

# Terra Ceia

Climate Change Lands

Manatee County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1996
<i>Project Acres</i>	4,724
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	2,432
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$4,962,500
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	2,292
<i>2021 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$44,117,884

## Purpose for State Acquisition

The Terra Ceia project will preserve mangrove swamps and flatwoods on the islands and mainland around Terra Ceia Bay, some of the last natural lands left on the southeast shore of Tampa Bay. The project will protect and restore this natural area, preserve the fishery and manatee feeding grounds in Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve and give the public an area in which to fish, boat and enjoy the original landscape of Tampa Bay.

## General Description

The Terra Ceia project is two-thirds mangrove swamp and one-third a mix of xeric hammock, flatwoods and old fields colonized by Brazilian pepper. The area is particularly significant for the protection it offers to bird rookeries, including nearby Bird Island, one of the top two rookeries in Florida. The project will support the conservation of the adjacent Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve (an Outstanding Florida Water); its seagrass beds are used heavily by manatees, and its nursery areas are crucial for fish and invertebrates within this important Florida fishery. Sixty-nine archaeological sites, mostly middens, are within the project and more are likely to be discovered. The natural resources in the project are vulnerable to alteration or destruction by development and invasion by exotic plant species. Growth pressures are intense, so endangerment is high.

## FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Florida manatee	G2G3T2/S2S3
<i>hairy beach sunflower</i>	G5T2/S2
<i>banded wild-pine</i>	G5/S3

## Public Use

This project qualifies as a preserve, with uses such as boating and fishing, and activities like picnicking and hiking in accessible uplands.



## Acquisition Planning

### **1996**

On December 5, 1996, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council added the Terra Ceia project to the Conservation and Recreational Lands list. This fee-simple acquisition, sponsored by Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserve, consisted of some 2,612 acres, multiple owners and a 1995 taxable value of \$8,059,357. The essential parcels were identified as Hendry Corp; Reeder; Schater; Huber; Blalock; and First Union/Larson. Before the project's addition to the Conservation and Recreational Lands list, the state's acquisition partner, Southwest Florida Water Management District, acquired Terra Ceia Isles. The Southwest Florida Water Management District acquired the Reeder (20 acres) and Schater parcels (39.1 acres) in 2000 with the state contributing half of the funding.

### **1998**

On October 15, 1998, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council designated an additional 843 acres as essential.

### **2007**

On June 15, 2007, the Acquisition and Restoration Council approved a fee-simple, 395-acre addition (Frog and McMullen Creek Addition) to the project boundary. The proposal was sponsored by DEP's Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas, the Division of Recreation and Parks and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The addition consisted of 33 landowners and 61 parcels. The Division of Recreation and Parks is the recommended manager for most of the site. Parcels in Frog Creek already owned and managed by the Southwest Florida Water Management District will continue to be managed by them.

### **2009**

In June 2009, a donation of 40.06 acres was received from the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

### **2010**

On August 13, 2010, the Acquisition and Restoration Council approved a 251-acre (\$51,544,946 just value) reduction to the project boundary due to residential/commercial/infrastructure development.

### **2011**

On December 9, 2011, the Acquisition and Restoration Council placed this project in the Climate Change Lands category of Florida Forever projects.

## Coordination

The Southwest Florida Water Management District is an acquisition partner. DEP received a grant of \$504,731 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire Rattlesnake Key and Joe's Island.

## Management Policy Statement

The primary objective of management of the Terra Ceia project is to preserve and restore the coastal natural communities, ranging from xeric and maritime hammocks to coastal strand and mangrove swamps that remain around the Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve. Achieving this objective will protect the resources of





the aquatic preserve and play an important part in protecting and restoring the Tampa Bay estuary, the largest open-water estuary in Florida. The project should be managed under the single-use concept. Management activities should be directed first toward preserving resources and second toward integrating carefully controlled consumptive uses such as fishing.

Managers should control access to the project; limit public motor vehicles to one or a few main roads; thoroughly inventory the resources; restore hydrological disturbances; implement prescribed fire management; strictly limit timbering; and monitor management activities to ensure that they are preserving the resources of the aquatic preserve. Managers should limit the number and size of recreational facilities, ensure that they avoid the most sensitive resources and site them in already disturbed areas when possible. The project includes nearly all the coastal undeveloped land south of Port Manatee and around Terra Ceia Bay and consequently has the size and location to achieve its primary objective.

### Manager(s)

The Division of Recreation and Parks is the designated manager. Parcels in Frog Creek already owned and managed by the Southwest Florida Water Management District will continue to be managed by that agency.

### Management Prospectus

#### **Qualifications for State Designation**

This project qualifies as a state buffer preserve to protect the resources of the Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve.

#### **Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management**

The Terra Ceia project generally includes lands that are low need tracts, requiring basic resource management and protection.

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

Management activities will seek to protect the water quality and the highly productive marine habitat of the aquatic preserve by maintaining the project area in a substantially natural condition; preserve and protect significant endangered and threatened species including the West Indian manatee, roseate spoonbill, little blue heron, tricolored heron, least tern, snowy egret, reddish egret and American oystercatcher; preserve and protect significant archaeological sites; restore islands to a natural state which will include removal of exotic vegetation and habitat restoration activities; and establish a self-guided canoe trail between the islands for use by the general public.

Within the first year after acquisition, activities will concentrate on the site security of the mainland property and resource inventory. The site's natural resources will be inventoried, and a management plan will be formulated. Long-range plans for this property will be to remove exotic plants, restore disturbed areas and perpetuate and maintain natural communities. Management practices will also stress the protection of the water quality of the aquatic preserve by maintaining the project area in a substantially





natural condition, the protection of threatened and endangered species and the preservation of the significant archaeological sites for professional investigation.

**Revenue-generating Potential**

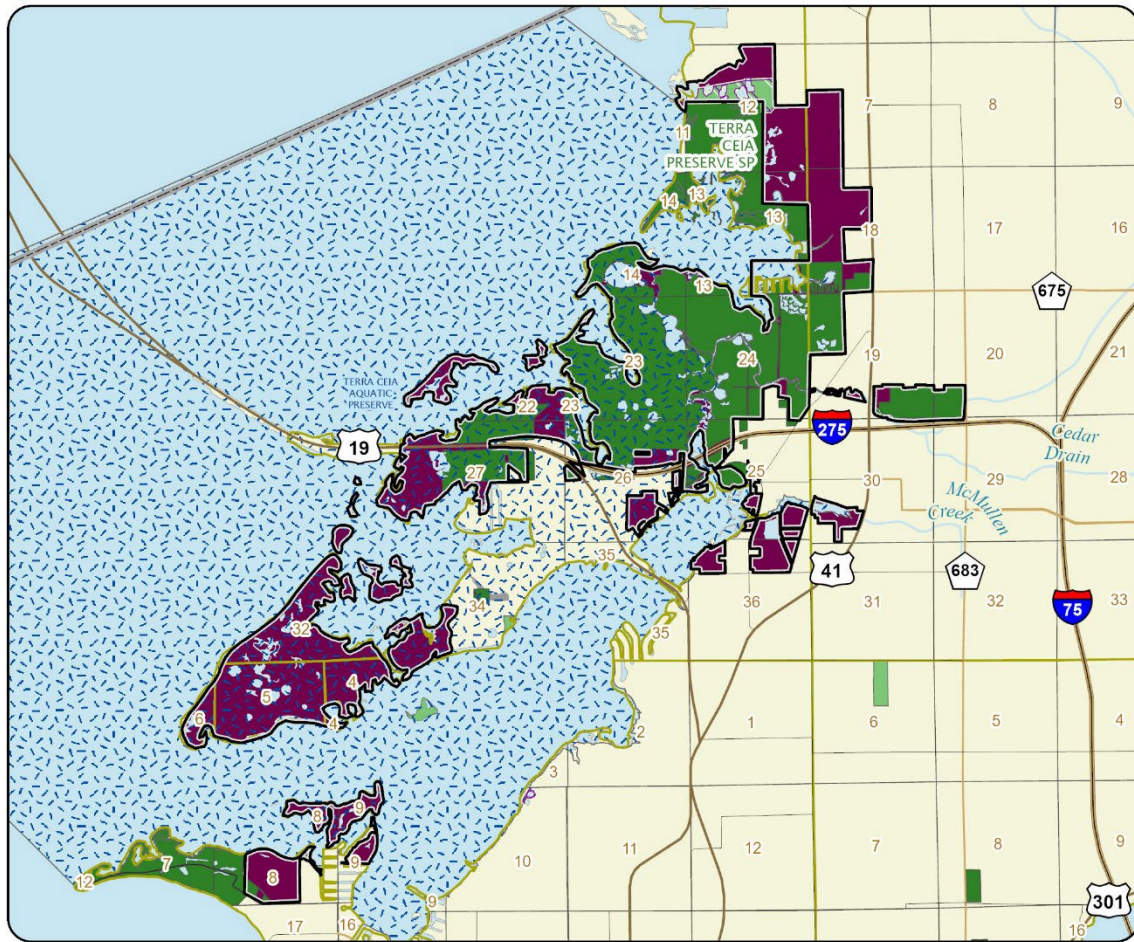
No revenue is expected to be generated from this property.

Management Cost Summary

<u>DRP</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Salary (2 FTE)	\$62,000	not provided
Expense	\$10,000	not provided
OCO	\$100,000	not provided
FCO	\$500,000	not provided
TOTAL	\$672,000	not provided

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





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