KORESHAN HISTORIC STATE PARK

Park Chapter

BIG CYPRESS REGION

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Koreshan Historic State Park

Park Chapter

Unit Name: Koreshan Historic State Park

Planning Region: Big Cypress

County: Lee

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 3630

Central Park Theme: Cradled by majestic oaks along the banks of the Estero River, the historic buildings and gardens of Koreshan Historic State Park are a testament to the industrious lives and belief systems of early twentieth century pioneers of South Florida.

Total Acreage: 196.16

Natural Communities	Acres
Blackwater Stream	1
Mesic Flatwoods	38
Mangrove Swamp	4
Scrubby Flatwoods	85

Altered Land Cover	Acres
Abandoned Field/Pasture	23
Developed	45

Acquisition: Koreshan Historic State Park was initially acquired on November 2, 1961, as a donation from the Koreshan Unity, Inc. Since the initial donation, the Trustees has acquired several parcels through purchases via the Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever programs.

Resource Management Component

Hydrology

- Assess the park's hydrological needs.
- Continue to monitor erosion from foot traffic, primarily on the south bank of the Estero River.
- Continue to monitor, review and comment on proposed land-use or zoning changes within land bordering the park.
- Restore natural hydrological condition and function to borrow pits.
- Remove the abandoned wastewater treatment plant structure.
- Restore natural hydrology and native vegetation in the former wastewater treatment plant site.

Natural Communities

- Maintain ± 75 acres within the optimum prescribed fire return interval within the planning period.
- Conduct natural community restoration on abandoned field/pasture.

Imperiled Species

- Develop and update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists for flora and fauna.
- Continue existing monitoring protocols for gopher tortoise.
- Monitor and document plume polypody and hand fern.

Invasive and Nuisance Species

- Conduct a collaborative invasive plant species assessment on scrubby flatwoods, mesic flatwoods, abandoned field/pasture and developed areas.
- Update the long-term invasive plant management plan for the park.
- Monitor ± 111 acres already in maintenance condition.
- Reduce and maintain cover class on ± 85 acres not in maintenance condition.
- Monitor and removal feral hogs and other invasive/nuisance animals as needed.

Cultural Resources

- Assess all recorded cultural resources and evaluate their condition on a monthly basis.
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources, ensuring that all known sites are recorded and/or updated in the Florida Master Site File (FMSF).
- Document and nominate the Anna Lewis House for inclusion in the FMSF.
- Continue to maintain the structures and grounds of the historic settlement, repairing as needed.
- Perform a full restoration of the New Store.

Land Use Component

Conceptual Land Use

Koreshan Historic Settlement

- Increase public access by determining adaptive re-use of the New Store.
- Evaluate condition of interpretive elements on an annual basis.
- Restore historic functionality to the Bakery.
- Discontinue overflow parking area, assess impacts to adjacent mesic flatwoods and construct expanded paved parking.
- Demolish existing restroom within the historic settlement and construct new restroom outside the historic settlement.
- Conceptualize and develop pedestrian access to the historic settlement with trail connection to adjacent conservation lands.
- Incorporate Boomer Estate by constructing a bridge connecting the parcel to the park, evaluate and conduct historic preservation of the house and utilize house and lawn for special events and interpretation.

Campground

- Improve facilities and configuration including reshaping RV campsites, upgrading utilities, repositioning dump stations and replacing the bathhouse.

Estero River Boating Access and Picnic Area

- Resurface/stabilize parking and construct a new restroom.

Northeast Side of Estero River

- Redevelop the volunteer campground to serve local and regional staff.
- Connect operational municipal sewer and water.
- Establish vegetative buffer along the north and east borders of the volunteer campground.
- Increase capacity of the Museum Storage building.
- Construct bridge across the Estero River to connect the northeast side of the park to the southeast side.

Support Area

- Improve facilities to effectively support park operations, including:
    - Add a four-bay maintenance facility.
    - Add a six-bay pole barn.
    - Add an administrative office.
    - Relocate Anna Lewis House.
    - Reconfigure layout of support area.
    - Stabilize road.
    - Provide municipal sewer connection to remaining buildings on septic.

Optimum Boundary

The Boomer (Mirasol) parcel, located on the north side of the Estero River, was acquired but has not yet been integrated with the park as it has remained occupied by the seller through a life estate contract. When vacated, the house and the surrounding acreage will be incorporated with the remainder of the park.

Adjacent to the south boundary of the park is an ± 80-acre undeveloped tract of land that would offer a significant buffer to the historic district.

North of and directly abutting the northern boundary of the park is the ± 37-acre Koreshan Preserve, owned and managed by Lee County. This preserve contains upland natural communities that provide habitat for gopher tortoise. Public access is not currently provided; the DRP would consider accepting management of this tract, to which access and recreation would then be ensured.

INTRODUCTION

LOCATION AND ACQUISITION HISTORY

Koreshan Historic State Park is located in southwestern Lee County, between Fort Myers and Bonita Springs in the Village of Estero. Access to the park is via Corkscrew Road from U.S. Highway 41, 2 miles west of Interstate 75. The Big Cypress Region map also reflects significant land and water resources existing near the park.

Koreshan Historic State Park was initially acquired on November 2, 1961, as a donation from the Koreshan Unity, Inc. Since the initial donation, the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) has acquired several parcels through purchases under Preservation 2000 (P2000) Additions and Inholdings (A&I) and Florida Forever/A&I programs, as well as through a lease from the Florida Audubon Society. Currently, the park comprises 196.16 acres. The Trustees hold fee simple title to the park, and on January 23, 1968, the Trustees leased (Lease No. 2324) the property to the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) under a 99-year lease. On August 24, 1988, the Trustees changed Lease No. 2324 as it applied to Koreshan Historic State Park and Mound Key Archaeological State Park to a specific lease No. 3630 without changing any of the terms and conditions of Lease No. 2324. The current lease will expire on January 22, 2067.

Koreshan Historic State Park is designated single use to provide public outdoor recreation and conservation. There are no legislative or executive directives that constrain the use of this property (see appendix). A legal description of the park property can be made available upon request to DEP.

SECONDARY AND INCOMPATIBLE USES

In accordance with section 253.034(5), Florida Statutes (F.S.), the potential of the park to accommodate secondary management purposes was analyzed. These secondary purposes were considered within the context of DRP's statutory responsibilities and resource values. This analysis considered the park's natural and cultural resources, management needs, aesthetic values, visitation and visitor experiences. It was determined that no secondary purposes could be accommodated in a manner that would not interfere with the primary purpose of resource-based outdoor recreation and conservation.

DRP has determined that uses such as water resource development projects, water supply projects, stormwater management projects, linear facilities and sustainable agriculture and forestry (other than those management activities specifically identified in this plan) would not be consistent with the management purposes of the park.

In accordance with section 253.034(5), F.S., the potential for generating revenue to enhance management was also analyzed. Visitor fees and charges are the principal source of revenue generated by the park. It was determined that multiple-use management activities would not be appropriate as a means of generating revenues for land management. Instead, techniques such as entrance fees, concessions and similar measures will be employed on a case-by-case basis as a means of supplementing park management funding. Generating revenue from consumptive uses or from activities that are not expressly related to resource management and conservation is not under consideration.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARK

Park Purpose

The purpose of Koreshan Historic State Park is to provide for the preservation and interpretation of natural, historic and cultural resources found within the park for the enjoyment of Florida's residents and visitors and to provide compatible resource-based recreation opportunities.

Park Significance

- The park was home to the utopian Koreshan Unity settlement. The historic settlement was an influential community in the region that helped shape the area's political, cultural and economic history, and additionally brought electricity, printing and art to the region.

- The park contains many historic buildings, several of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The community was intended to become a large city and attracted the attention of Henry Ford, who visited the community on multiple occasions.

- Members of the community adopted Koreshanity, a unique belief system that melded religion, science and utopian communalism. Koreshanity placed significant emphasis on education, culture and arts, horticulture and industry.

- Exceptional recreational activities at the park include guided interpretive tours of the historic settlement, access to popular local paddling trails, Mound Key Archaeological State Park and boating opportunities in Estero Bay.

- The park provides habitat for 28 imperiled plant and animal species including golden leather fern, plume polypody, Florida royal palm, common wild-pine, gopher tortoise, reddish egret and roseate spoonbill.

Central Park Theme

Cradled by majestic oaks along the banks of the Estero River, the historic buildings and gardens of Koreshan Historic State Park are a testament to the industrious lives and belief systems of early 20th century pioneers of South Florida.

Internal Classification

Koreshan Historic State Park is classified as a state special feature site in the DRP unit classification system. A special feature site is a discrete and well-defined object or condition that attracts public interest and provides public benefit through interpretive observation and study. A state special feature site is an area that contains such a feature and is set aside for controlled public enjoyment. Special feature sites, for the most part, are either historical or archaeological by type, but they may also have a geological, botanical, zoological or other basis. State special feature sites must be of unusual or exceptional character or have statewide or broad regional significance. Management of special feature sites places primary emphasis on protection and maintenance of the special feature for long-term public enjoyment. Permitted uses are almost exclusively passive in nature and program emphasis is on

interpretation of the special feature. Development at special feature sites is focused on protection and maintenance of the site, public access, safety and the convenience of the user.

OTHER DESIGNATIONS

The unit is not within an Area of Critical State Concern as defined in section 380.05, F.S., and it is not under study for such designation. The park is a component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System, administered by DEP's Office of Greenways and Trails.

All waters within the park have been designated as Outstanding Florida Waters, pursuant to Chapter 62-302, Florida Administrative Code. Surface waters in this park are also classified as Class III waters (suitable for fish consumption and recreation) by the Department. The park is not adjacent to an aquatic preserve as designated under the Florida Aquatic Preserve Act of 1975 (section 258.35, F.S.).

PARK ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Conducted monitoring of rare Curtiss' milkweed.
- Continued *Tillandsia* propagation and plantings to increase population.
- Burned two backlogged zones.
- Expanded fire line preparations.
- Documented a record-sized gopher tortoise.
- Removed bamboo in outlying areas of the historic settlement.
- Exceeded exotic plant removal goals for four concurrent years.
- Released the Melaleuca weevil in nearby Estero Bay Preserve, which has successfully reduced the flowering and seeding of melaleuca at Koreshan Historic State Park.
- Installed all new interpretive displays throughout the historic settlement for self-guided tours.
- Completed reconstruction of boat ramp and ADA-compliant paddlecraft launch.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMPONENT

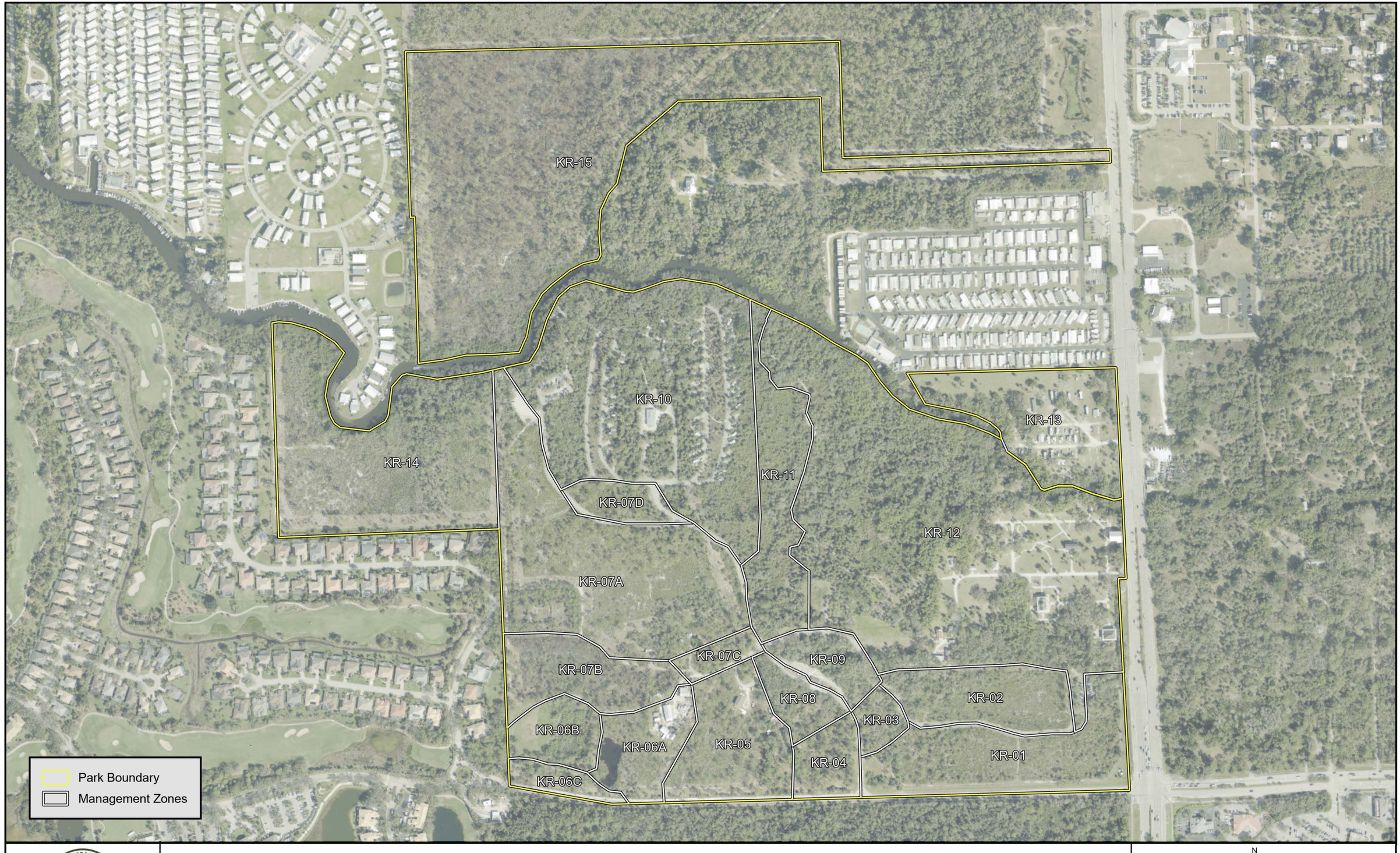
Koreshan Historic State Park Management Zones		
Management Zone	**Acreage**	**Managed with Prescribed Fire**
KR-01	9.35	Yes
KR-02	5.42	Yes
KR-03	1.24	Yes
KR-04	2.37	Yes
KR-05	6.46	Yes
KR-06A	3.84	Yes
KR-06B	2.70	Yes
KR-06C	1.45	Yes
KR-07A	18.08	Yes
KR-07B	5.29	Yes
KR-07C	1.25	Yes
KR-07D	1.97	Yes
KR-08	2.13	No
KR-09	2.62	No
KR-10	23.64	Yes
KR-11	6.68	Yes
KR-12	39.32	No
KR-13	8.36	No
KR-14	17.20	Yes
KR-15	35.98	Yes

TOPOGRAPHY

The Big Cypress Province, within the Everglades District, encompasses the Big Cypress Swamp, Corkscrew Swamp and adjacent ridge and slough systems stretching from the Gulf of America north of Naples to the Everglades marshlands. Slightly higher in elevation than the Everglades Province, this region features a predominant surface water flow direction from north to south—toward the Gulf in the west and toward the Everglades in the east. It remains largely undeveloped, with significant conservation lands managed by federal, state, local, tribal and environmental entities.

Geographically, the province is primarily located in Collier County and extends into southern Lee and Hendry counties, with smaller portions in Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

Geologically, it is underlain by the Pliocene Tamiami Formation, which includes limestone and shelly sand that influence karst features. Tertiary–Quaternary shelly sediments and Pleistocene Miami Limestone are also present. A localized “caprock”—a dense limestone or calcite-cemented sandstone—occurs across the province. Along the coast, Holocene sediments consisting of shelly sand and mangrove peat dominate.



KORESHAN HISTORIC STATE PARK
Management Zones

N

0 500 Feet 1,000

Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection
This graphical representation is provided for informational purposes and should not be considered authoritative for navigational, engineering, legal, and other uses.

Topography throughout the park has been moderately altered by human activity. Road clearing, firebreak maintenance and the creation of unpaved access routes have caused minor changes in upland elevations. Additional man-made alterations include several drainage ditches, borrow pits and spoil mounds located on either side of the Estero River. These features are largely cultural in origin. The drainage ditches were originally constructed as part of the Koreshan Unity's historic garden landscapes. Borrow pits near the park's southern boundary are associated with the construction of the grade for Corkscrew Road, and the resulting spoil was deposited in nearby mounds.

Regionally, the park is underlain by deposits of varied geological origin. From youngest to oldest, these include Holocene Sediments and the Caloosahatchee Formation, which are part of the broader Tertiary–Quaternary Fossiliferous Sediments of Southern Florida. These represent deposits from the Holocene and the Pliocene–Pleistocene epochs, respectively.

Holocene sediments consist primarily of quartz sands, carbonate sands, muds and organic material. These unconsolidated surficial deposits can exceed 70 feet in thickness and typically serve as a reliable source of potable water. Beneath these younger layers, the Caloosahatchee Formation—composed primarily of fossiliferous sands and carbonates—can exceed 100 feet in thickness and may include confining units important for groundwater hydrology. These deeper fossiliferous sediments are a part of the Tertiary–Quaternary sequence and are commonly utilized for water resources.

Beneath these surficial and intermediate layers lies the Floridan Aquifer, a highly productive groundwater system that underlies much of peninsular Florida, including Koreshan Historic State Park. While no on-site data confirms direct aquifer access, regional hydrogeologic mapping confirms the Floridan Aquifer's presence beneath the park.

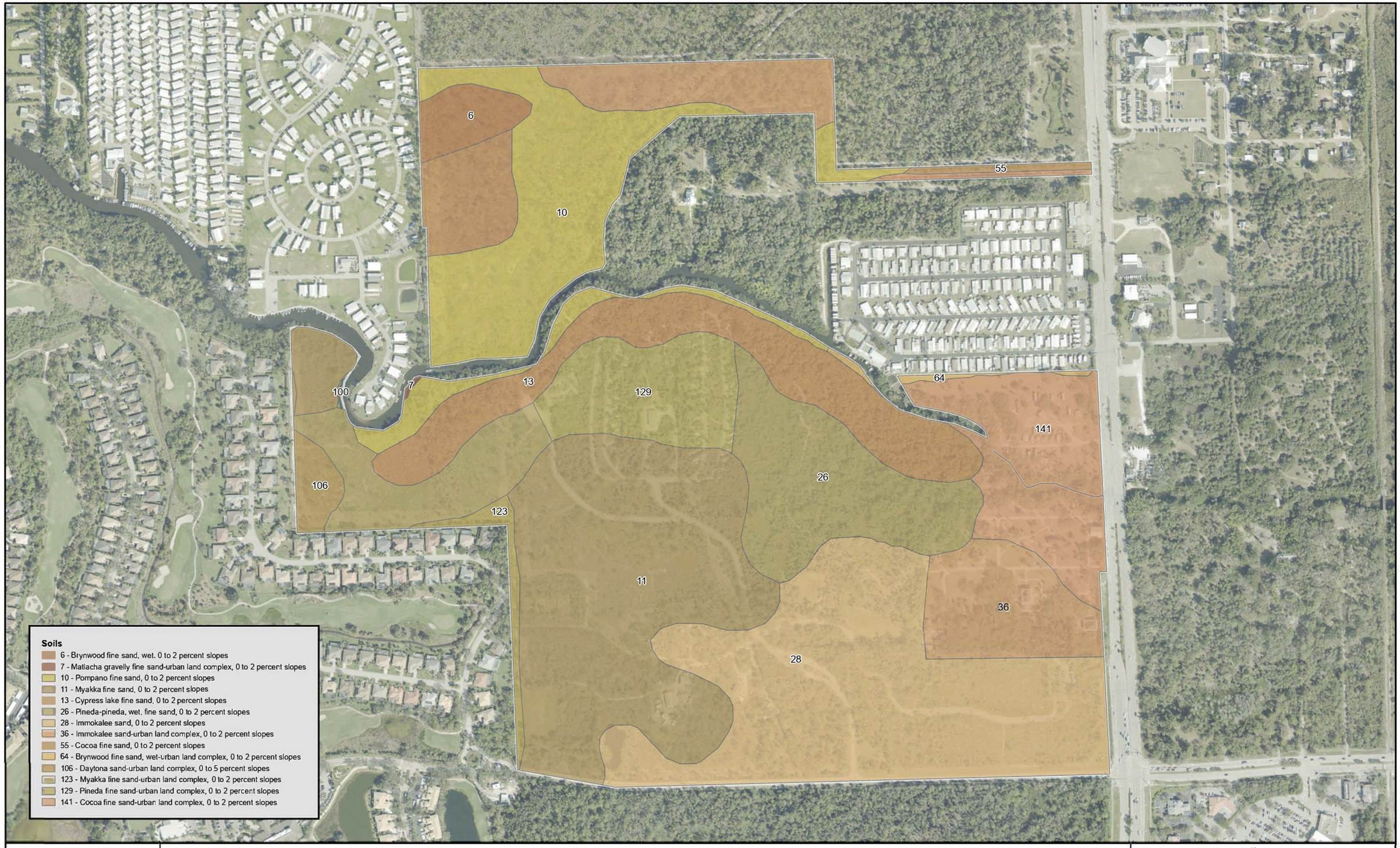
SOILS

Ten soil types have been identified within this unit, including Hallandale fine sand, Matlacha-Urban land complex, Pompano fine sand, Myakka fine sand, Boca fine sand, Daytona sand, Pineda fine sand, Immokalee sand, Cocoa fine sand and Hallandale-Urban land complex. A comprehensive description of these soils is provided in the appendix (Henderson 1984).

The soil profile at Koreshan Historic State Park has been modified in areas related to the garden features. Significant soil disturbances include the Koreshan ditches and the "sunken garden" landscape feature, which extended into lower soil horizons and created a drainage system leading into the river. While soil erosion along riverine shorelines is partially a natural process, the primary concern in public use areas is to prevent impacts on the vegetation along steep natural shorelines and man-made ditches.

To minimize soil erosion in the park, several measures can be taken including direct seeding of native grasses, planting native vegetation and maintaining overlook structures and retaining walls. When adding new recreational facilities, it is crucial to consider the dynamic natural processes of riverine environments to reduce potential damage.

To address erosion caused by visitors descending the riverbanks, portions of the trail along the south bank of the Estero River are being relocated slightly away from the bank. Additionally, removing non-native vegetation on the south side of the path will facilitate improved access and transit.



KORESHAN HISTORIC STATE PARK

N

0 500 Feet 1,000

Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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HYDROLOGY

Water Quantity

The park features well-drained soils, and surface hydrology is primarily influenced by rainfall and modest elevation gradients. During periods of intense precipitation, especially in the western portion of the park near the campground and picnic area, sheet flow occurs from south to north. This overland flow is effectively managed by the historic Koreshan drainage features, which collect and convey water into the Estero River.

One of the park's key stormwater conveyances is located on the Boomer Tract (management zone KR-15), where a northeast-to-southwest oriented man-made ditch channels water into the Estero River. This ditch—an easement maintained by the Lee County Division of Natural Resources—was likely constructed before 1944 to irrigate citrus groves and now serves as the primary outfall for a 200-acre sub-basin north of West Broadway Avenue. Restoration activities in 2006 and 2010 involved removal of invasive Australian pine (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) and other exotic vegetation to enhance drainage capacity (Lee County 2011).

Two borrow pits located just north of Corkscrew Road retain water intermittently and are used recreationally by park visitors for fishing. These features also provide habitat for wading birds, waterfowl, small mammals and other wildlife. Hydrologic enhancement through recontouring and native vegetation planting could improve ecological function and expand wildlife viewing opportunities.

Water Quality

Koreshan Historic State Park is situated within the Estero River drainage basin and plays a critical role in maintaining the quality of surface water entering the river system. The Estero River, historically known as the Ostego River (Damkohler 1973), is the park's most prominent hydrologic feature. Numerous drainage ditches south of the river, originally constructed by members of the Koreshan Unity for aesthetic landscaping purposes, now function as tributaries conveying surface water into the river. These ditches are vegetated along their banks, helping to stabilize soils and filter runoff and are recognized as part of the park's cultural and historic landscape.

Surface runoff entering the park from adjacent developments, such as the Pelican Sound residential community, also contributes water to the Estero River via historic Koreshan ditches. While stormwater from Pelican Sound drains directly along the western and southern boundaries of management zone KR-14, these inputs are currently filtered through natural vegetation, posing no significant degradation to the river's water quality. Similarly, runoff from the park's interior, including from native and exotic plant communities, flows through established landscape ditches and into the Sunken (Victorian) Gardens area before reaching the river, with no known negative impacts on water quality.

Hydrological Alterations

The park has undergone several hydrological modifications over time, reflecting both historical land use and more recent development pressures. Man-made ditches, borrow pits and minor grading changes associated with roads and firebreaks are present throughout the site. These features are generally stabilized and have become integrated into the park's functional and cultural landscape.

The Pelican Sound development, constructed on elevated fill immediately west and south of the park, significantly altered local topography. Stormwater runoff from the development now flows downslope into the park, contributing to localized ponding and occasional inundation along the KR-14 management zone fence line. In periods of heavy rain, this can temporarily limit vehicular access along internal service roads.

Previous alterations along U.S. Highway 41 had led to problematic stormwater retention in the park's southeastern flatwoods community due to direct flow from the highway roadbed. This issue has since been addressed through highway widening and drainage improvements, restoring more natural hydrologic conditions in that area.

Ongoing maintenance of existing drainage structures, removal of invasive species and restoration of disturbed areas will be important for sustaining natural hydrologic function and protecting both cultural and ecological resources within the park.

Monitoring and Assessment

Objective: Assess the park's hydrological restoration needs.

Actions:

- Conduct/obtain an assessment of the park's hydrological restoration needs related to adjacent elevated development.
- Continue to cooperate with other agencies and independent researchers regarding hydrological research and monitoring programs.
- Continue to monitor for erosion from foot traffic, primarily on the south bank of the Estero River.
- Continue to monitor, review and comment on proposed land-use or zoning changes within land bordering the park.

DRP will continue its longstanding tradition of collaboration with state and federal agencies, academic institutions and independent researchers engaged in hydrological research and monitoring at the park. These partnerships help guide adaptive management strategies and inform conservation priorities. DRP will support these efforts by facilitating the review and approval of research permits and providing in-field assistance and orientation to park resources when appropriate. Insights and recommendations generated through ongoing monitoring and research will be critical to the park's resource management and planning decisions.

Trends identified by water quality and quantity monitoring are important factors that should inform certain land use development decisions. The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) maintains a monitoring well (L-2295) at the entrance to the park. Data collection for this station extends back to the 1950s. SFWMD can assist DRP with accessing archival water quality data from this and other vicinity stations including ESTERO 45 and ESTERO N. Stream hydrology within vicinity of the park is monitored by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) at monitoring station 02291580 along the north branch of the Estero River, upstream from the park. Parameters include gauge height (feet) and discharge (i.e., flow rate in cubic feet per second). A suite of baseline water quality data has been sampled at this monitoring station from the late 1980 – early 1990s. Water quantity and quality data from this and other USGS monitoring stations in the vicinity of the park is available on the USGS website.

DRP District 4 staff will continue to actively review Environmental Resource Permit and Water Use Permit applications in the surrounding region to ensure that potential impacts on park water resources are identified and mitigated. Staff will also monitor proposed land-use and zoning changes adjacent to the park, with the goal of protecting hydrological integrity and natural community health.

An area of particular concern is located along the western boundary of the park, where water from the adjacent Pelican Sound residential development drains into the scrubby flatwoods. The homes in this community were constructed on elevated fill, creating a downslope flow of stormwater into the park during the rainy season. This area should be monitored regularly to assess the hydrological impact of this inflow, particularly its potential to alter soil moisture regimes or stress the scrubby flatwoods vegetation community.

Restoration

Objective: Restore natural hydrological condition and function to borrow pits.

Actions:

- Create a detailed restoration plan that includes recontouring, native vegetation planting, erosion control measures and habitat enhancement measures.
- Choose native wetland plants that are suited to the local climate and soil conditions, such as a mix of emergent, floating and submerged plants.

North of Corkscrew Road, two borrow pits (approximately 0.5 acres) in management zone KR-06A present an opportunity for ecological restoration and enhanced visitor engagement. Restoration efforts should focus on recontouring the pits to more natural landforms and establishing native wetland and upland vegetation. These improvements would enhance habitat quality for a variety of wildlife species already observed using the area, including wading birds, waterfowl, small mammals and other vertebrates. While the pits are currently used informally for fishing, a comprehensive restoration plan could incorporate a designated wildlife viewing area to support passive recreation and environmental education, while protecting sensitive habitats and encouraging greater appreciation for the park's natural resources.

Objective: Remove the abandoned wastewater treatment plant structure.

Actions:

- Develop and implement a plan to demolish and remove the concrete wastewater treatment structure and associated infrastructure.
- Properly dispose of all demolition materials in accordance with applicable regulations.

The former wastewater treatment plant known as Old Leach Field (see Existing Facilities map) in management zone KR-07A is defunct and no longer provides operational value to the park. The fence, concrete structure and surrounding ditch create hazards for wildlife, including gopher tortoises that may become trapped within the enclosed area.

Objective: Restore natural hydrology and native vegetation in the former wastewater treatment plant site.

Actions:

- Regrade disturbed areas to approximate natural elevations and drainage patterns.
- Restore natural surface water flow by filling or modifying the remaining ditch as needed.
- Stabilize soils and revegetate the site using appropriate native plant species.
- Monitor the area and implement corrective actions as necessary to ensure successful site stabilization and vegetation establishment.

This project will restore natural site conditions following the removal of the park's former wastewater treatment plant in management zone KR-07A. After the removal of obsolete infrastructure, the site will be regraded to approximate natural elevations and drainage patterns. The remaining ditch will be filled or modified as necessary to restore natural surface water flow. Disturbed areas will be stabilized and revegetated with appropriate native plant species to support habitat restoration and long-term ecological function. The site will be monitored to ensure successful stabilization and vegetation establishment.

NATURAL COMMUNITIES

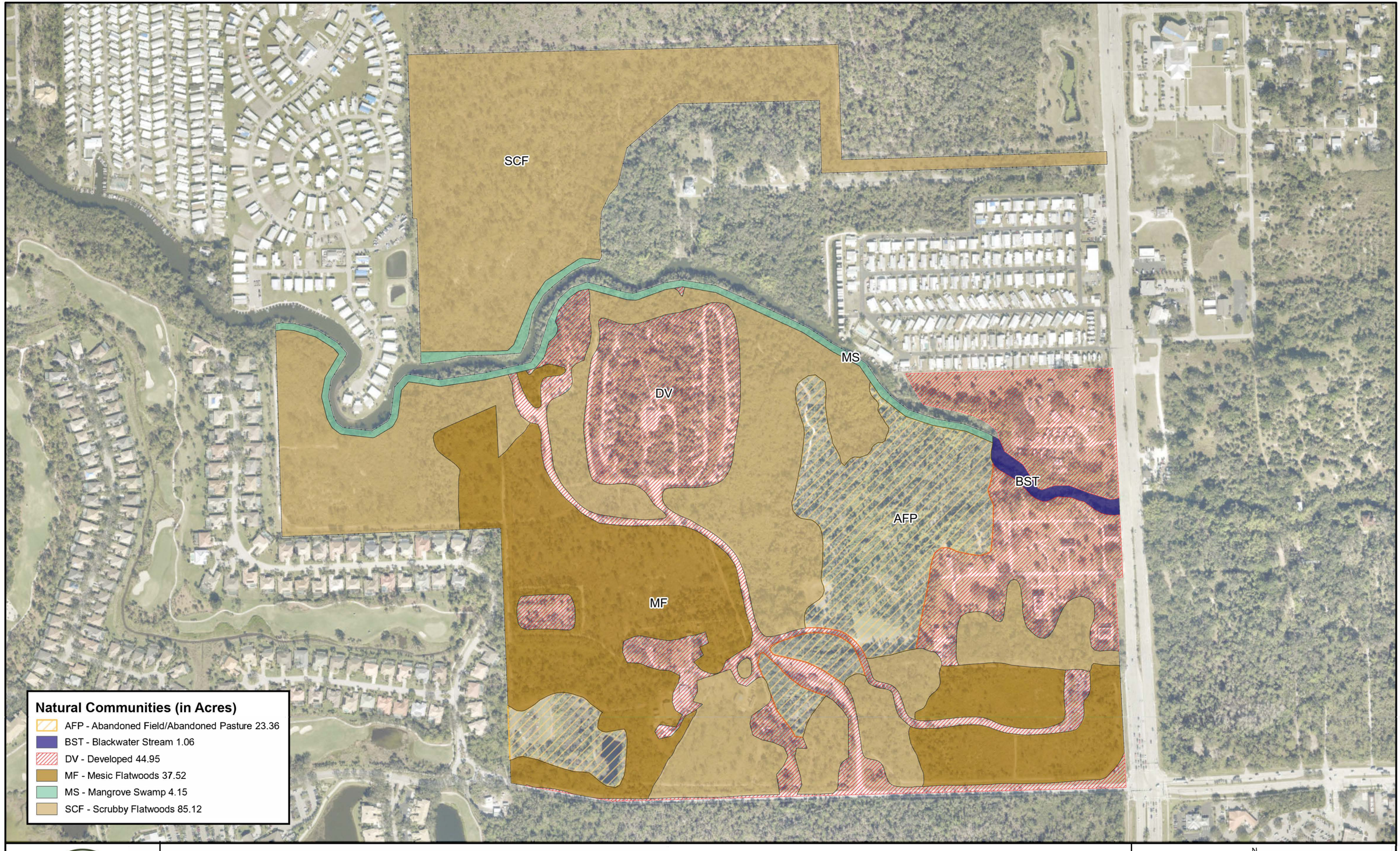
The park contains four distinct natural communities and two altered landcover types (see Natural Communities Map). A list of known plants and animals occurring in the park is included in the Southwest District Species Matrix appendix.

Mesic Flatwoods

The mesic flatwoods community at the park is in good condition despite encroachment of non-native species. Scattered south Florida slash pine (*Pinus densa*) comprises the tree canopy, with a midstory consisting of shrubs such as saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens)*, tarflower (*Bejaria racemosa)* and the angled branches of fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida)*. Shiny blueberry (*Vaccinium myrsinites)*, American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) and coralbean (*Erythrina herbacea*) dominate the understory. The imperiled gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) is commonly found within this habitat, with many burrows established in the understory.

This community was heavily invaded by melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) trees and downy rose myrtle (*Rhodomyrtus tomentosa*) that have been extensively treated with success. Scattered saplings of melaleuca, earleaf acacia (*Acacia auriculiformis*), woman's tongue (*Albizia lebbeck*), carrotwood (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*), Surinam cherry (*Eugenia uniflora*) and common bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris*) persist throughout the flatwoods.

Various non-native plant escapees from the former plant nursery, gardens and groves are present along the edges closest to the Koreshan horticulture areas including guava (*Psidium guajava*), Java plum (*Syzygium cumini*), life plant (*Kalanchoe pinnata*), bowstring hemp (*Sansevieria hyacinthoides*) and citrus species, among others. Several patches of cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) occur in large areas on the west side of the park and in scattered clusters on the east side.



KORESHAN HISTORIC STATE PARK
Natural Communities - Existing Conditions

N

0 440 880 Feet

Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection
This graphical representation is provided for informational purposes and should not be considered authoritative for navigational, engineering, legal, and other uses.

Much of the original mesic flatwoods was displaced by the construction of buildings, landscaping and by horticultural endeavors of the Koreshan Unity. Very little of this community remains in the original condition; however, much of the original aspect has been restored due to the use of fire as a management tool and non-native removal efforts.

Prescribed burns have been conducted every two to four years in the mesic flatwoods. Recently, cogon grass has begun to spread in the western section of this natural community. Park staff are actively addressing this issue with aggressive treatment strategies including herbicide applications following prescribed burns and mechanical cutting as needed.

Scrubby Flatwoods

Scrubby flatwoods comprise the largest natural community in the park and are in fair condition. The community on the south side of the Estero River was heavily altered by the development of structures associated with the historic settlement. This severely restricts the use of prescribed fire, the traditional management tool, to maintain the community at an early successional stage. None of this natural community is in its original condition due to these encroachments. In addition, the extent of non-pyric non-native plants present in this community contributes to the difficulty of burning the area.

On the north side of the river, the scrubby flatwoods have been invaded primarily by Australian pine and Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*). These locations were formerly citrus groves, but now south Florida slash pine and cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*) dominate the native vegetation.

Other plant species found in this community include live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) and scrubby oak species, such as myrtle (*Quercus myrtifolia),* Chapman's (*Quercus chapmanii)* and sand live oak (*Quercus geminata)*, Florida strangler fig (*Ficus aurea*), holly species (*Ilex* spp.), wax myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) and staggerbush (*Lyonia fruticosa)*. Gopher tortoises are common in the scrubby flatwoods at the park.

The Koreshan settlers imported and established several non-native and invasive plants which escaped the nursery, orchards and gardens in the scrubby flatwoods. Remnant plants from those locations are proliferating in the natural areas of the park and southern Lee County (Driapsa 2006). The same non-native plants listed in the mesic flatwoods portion are present, but in higher densities in the scrubby flatwoods. The scrubby flatwoods community is well drained and dry during the wet season.

Ideal conditions for gopher tortoises include the early successional scrubby flatwoods stage, achievable using a combination of mechanical treatment and prescribed fire. Mechanical treatment may be necessary in portions of the park adjacent to developed areas, where prescribed burns are not feasible.

Mangrove Swamp

Mangrove swamp is in excellent condition at the park. All three mangrove species occur in a thin band along much of the shoreline of both sides of the Estero River. Florida slash pine, live oak and cabbage palm hang over the banks in many places. Coin vine (*Dalbergia ecastaphyllum*), marlberry (*Ardisia escallonioides*), groundsel tree (*Baccharis halimifolia*) and silverling (*Baccharis glomeruliflora*) grow among the mangroves. String lily (*Crinum americana*), golden leather fern (*Acrostichum areum*) and giant leather fern (*A. danaeiflolium*) thrive under the mangrove branches. Disturbance along the riverbank where a small amount of erosion has occurred has been mitigated by relocating the path further inland.

Blackwater Stream

Blackwater stream at the park is in excellent condition. The Estero River, part of the Caloosahatchee drainage basin (Fernald 1998), empties into Estero Bay and is designated as an Outstanding Florida Water noted for its exceptional ecological significance.
The river meanders along the southern portion of management zone KR-15. Tidal influence from Estero Bay extends into the park to as far as the U.S. Highway 41 bridge. Mangrove trees are commonly interspersed with the shoreline vegetation along the riverbank. Species such as snook (*Centropomus undecimalis*) and mullet (*Mulgil* spp.) frequent the river. Adult Florida manatee (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*) have been observed with calves as far upriver as Bamboo Landing. Injured and rehabilitated manatee have been released into the river by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Birds including tricolored heron (*Egretta tricolor*), snowy egret (*Egretta thula*), little blue heron (*Egretta caerula*), anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) use the bankside vegetation for roosting and foraging. On the steep riverbanks, native plants such as coin vine, giant leather fern, golden leather fern, plume polypody (*Pecluma plumula*) and shoestring fern (*Vittaria lineata)* occur. Invasive plants including Brazilian pepper, leadtree (*Leucaena eucocephala*) and bowstring hemp grow among native plants. At sites where the sand bottom is exposed during low water, a relatively invasive population of umbrella plant (*Cyperus involucrata*) has become established.

This part of the river was established as an "Idle Speed, No Wake" zone by Lee County. Due to this regulation and continued enforcement, erosion from boat traffic has been negligible.

Altered Land Cover Types

Abandoned Pasture

This area (spanning portions of management zones KR-11 and KR-12) served as the historic location of the Koreshan nursery, "orchard," truck garden, pasture and paddock. While not included in the historic settlement, it represents the area the Koreshan Unity utilized for horticultural and agricultural activities. Plants, seeds and cuttings from around the world were obtained and cultivated by the Unity. Many species from these endeavors have spread and invaded adjacent natural areas. Invasive non-natives such as Guinea grass (*Urochloa maxima*), Australian pine, common bamboo, Queen palm (*Syagrus romanzoffiana*) and Australian almond (*Terminalia muelleri*), among others, are found at this site. Most of the plants listed on the Florida Invasive Species Council (FISC) Invasive Species table are present in this area. Among the dense, impenetrable thicket of non-native species, isolated south Florida slash pine and cabbage palm persist as reminders of the former native landscape. It is possible that champion non-native trees and rare specimen plants could be found in this area.

Within a subset of this landcover type is an area formerly used for overflow parking during large-scale special events and farmer's markets. It was determined by park management that these events were not germane to the cultural resource themes of the park. Special events are now being planned with pertinent cultural and historical programming and visitor use management principles in mind, and as such, the demand for overflow parking in this area has drastically reduced.

An even smaller (approximately 1 acre) footprint within the abandoned pasture was used formerly by park staff to conduct prescribed pile burns. This area is no longer utilized for this operation and should be restored back to its historic natural condition.

Developed

Developed areas include the historic settlement grounds (management zone KR-12) where native vegetation was almost entirely replaced by ornamental non-native specimens. Portions of this unit are maintained as mowed lawn. Several extensive stands of melaleuca and eucalyptus species planted by the Koreshan Unity were removed in 1989. It is unlikely that these areas can be completely restored; however, with persistent maintenance, low herbaceous ground cover representative of a flatwoods-type community can be achieved. Other developed areas include the campground, Old Leach Field, staff support areas and park drive.

A large area west of the historic settlement is reminiscent of the Koreshan horticultural landscape and agricultural activities. Some specimen non-native plants, as well as some yet-to-be identified species are present, as well as the recently discovered and imperiled hand fern (*Ophioglossum palmatum*). Several recent explorations with botanists have occurred, but further survey and inventory are needed in this area. Many of the plants located here are significant to the cultural interpretation of the park.

Prescribed Fire

Objective: Within 10 years, maintain 75 acres within the optimum fire return interval.

Actions:

- Develop/update annual prescribed fire plan.
- Conduct prescribed fire on 14–32 acres annually.

The table below lists all fire-dependent natural communities found within the park, their associated acreage and optimal fire return interval and the annual average target for acres to be burned.

Prescribed Fire Management		
Natural Community	**Acres**	**Optimal Fire Return Interval (Years)**
Scrubby Flatwoods	75	6–15
Mesic Flatwoods	37	2–4
Annual Target Acreage	14–32	

The park is divided into designated management zones, several of which are identified as burn zones (refer to the Management Zones Table and Map). Prescribed fire is a critical tool for maintaining the park's fire-adapted natural communities and is implemented on a rotational basis according to ecological need and specific site conditions. The prescribed burn program at the park is guided by an annually updated burn plan, which aligns with the broader goals and objectives of this 10-year management plan. Because fire management is inherently dynamic, the annual planning process allows staff to respond adaptively to weather conditions, vegetation changes, fuel loads and restoration priorities.

The park's primary fire-adapted communities—mesic flatwoods and scrubby flatwoods—require regular burning to maintain their ecological integrity. Mesic flatwoods are targeted for burns on a two- to four-year interval, while scrubby flatwoods require longer return intervals of six to 15 years. However, areas lacking recent fire history, such as parts of the scrubby flatwoods north of the Estero River, may require shorter-term restoration efforts to reduce fuel loads and restore native vegetation structure. Once restoration objectives are met, these areas can transition into a maintenance phase with a return to optimal fire intervals.

Each year, approximately 14 to 32 acres of the park are targeted for prescribed fire, based on site-specific burn objectives and current fuel conditions. Invasive plant management, particularly in the northern scrubby flatwoods, remains an important precursor to burning to reduce hazardous fuel loads and support native plant recovery.

DRP uses the Natural Resource Tracking System (NRTS) to manage and evaluate the park's prescribed fire program. This statewide database enables staff to document burn histories, fire return intervals, staff qualifications, annual goals and progress toward burn targets. It also supports adaptive management by tracking whether individual burn objectives are met and informing future planning. NRTS is updated quarterly, and reports are generated to guide implementation and ensure accountability in meeting both annual and long-term fire management objectives.

Restoration

Objective: Conduct natural community restoration on abandoned field/pasture.

Actions:

- Restore a portion of abandoned field/pasture to historic mesic flatwoods community.
- Restore a portion of abandoned field/pasture to historic orchard.

This restoration project will convert an abandoned field/pasture within portions of management zones KR-11 and KR-12 park to a functional mesic flatwoods natural community. The approximately 1 acre footprint formerly used to conduct prescribed pile burns is to be incorporated into this restoration project, with fire planned to be introduced in 2026.
Restoration will begin with site preparation to reduce invasive and non-native vegetation. Prescribed fire will be applied as conditions allow, followed by the planting of south Florida slash pine to establish the characteristic overstory. Native herbaceous groundcover species appropriate to mesic flatwoods will also be reintroduced to restore natural community structure and function. Initial work has begun on approximately 10 acres and includes mechanical treatment and fire line preparation. Prescribed fire will be used over time to maintain the community and promote native species recruitment. This project will enhance habitat quality, improve ecological connectivity and contribute to the long-term resilience of the park's natural systems.

The subset of this abandoned field/pasture previously used for overflow parking should be restored to its original historic condition considering elements consistent with the Koreshan era which may include an orchard, horse stables and other pertinent replica components.

Assessment and Monitoring

Objective: Perform invasive plant species monitoring of scrubby flatwoods, mesic flatwoods, developed and abandoned field/pasture communities.

Action:

- Conduct a collaborative invasive species assessment with other entities to identify non-native plant species and provide removal priority recommendations.

The Koreshan Unity planted diverse specimens from around the world in the historic settlement, including in the Sunken (Victorian) Gardens, orchard and plant nursery. The abandoned field/pasture area to the west features a collection of mature non-native plants from Africa, Europe, Australia and South America. Botanists, including Thomas Edison and R. Nerhling visited to study the collection. Some species remain unidentified, and rare or champion specimens may be present. However, many of these plants have spread into natural areas, threatening the park's ecosystems, particularly the scrubby and mesic flatwoods.

An invasive species assessment is needed, involving collaboration with Selby Gardens, Naples Botanical Gardens, the local Native Plant Society, Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) and FWC. This effort could help restore the historic landscape to the west of the buildings while still preserving non-native plants of cultural significance and minimizing their spread.

IMPERILED SPECIES

Imperiled species are defined as those that (1) are tracked by FNAI with global or state ranks of G1/S1 (critically imperiled) or G2/S2 (imperiled) or (2) are listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), FWC or Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) as endangered, threatened or of special concern.

Several imperiled species are known to occur within the park. These include both flora and fauna that depend on the park's diverse natural communities for survival. For most imperiled species, routine land management actions such as prescribed burning, non-native species control and hydrological restoration provide adequate protection and promote habitat suitability. However, two species—the gopher tortoise and Florida manatee—warrant additional, species-specific attention due to their status and management needs.

The gopher tortoise is listed as threatened by FWC, serving as a keystone species whose burrows provide shelter to numerous other native wildlife. While earlier park management records estimated a population of approximately 31 individuals, casual observations by staff and biologists now suggest the presence of up to 100 tortoises. Most tortoise habitat within the park has been surveyed; however, updated population estimates are needed. Since the methodology used by FWC to calculate gopher tortoise and burrow density has recently changed, a new survey using the revised protocols is required. This survey should produce a final report documenting the density and distribution of active and inactive burrows and individuals throughout the park.

Florida manatees are designated as a threatened species under federal and state law and frequent the Estero River, especially during colder months. On occasion, rehabilitated manatees are released into the river from within the park boundaries through FWC partnerships. While no direct management interventions are currently required beyond protecting water quality and minimizing disturbance, when possible, continued observation and protection of aquatic habitat are critical to this species' conservation.

Several rare and imperiled plant species occur within the park, although no species-specific management protocols are currently in place. Park staff and DRP District 4 biologists will continue to locate and monitor occurrences of listed and imperiled plant species using GPS and GIS tools. These data will support annual assessments and help guide habitat restoration. Future management efforts should include developing conservation measures to protect sensitive populations from trampling, invasive species competition or alterations to hydrology or fire regimes. Imperiled species are listed in the table below.

Imperiled Species Inventory						
Common and Scientific Name	**Imperiled Species Status**				**Management Actions**	**Monitoring Level**
	FWC	**USFWS**	**FDACS**	**FNAI**		
PLANTS						
Golden leather fern *Acrostichum aureum*			T	G5, S3	1, 2	Tier 1
Curtiss' milkweed *Asclepias curtissii*			E	G3, S3		
Pinepink *Bletia purpurea*			T	G5?, S3	2	Tier 1
Nodding pinweed *Lechea cernua*			T	G3, S3		
Twinberry; Simpon's stopper *Myrcianthes fragrans*			T		2	Tier 1
Giant sword fern *Nephrolepis bisserata*			T	G5, S3		
Hand Fern *Ophioglossum palmatum*			E	G4, S2	2	Tier 1
Plume polypody *Pecluma plumula*			E	G5, S2	2	Tier 1
Florida royal palm *Roystonea regia*			E	G2, G3, S2	2	Tier 1

Imperiled Species Inventory						
Common and Scientific Name	**Imperiled Species Status**				**Management Actions**	**Monitoring Level**
	FWC	**USFWS**	**FDACS**	**FNAI**		
Lace-lip ladies' tresses *Spiranthes laciniata*			T	G4G5, S3S4		
West Indies mahogany *Swietenia mahagoni*			T	G3G4, S3		
Northern needleaf *Tillandsia balbisiana*			T	G5, S4?	2	Tier 1
Cardinal airplant *Tillandsia fasciculata*			E	G5, S4?	2	Tier 1
Twisted airplant *Tillandsia flexuosa*			T	G5, S3	2	Tier 1
Giant airplant *Tillandsia utriculata*			E	G5, S3	2	Tier 1
Redmargin zephyrlily *Zephyranthes simpsonii*			T	G2G3, S2S3		
REPTILES						
American alligator *Alligator mississippiensis*	FT(S/A)	SAT		G5, S4	13	Tier 1
American crocodile *Crocodylus acutus*	FT	T		G2, S2	13	Tier 1
Eastern indigo snake *Drymarchon couperi*	FT	T		G3, S2?		
Gopher tortoise *Gopherus polyphemus*	ST			G3, S3	1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13	Tier 1; Tier 2
Florida king snake *Lampropeltis floridana*				G2, S2		
BIRDS						
Short-Tailed hawk *Buteo brachyurus*				G4G5, S1	13	Tier 1
Little blue heron *Egretta caerulea*	ST			G5, S4	13	Tier 1
Reddish egret *Egretta rufescens*	ST			G4, S2	13	Tier 1
Tricolored heron *Egretta tricolor*	ST			G5, S4	13	Tier 1

Imperiled Species Inventory						
Common and Scientific Name	**Imperiled Species Status**				**Management Actions**	**Monitoring Level**
	FWC	**USFWS**	**FDACS**	**FNAI**		
Swallow-tailed kite *Elanoides forficatus*				G5, S2	13	Tier 1
White-tailed kite *Elanus leucurus*				G5, S1	13	Tier 1
Merlin *Falco columbarius*				G5, S2	13	Tier 1
Magnificent frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*				G5, S1	13	Tier 1
Wood stork *Mycteria americana*	FT	DL		G4, S2	13	Tier 1
Roseate spoonbill *Platalea ajaja*	ST			G5, S2	13	Tier 1
American redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*				G5, S2	13	Tier 1
MAMMALS						
Florida panther *Puma concolor coryi*	FE	E		G5T1, S1		
Big Cypress fox squirrel *Sciurus niger avicennia*	ST			G5T2, S2	10, 13	Tier 1
Florida manatee *Trichechus manatus latirostris*	FT	T		G2G3T2, S2S3	10, 13	Tier 1

Management Actions:

1. Prescribed Fire
2. Non-native Plant Removal
3. Translocation/Augmentation
4. Hydrological Maintenance/Restoration
5. Nest Boxes/Artificial Cavities
6. Hardwood Control
7. Mechanical Treatment
8. Predator Control
9. Erosion Control
10. Protection from Visitor Impacts
11. Decoys (Shorebirds)
12. Vegetation Planting
13. Outreach/Education
14. Other

Monitoring Level:

Tier 1. Non-Targeted Observation/Documentation: includes documentation of species presence through casual/passive observation during routine park activities (i.e. not conducting species-specific searches). Documentation may be in the form of Wildlife Observation Forms or other district specific methods used to communicate observations.

Tier 2. Targeted Presence/Absence: includes monitoring methods/activities that are specifically intended to document presence/absence of a particular species or suite of species.

Tier 3. Population Estimate/Index: an approximation of the true population size or population index based on a widely accepted method of sampling.

Tier 4. Population Census: A complete count of an entire population with demographic analysis, including mortality, reproduction, emigration and immigration.

Tier 5. Other: may include habitat assessments for a particular species or suite of species or any other specific methods used as indicators to gather information about a particular species. [If referenced in table, provide discussion in narrative]

Inventory

Objective: Develop/update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists for plants and animals.

Action:

- Continue to survey the park to update imperiled species inventory lists.

The park is home to 16 imperiled plant species and 19 imperiled animal species. While the inventory of native species is comprehensive, formal plant and animal surveys could be conducted if funding or partnership opportunities arise, enhancing data on species' occurrence and distribution. Park staff are trained to document imperiled species and record details of unfamiliar species for identification. All collected data are reported to the DRP District 4 biology office, FDACS, FNAI and FWC.

Fauna

Objective: Continue existing monitoring protocols for gopher tortoise.

Action:

- Monitor gopher tortoise, using the line transect distance sampling method to establish baseline population numbers.

To improve understanding of the gopher tortoise distribution and population size throughout the park, a comprehensive burrow survey is proposed.

Gopher tortoises thrive in early successional scrubby flatwoods and healthy mesic flatwoods communities, both abundant habitats at the park. To support an optimal gopher tortoise population, it is crucial to keep these flatwoods in an early successional state. As development encroaches on the site, a mix of prescribed burning and mechanical treatments may be required to preserve these habitats and ensure they remain suitable for gopher tortoise.

Flora

Objective: Monitor and document two imperiled plant species.

Actions:

- Develop monitoring protocols for plume polypody and hand fern.
- Implement monitoring protocols for these species.

In collaboration with Selby Gardens in Sarasota, Naples Botanical Gardens and other interested botanical organizations, park staff and DRP district biologists as appropriate will locate and monitor populations of the imperiled plume polypody and hand fern.

INVASIVE SPECIES

The natural communities at the park have been heavily infested with invasive non-natives particularly melaleuca, Australian pine and downy rose myrtle. Much of the melaleuca and Australian pine have been eradicated in the park, and the downy rose myrtle is at a management condition. Aggressive non-native control actions must continue to prevent reverting back to the poor natural community conditions of the 1990s. As mentioned previously, a survey should be conducted to determine the extent of invasive plants, and an invasive prediction assessment should occur.

The Invasive Plant Species Table contains a list of the FISC Category I and II invasive, non-native plant species found within the park (FISC 2015). The table also identifies the relative distribution for each species and the management zones in which they are known to occur. An explanation of the codes is provided following the table. For an inventory of all non-native species found within the park, see the appendix.

Invasive Plant Species			
Common and Scientific Name	**FISC Category**	**Distribution**	**Management Zone(s)**
Rosary pea *Abrus precatorius*	I	Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-01, KR-02, KR-03, KR-04, KR-06A, KR-06B, KR-06C, KR-07C, KR-08
		Scattered Dense Patches	KR-11, KR-12
		Dominant Cover	KR-10
Earleaf acacia *Acacia auriculiformis*	I	Single Plant or Clump	KR-01, KR-02, KR-03, KR-04, KR-07D, KR-08, KR-12
		Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-05, KR-06A, KR-06B, KR-06C, KR-07C, KR-09, KR-14, KR-15
		Scattered Dense Patches	KR-15
Australian pine *Casuarina equisetifolia*	I	Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-11, KR-15
Carrotwood *Cupaniosis anacardioides*	I	Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-05, KR-11, KR-15
Air potato *Dioscorea bulbifera*	I	Single Plant or Clump	KR-06A
		Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-13, KR-15
		Scattered Dense Patches	KR-12
		Dominant Cover	KR-10
Bowstring hemp *Dracaena hyacinthoides*	II	Single Plant or Clump	KR-04
		Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-02, KR-03, KR-08, KR-11, KR-15

Invasive Plant Species			
Common and Scientific Name	**FISC Category**	**Distribution**	**Management Zone(s)**
		Scattered Dense Patches	KR-12
Surinam cherry *Eugenia uniflora*	I	Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-11
Cogongrass *Imperata cylindrica*	I	Single Plant or Clump	KR-08
		Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-01, KR-06B, KR-06C, KR-07A, KR-07B
		Scattered Dense Patches	KR-06A, KR-07C
Gold coast jasmine *Jasminum dichotomum*	I	Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-11
		Dense Monoculture	KR-12
Mother of millions *Kalanchoe x houghtonii*	II	Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-13
Lantana; Shrub verbena *Lantana camara*	I	Single Plant or Clump	KR-07D
		Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-13
Lead tree *Leucaena leucocephala*	II	Single Plant or Clump	KR-10
		Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-12
Japanese climbing fern *Lygodium japonicum*	I	Single Plant or Clump	KR-12
		Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-01
Old World climbing fern *Lygodium microphyllum*	I	Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-05
		Linearly Scattered	KR-15
Melaleuca *Melaleuca quinquenervia*	I	Single Plant or Clump	KR-03, KR-06A, KR-06B
Burma reed *Neyraudia reynaudiana*	I	Scattered Dense Patches	KR-12
Guinea grass *Urochloa maxima*	II	Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-04, KR-06A, KR-06B, KR-06C, KR-07A, KR-07B, KR-10
		Scattered Dense Patches	KR-11, KR-12, KR-13
Torpedo grass *Panicum repens*	I	Scattered Dense Patches	KR-06A
Napiergrass; elephantgrass *Pennisetum purpureum*	I	Single Plant or Clump	KR-06B

Invasive Plant Species			
Common and Scientific Name	**FISC Category**	**Distribution**	**Management Zone(s)**
Downy rose myrtle *Rhodomyrtus tomentosa*	I	Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-01, KR-02, KR-05, KR-06A, KR-07B, KR-07D
		Scattered Dense Patches	KR-15
Brazilian pepper *Schinus terebinthifolia*	I	Single Plant or Clump	KR-03, KR-06C, KR-12
		Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-05, KR-06B, KR-09, KR-11, KR-15
Wedelia *Sphagneticola trilobata*	II	Scattered Dense Patches	KR-06B, KR-06C, KR-07B
Queen palm *Syagrus romanzoffiana*	II	Single Plant or Clump	KR-12
		Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-05
Java plum *Syzygium cumini*	I	Single Plant or Clump	KR-02, KR-03, KR-04, KR-08
		Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-05, KR-09, KR-10, KR-11, KR-12
Caesar's weed *Urena lobata*	I	Scattered Plants or Clumps	KR-02, KR-03, KR-04, KR-06B, KR-06C, KR-07A, KR-07C, KR-07D, KR-08, KR-11, KR-12
		Scattered Dense Patches	KR-06A
		Dominant Cover	KR-10
		Dense Monoculture	KR-13, KR-14

Invasive Plant Treatment

Objective: Update the long-term invasive plant management plan for the park.

Actions:

- Identify the major vectors and pathways for invasive plants at the park and reduce incoming propagules where possible.
- Regularly update surveys to reflect accurate infestation levels of each management zone.
- Develop an early detection rapid response protocol for new infestations.
- Develop a species-specific action plan for each management zone with a prioritization framework.
- Evaluate and update the plan on an annual basis and adapt to changing conditions.

Objective: Monitor and maintain 111 acres of habitat already in maintenance condition, as needed.

Actions:

- Survey all maintenance areas yearly for new infestations.
- Treat areas where invasive plant spread is imminent (e.g., after prescribed fire, mechanical or other disturbance).
- Document treatments and update surveys in NRTS.
-

Objective: Reduce and maintain cover class on 85 acres not in maintenance condition.

Actions:

- Survey and treat after prescribed fire for rapid spread of invasive species.
- Treat medium infestations with staff and volunteers where available.
- Reduce high infestations with additional labor sources (e.g., contract funding, strike teams) and plan for passive or active restoration.
- Document treatments and update surveys in NRTS.

Park staff, in collaboration with Florida Gulf Coast University service-learning students, Lee County's invasive plant management group and volunteers actively manage FISC Category I and II invasive plants. An annual plan has been implemented, with quarterly progress reports entered into NRTS, which are used to generate an annual report. Following an invasive species prediction assessment, other non-native species may be targeted for removal as surveys and inventories progress.

Biennial invasive plant surveys will guide treatment priorities and allow for adjustments to annual treatment goals, ultimately aiming to bring the park into maintenance condition.

Invasive non-native plants should be removed as they are discovered, with special care taken when using herbicides to protect listed species. In some cases, hand-pulling will be necessary to avoid accidental herbicide exposure. Additionally, the release of the Melaleuca weevil (*Oxyops vitiosa*) in nearby Estero Bay Preserve State Park has successfully reduced the flowering and seeding of melaleuca in the park.

Invasive and Nuisance Animal Control

Objective: Implement control measures on non-native/nuisance animals to protect native species and habitats.

Action:

- Monitor and remove hogs and other non-native/nuisance animal species from park as needed.

Wild hogs (*Sus scrofa*) are not commonly found on the property; however, due to their potentially destructive behavior, the park will continue to monitor their presence and take prompt action if detected. Invasive reptiles have been observed within the park, including the red-headed agama (*Agama picticauda*) and the green iguana (*Iguana iguana*). Feral dogs and cats are occasionally encountered and are promptly removed when detected. Cuban treefrog (*Ostepilus spetentrionalis*) and brown anole (*Anolis sagrei*) are present; however, eradication of these species is not considered feasible. Armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) will be removed when possible. Currently, no long-term control programs are required aside from the occasional removal of released pets and nuisance animals.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Archeological Sites

Koreshan Historic State Park contains eight historic archaeological sites recorded in the Florida Master Site File (FMSF). These locations are all within the Koreshan Unity Settlement (LL00094), which was listed as a historic district within the NRHP in 1976, except for the cemetery located outside of the historic district. The district was listed because it represents a unique philosophical and religious movement, it illustrates a cooperative settlement of a past era and is a remnant of a significant southwest Florida pioneer community which typified life on the southwest Florida frontier in that late nineteenth and the early to middle twentieth centuries. The Koreshan Bakery (8LL2541), Founder's House (8LL1545), etc., are associated with their namesake historic structures. The Koreshan Unity Cemetery #1/Horseshoe Bend (8LL2632) is located approximately 0.5 miles west of the NRHP district, on the south bank of the Estero River.

The Koreshan Unity was a turn-of-the-century communal society that formed in Chicago, Illinois, but established itself in the Estero area beginning in 1894. It was here that the new community was to be Utopia, the "New Jerusalem" – a life without crime, tobacco or drugs. In addition, education played an integral part in the Koreshan Unity. The Pioneer University provided schooling for all members of the settlement. The group flourished in the area until the death of the Koreshan Unity founder, Dr. Cyrus Reed Teed, in 1908. The community continued to function at a reduced capacity for several years after the death of Teed, until the structures and land were donated to the state of Florida in 1961.

The additional archaeological sites located within the park boundary consist of surface scatters of trash and other debris (e.g., bottles, cups, license plates, cans, etc.) that are indicative of the time (1894-1982) during which the area was occupied by the Koreshan membership. These surface scatters are in several areas of the park outside of visitor use areas.

In 2013, the Alliance for Integrated Spatial Technologies (AIST) at the University of South Florida were contracted as part of a the DRP District 4 and 5 project to perform predictive modeling of cultural resource potential in state parks. During this project aerial LiDAR data was used to determine surface elevations at the park (Collins 2013). The model identified 22.49 acres (11.47 percent) of uplands within the park as high sensitivity for archaeological resources. The remaining acres were considered medium sensitivity (28.75 acres or 14.66 percent) or low sensitivity (144.91 acres or 73.87 percent).

As a result of this research, a new site was located outside of the historic district boundary and was recorded in the FMSF (LL02632). The Koreshan Unity cemetery #1/Horshoe Bend is a cemetery location with one representative tombstone of a Koreshan member, Mary Ellen Knight. Online research conducted by AIST assessed that there were 28 internments within the cemetery and reported wooden fencing pieces scattered in the area. AIST recommended that an investigation be conducted into the site and boundary determinations to show the extent of the burial locations.

The archaeological sites located at the park are in either good or fair condition and remain relatively stable. Estero Riverbank (LL01912) is currently stable, with erosion being a minor concern. Koreshan Waterline (LL02035) is also stable and within a protected area of the park. Occasionally, animal or visitor activity will disturb the sites, but these incidences are infrequent and consist of only minor disturbances.

Currently there are no major threats to the archaeological sites. Intrusion from vegetation helps to preserve the surface scatter sites by obscuring them from visitors and is not an issue in the relevant areas. Animal intrusion does occur but is only minor and results in little disturbance to the overall site. Most of the artifacts are covered by vegetation or remain buried within 30 centimeters of the surface, and as such are relatively protected from the sun, rain and other environmental degradation issues. Looting is a minor issue, and no looters pits or other disturbances related to illicit activity have been seen at these sites.

The Koreshan Cemetery (LL02632) is in fair condition with heavy vegetation, including non-native species, having invaded the location over the years. The boundary fence to the cemetery has degraded and only one headstone is present.

The Koreshan Waterline for Planetary Court (LL02034) and Estero Riverbank (LL01912) are not classified as contributing to the Koreshan Unity Settlement Historic District (LL00094) and are not considered significant or eligible for listing on the NRHP. The Koreshan Bakery (LL02541), Founder's Home (08145), Membership Cottage (LL02064) and Small Machine Shop (LL02065) have not been evaluated for significance. As individual sites they are most likely not eligible. An argument could be made to have them added later as contributing sites of the Koreshan Unity Settlement Historic District (LL00094). Each of these sites has a late 19th to early 20th century component likely related to the historic settlement that argues for unification. The Boomer House (LL01098) was not originally listed as a contributing element to the NRHP district; however, it is considered eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level under Criterion C as an excellent example of a Prairie style residence in Lee County. The Boomer Caretaker's House (LL01097) has been determined to be not eligible for listing in the NRHP. Artifacts recovered in the future from the historic settlement area should be considered as part of the larger site and not recorded as separate sites, unless judged otherwise by a professional archaeologist.

Action required in relation to the archaeological sites located at the park includes site preservation, non-native removal and monitoring for necessary stabilization actions. The surface scatter sites that are not within visitor use areas are monitored by staff for disturbances. As such, continuing this preservation activity will help to ensure these sites remain undisturbed and intact for future study.

Historic Structures

Currently there are 14 historic structures and landscapes that are recorded in the FMSF and that are associated with the historic settlement. The Koreshan community consisted of approximately 200–250 individuals during its height around 1905. The group constructed many diverse structures that had several different purposes, and purposes that changed frequently throughout the group's time in Estero. The Koreshan Unity also heavily modified the landscape of the area they occupied extending to the northern banks of the Estero River and to the east of U.S. Highway 41. These landscape modifications included the construction of a gardens area, complete with pools and canals designed to be filled by artesian wells in addition to being fed by the Estero River.
The structures within the boundary of the park include:

Art Hall (LL02593): This large one-room building was used for the performing arts, lectures and a gallery building. Built by the professors and students of the Koreshan Pioneer University, it is a testimony to their craft and skills. Significant features include large windowpanes for lighting, large decorative white roof supports and trim.

Planetary Court (LL02598): This structure served as the home for the seven ladies, or "sisters," of the Planetary Chamber, the "city council" of the Koreshan Unity. Each woman had her own room. Most of the furnishings were brought from Chicago. The building is three stories tall and consists of a two-story outside deck.

Founders Home (LL01845): The oldest surviving structure on the historic settlement built by the Koreshans, it is the former home of Dr. Cyrus Reed Teed and served several other purposes including as the Children's School throughout the building's life. It is a two-story building with an outside deck on the north and south aspects.

Damkohler Cottage (LL02594): The only structure on the property at the time of Dr. Teed's arrival. It was built by the parcel's original landowner, Gustave Damkohler, a German settler who homesteaded there in 1882 with his family. Damkohler donated the land shortly after meeting Dr. Teed, convinced that Koreshanity was to become the "great religion." It is a small, one-room cottage.

New Store (LL02597): Once the only stop between Fort Myers and Naples, it was used as a store, post office, restaurant and inn by the Koreshan community. It is located immediately off U.S. Highway 41 and is a two-story, multi-room building. This structure requires extensive renovation and is currently stabilized with an internal support structure to prevent collapse. See Conceptual Land Use Component section for details.

Bakery (LL02541A): This building was used by the Koreshan Unity to produce baked goods, including significant quantities of bread per day. It is a two-story building with a large, open first story and multiple rooms on the second floor used as a dormitory.

Vesta Newcomb Cottage (LL02600): This single-story duplex building was moved to the west side of the historic settlement in the 1940s from off-site. It was originally located on Corkscrew Road and owned by Koreshan member Lou Staton. Vesta Newcomb lived in it after it was relocated to this historic settlement.

Membership Cottage (Conrad Schlender Cottage) (LL02064): The building served as a house for many Koreshan members, but as membership began to decline it became the sole residence of Conrad Schlender, one of the last remaining members. He lived in the cottage until his death in 1965. It is a single story Florida Cracker wood-frame vernacular style house that was specially adapted for the hot, humid and rainy climate. It has undergone extensive modifications.

Small Machine Shop (LL02065): The shop was used for machining small electrical components for the Koreshan community. It is a small, single room building with a bowed roof.

Large Machine Shop (LL02596): This large, open-air building was historically used to contain steam power machinery that served the adjacent laundry. In addition, several tools and machines were designed and created here, including a marine gas engine.

Generator Building (LL02595): This building was used to produce electricity for the Koreshan community as well as for sale to the outside community. It is a large, tin-sided structure with a tall roof and multiple additions. To the east side of the building is the foundation of the tower that supplied water for the original steam engine. It was later replaced with a more powerful Fairbanks-Morse diesel engine.

Sunken (Victorian) Gardens: This area of the historic settlement was heavily modified with a large pool (fed by an artesian well) and a canal system (fed by the Estero River). This area was designed to be a peaceful garden area with only aesthetic goals in mind. The gardens were sculpted to form mounds, islands and terraces.

Boomer House (LL01098): Acquired by the Trustees in 2005, this structure is held under a life estate encumbrance and as of 2026 has not yet come under the management of the park.

Boomer Caretaker House (LL01097): Also acquired by the Trustees in 2005, this structure is also held under a life estate encumbrance and as of 2026 has not yet come under the management of the park.

Boat House (LL02577): This structure was not structurally sound and is no longer standing. It was demolished with approval from DRP's Bureau of Natural and Cultural Resources (BNCR).

Overall, the historic structures are stable and in good condition. The Membership Cottage is in excellent condition. A renovation effort, funded in part by a grant from the Florida Department of State's Division of Historical Resources (DHR) Small Matching Grants Program and matched by the citizen support organization, Friends of Koreshan Historic State Park, took place in 2015 to stabilize and restore the structure. The cottage restoration received an Outstanding Achievement award for restoration/rehabilitation from the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation.

The major concern within the historic settlement is the New Store building, which is in poor condition and requires extensive restoration. Currently, it is not a visitor-use area due to the danger of the structure collapsing or sections falling. It has been stabilized with the application of an internal support structure that runs vertically from the concrete pad to the roof trusses. However, due to termite damage and, in some cases, poor construction, the building requires extensive restoration.

Threats to the other structures at the park are minimal and can be prevented with basic maintenance. Currently, there are no plans for demolition of any FMSF listed structure within the park boundaries.

In general, many structures at the park require continued preservation as a primary treatment. Minor concerns such as periodic shingle repair, painting and small maintenance concerns are the only issues affecting most structures.

Historic Collection

The collections at the park are extremely significant in that they nearly all are directly associated with the Koreshan Unity. This is one of the few collections like this among Florida's state parks. The diverse collection includes historic artifacts kept in the temperature-controlled Museum Storage facility, extensive archival material, a large collection of artwork, historic furniture, large pieces of machinery, a Fairbanks-Morse engine used in the production of electrical power and many unique plant species that are part of the Koreshan gardens complex. No known informal collections of artifacts exist at the park.

The source of the collection objects is the Koreshan Unity organization, and much of the collection was acquired when the historic settlement was donated to the state of Florida in 1961. However, some sub-sets of the collection have been donated to the park by outside organizations and individuals, the majority coming from the College of Life, a real estate group with ties to the Koreshan Unity. The approximate size of the collection in its entirety is 331,000 cubic feet.

In 2016, many artifacts were donated to Florida Gulf Coast University. This collection included mostly paintings, musical instruments, documents, photographs and personal items. The collection that remains in the park is primarily furniture, which is stored in three buildings: Museum Storage, the New Store and the second floor of the Founders House. A dedicated storage system for paintings is likely not needed, as most remaining paintings are on display. However, because much of the furniture is stored in historic buildings, additional storage space is needed to protect these items and ensure their long-term preservation.

Currently, most objects are stored in the Museum Storage building, but there are several artifacts that are exhibited in buildings throughout the settlement. Artifacts stored in the Museum Storage building are climate controlled and kept at a constant temperature to minimize pests. Quarterly pest control is also used in this building as well as all other structures in the historic settlement. The Art Hall is climate-controlled and is where a rotating collection of artwork is displayed, along with significant or environmentally sensitive artifacts displayed in cases. The building's climate is carefully regulated and monitored. All other structures are not climate-controlled but house artifacts that have adjusted to the ambient environment and show no signs of degradation. Artifacts are never transferred from a climate-controlled environment into a non-climate-controlled environment without adequate periods of adjustment, and vice versa.

The park currently has a Scope of Collections Statement that was updated in 2011 and is on file in the Museum Storage building. The catalog system currently used at the park is Past Perfect v5, which serves as the primary record for the location and status of all items in the collection. Housekeeping manuals derived from the Secretary of Interior Standards are kept in each building, and staff and docents are trained in the proper techniques contained therein. Monitoring and climate control in relevant buildings is accomplished through portable temperature and humidity devices and cross-checked using the built-in air conditioning system monitors. Pest control is monitored daily, and treatments are conducted using professional service in all buildings on a quarterly basis. Staff are trained to recognize preservation issues and instructed to report them to park management or the Museum Curator.

Informal collections assessments have taken place, with recommendations to lower the temperature in the Museum Storage building. This recommendation was taken, and the temperature was lowered to below 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Increased storage for the collection is a need that must be addressed within the next five years before it becomes a critical issue.

The Cultural Resource Table below contains the name, reference number, culture or period and a brief description of all the cultural sites within the park that are listed in the FMSF. The table also summarizes each site's level of significance, existing condition and recommended management treatment. An explanation of the codes is provided following the table.

Cultural Sites Listed in the Florida Master Site File					
Site Name and FMSF #	**Culture/Period**	**Description**	**Significance**	**Condition**	**Treatment**
LL00094 Koreshan Unity Settlement Hist. District	Historic/1894–1963	Resource Group	NRL	G	RS
LL02541 Koreshan Bakery	Historic/	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
LL01845 Founders House	Historic/1896	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
LL01098 Boomer House	Historic/1900s	Historic Structure	NR	G	P
LL01097 Boomer Caretaker House	Historic/1900s	Historic Structure	NE	G	P
LL01912 Estero Riverbank	Historic/1900s	Archaeological Site	NS	G	P
LL01917 20950 S Tamiami Trail	Historic/1900s	Historic Structure	NS	G	P
LL02035 Koreshan Waterline for Planetary Court	Historic/1900s	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
LL02064 Membership Cottage	Historic/1903	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
LL02065 Small Machine Shop	Historic/1905	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
LL02577 Koreshan Boat House	Historic/1895	Historic Structure (demolished with DHR approval)	NS	NA	N/A
LL02594 Damkohler Cottage	Historic/1896	Historic Structure	NRL	G	P
LL02595 Generator Building	Historic/1908	Historic Structure	NRL	G	P
LL02596 Large Machine Shop	Historic/1907	Historic Structure	NRL	G	P
LL02541A Membership Cottage	Historic/1900s	Historic Structure	NRL	G	P

Cultural Sites Listed in the Florida Master Site File					
Site Name and FMSF #	**Culture/Period**	**Description**	**Significance**	**Condition**	**Treatment**
LL02597 New Store	Historic/1920	Historic Structure	NRL	P	R
LL02598 Planetary Court	Historic/1903	Historic Structure	NRL	G	P
LL02065A Small Machine Shop	Historic/1905	Historic Structure	NRL	G	P
LL02600 Vesta Newcomb Cottage	Historic/1900s	Historic Structure	NRL	G	P
LL02593 Art Hall	Historic/1905	Historic Structure	NRL	G	P
LL02541A Bakery Building	Historic/1905	Historic Structure	NRL	G	P
LL02632 Koreshan Unity Cemetery #1	Historic/1917	Historic Cemetery	NE	F	P

Significance:
NRL - National Register Listed
NRE - National Register Eligible
LS - Locally Significant
NE - Not Evaluated
NS - Not Significant

Conditions:
G - Good
F - Fair
P – Poor

Recommended Treatment:
RS - Restoration
RH - Rehabilitation
ST - Stabilization
P - Preservation
R – Removal

Cultural resources are unique, and collectively, very challenging for the public land manager whose goal is to preserve and protect them in perpetuity. The management of cultural resources is often complicated because these resources are irreplaceable and extremely vulnerable to disturbances. Therefore, the advice of historical and archaeological experts is required in this effort. All activities related to land clearing, ground disturbing activities, major repairs or additions to historic structures listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP must be submitted to DHR for review and comment prior to undertaking the proposed project. Recommendations may include but are not limited to concurrence with the project as submitted, pre-testing of the project site by a certified archaeological monitor, cultural resource assessment survey by a qualified professional archaeologist and modifications to the proposed project to avoid or mitigate potential adverse effects. In addition, any demolition or substantial alteration to any historic structure or resource must be submitted to DHR for consultation and DRP must demonstrate that there is no feasible alternative to removal and must provide a strategy for documentation or salvage of the resource.

Florida law further requires that the DRP consider the reuse of historic buildings in the park in lieu of new construction and must undertake a cost comparison of new development versus rehabilitation of a building before electing to construct a new or replacement building. This comparison must be accomplished with the assistance of DHR.

Condition Assessment

Objective: Assess all recorded cultural resources and evaluate their condition monthly.

Action:

- Continue to assess/evaluate 22 recorded cultural resources.

Assessments of archaeological sites within the boundaries of the park are conducted monthly. These assessments are informal and are designed to monitor sites for any major changes or threats. Assessments will note any changes to the sites since the last update and will include at least one picture that shows the overall extent of the sites. Updated GPS coordinates should also be provided to ensure that the sites can continue to be found accurately. Currently, there is no need for a Level 1 archaeological survey anywhere within the historic settlement.

Evaluating the condition of cultural resources is accomplished using a three-part evaluation scale, expressed as good, fair and poor. These terms describe the present condition, rather than comparing what exists to the ideal condition. Good describes a condition of structural stability and physical wholeness, where no obvious deterioration other than normal occurs. Fair describes a condition in which there is a discernible decline in condition between inspections, and the wholeness or physical integrity is and continues to be threatened by factors other than normal wear. A fair assessment is usually a cause for concern. Poor describes an unstable condition where there is palpable, accelerating decline, and physical integrity is being compromised quickly. A resource in poor condition suffers obvious declines in physical integrity from year to year. A poor condition suggests immediate action is needed to reestablish physical stability.

Documentation of Recorded Sites

Objective: Compile reliable and comprehensive documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.

Actions:

- Update all FMSF forms on a biennial basis and update all restoration plans on a five-year cycle or as needed, ensuring cost estimates remain accurate and preservation practices align with current standards and staffing resources.
- Expand the park's historical record by collecting oral histories from long-term staff and documenting administrative history.

Formal updates of the FMSF forms should be accomplished every two years for all sites listed within the FMSF database and in the Cultural Resources Table above to ensure continued accuracy. Restoration plans for all historic structures and landscapes within the historic district have been completed and are on file in the park archives. Updates to the restoration plans for the historic district structures would be advisable on a five-year cycle or as needed, as many are over 10 years old. These restoration plans can be adjusted for inflation and used for project cost estimation at any point in the future. These tasks can be accomplished at the park level in collaboration with the citizen support organization.

There is a definite need to continue collecting oral history interviews and administrative history reports. Much of the history of DRP's involvement can be revealed through the oral history passed down to staff members. Long-term staff members of the park should be asked to complete an oral history interview before retirement to ensure this information remains accessible.

Objective: Document the Anna Lewis House (El Retiro) and nominate it for inclusion in the FMSF to formally recognize its historical significance.

Actions:

- Conduct a detailed survey of the house, including architectural features, construction history and association with Frank and Anna Lewis.
- Compile archival research, photographs and relevant documentation to support the site record.
- Submit the completed documentation to the FMSF for official recognition.
- Maintain the house in a stable condition to support ongoing documentation and future preservation efforts.

Anna Lewis House (El Retiro) was built in 1931 by Koreshan settlers Frank and Anna Lewis as their retirement home. The house was originally located on the east side of U.S. Highway 41, opposite the entrance pillars of the historic settlement. In 2004, the house was donated to the park and relocated to its current site, where it is used and maintained as the park's administration building.

Maintenance of Recorded Sites

Objective: Continue to maintain the structures and grounds of the historic settlement and repair as needed.

Action:

- Perform daily monitoring of the structures and landscapes within the historic settlement.

- Determine if repairs are needed and consult with the Museum Curator, BNCR and DHR.
- Monitor Monkey Puzzle Island for erosion.

The regular maintenance of structures and repair as it becomes necessary is a priority. Inspections take place twice daily by staff during the opening and closing of the historic settlement. The Museum Curator monitors all other concerns within the historic district. If it is determined that repairs to structures are necessary, consult appropriate park staff, BNCR and DHR to ensure compliance.

Some stabilization work has been done along the trail near Monkey Puzzle Island to prevent additional erosion, which includes the construction of 2-by-4-inch wood planks to divert water during heavy rain events. The area needs to be monitored and if the current strategy does not work, a permanent solution will need to be investigated. DRP staff will continue to monitor erosion along trails and the river, and as needed, seek solutions to prevent additional erosion where feasible with priority given to protect visitor use areas, cultural resources and park infrastructure.

Preservation Measures

Objective: Perform a full restoration of the New Store building.

Action:

- Implement the full restoration of the New Store building within the next 10 years using the restoration plan on file.

The highest restoration priority is the New Store building, which currently is stabilized with the installation of an internal support structure running from the concrete pad up to the roof truss. However, the structure is not safe for visitors or staff use. A full restoration of the structure should take place well before the end of this 10-year planning cycle, following the restoration plan currently on file in the Museum Storage building. Its size and location within the historic settlement make it the ideal candidate for such a project. Its position immediately off U.S. Highway 41 also makes it an excellent advertisement for the park, particularly if it is fully restored.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Arthropod Control Plan

All the DRP lands are designated as “environmentally sensitive and biologically highly productive” in accordance with section 388.4111, F.S. If a local mosquito control district proposes a treatment plan, DRP works with the local mosquito control district to achieve consensus. By policy of DEP since 1987, aerial adulticiding is not allowed, but larviciding and ground adulticiding (truck spraying in public use areas) is typically allowed. DRP does not authorize new physical alterations of marshes through ditching or water control structures.

In 1995, an agreement between the Lee County Mosquito Control District (LCMCD) and DEP allowed a three-year experimental use of Abate, with monitoring by Mote Marine Laboratory, after which Abate use would continue unless “substantial adverse impacts to non-targets” were shown by Mote. The experiment concluded with a finding of no significant impacts, and the use of Abate was authorized in a formal amendment to the arthropod management plan (AMP) in 1999.

Even though the 1987 AMP only allowed Bti, the 1999 amendment to the AMP stated that “the use of methoprene, Bti, and monomolecular films…remains unchanged. All other chemicals used on designated lands will be reported.” Because of the heightened concern with the toxicity of Abate, the 1995 agreement defined the low marsh “recurring breeding areas” as those which needed regular treatment and high marsh “non-recurring areas” as those which only needed occasional treatment. The types of habitats were mapped, ground truthed and adopted by mutual consent. The 1999 amendment did not institute these designations but rather identified “treatment areas” and “non-treatment areas.” The amendment required an annual meeting between LCMCD and DEP staff, prior to the treatment season, to review maps and decide which acreages should be classified in the two categories for that year.

In 2017, DEP approved limited aerial adulticiding in state parks within Lee County, with specific restrictions and excluding Cayo Costa State Park. Additionally, the use of Spinosad was authorized in designated areas, with its use subject to reevaluation every five years.

Mosquito control plans temporarily may be set aside under declared threats to public or animal health or during a declared state of emergency.

LAND USE COMPONENT

VISITATION

Visitors are drawn to Koreshan Historic State Park to see its main attraction, the historic settlement, which features 11 flawlessly restored and nationally registered historic structures carpentered by the Koreshans between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1894, the Koreshan Unity, a religious sect led by Dr. Cyrus R. Teed, moved to the Estero River area and built a settlement based on a commitment to communal living and a belief that the universe existed on the inside of the Earth. Living celibate lives, this industrious group established a farm, nursery and botanical gardens. Their vision for the planned city would embrace a system of formal gardens laid out in patterns of applied geometry. Dr. Teed corresponded with other horticulturalists, exchanging seeds and plants that allude to biblical descriptions of Eden (Genesis 1:1-31).

Other day-use recreational opportunities include a picnic area, offering a large pavilion, grills, a short nature trail and a playground. The park also provides a boat ramp along the Estero River, a brackish tidal waterway that leads to Estero Bay approximately three miles west of the boat ramp. Visitors must bring their own canoe, kayak or paddleboard. The maximum boat length allowed is 24 feet. A 60-site campground provides visitors with electricity, water, a picnic table and fire ring. Twelve sites are designated tent camping only and four paved ADA campsites are available.

Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail (CT)

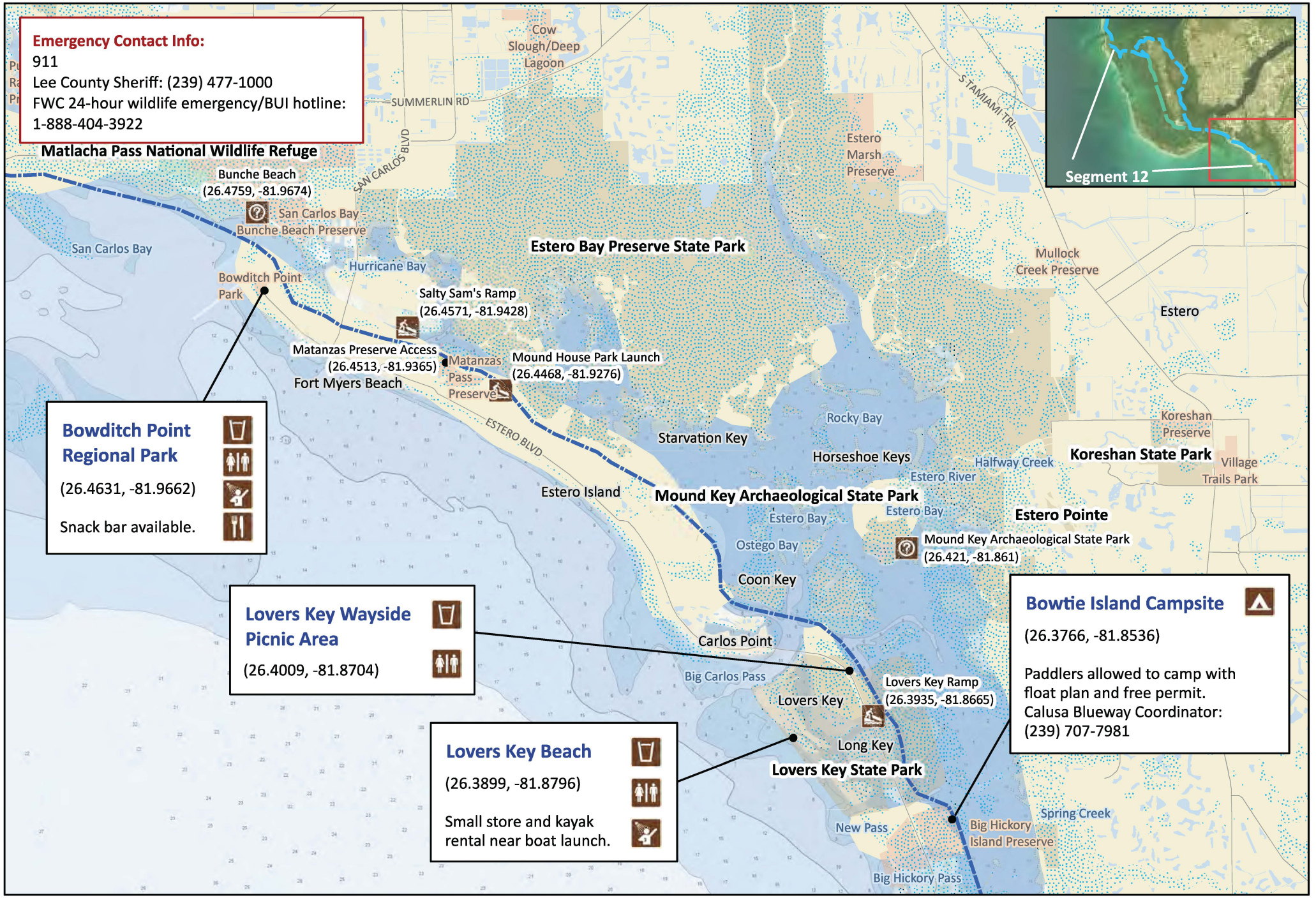
Segment 12, an approximately 40-mile portion of the CT from Cayo Costa State Park/Cabbage Key to Lovers Key/Bowtie Island, features several state parks including Koreshan Historic. Paddlers accessing the Great Calusa Blueway on the inside of San Carlos Island can venture into Estero Bay, the terminus to the Estero River, and paddle upstream for a detour off trail to Koreshan Historic where camping is available by reservation.

Trends

Visitation at Koreshan Historic State Park tends to remain relatively constant throughout the year with a slight drop during the heat of the south Florida summer, and a slight uptick during the spring months. Between 2015–2025, the park received an average of 189,272 visitors annually.

Economic Impact

Attendance over the 10-year period from FY 2015–16 through FY 2024–25 totaled 1,892,715 visitors. By DRP estimates, the visitors contributed $226,799,439 in direct economic impact. Visitor spending supported a cumulative total of approximately 3228 one-year job equivalents over the 10-year period. (DEP 2015-2025).



Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail

Segment 12: Pine Island/Estero Bay (Map 3 of 3)

Begin: Cayo Costa State Park
End: Lovers Key/Bowtie Island

Distance: 38.3-41.5 miles
Duration: 2-3 days

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

Updated: 12/2/2024

N

EXISTING FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Four recreational day use areas are located at the park. The historic district comprises the majority of the park's day use area, consisting of the eastern half of the park property. The park's historic settlement is a unique, intact site containing a significant number of original buildings and artifacts. Interpretive displays are distributed throughout.

The campground is located at the north end of the park drive, to the west of the historic settlement, and provides 60 sites. The boat ramp is to the west of the campground and adjacent to the recreation area. The picnic area contains multiple tables and grills, as well as two overlooks and a playground.

The park has three support areas. The main entrance to the park is located on the south side of the property and provides an entrance station and small storage building. Maintenance and staff residence areas are located west of the entrance station. This area includes park residences, several storage sheds, a pole barn, maintenance shop and administrative space. Additionally, there is a volunteer campground with a restroom and recreation hall, along with one ranger residence, one employee-owned site and two storage buildings.

Facilities Inventory

Historic District	
Art Hall	1
Planetary Court	1
Founders Home	1
New Store	1
Damkohler Cottage	1
Bamboo Landing	1
Hedwig Michel Gravesite	1
Bakery	1
Conrad Schlender/Membership Cottage	1
Vesta Newcomb Cottage	1
Large Machine Shop	1
Small Machine Shop	1
Generator Building	1
Sunken Gardens Bridge	2
Interpretive Sign	12
Paved Parking Area	25
Restroom Facility	1
Day Use Picnic Area	
Large Covered Picnic Pavilion	1
Grills	11
Picnic Table	34
Observation Deck	2
Playground	1
Interpretive Sign	1
Unpaved Parking Area	25
Restroom Facility	1

KORESHAN HISTORIC STATE PARK
Existing Facilities

N

0 500 Feet 1,000

Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection
This graphical representation is provided for informational purposes and should not be considered authoritative for navigational, engineering, legal, and other uses.

Nature Trails (mileage)	1.08
Campground	
Campsite	60
Campfire Circle	1
Bathhouse	1
Pump-House (Storage Building)	1
Boat Ramp	
Paddle launch	1
Unpaved Parking Area	20
Entrance Area	
Entrance Station	1
Maintenance/Residence Area	
Maintenance Shop	1
Ranger Office	1
Garden Shed	1
Paint Shed	1
Pole Barn	1
Chemical Shed	1
Plant Nursery	1
Lift Station and Filter Beds for Waste Treatment	1
Staff Residence	2
Storage Shed	3
Carport	1
Volunteer Campground	
Recreational Hall	1
Volunteer Host Site	21
Restroom	1
Staff Residence	1
Employee-Owned Trailer Site	6
Museum Storage	1

CONCEPTUAL LAND USE PLAN

Koreshan Historic Settlement

Objective: Increase public access at the New Store.

Action:

- Determine adaptive reuse for the New Store.

The New Store is both the most public-facing and most in disrepair of all the buildings in the historic settlement. As a high-visibility building, after restoration is complete it should be utilized by a concessionaire to fulfill uses compatible with either its historic function as a general store, or as a visitor center and climate-controlled collections facility that supports both public engagement and long-term collections care. Some additional resource-based uses may be considered within this restored structure.

Objective: Interpret all elements of the historic settlement.

Actions:

- Evaluate the condition of interpretive elements on an annual basis.
- Incorporate multi-media interpretive elements into interpretive plan.
- Restore historic functionality to the Bakery.

The introductory interpretation necessary to fully understand and appreciate the historic district is currently provided throughout the settlement. All exterior interpretive signs were replaced in October 2025. Additionally, signage was added to distinct trees of historical significance originally planted by the Koreshan Unity. Interpretive improvements to the multi-media content provided at specific historic district sites could be considered.

Constructed just to the west of the former Dining Hall (demolished in 1949), the Bakery produced 500-600 loaves of bread per day for Koreshan members and for sale at the store (New Store). Prior to state acquisition, the baking ovens connected to the south side of the building were removed. To recreate historic function and expand interpretive opportunities of the historic settlement, evaluate feasibility of acquiring ovens germane to the Koreshan-era that could be utilized for the production of baked goods and to supplement interpretive programming.

Objective: Consolidate and expand parking.

Actions:

- Discontinue the overflow parking area.
- Assess the impacts to adjacent mesic flatwoods.
- Construct expanded paved parking.

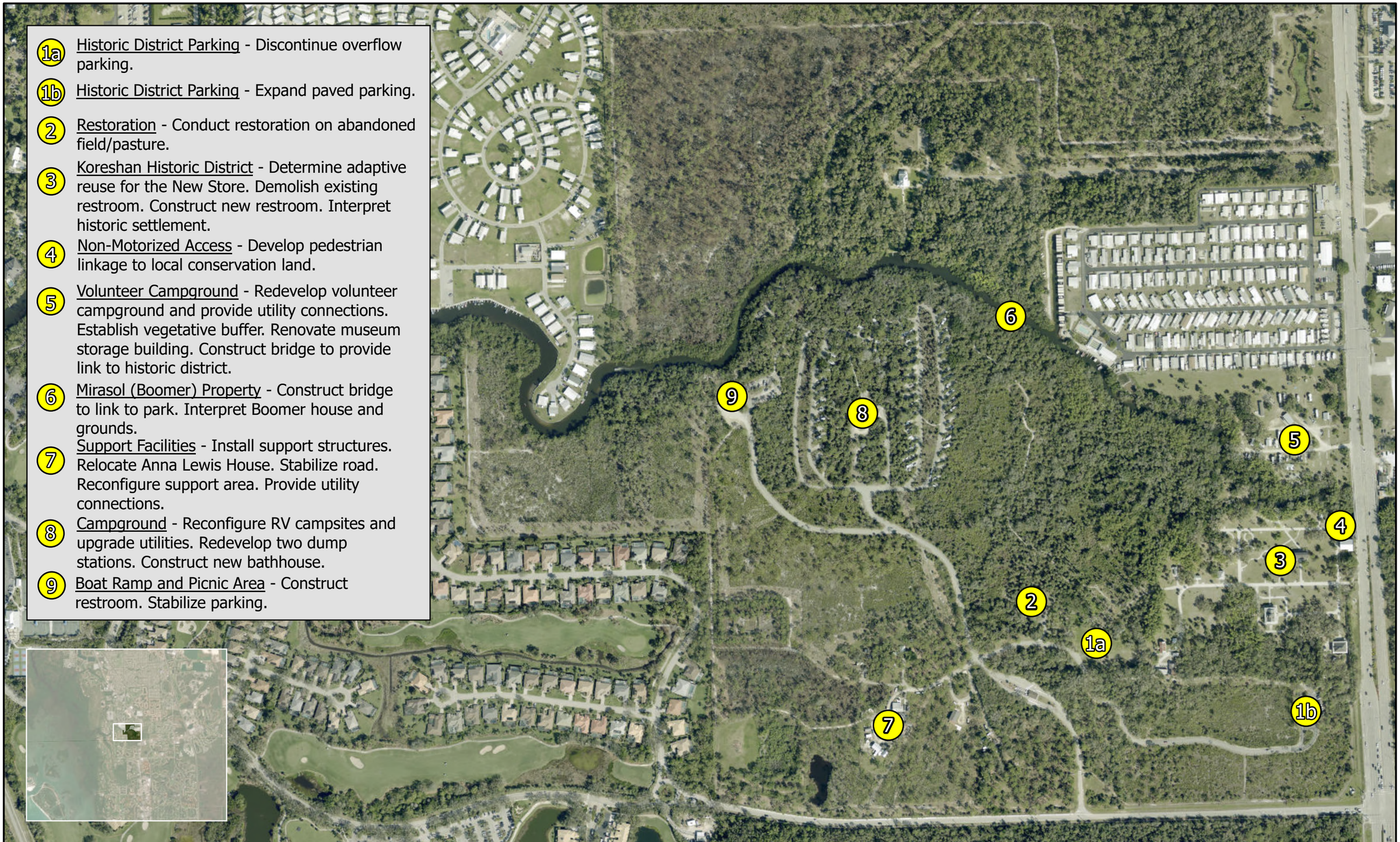
The current parking area for visitors to the historic settlement, while appropriately located at the beginning of the interpretive experience, is undersized. This 25-space parking area needs to be expanded westward to accommodate up to 80 vehicles based on existing and anticipated demand. Although an approximately 1-acre segment of mesic flatwoods (a portion of management zone KR-02) would be lost, expanding the current parking area to the west within this narrow corridor is the most practical option. Natural community restoration of both the former pile burn area and overflow parking area (see resource management component) would serve as a net positive benefit for the loss of mesic flatwoods as a result of expanded parking. By expanding the main paved parking area, all day-use parking will be consolidated on the east side of the park. An ecological assessment would be needed to determine impacts to the upland community, including the presence of any imperiled species, particularly gopher tortoises.

Objective: Demolish existing and construct new restroom.

Actions:

- Demolish the existing restroom within historic settlement.
- Construct a new restroom outside historic settlement.

A new restroom should be placed outside of the historic settlement, within or adjacent to the current parking area, and the outdated structure should be removed. The location of the existing restroom inside the historic settlement and just before reaching the Art Hall is not appropriate for the rigorous



KORESHAN HISTORIC STATE PARK
Conceptual Land Use Plan

N

0 500 Feet 1,000

This graphical representation is provided for informational purposes and should not be considered authoritative for navigational, engineering, legal, and other uses.

historic preservation standards of the settlement, as this is the first structure encountered by visitors entering from the main parking area.

Objective: Construct a pedestrian connection.

Action:

- Conceptualize and develop pedestrian access to the historic settlement with trail connection to adjacent conservation lands.

Consistent with local efforts to design and implement non-motorized, multimodal walkways and trails, the DRP supports a pedestrian linkage between the historic settlement and municipal conservation lands (i.e., Village Trails Park) along the east side of U.S. Highway 41. A major regional trail project is the Bonita Estero Rail Trail (BERT), which follows the Seminole Rail right of way and would become a 15-mile non-motorized, multimodal trail extending from Alico Road through Bonita Springs and Estero to Bonita Beach Road.

Three specific points of entry are feasible:

- *Historic Gate*
  The historic main gate into the Koreshan Unity Settlement is preserved but only utilized for operational purposes. Interfacing at grade with U.S. Highway 41 across from Village Trails Park (Lee County), this point along the park boundary could feasibly become an entry point from BERT given trail alignment along the west side of U.S. Highway 41 parallel to the park boundary. Entry through the historic gate would introduce visitors to and interpret the Koreshan settlement as it was used by the original settlers. This would additionally maximize visitation adjacent to the New Store which is proposed for full restoration with potential concession services.

- *South Bank of Estero River*
  Given an alignment of BERT along the south bank of the Estero River, an entry point via U.S. Highway 41 underpass (adjacent to but outside of state park boundary) would provide direct access into the historic settlement through an existing operational pedestrian gate. Passage under the bridge would require modification of the existing path by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) or the Village of Estero to improve safety, aesthetics and sense of arrival.

- *North Bank of Estero River*
  Given an alignment of BERT along the north bank of the Estero River, an entry point via U.S. Highway 41 underpass (adjacent to but outside of state park boundary) would provide indirect access via the proposed in-park bridge into the historic settlement (see discussion below concerning the northeastern portion of the park). Passage under the bridge would require modification of the existing path by FDOT or the Village of Estero to improve safety, aesthetics and sense of arrival.

Objective: Incorporate Boomer Estate with the park.

Actions:

- Construct a bridge connecting the Mirasol (Boomer) parcel to the park.
- Evaluate and conduct historic preservation of the house.
- Utilize the house and lawn space for special events and interpretation.

When the Mirasol (Boomer) parcel (identified in the Optimum Boundary section) is incorporated with the state park, a bridge should be constructed over the Estero River to provide linkage to future non-motorized multimodal trails in what would be a new portion of the park. Placement of the bridge should be well east of the Mirasol Landing to avoid viewshed and/or use conflicts with future event space at this location and other existing park use areas. However, this recommendation should not preclude an alternative bridge alignment if site conditions should change. This bridge will enable efficient operations and connectivity to the core of the park.

Constructed in 1910, the Boomer House will require ongoing structural evaluation and maintenance for the purposes of historic preservation (see Cultural Resources section for additional detail).

As the primary interpretive focus of the park is the historic settlement, the Boomer Estate is considered a secondary asset. While the history of the house and its occupants is linked to the Koreshan Unity, it was not a feature of the settlement itself. Accordingly, the estate is to be interpreted for this time period; however, it may also be suitable for special events that would not be hosted within the historic district. Such events may be facilitated by a potential concessionaire. In addition to the Boomer House, the 24-acre parcel is recognized as an ornamental cultural landscape that is suitable for passive interpretation. Improvements to the house and grounds for the purposes of hosting events must be in accord with historic preservation objectives.

Campground

Objective: Improve campground facilities and configuration.

Actions:

- Reshape and improve RV campsites.
- Upgrade all utilities.
- Reconfigure or reposition the two sanitary dump stations.
- Replace the bathhouse.

There is currently a funded project with DEP's Bureau of Design and Construction to improve all campsites in the campground, excluding the tent only sites. The campground was closed in October 2025 and construction is currently underway. The scope of work includes reshaping and improving the existing sites to bring some much-needed uniformity including new timber borders, crushed gravel base, as well as replacement/upgrades to utilities. These new improvements will provide a superior overall camping experience for the visitor.

A reconfiguration of the two sanitary dump stations is needed. The current location and tight spacing does not allow two RVs to empty their tanks at the same time. Redevelopment of the sanitary dump stations should occur within the general existing site (within the western loop of the campground) or along the park road, between the campground entrance and the four-way intersection.

In 2026, the bathhouse burned down due to an electrical fire. The former bathhouse was outdated (approximately 45 years of age) and in need of modernization. The previous bathhouse did not meet the needs of a 60-site campground; therefore, a larger bathhouse must be constructed on a new and expanded footprint. There had been a consideration of constructing a bathhouse to the north of the former structure such that two bathhouses may have served the campground. Given the total loss of the former, and to minimize natural community impact, only one bathhouse should be constructed on the

former footprint. The size should match current and anticipated demand. In addition to walking trails, camper access to the new bathhouse should include an improved pathway suitable for small utility vehicles to accommodate visitors with limited mobility.

Estero River Boating Access and Picnic Area

Objective: Improve functionality and accessibility.

Actions:

- Resurface/stabilize parking areas.
- Construct a new restroom.

The previously proposed boat ramp redesign project has been accomplished as of 2026. This includes replacement of the cement boat ramp and the addition of an on-grade paddlecraft launch. This project also includes a dock with universally accessible features to allow for independent launch and recovery. Pending improvements are for the ingress/egress and parking for the new boat ramp. While the crushed shell surface is prone to erosion and cannot be striped for organized parking, a paved alternative would require stormwater retention. Natural community and aesthetic constraints are not compatible with stormwater retention such that unpaved surfacing is necessary even with improvements. Scope of improvements is limited to stabilization by way of pervious surface.

The current restroom facility in the recreation area is outdated and should be replaced with an upgraded facility, ideally in the same footprint as the existing restroom.

Northeast Side of Estero River

Objective: Redevelop the volunteer campground to serve local and regional staff.

Actions:

- Redevelop the volunteer campground.
- Connect operational municipal sewer and water.
- Establish a vegetative buffer along the north and east borders of the campground.

The volunteer campground is located on the eastern side of the park, north of the Estero River. This facility currently consists of 21 sites, a small bathhouse and other amenities. All sites are supplied with electricity and potable water but lack direct sewer connection. Residents must currently utilize the sanitary dump station located within the main campground, which requires volunteers to exit and re-enter the park. Co-located in this area are an artifacts storage building, a general storage building, one ranger residence and six employee-owned trailer sites. The bathhouse is an undersized and aging facility that needs to be upgraded. Ingress/egress to the campground is via an aproned entrance from adjacent U.S. Highway 41. The volunteer campsites are highly visible from U.S. Highway 41 and absence of a vegetative buffer contribute to highway noise and lack of privacy.

There is a need to completely redesign and redevelop this volunteer campground facility to maximize public use of the northeast side of the Estero River and better serve the local and regionally administered parks. Located inland from the coast on a relatively high, well-drained site and directly along U.S. Highway 41, the park is one of the best suited locations to provide space for staff and volunteer residences and therefore should consider the needs of both local staff as well as essential

positions from neighboring parks. Designs for a new volunteer campground (and residential space) will entail shifting the entire facility (including all structures/amenities) to the northwest to improve buffering from the highway, providing adequate spacing between sites and separating residential areas from administrative facilities (i.e., staff office and storage buildings). In redeveloping this area, the total number of campsites/residences may be increased as the limited space permits. Additionally, shifting the location of the volunteer campground is necessary to reappropriate this site for a proposed bridge across the Estero River to the historic settlement (see objective below).

A full bathhouse should be centrally located within the new volunteer campground to maximize value to volunteers. This structure should include utility/supply storage and space for other essential amenities. Given the proximity to U.S. Highway 41, all sites should have direct connection to municipal sewer and water. Electrical connections should provide 20-, 30- and 50-amp service.

Installment of trees and groundcover is needed on the northern and eastern borders of the volunteer campground to maximize visual and acoustic buffering from the adjacent neighborhood and U.S. Highway 41. Upon completion of the new volunteer campground, the existing volunteer campground will be discontinued. The footprint of the existing volunteer campground will be restored to a semi-naturalized condition. While achieving the objectives of buffering and beautification, space may be reserved for staging potential events that are not suitable for the sensitive cultural landscape of the historic district (i.e., south of the Estero River).

Objective: Increase capacity of the Museum Storage Building.

Actions:

- Renovate/expand the building.
- Install storage features for art collections.

The Museum Storage Building, which is not considered historic, contains the vast majority of highly sensitive archival and artifactual material related to the Koreshan Unity. Considerable collections are currently stored in non-climate-controlled buildings. Additionally, it is expected that a large influx of artifacts could take place during this 10-year management plan cycle. As this storage facility is filled to capacity, renovation and/or expansion is necessary to increase spatial efficiency and total square footage. Inclusion of formal hanging storage for the art collection is a necessary feature. This would allow for proper storage of the artwork and provide an easier and more active rotation schedule from the Museum Storage Building to the Art Hall.

Objective: Connect the northeast side of the park to the southeast side.

Action:

- Construct a bridge across the Estero River.

Currently no interior connection between the northeast and south sides of the park exists. A short bridge spanning across the Estero River is proposed to provide a direct connection to the historic settlement.

For recreational purposes, a bridge would facilitate a connection of the future BERT from the north side of the river. For operational purposes, this bridge would need to accommodate UTV traffic.

Additional considerations concerning a potential bridge must include shifting the location of the existing volunteer campground to the west in order to beautify the proposed bridge site and separate operational and recreational uses. Without westward relocation of the volunteer campground, such a proposed bridge for recreational purposes is infeasible.

Support Area

Objective: Improve facilities to effectively support park operations.

Actions:

- Add a four-bay maintenance facility.
- Add a six-bay pole barn.
- Add an administrative office.
- Relocate the Anna Lewis House.
- Reconfigure the layout of the support area.
- Stabilize road.
- Provide municipal sewer connection to remaining buildings on septic.

The park serves as an operational hub for several commonly administered parks. The current maintenance facility is undersized. A new and expanded maintenance facility is needed to adequately support this locally administered group of parks, as well as the special needs of other regional parks, particularly following storm events. This new facility would replace three to four existing smaller structures in the current footprint of the maintenance area. In addition, a new pole barn should be constructed within the support area to prevent equipment from being left uncovered and exposed to the elements.

Park staff currently utilize the Anna Lewis House as the administrative office. This facility is undersized and not adequate for its current use and would better serve as an interpretive element. It is recommended this structure be relocated to a more suitable area of the park, where visitors have access and can learn more about its history and significance. In the existing footprint of the Anna Lewis House, a new administrative office should be constructed of adequate size to meet staff needs.

The current layout of the support area needs reconfiguration to provide better utilization of space. This would aid in accessibility and more streamlined operations, ultimately supporting overall park maintenance needs and safety. More efficient use of space will also reduce the need for further land disturbance, preserving natural resources as well as providing an enhanced aesthetic appeal. The support area is prone to heavy flooding; therefore, appropriate stabilization measures should be taken. The addition of pervious or semi-pervious material, such as pervious pavers, is recommended to aid in these events.

The park either has or will have ongoing projects to include municipal sewer connections during this planning cycle. The campground improvements and volunteer campground redevelopment will ultimately eliminate septic tank use in these use areas. Several buildings in the support area are currently on septic and should be converted to municipal sewage as soon as feasible.

OPTIMUM BOUNDARY

One optimum boundary parcel, identified as the Boomer (Mirasol) parcel, is located on the north side of the Estero River. This roughly 24-acre parcel includes a mature hardwood forest and a historic structure. This parcel would preserve woodland space along the Estero River while offering the park an additional interpretive element. This parcel was acquired but has not been integrated with the park as it has remained occupied by the seller (heir of the Boomer Estate) through a life estate contract. When vacated, the house and surrounding acreage will be incorporated with the remainer of the park (see land use component for additional details).

Adjacent to the south boundary of the park is an approximately 80-acre undeveloped tract of land that would offer significant buffer to the historic district as well as scenic, ecological and potential cultural values.

North of and directly abutting management zone KR-15, the 37-acre Koreshan Preserve (Lee County) contains upland natural communities that provide critical habitat for gopher tortoises and rare plant species. Public access is not allowed at this preserve. DRP would consider accepting management of the preserve to which public access and recreation would then be ensured.

Existing Park Boundary
Other Existing Conservation Lands

Optimum Boundary
ARC-Approved Additions
Proposed Additions

KORESHAN HISTORIC STATE PARK
Optimum Boundary

N

0 650 Feet 1,300

This graphical representation is provided for informational purposes and should not be considered authoritative for navigational, engineering, legal, and other uses.