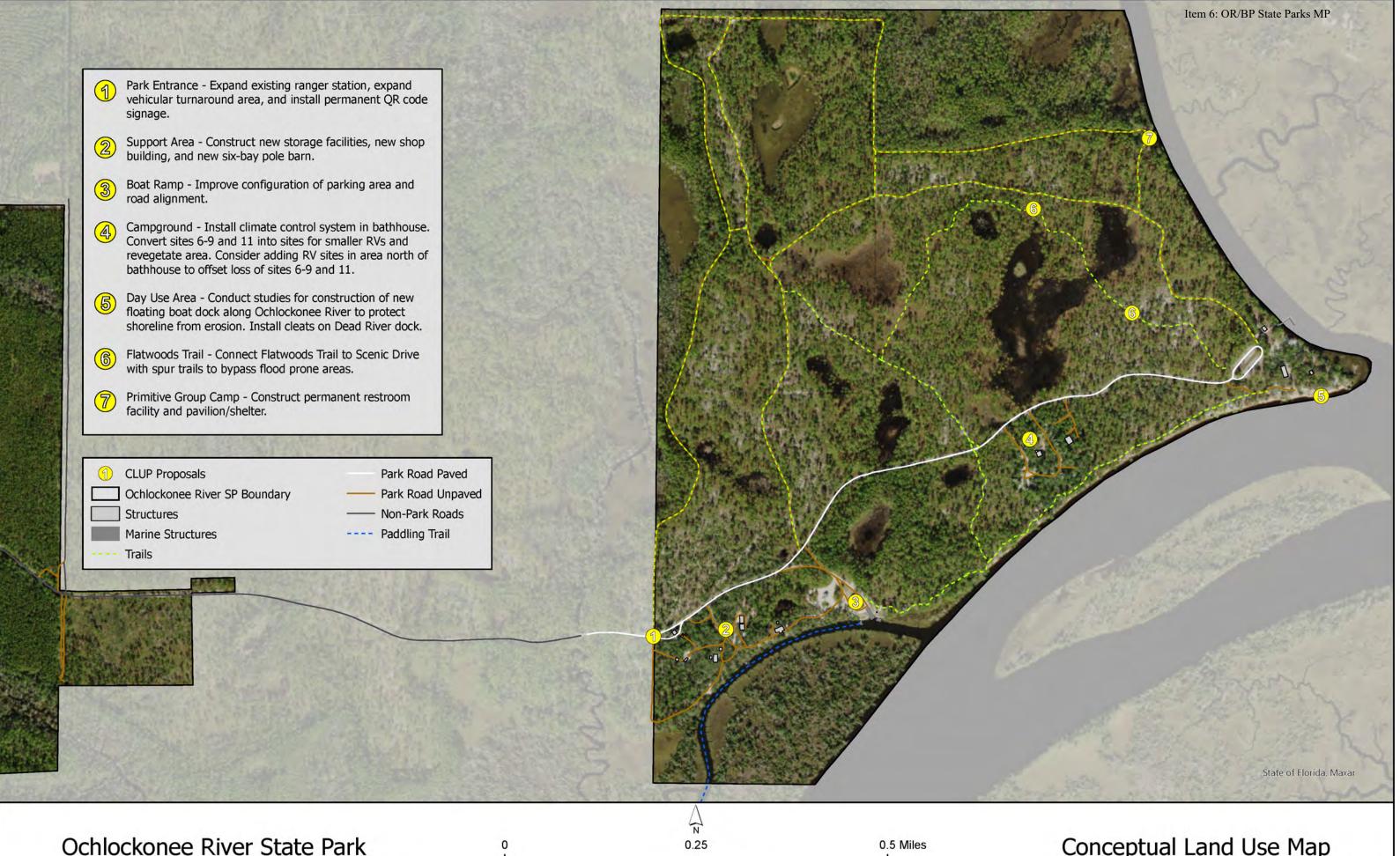




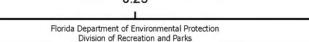






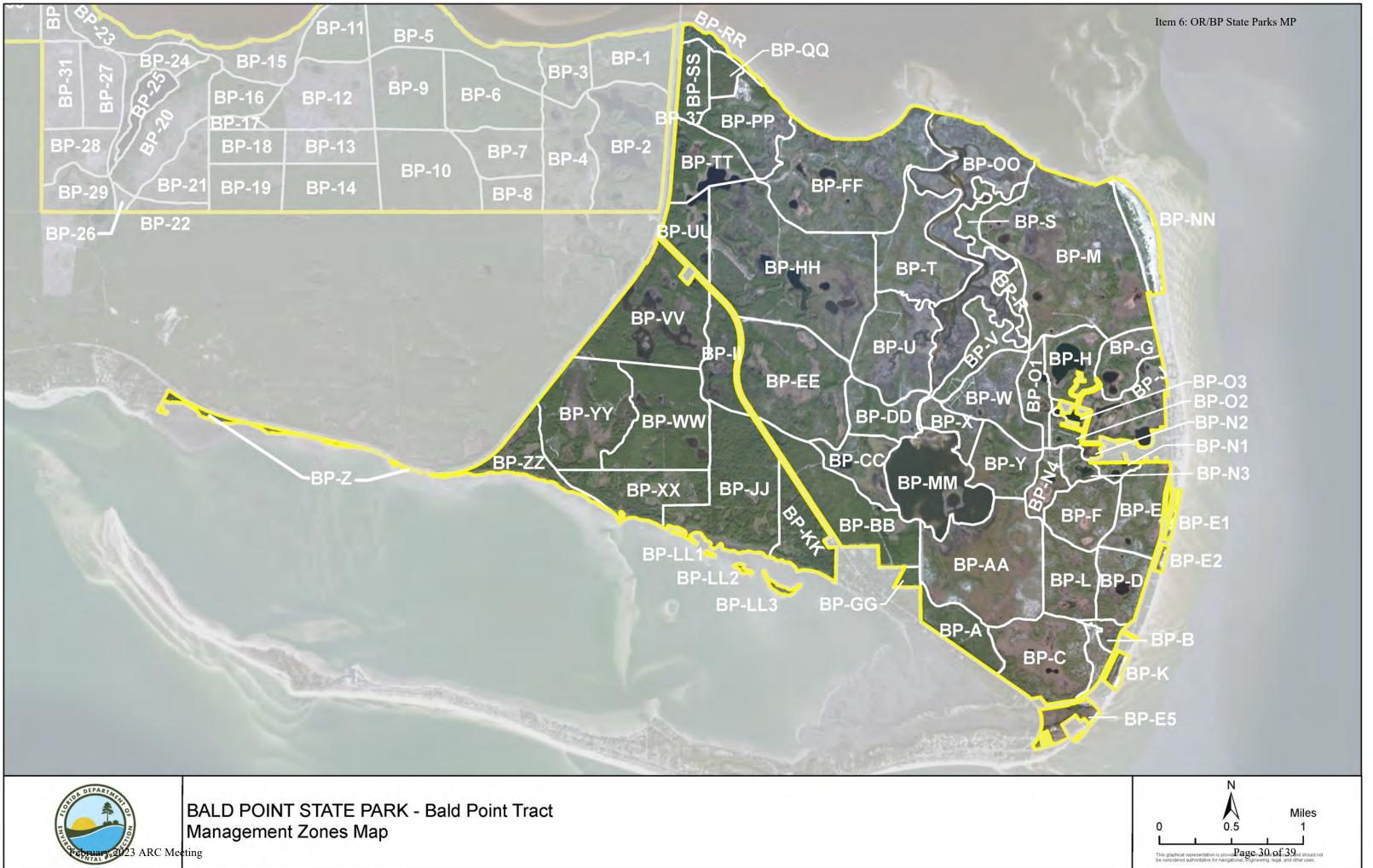


February 2023 ARC Meeting

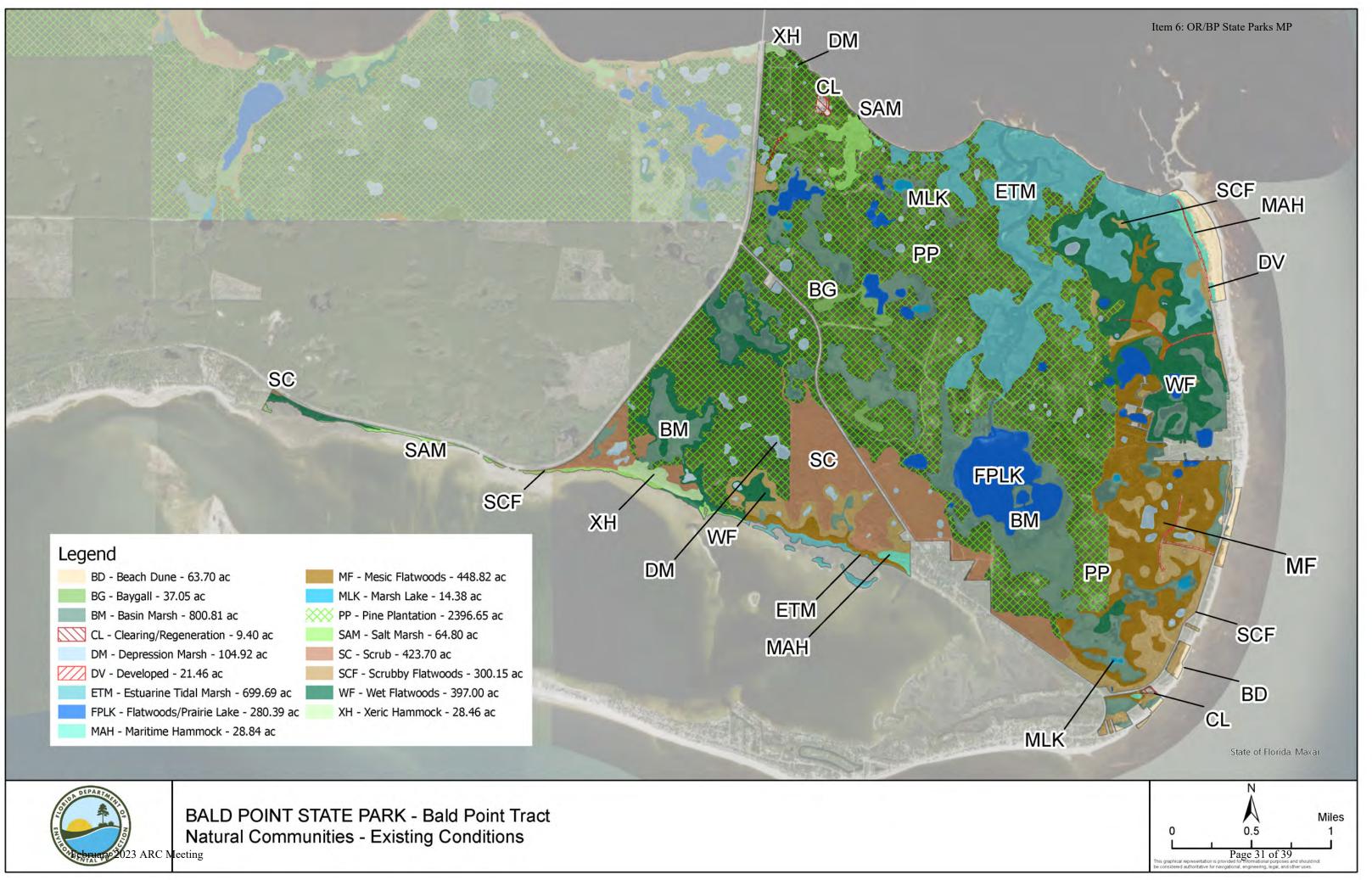


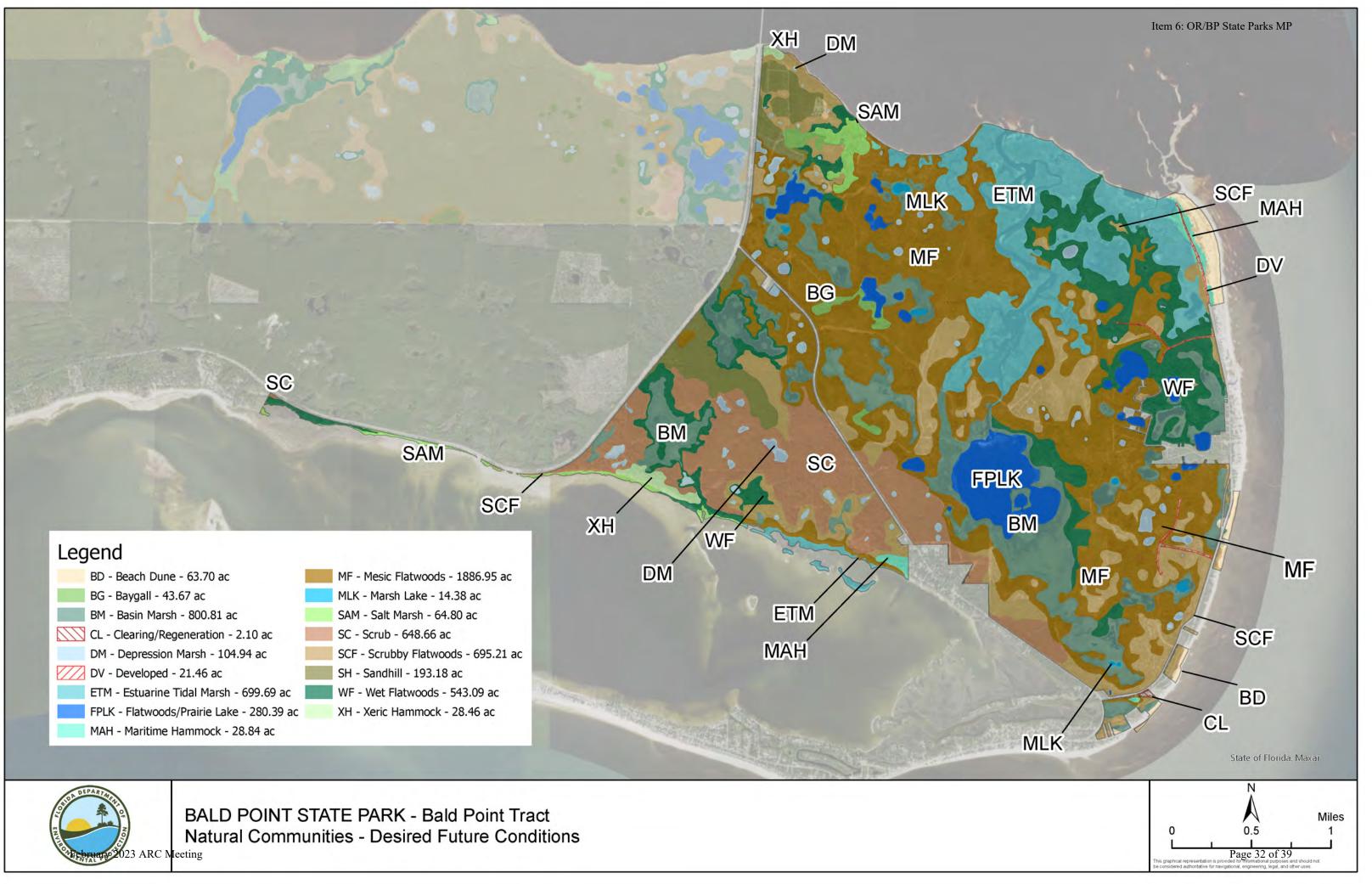
Conceptual Land Use Map

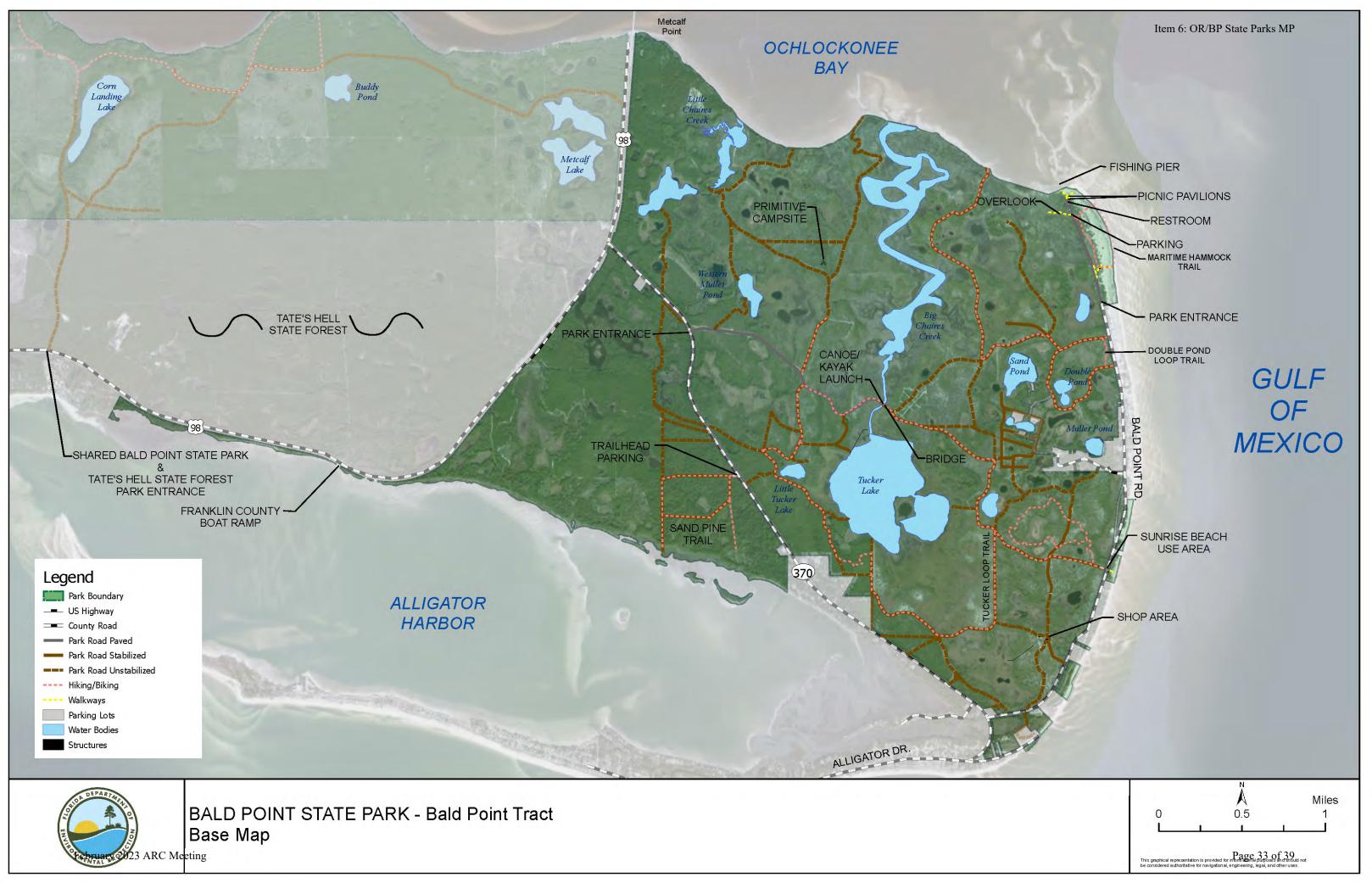
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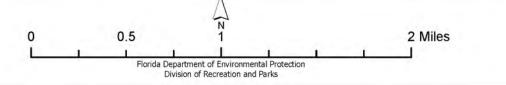




- Alligator Harbor Beaches Install park boundary signage and fencing to mitigate visitor impacts to shoreline.
- Alligator Harbor Boat Ramp Conduct feasibility study, environmental impact analysis, and stakeholder engagement to determine potential appropriate location for a improved boat launch.
- Park Entrance Install park entrance signs and construct ranger station with parking area.
- Bombing Range Trail Reconstruct collapsed bridge over creek to improve resource management capabilities and expand trail network.
- Tucker Loop Trail: Connect trail to Chaires Creek day use area via one of the following alternatives: Preserve existing alignment and construct sidewalk along park entrance road (5a), reroute trail along existing management road and complete connection with sidewalk along entrance road (5b), or develop new trail south of entrance road (5c).
- Chaires Creek Day Use Area Complete construction of restroom and picnic pavilions. Construct sidewalk connecting day use area to bridge. Address eroding areas around bridge.
- New Campground Conduct needed repairs to bridge and develop 8-12 acre full facility campground with bathhouse and 5 park model cabins.
- New Multiuse Trail Connect Chaires Creek day use area to beach access via one of the following alternatives: Follow existing management road and construct new trail and boardwalk over salt marsh area connecting to Maritime beach access (8a). Follow existing management road and construct sidewalk along Bald Point Road to Maritime beach access entrance gate (8b). Connect to Sunrise Beach access via existing management road (8c).
- CLUP Proposals
 Bald Point Tract Boundary
 Trails

Paddling Trail
 Park Roads Unpaved
 Park Roads Paved
 Proposed Trails

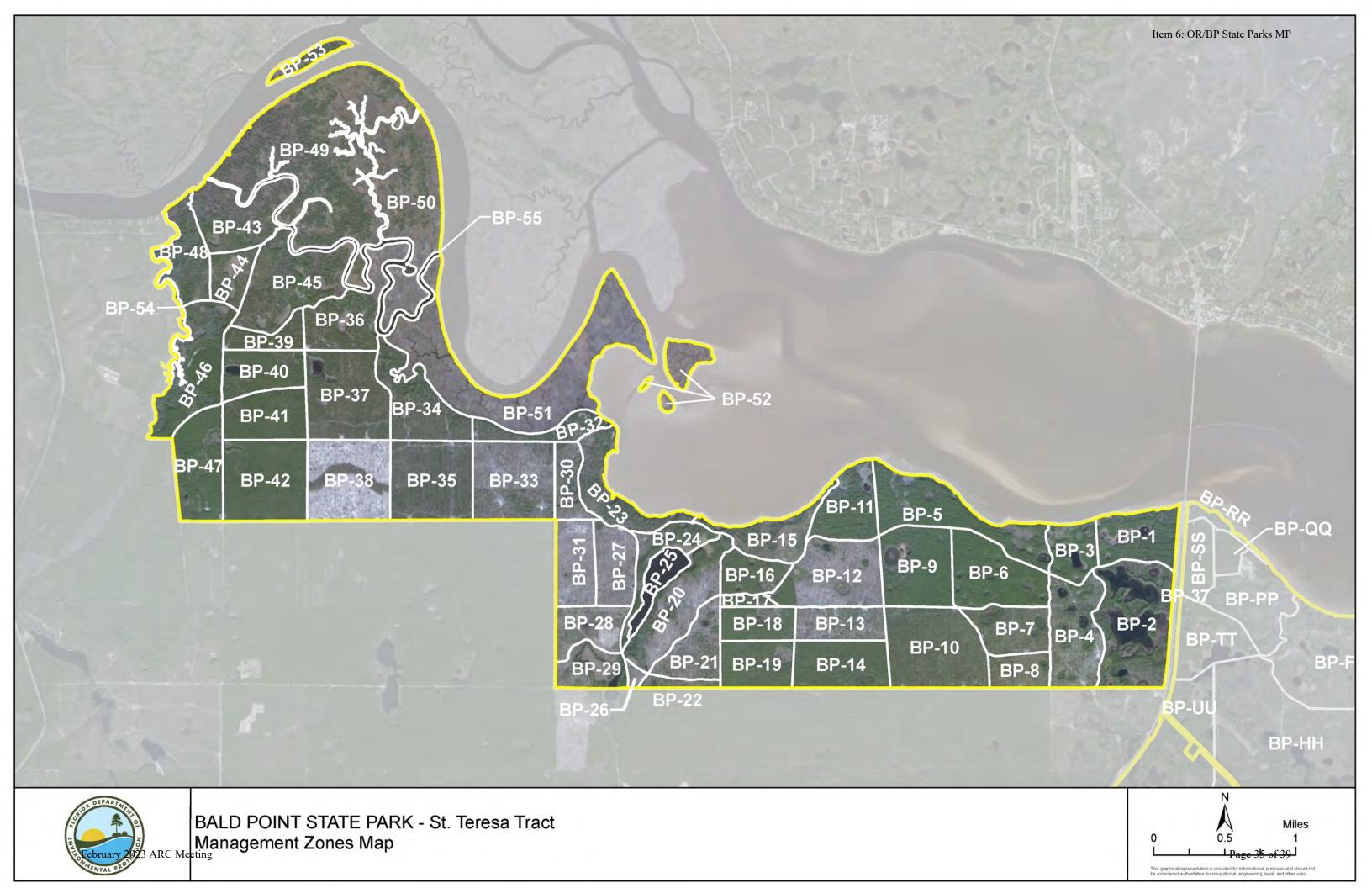


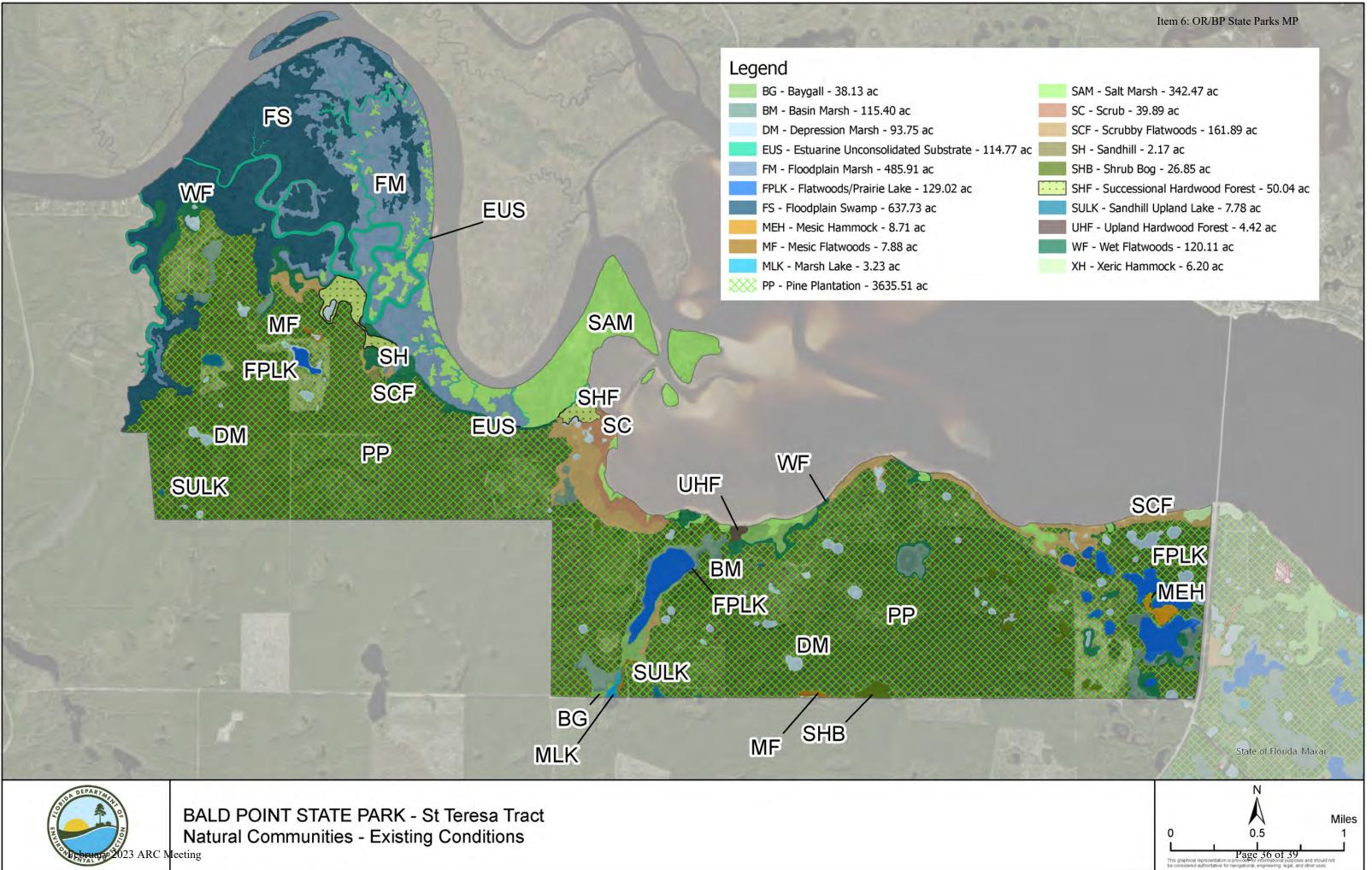


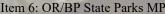
- North Point Beach Access Construct small permanent restroom facility in appropriate area.
- Maritime Beach Access Partner with Franklin County to develop vehicle turnaround area outside entrance gate. Widen vehicular entrance gate. Improve landscaping in parking lot median.
- Sunrise Beach Access Partner with Franklin County to improve pedestrian crosswalk. Construct permanent restroom and ADA parking west of Bald Point Road. Connect ADA parking to crosswalk.
- Shop Area Construct enclosed shop and barn to protect vehicles and equipment from salt spray.
- Sand Pine Trail Stabilize and expand parking at trailhead for up to 10 vehicles. Install potable water and interpretive kiosk. Expand existing trail westward into newly acquired property

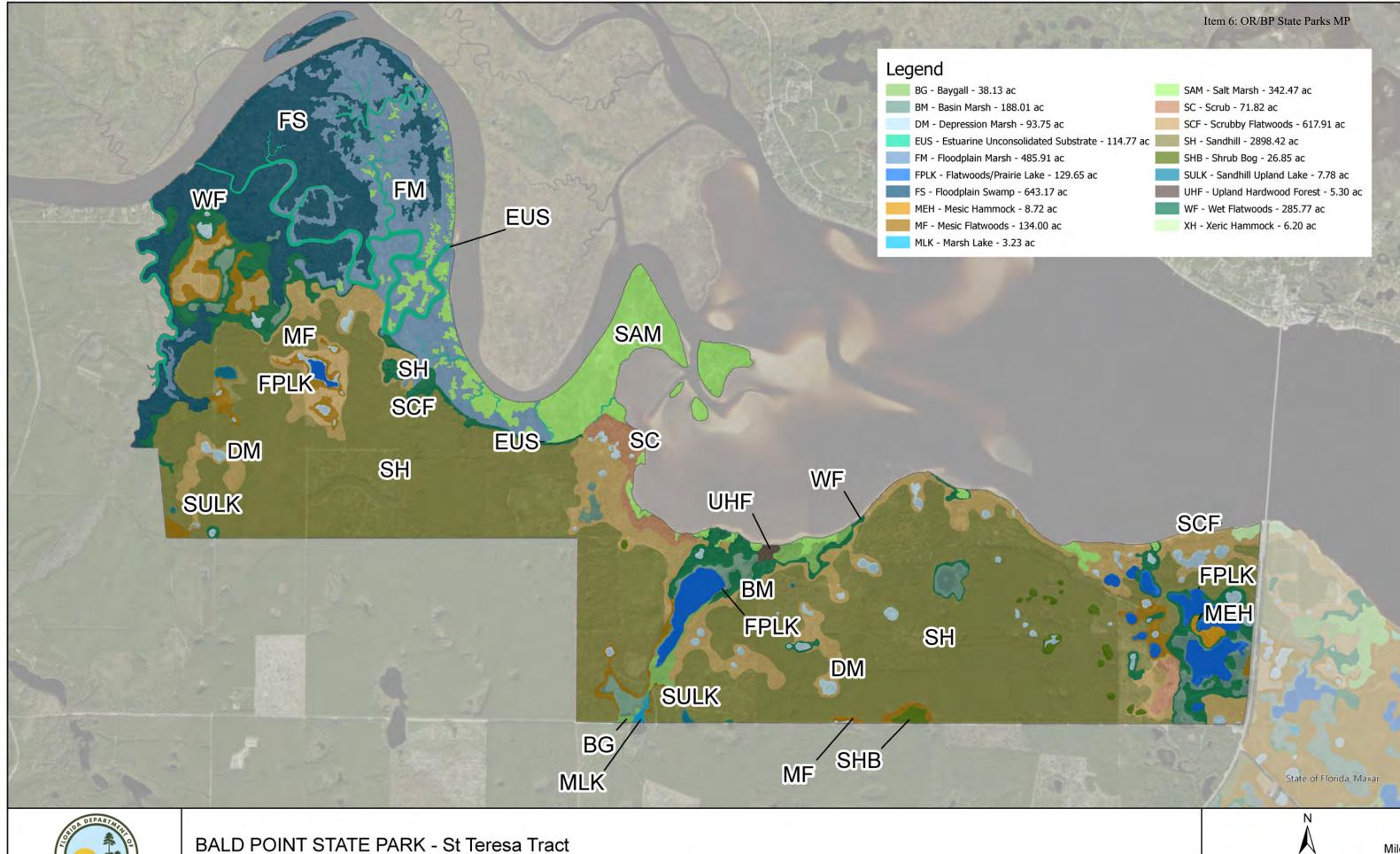


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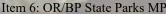






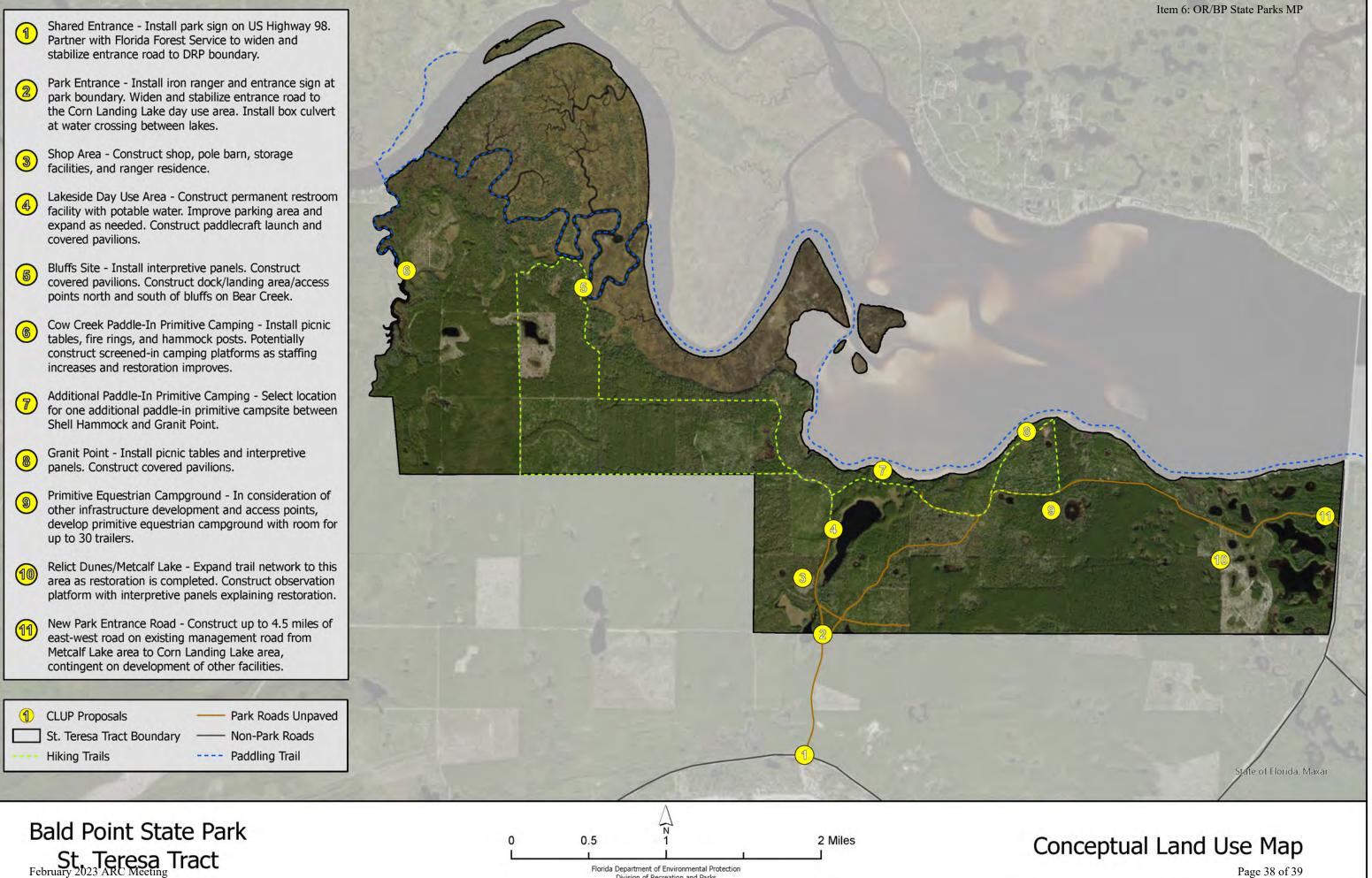


Natural Communities - Desired Future Conditions 23 ARC Meeting



SAM - Salt Marsh - 342.47 ac
SC - Scrub - 71.82 ac
SCF - Scrubby Flatwoods - 617.91 ac
SH - Sandhill - 2898.42 ac
SHB - Shrub Bog - 26.85 ac
SULK - Sandhill Upland Lake - 7.78 ac
UHF - Upland Hardwood Forest - 5.30 ac
WF - Wet Flatwoods - 285.77 ac
XH - Xeric Hammock - 6.20 ac





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