



# **YULEE SUGAR MILL RUINS** **HISTORIC STATE PARK** Park Chapter

GULF COAST REGION



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## Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park

### Park Chapter

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## Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park

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**Planning Region:** Gulf Coast

**County:** Citrus

**Lease/Management Agreement Number:** 3647

**Overview:** The plantation owner, David Levy Yulee, was a key person in Florida's history, and served as a member of the Territorial Legislative Council, the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate after Florida's statehood and in the Confederate Congress during the Civil War. The machinery seen at the sugar mill ruins is a premier example of the engineering and innovation of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Total Acreage:** 4.6

| <b>Natural Communities</b> | <b>Acres</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Hydric Hammock             | 2.93         |
| <b>Altered Land Cover</b>  | <b>Acres</b> |
| Developed                  | 1.67         |

**Acquisition:** Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park was initially acquired on June 24, 1953, using a donation from the Citrus County Federation of Women's Clubs through the Board of County Commissioners of Citrus County. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) hold fee simple title to the park and on September 28, 1967, FBPHM transferred its title interest in Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park to the Trustees. On January 31, 1968, the Trustees leased the property back to FBPHM (now the Division) under a 99-year lease, Lease No. 2324. In 1988, the Trustees assigned a new lease number, Lease No. 3647, to Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park without changing the terms and conditions of Lease No. 2324, which will expire on January 30, 2067.

### Resource Management Component

#### Hydrology

- Assess the park's hydrological restoration needs.

#### Natural Communities

- No objectives.

#### Imperiled Species

- Update baseline imperiled species occurrence list.

#### Invasive and Nuisance Species

- Annually implement invasive plant work plan by treating 4 gross acres in the park.



## **Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park**

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### **Cultural Resources**

- Bring the sugar mill ruins into good condition by implementing a regular monitoring program.
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.
- Conduct interviews with descendants of people that were present and/or connected with the Yulee Plantation to compile oral histories.

### **Land Use Component**

#### **Conceptual Land Use**

##### *County Road 490*

- Realign road corridor away from ruins. Options include:
  - Moving toward interior of park along hydric hammock ecotone.
  - Using platted road right of way along eastern edge of park boundary.

##### *Parking*

- Restore and revegetate area surrounding the ruins.

##### *Park Facilities*

- Remove restroom.
- Relocate picnic pavilion.
- Connect facilities with ADA walkways.

##### *Sugar Mill Ruins*

- Update interpretive elements.

##### *Parkwide Interpretation*

- Create and implement a park-wide interpretive plan.

##### *Shed*

- Eliminate park boundary discrepancies with a land survey.

### **Optimum Boundary**

The optimum boundary comprises approximately 4.2 acres and includes an old, platted road corridor running east and west of Yulee Drive, that contains a portion of the ruins. Proposed additions east of Yulee Drive afford more flexibility for road relocation and the inclusion of the museum/ café could significantly enhance the interpretive potential of the site.

Additions of forested parcels to the east and south boundary of the park would further increase the surrounding conservation land in the developed Homosassa area. Katherine Padula from University of South Florida has discovered ruins on an adjacent property that is believed to have been part of a hearth from one of the “slave quarters”. These parcels are believed to be inside the original footprint of the Margarita Plantation and may house other historic artifacts and structures.



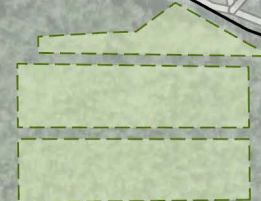




CRYSTAL RIVER  
PRESERVE STATE PARK

TO US 19/98,  
ELLIE SCHILLER  
HOMOSASSA  
SPRINGS STATE  
WILDLIFE PARK

TO US 19/98,  
WEEKI WACHEE  
SPRINGS  
STATE PARK



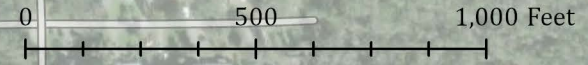
CRYSTAL RIVER  
PRESERVE STATE PARK

YULEE SUGAR  
MILL RUINS  
HISTORIC STATE PARK



YULEE SUGAR MILL RUINS HISTORIC STATE PARK

CITRUS COUNTY, FLORIDA







## **INTRODUCTION**

### **LOCATION AND ACQUISITION HISTORY**

Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park is located in Citrus County. Access to the park is from County Road 490 (West Yulee Road). The Gulf Coast Region Map also reflects significant land and water resources existing near the park.

Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park was initially acquired on June 24, 1953, using a donation from the Citrus County Federation of Women's Clubs through the Board of County Commissioners of Citrus County. Currently, the park comprises 4.6 acres and is jointly administered with Crystal River Preserve State Park and Crystal River Archaeological State Park. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) hold fee simple title to the park and on Sept. 28, 1967, the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials (FBPHM) transferred its title interest in Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park to the Trustees. On Jan. 31, 1968, the Trustees leased the property back to FBPHM (now the Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP)) under a 99-year lease, Lease No. 2324. In 1988, the Trustees assigned a new lease number, Lease No. 3647, to Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park without changing the terms and conditions of Lease No. 2324, which will expire on Jan. 30, 2067.

Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins 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 the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

### **SECONDARY AND INCOMPATIBLE USES**

In accordance with 253.034(5) 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 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 no additional revenue generating activities are appropriate during this planning cycle. 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 Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park is to preserve, protect and maintain the sugar mill ruins so that they may be enjoyed by and interpreted to by the public. Through the use of interpretive signage, the park provides the opportunity to learn about the lives of those who lived on Margarita Plantation.

### **Park Significance**

- The plantation owner, David Levy Yulee, was a key figure in Florida history, and served as a member of the Territorial Legislative Council, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the U.S. Senate after Florida's statehood and in the Confederate Congress during the Civil War.
- Machinery preserved at the sugar mill ruins is a premier example of the engineering and innovation of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in one of Florida's first agricultural industries.
- The toil of enslaved laborers, who built and operated the mill, contributed to the plantation's success.

### **Central Park Theme**

An 1800s sugar plantation built and operated by enslaved laborers, Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park is a reminder of the complicated and hazardous history of one of Florida's first agricultural industries.

Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park is classified as a special feature site in the DRP unit classification system. In the management of a special feature site, a special feature 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; Florida Statutes and is not presently under study for such designation. The park is a component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System, administered by the DEP Office of Greenways and Trails.

No permanent water bodies or surface waters are located within the park boundaries. This unit is not adjacent to an aquatic preserve as designated under the Florida Aquatic Preserve Act of 1975 (section 258.35, Florida Statutes).

### **PARK ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Installed new parking, including accessible space.
- Installed new interpretive signage.
- Constructed new information kiosk.
- Conducted baseline preservation on mill structure.
- Treated invasive species.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMPONENT

| Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park Management Zones |       |                              |                                   |
|---|-------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Management Zone   | Acres | Managed with Prescribed Fire | Contains Known Cultural Resources |
| YS-1  | 0.54  | N                            | Y                                 |
| YS-2  | 4.06  | N                            | N                                 |

### **TOPOGRAPHY**

Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park is located in the Chassahowitzka Coastal Strip physiographic region, also known as the Gulf Coastal Lowlands (Brooks 1982). This region encompasses most of the area between the Brooksville Ridge and the Gulf of Mexico. The region is generally level, although relict dunes of higher elevation occasionally provide some topographic relief. Elevations at the Yulee Mill site are five feet or less above sea level. There are no abrupt changes in topography within the park.

### **SOILS**

According to the Soil Survey of Citrus County (Pilny et al. 1988), Hallandale-Rock Outcrop complex and Citronelle fine sand are the only two soil types found in this small park (see Soils Map). The Hallandale complex consists of a nearly level, poorly drained mineral soil with rock outcrops. A high water table within 10 inches of the surface is characteristic in most years. Citronelle fine sand is a nearly level, somewhat poorly drained soil. It also has a high water table which remains within two to three feet of the surface for up to four months a year. A complete description of these soils is found in the Appendix. Despite the land use history of the area, the soils appear little disturbed except where a county road passes through the park and where an elevated drainfield services the rest room facilities. No significant soil erosion currently occurs in the park. Management activities will follow generally accepted best management practices to prevent soil erosion and conserve soil and water resources on the site.

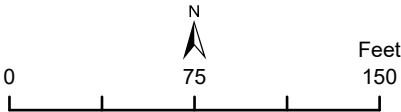
### **HYDROLOGY**

No permanent surface water features exist in the park, but during periods of frequent rainfall, water commonly pools at lower elevations in the hydric hammock. Rock outcrops in the park are associated with the Floridan aquifer, which at times may discharge water in the form of seepage. Water may also percolate into the aquifer at outcrop locations. A small canal borders the north edge of the park, but only along the small fragment of property that lies west of County Road 490. This canal has likely changed drainage patterns at the park. Surface drainage east of the county road is generally toward the hydric hammock that occupies much of the east portion of the park.





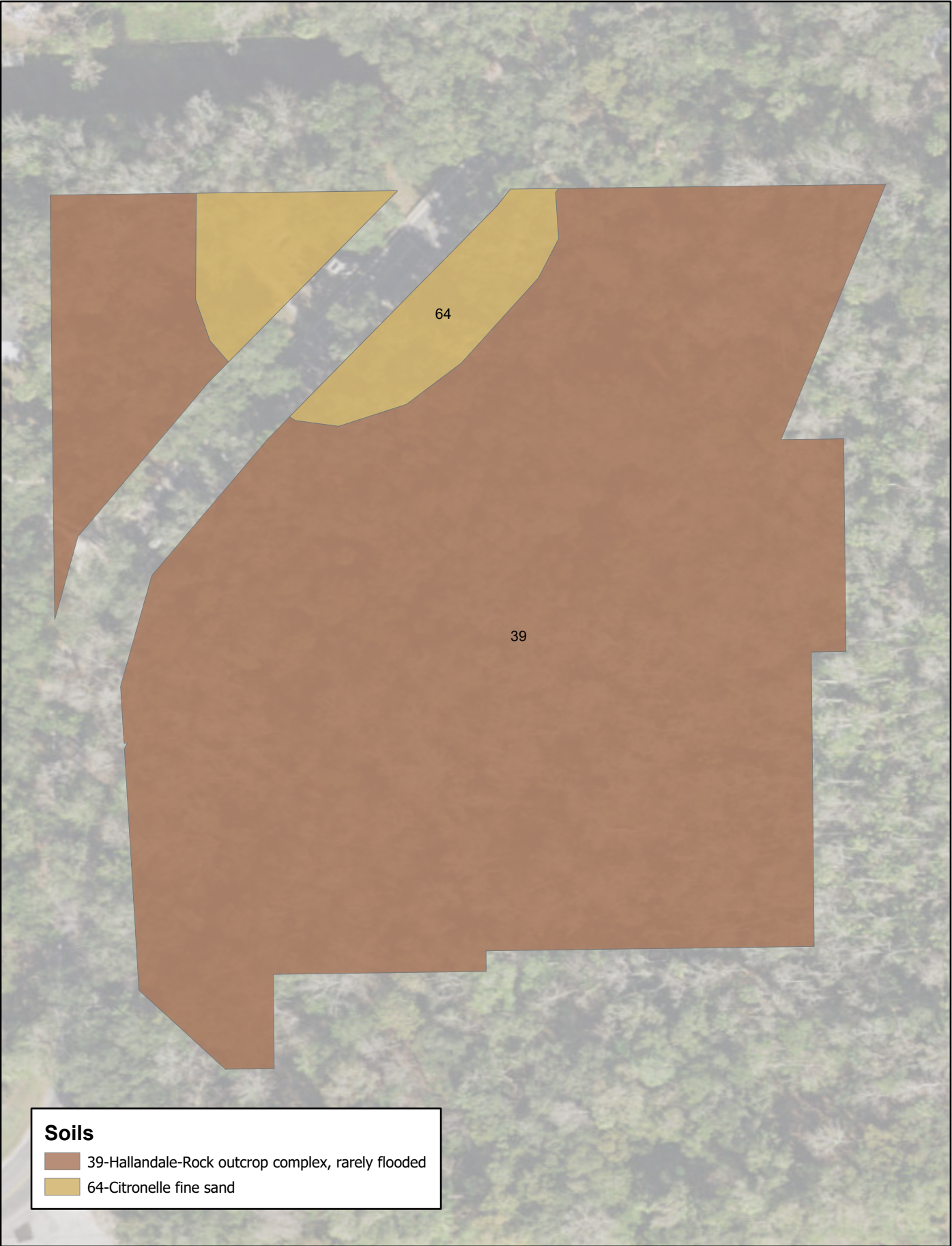
**YULEE SUGAR MILL RUINS HISTORIC  
STATE PARK  
Management Zones**



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







**Soils**

- 39-Hallandale-Rock outcrop complex, rarely flooded
- 64-Citronelle fine sand



## Assessment of Needs

### **Objective: Assess the park's hydrological restoration needs.**

Management will comply with best management practices to maintain or improve the existing water quality onsite and will respond appropriately to prevent soil erosion or other impacts to water resources.

## **NATURAL COMMUNITIES**

### **Hydric Hammock**

Hydric hammock covers almost two-thirds of the park. Dominant vegetation in the hammock includes cabbage palm, southern red cedar and live oak, with numerous other hardwood species present as well. This community has both the aspect and the composition of relatively undisturbed hydric hammock, some of which still exist in the Homosassa area. The hammock at Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park, however, is not likely an example of a pristine forest, but rather a woodland that has substantially recovered from past disturbances, most of which probably occurred during the period of mill operation. Several wood burning furnaces were features of the mill operations in the mid-1800s, and some of the fuel for the furnaces undoubtedly came from the adjacent hammock. The hydric hammock is generally in good condition. The only active management required for this natural community is to regularly treat any invasive plant species that may be present.

### **Developed**

The developed portion of the park contains the sugar mill ruins, which include the standing, limestone masonry remains of the sugar mill complex as well as a representative, yet incomplete, portion of the associated machinery and objects involved in the sugar-making process. The remainder of the developed area consists of a parking lot, picnic area and restrooms. Invasive plants will be controlled as necessary.

## **IMPERILED SPECIES**

There are no imperiled species recorded for Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park.

## Inventory

### **Objective: Update baseline imperiled species occurrence list.**

## **INVASIVE SPECIES**

For a small park, Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park has a diversity of invasive plant species. At least 11 are present. Particularly concerning is old world climbing fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*). Skunk vine (*Paederia foetida*) is also a serious invader typically along the borders of the hydric hammock. This invasive vine has already spread over several thousand square feet and is beginning to climb nearby trees. Another invasive, Mexican petunia (*Ruellia brittoniana*) has also invaded the edges of the hydric hammock.

Private properties adjacent to the park harbor invasive plants that continue to infest the park.

| Invasive Plant Species                                 |                  |  |            |
|--|------------------|--|------------|
| Species Name<br><i>Scientific Name</i> - Common Name   | FISC<br>Category | Distribution   | Zone ID    |
| <i>Ardisia crenata</i> - Coral ardisia                 | I                | Scattered Plants or Clumps                           | YS-2       |
| <i>Cinnamomum camphora</i> - Camphor-tree              | I                | Single Plant or Clump                                | YS-2       |
| <i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i> - Air-potato                | I                | Scattered Plants or Clumps                           | YS-2       |
| <i>Lygodium microphyllum</i> - Old world climbing fern | I                | Single Plant or Clump                                | YS-2       |
| <i>Mikania micrantha</i> - Mile-a-minute vine          | II               | Single Plant or Clump                                | YS-2       |
| <i>Nephrolepis cordifolia</i> - Tuberous sword fern    | I                | Scattered Plants or Clumps                           | YS-2       |
| <i>Paederia foetida</i> - Skunk vine                   | I                | Scattered Plants or Clumps                           | YS-1, YS-2 |
| <i>Phoenix reclinata</i> - Senegal date palm           | II               | Single Plant or Clump                                | YS-1       |
| <i>Ruellia simplex</i> - Mexican petunia               | I                | Scattered Plants or Clumps                           | YS-1, YS-2 |
| <i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i> - Brazilian pepper     | I                | Single Plant or Clump,<br>Scattered Plants or Clumps | YS-1, YS-2 |
| <i>Syngonium podophyllum</i> - Arrowhead vine          | I                | Scattered Dense Patches                              | YS-1       |

### Invasive Plant Treatment

#### **Objective A: Annually treat 4 gross acres of invasive plant species.**

##### *Actions:*

- Annually develop invasive plant management work plan.
- Implement annual work plan by treating 4 gross acres in park each year.
- Continue maintenance and follow-up treatments as needed.

The park will continue its methodical treatment of invasive plants. The focus should be particularly on aggressive species such as old-world climbing fern and skunk vine. Treatment of Mexican petunia and other invasives will occur as needed.

Several other less invasive plants should be incorporated into the park invasive plant removal program. These plants exist as scattered individuals. One possible exception may be sour orange (*Citrus aurantium*), which occurs in the park only infrequently. DRP needs to establish the validity of citrus as a cultural feature at the park and weigh allowing its continued presence against the potential for causing adverse impacts to the park's hydric hammock.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The Florida Master Site File (FMSF) lists one site for the park. This site, recorded as 8Ci124, is commonly referred to as the Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins, although it is also known as the Homosassa mill. It achieved listing on the National Register of Historic Places in August 1970. The Yulee Sugar Mill is the sole recorded remnant of David L. Yulee's Margarita Plantation, which was active from approximately 1851 through 1864.

The ruins of the Yulee mill complex present an incomplete and somewhat confusing picture of the antebellum industrial process of making sugar from sugar cane. To date, what little is known about the mill's relationship to its surroundings or about the extent of its operations is the product of research by Gulf Archaeology Research Institute (GARI) in 1997. Due to project limitations, GARI did not conduct an in-depth study of the extent of the plantation or its related features (Denson et al. 1997). In comparison to mill ruins on the east coast of Florida, such as those at Bulow Plantation Historic State Park, the Yulee mill remains are so limited geographically as to be obviously incomplete. Suffice to say the existing mill ruins likely represent a minor portion of what was once a considerably larger industrial complex.

The sugar mill resource consists of the standing limestone masonry remains of the sugar mill complex and a representative, but incomplete, portion of the associated machinery and objects involved in the sugar-making process. Masonry remains include the boiler housing, supports for the evaporating pan array of the mill, partially reconstructed walls of the water well structure, the below-ground foundation of the kettle train (housing for multiple kettles), and a virtually complete limestone masonry chimney stack that served the boiler furnace and kettle train furnaces. Of the remnant mill machinery, the most visible elements are the rollers of a single path crusher, the main and gear reduction flywheels, and the associated metal supporting frames. The boiler, enclosed within masonry, is only partly visible. Except for the boiler and evaporative pans, most of the metal elements depend in some way upon large (modern) timbers for support. Other remains at the park include two structures excavated into the native bedrock, the steam well and the cooling vat. In addition, a rubble pile extends generally westward from the kettle train. This may have been a simple drain field for syrup impurities (Denson et al. 1997).

All the visible remnants of the Yulee Sugar Mill are located only a few feet from County Road 490, which slices through the northwest quarter of the park. Some authorities believe that road traffic vibration is affecting the masonry structures in the park (Griffin 1952; DRP 1980; Denson et al. 1997). The extent of the purported damage is currently unknown. Furthermore, since the road runs so close to the masonry structures, in fact less than 6 feet from the chimney stack, the likelihood of a vehicular accident eventually damaging some of the structures is considerable. Studies to document the effects of road vibrations on the ruins and to consider alternate road alignments would be desirable. DRP should continue to cooperate with pertinent agencies and governing bodies in an effort to either reroute the road or implement measures to lessen impacts on the site.

DRP conducted a resource management audit of the Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park in 1997, at which time each cultural resource received a field assessment of condition based on the three-part evaluative scale described above (Warzeski 1998). An audit report followed in 1998. Many of the report's conclusions referenced a 1997 study by GARI designed to develop treatment recommendations for masonry elements of the Yulee site (Denson et al. 1997). Since that time, DRP has addressed many of the GARI concerns, and additional work is planned. As work progresses, DRP will adjust the condition assessments of the affected elements.







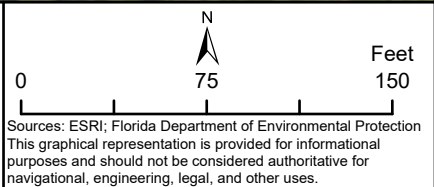
**Natural Communities (in Acres)**

HH - Hydric Hammock 2.93

DV - Developed 1.67



**YULEE SUGAR MILL RUINS HISTORIC  
STATE PARK**  
Natural Communities - Existing Conditions





During its period of management prior to 2006, DRP undertook extensive reconstruction of several elements of the mill site (Division 1980; Denson et al. 1997). Among the elements reconstructed were the above-grade portion of the wall enclosing the water well and the masonry wall surrounding the modern timbers that support the massive metal components of the mill. While the masonry surrounding and supporting the boiler appeared to be in good condition at the time of the 1997 audit, it was evident that previous attempts to reconstruct, reface and tuck-point portions of the boiler assembly had used unsuitable Portland-type cement. This type of cement tended to weather out in large chunks, thereby accelerating deterioration of the limestone blocks (Denson et al. 1997). For that reason, the audit team considered the condition of the masonry elements to be only fair.

In January 2006, the Historic Preservation Training Center of the National Park Service (NPS) and DRP signed a Cooperative Agreement assigning each agency tasks for the stabilization and conservation of the masonry features of the Yulee Sugar Mill ruins. Actual reconstruction work, designed to remedy some of the problems associated with previous efforts, began that spring. All work complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The original cane grinding equipment is now set on rebuilt foundations. DRP personnel, under the guidance of NPS staff, have selectively removed failed mortars and inappropriate Portland cement repairs throughout the mill ruins. Some of the original stonework has been rebuilt, and almost all of the mortar of the original stonework has been replaced with soft quicklime mortar as stipulated by NPS standards.

In 2016, Katherine Padula of the University of South Florida conducted archaeological digs within Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park and the surrounding area. The goal of her investigation was to learn more about the plantation boundaries and structures, especially the enslaved laborers' quarters, in to gauge their reflection on historical operations and relationships on the plantation, and to add voice to the enslaved laborers whose historical record in the plantation narrative is minimal. (Padula 2017) In total, 16 shovel tests were conducted within the park boundary. One of which resulted in artifacts being unearthed near the ruins. Shovel digs performed on adjacent private properties were positive for artifacts as well including a portion of a hearth structure that could have been the chimney remains of a slave quarters. Coordination with USF archaeological researchers during the interpretive planning process is recommended.

According to the 1997 DRP audit, growing vegetation at the site threatened most of the masonry elements to varying degrees (Warzeski 1998). Where plant matter was easily removable from mortar joints, the degree of endangerment was slight. Endangerment from established trees was profound, however. Tree roots were undermining walls and foundations and falling branches or toppled trees could easily have demolished portions of the National Historic Register resource. To resolve these issues, staff in 2006 completed virtually all tree trimming and tree removal tasks recommended in the audit and in the Cooperative Agreement between DRP and the NPS.

The array holding the evaporating kettles (kettle train) is in poor condition. The above-ground portion largely does not exist or has fallen into the flue and furnaces that were excavated from the limestone bedrock below the kettles. Tree roots have compromised the integrity of portions of the kettle train foundation in the past, but that situation should now be resolved due to efforts of the DRP/NPS restoration team. Other below-grade portions of the kettle train are considered quite stable. Most of the metal elements of the sugar mill resource, its gear wheels and crusher rollers, are in good condition, although parts are missing. These metal elements, as well as the reconstructed wall surrounding the supporting timbers, continue to be endangered, however, due to degradation of the timbers and the possibility of collapse. At least two major components of the steam engine powering the rollers are

missing, the centrifugal governor and the drive shaft (Denson et al. 1997). The 10-ton boiler has shifted, causing slumping of the supporting structure. Furthermore, one portion of the boiler tube has corroded through and may be bending due to the lack of supporting timber (Denson et al. 1997). Past assessments of the boiler have determined it to be in poor condition. However, the current DRP/NPS restoration project is addressing the issue of the deteriorating boiler support pylons and yoke, so future condition assessments will likely range from fair to good. Evaporating pans are in poor condition.

The park's cultural resources survey, which included extensive, systematic subsurface sampling performed by GARI, yielded no diagnostic aboriginal materials (Denson et al. 1997). University of South Florida graduate students used laser scanning to obtain archival measurements for a stratigraphic profile of the Yulee site.

A predictive model for the park was completed in 2012 (Collins, L. D. et al. 2012). The model was partially tested by an archaeological reconnaissance survey conducted by the University of South Florida Anthropology Department in 2017 (Wallman). The entire park was originally indicated to be a high probability zone for encountering archaeological remains. However, out of the 16 shovel tests conducted, only one was positive for artifacts. No additional sites were identified during the survey. It is recommended that ground penetrating radar (GPR) study be conducted to more definitively rule out the possibility of any additional structural remains or cultural materials occurring at the park.

Table 4 contains the name, reference number, culture or period, and brief description of all the cultural sites within the park that are listed in the FMSF. The table also summarizes each level of significance, existing condition, and recommended management treatment for the site and its attributes. 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 |
| Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins<br>8CI124B                     | Historic/Mid-19 <sup>th</sup> Century | Historic Structure | NRL          |           | P         |

**Significance:**

NRL – National Register Listed  
NRE – National Register Eligible  
LS – Locally Significant  
NE – Not Evaluated  
NS – Not Significant

**Condition:**

G – Good  
F – Fair  
P – Poor

**Recommended Treatment:**

RS – Restoration  
RH – Rehabilitation  
ST – Stabilization  
P – Preservation  
R – Removal

## Condition Assessment

**Objective: Assess/evaluate the 1 recorded cultural resource in the park.**

*Actions:*

- Complete one assessment/evaluation of historic structures.

The park has one recorded historic structure. This should be assessed and evaluated over the course of this plan.

## Preservation Measures

**Objective: Bring the 1 recorded cultural resource into good condition.**

*Actions:*

- Implement regular monitoring programs for one cultural site.

The park should begin to include annual documentation of the historic structure during the cleaning process in the same manner that is done for each collection item. This would entail documenting the structure repairs needed/completed and the method used to clean the structures. Annual monitoring for termites should be part of this process.

## Documentation of Recorded Sites

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

*Actions:*

- Ensure all known sites are recorded or updated in the Florida Master Site File.

Continue to support the identification and additional documentation of cultural resources.

## Conduct Interviews

**Objective: Compile oral histories on the Yulee enslaved labor force.**

*Actions:*

- Conduct interviews with descendants of the Yulee enslaved labor force.

Interviews of descendants of the Yulee enslaved labor force should be conducted to provide interpretation to a more diverse audience and reach underrepresented communities. This could be achieved through cooperation with sociology departments at community colleges or universities. Funding could be through community action or education grants.

## **SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Arthropod Control Plan**

Mosquito control plans (i.e., arthropod control plans) are typically proposed by county mosquito control districts when they desire to treat on public lands that are protected by Ch. 388.4111 (CCMCD 2012; FDACS 2012).

The current plan for Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park was finalized in 2010 and is available in the Northeast District Arthropod Control Plan Appendix.

## **LAND USE COMPONENT**

### **VISITATION**

Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park may be small, but it holds a great deal of history. The sugar mill ruins are the interpretive centerpiece of the park and were once part of a 5,100-acre sugar cane plantation known as Margarita. The sugar mill operated from 1851 to 1864 when federal raiders burned the Yulee home to the ground. David Levy Yulee was the owner of Margarita Plantation, but he is most remembered for building Florida's first cross-state railroad and for being the state's first U.S. Senator.

The plantation encompassed a large portion of modern-day Homosassa, and it supplied sugar products for southern troops during the Civil War. However, the plantation would not have been built or operational without the over 80 enslaved laborers that lived and worked there. Descendants of the enslaved still live in the area today.

### **Trends**

From 2009 to 2019, Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park received seasonal patterns in visitation. Winter months generally feature higher visitation, likely due to cooler temperatures. The summer and fall months generally had lower visitation, with some exceptions. Throughout the year, visitors can explore the sugar mill ruins and relax at the picnic pavilion.

### **Economic Impacts**

Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park recorded 28,779 visitors in FY 2022/2023. By DRP estimates, the FY 2022/2023 visitors contributed \$3,452,795 in direct economic impact, the equivalent of adding 48 jobs to the local economy (FDEP 2023).

### **EXISTING FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Park facilities can be separated into two broad use areas, the sugar mill ruins in the northwest corner and a multi-acre oak grove with a clear understory to the east. Moving even further east is an area made up of intact hydric hammock. The namesake ruins are the primary feature of the park. West Yulee Drive (County Road 490) separates the park into east and west segments. Much of the visitation to the park comes from incidental passing traffic rather than intentional visitation. With the potential realignment of County Road 490, the park will gain opportunities to utilize more of its acreage for interpretation of historical attributes of the former Margarita Plantation that once encompassed the present-day park.

Located west of County Road 490 stands the impressive remains of the sugar mill site, which was in operation from 1851 to 1864. It is likely that the mill site represents only a fraction of what once composed the Margarita Plantation, which spanned roughly 5,000 acres. What remains has been protected and, in 1970, the mill site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The primary structural and mechanical elements are referred to as the sugar mill ruins. These ruins include the boiler housing, evaporating pan array and impressive machinery including iron gears and rollers for the single path crusher. The 40-foot-tall limestone masonry chimney is essentially untouched and is perhaps the most recognizable feature of the park. The chimney and the southeastern structural edifice are bounded by County Road 490 with just a few feet of clearance. A guard rail separates the ruins from traffic. Nearby are the ground level foundations of the kettle. A sidewalk wraps around three sides of the

historic site and allows for viewing, highlighted by interpretive panels illustrating the site's historical significance. A garden chain separates the sidewalk from the ruins. North of the sidewalk is a partially reconstructed water well structure. The cooling vat, also bound by a garden chain, is located south of the mill site. Interpretation includes information about David Levy Yulee and detailed descriptions of the sugar-making process. Little is mentioned of the enslaved workers who made the mill site operation possible.

Located east of County Road 490 are the park facilities, which include a picnic table and adjacent restroom no longer in working order. Roughly eight parking spaces are available. A shed to the north may be located outside the boundaries of the park.

County Road 490 divides the two regions of the park. At present, visitors must cross County Road 490 to access the ruins, as parking and other support infrastructure is absent in the western parcel. Therefore, visitors must cross the road via two unprotected crosswalks.

The historic landscape at Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park is enhanced by its natural settings. The hydric hammock natural community type surrounds the park infrastructure, creating a lush view. This verdant landscape compliments the surrounding built environment.

#### **Facilities Inventory**

| <i>Sugar Mill Ruins</i> |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Sugar Mill Ruins        | 1 |
| Historic Press          | 1 |
| Cooling Vat             | 1 |
| Interpretive Materials  | 5 |
| Well                    | 1 |
| <i>Park Facilities</i>  |   |
| Pavilion                | 1 |
| Restroom                | 1 |
| Shed                    | 1 |



## **CONCEPTUAL LAND USE PLAN**

This unit needs significant interpretive updates which will be developed during Interpretive Services' planning process. Any interpretive themes outlined in the Conceptual Land Use Plan are meant as suggestions to be considered during the Interpretive Planning Process.

### **County Road 490**

#### **Objective: Mitigate deterioration of the ruins.**

##### *Actions:*

- Realign road corridor away from ruins. Viable options include:
  - Moving toward interior of park along hydric hammock ecotone.
  - Using platted road-right-of-way along eastern edge of potential park boundary.

County Road 490 extends through the park, passing within only a few feet of the historic mill ruins. Vibrations and vehicular exhaust may be hastening the gradual deterioration of the remaining components of the mill. The potential also exists for direct vehicular impact to the ruins despite the presence of a guard rail. As a special feature site, a primary emphasis at the park is placed on the protection and maintenance of the historic ruins. The road is also a safety hazard for visitors as they cross from the parking and picnic area to see the ruins. It is in the long-term interest of the park and public safety to have the road shifted away from the ruins as far as possible. This objective is contingent on support from Citrus County and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and may necessitate acquisition of adjacent parcels to provide sufficient land to meet roadway design standards. This would also mean an exchange of ownership of the new and old road corridor between DRP and FDOT. A relocated road would enhance the visitor experience and safety and also increase the protection afforded to this historic site. A portion of the old road corridor could then be vacated and incorporated into the park, which would enable other significant park land use improvements.

Two viable options for rerouting the road have been identified and evaluated:

- *Park interior (red line in CLUP)*  
Moving the road within the park boundary minimizes impacts to the neighboring community and project costs—issues that proved insurmountable during prior planning efforts. This option takes advantage of the already developed portion of the park without damaging the hydric hammock.
- *Platted road right-of-way, eastern edge of potential future park boundary (orange line in CLUP)*  
With boundary expansion, the boundary may extend even further east. The eastern edge of optimum boundary parcels abuts a platted road right-of-way that may be usable for a future realignment of the road. Citrus County property appraiser data identifies this north-south oriented platted road as South Coral Bells Avenue. If the road no longer bisects the park, there would be only one designated entrance to the park, increasing security and creating the opportunity for fee collection.

## **Parking**

### **Objective: Restore and revegetate area surrounding the ruins.**

Convert abandoned road corridor into parking area and revegetate area around ruins. If County Road 490 is rerouted, the abandoned corridor around the ruins should be revegetated. The section of abandoned road near the park entrance, close to West Bresler Court, could be adapted for parking. Vehicular access would no longer be allowed adjacent to or north of the ruins. Upon county abandonment of the existing road, the corridor would be annexed to the park. Reconfiguration and partial restoration to the road near the ruins would require several tasks. Approximately 200 feet of asphalt should be removed with restoration of the underlying soil, which is compacted and potentially polluted. The abandoned corridor would then be transformed into green space, merging the once bisected park and unifying the majority of park acreage with the namesake ruins. It is advised that trees native to the surrounding natural community be planted in the old road corridor to block the view of non-conservation uses farther up the road.

## **Park Facilities**

### **Objective: Evaluate use and location of ancillary structures and improve accessibility.**

#### *Actions:*

- Remove restroom.
- Relocate picnic pavilion.
- Connect facilities with ADA walkways.

The existing restroom is in poor condition and should be removed. There is no need to build a new restroom considering the short amount of time the average visitor spends at the park. If County Road 490 is successfully relocated, the picnic pavilion should be shifted to the south to make space for the garden (see below) or other interpretations of the site's lesser-known history. An interpretive pavilion would be placed between the ruins and the garden, and an ADA accessible walkway would connect all interpretive sites with relocated picnic pavilion.

## **Sugar Mill Ruins**

### **Objective: Update interpretive elements.**

The interpretive signage at the ruins is weathered and has been identified for updates to both format and content. The paved walkway around the ruins requires resurfacing but follows an appropriate route, closely adjacent to the ruins but adequately separated for protection of the historic resource, such that the current footprint of the walkway should be retained.

## **Parkwide Interpretation**

### **Objective: Create and implement a parkwide interpretive plan.**

With the proposed realignment of County Road 490, the park historic ruins site would become contiguous with the remaining three acres of the park, opening opportunities for new interpretive uses. As the ruins are primarily interpreted directly adjacent to the actual ruins site, the remaining acreage of

the park is well suited for interpretation of the broader history of the former Margarita Plantation that once included the present-day park and the sugar mill. Comprehensive interpretive planning is required to determine the most effective way to connect visitors to the meaningful and relevant themes in this interpretive area that includes walkway and pavilion improvements. The type, design, quantity, and placement of interpretive elements to deepen understanding of this significant site will be specified during the additional planning process. The following are topics that may be considered:

#### Interpretive Walk

Apart from the mill ruins, which are concentrated in a small area in the western portion of the park, no historic features remain for site-specific interpretation, such that interpretive installations addressing other aspects of the plantation history may be located throughout the upland landscape of the park. The inclusion of an interpretive pavilion, in the style of the Lake Jackson Mounds Archeological State Park pavilion, should be considered along this walk. To link such interpretive installations, maximize accessibility, and minimize soil erosion, a walkway is recommended. Potential interpretive topics along the trail should expand on the greater history of the site. Content ideas for potential interpretive signage include:

- a. Pictures and descriptions of historic artifacts that have been discovered at the site and the surrounding area (Padula 2017). Showcasing items that are suspected to have been used by the enslaved persons who lived on the plantation would allow for insight into their lives. The life of the enslaved persons living at Margarita could be further described here as well.
- b. A map showing the suspected geographic footprint of the plantation and associated buildings.
- c. Updated visuals to accompany the text discussing the process of creating sugar from sugar cane.
- d. The story behind why the plantation home was burned to the ground by Union blockaders. A photo of the remains of the house following the fire could be included.
- e. Consider installation of a period-appropriate subsistence garden replica contingent upon adequate staffing.

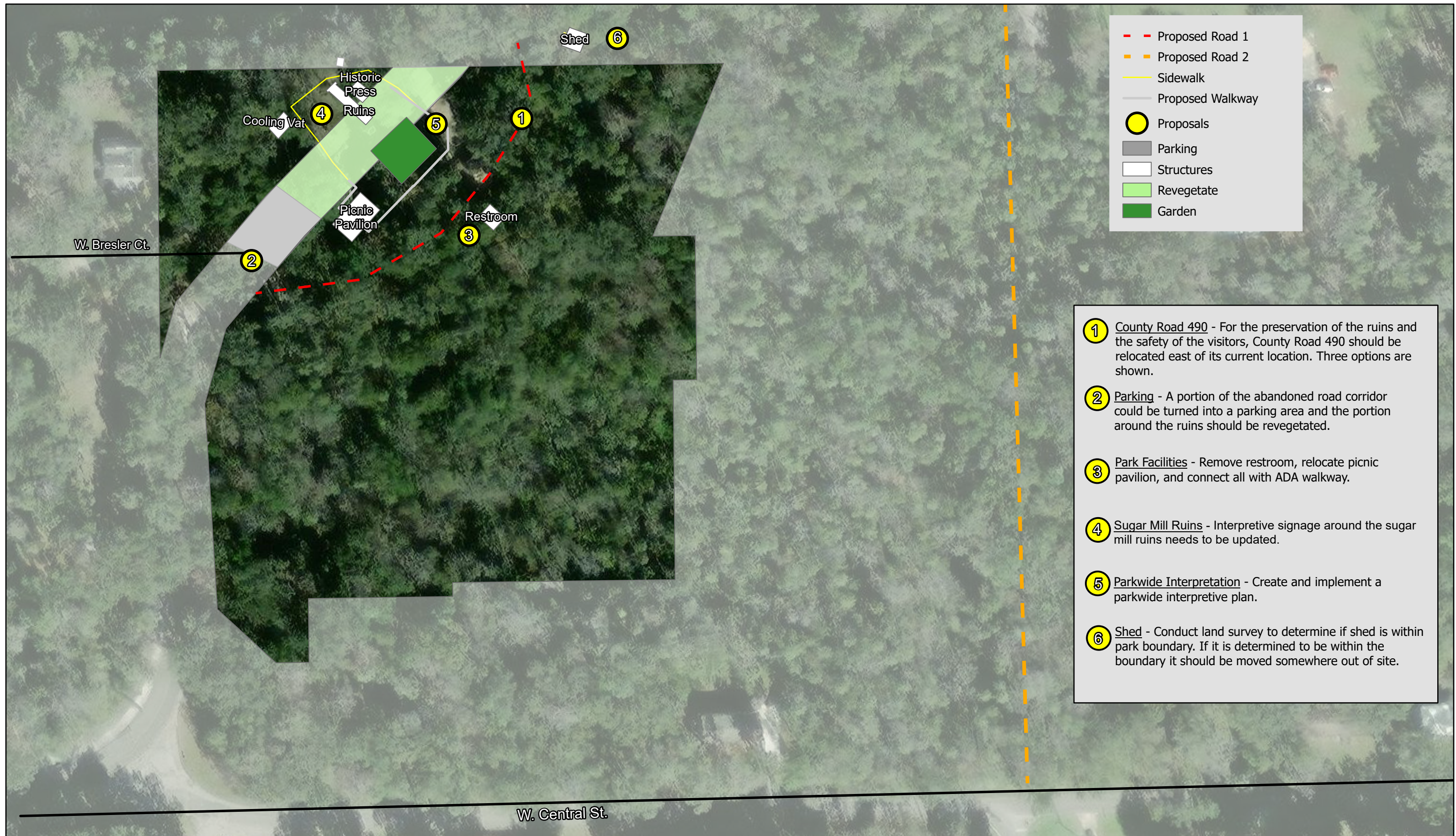
#### Subsistence Garden Re-Creation

If County Road 490 is rerouted and the landscape of the park is reimagined, the potential for increased attendance could warrant additional staffing of the park. Considering the sensitive maintenance needs of a garden that could degrade without appropriate upkeep, additional staffing of this park would be recommended. The proposed garden, among various other potential interpretive installations, may be included as a feature of the proposed interpretive walk to depict what life was like at Margarita Plantation. The ruins only represent a small portion of the history of the site, and the scenic landscape of the park should be utilized to tell more of the story. An interpretive garden replicating the crops and medicinal herbs that would have been grown by those who lived and worked on the plantation to feed their families would provide a glimpse into their lives at Margarita Plantation. The DRP should coordinate with Kingsley Plantation National Historic Site to learn about the development and implementation of their interpretive garden, which is analogous to the proposed installation.

With ongoing research of the park and its surroundings, discovery of new historical information is anticipated over the implementation period for this plan. As accuracy is verified, such information that adheres to the purpose of the park may be identified for inclusion in the interpretive materials.







- ① County Road 490 - For the preservation of the ruins and the safety of the visitors, County Road 490 should be relocated east of its current location. Three options are shown.
- ② Parking - A portion of the abandoned road corridor could be turned into a parking area and the portion around the ruins should be revegetated.
- ③ Park Facilities - Remove restroom, relocate picnic pavilion, and connect all with ADA walkway.
- ④ Sugar Mill Ruins - Interpretive signage around the sugar mill ruins needs to be updated.
- ⑤ Parkwide Interpretation - Create and implement a parkwide interpretive plan.
- ⑥ Shed - Conduct land survey to determine if shed is within park boundary. If it is determined to be within the boundary it should be moved somewhere out of site.



# Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park Conceptual Land Use Plan

0 175 350 Feet







## Encroaching Structures

### **Objective: Resolve boundary discrepancies.**

#### *Actions:*

- Conduct land survey.

Several park boundary discrepancies have been identified for which land surveying is recommended. One boundary issue is that the park uses a shed that appears to be outside of the park boundary. If determined to be inside park boundaries, the shed should be removed or shifted to a less visible location.

### **OPTIMUM BOUNDARY**

Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins Historic State Park is surrounded by mostly low to medium density residential buildings, with minimal opportunity for boundary expansion. Some commercial activities occur along County Road 490 (West Yulee Drive), which bisects the park. Immediately north of the park are a printing museum and café.

The optimum boundary comprises approximately 4.2 acres and includes an old, platted road corridor running east and west of Yulee Drive that contains a portion of the ruins. Proposed additions east of Yulee Drive afford more flexibility for road relocation and the inclusion of the museum and café could significantly enhance the interpretive potential of the site.

Additions of forested parcels to the east and south boundary of the park would further increase the surrounding conservation land in the developed Homosassa area. Researcher Katherine Padula, of the University of South Florida, has recorded evidence of ruins on adjacent land that is understood to have been part of a hearth from one of the “slave quarters.” These parcels are believed to be inside the original footprint of the Margarita Plantation and may house other historic artifacts and structures.







**Yulee Sugar Mill Ruins  
Historic State Park**  
Optimum Boundary

0 100 200 Feet

