

FLORIDA

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

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Prepared by:

Florida Coastal Management Program

In cooperation with:

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of State Lands
Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas

Florida Natural Areas Inventory

Overview of conservation lands in the State of Florida

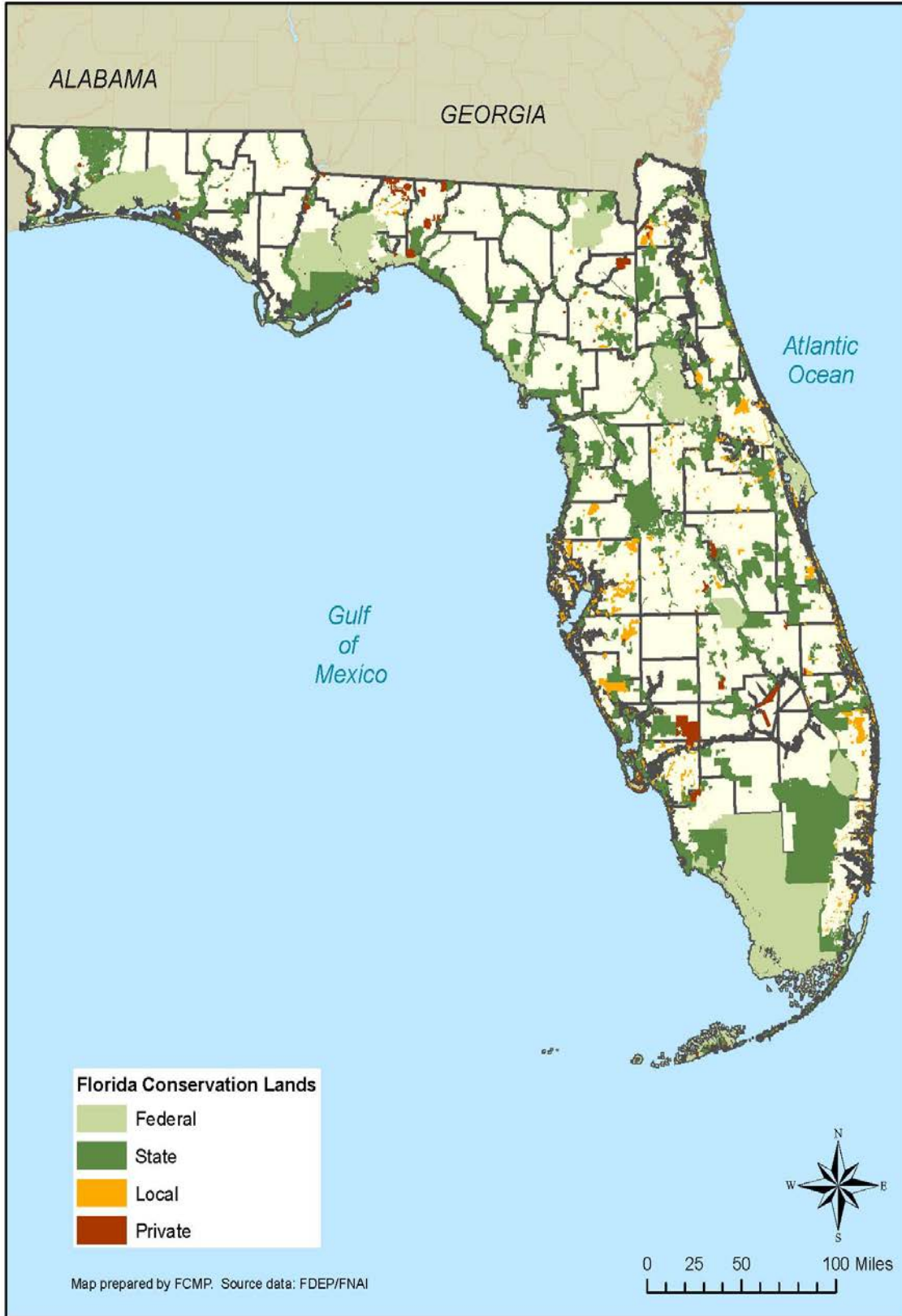


TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION..... 1
a. Background of the program 1
b. Purpose for the plan 1

II. PRIORITIES FOR COASTAL AND ESTUARINE LAND PROTECTION 3
a. Description of the geographic extent of coastal and estuarine areas. 3
b. Description of the types of lands or values to be protected through the program and
assessment of need for conservation through acquisition..... 6
c. Identification of “project areas” that represent the state’s priority areas for conservation. 8
d. A description of existing plans, or elements thereof, that are incorporated into this plan.... 35

III. STATE PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CELCP 43
a. Identification of state lead agency..... 43
b. List of state or local agencies, or types of agencies, that are eligible to hold title to property
acquired through the CELCP. 43
c. Description of State’s project nomination process..... 44

IV. COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT..... 47
a. Description of interagency coordination that occurred during the development of the plan.47
b. Description of public involvement in the development of the plan..... 47

V. CERTIFICATION AND APPROVAL 50
a. Certification that plan is consistent with the state/territory’s approved coastal management
program. 50
b. Approval of plan by designated official of state lead agency..... 50

REFERENCES..... 51

APPENDIX A A-1
APPENDIX B B-1
APPENDIX C C-1
APPENDIX D D-1
APPENDIX E..... E-1

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Panhandle Site Summaries 16
Table 2: Northeast Site Summaries..... 19
Table 3: Southeast Site Summaries..... 24
Table 4: Southwest Site Summaries 29
Table 5: Florida Keys Site Summaries 34
Table 6: Special areas protected through the Florida Forever Program. 36
Table 7: Florida Forever Agency Funding Distributions..... 38
Table 8: Agency partners in the Florida Forever Program 44

LIST OF MAPS

Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) boundary..... 5
Panhandle Regional Maps..... 14
Northeast Regional Maps..... 17
Southeast Regional Maps..... 20
Southwest Regional Maps..... 25
Florida Keys Regional Maps 30

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Acquisition and Restoration Council project selection process 41
Figure 2: Florida Division of State Lands, land acquisition process 42
Figure 3: Florida CELCP project nomination process..... 46

I. Introduction

a. Background of the program

The Department of Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations Act in 2002 (Public Law 107-77), directed the Secretary of Commerce to establish a Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELC Program or CELCP) “for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses,” giving priority to lands which can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value (CELCP Final Guidelines, 2003, p.2).

In 2003, the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) issued program requirements and guidelines for the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. Pursuant to the guidelines published by the OCRM, a three-stage process for competitive funding was established consisting of:

1. the development of a state coastal and estuarine land conservation plan
2. a process for identifying and ranking qualified projects within the state and nominating them to a national competitive selection process annually
3. a process for conducting peer review and selection of projects at the national level
(CELCP Final Guidelines, 2003, p.2)

In order to participate in the program, states must submit a Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for approval. Though participation in the CELC Program is voluntary, it is restricted to states that have a coastal zone management program approved by NOAA or a National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR).

Florida is eligible to participate in the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program because it satisfies both requirements. The Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) was approved by NOAA in 1981 while the Apalachicola NERR was designated in 1979, the Guana-Tolomato- Matanzas NERR was designated in 1999 and the Rookery Bay NERR was designated in 1978.

In accordance with the guidelines issued by OCRM, Florida will ensure that the CELCP procedures are closely followed throughout all stages of the CELCP process, from development of the CELCP plan, to proposing and soliciting land acquisition projects, applying for funds, and implementing projects approved under the program. The following CELCP plan was prepared by the Florida Coastal Management Program in consultation with its key partners, the Division of State Lands and the Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas, and with the technical assistance of the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI).

b. Purpose for the plan

(i) NOAA/OCRM requirements

The primary purpose of funding under the CELCP is to protect important coastal and estuarine areas with significant values or that are threatened by conversion, and can be effectively managed (CELCP Final Guidelines, 2003). Advancement of this goal is accomplished through eligibility requirements established by NOAA which state that CELCP funding will be provided for eligible activities related to

state planning, program administration, and project acquisition. Ineligible uses of CELCP funds include long term operations, maintenance or management of the land, construction of facilities, and research and land acquisition for active recreational facilities.

For the specific purpose of CELCP, state plans must address the following **national criteria** for projects and project areas:

- Protects important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical or aesthetic values, or that are threatened from conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses
- Gives priority to lands which can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value
- Directly advances the goals, objectives or implementation of the state's coastal management plan or program, NERR management plans approved under the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), national objectives of the CZMA, or a regional or state watershed protection plan involving coastal states with approved coastal management plans
- Is consistent with the state's approved coastal management program
(CELCP Final Guidelines, 2003)

To reduce the burden associated with implementing this program, OCRM's guidelines encourage states to incorporate elements of existing state or regional plans. States must also ensure that public review and comment is received during the development of the CELCP plan. This requirement may be met if the CELCP plan integrates existing plans that already include public review and comment.

In general, all lands acquired with CELCP funds must provide access to the general public without user fee charges. However, this access may be limited or controlled in an equitable manner for resource protection, public safety, or for other reasonable cause (CELCP Final Guidelines, 2003). Additionally, any project funded through the CELC Program must provide matching non-federal dollars for every federal dollar provided.

States with approved CELCP plans are eligible to participate in the competitive national selection process outlined by OCRM. To ensure continued eligibility, states must update the CELCP plan once every five years to reflect changes that may have occurred within the state or region, and submit this plan to OCRM (CELCP Final Guidelines, 2003).

(ii) Purpose and focus of Florida CELCP plan

The Florida CELCP plan is the foundation document that will guide the implementation of CELCP within the state. The plan will highlight the geographic area for project selection, the criteria for selecting project areas and identifying habitat priorities, and the process for coordinating the CELCP within the state. Providing a guidance document informs potential program applicants and reviewers about the processes involved in selecting nominated projects. The FCMP will utilize the existing state managed land acquisition and conservation program, **FLORIDA FOREVER**, (see Sections II.b., II.c. and II.d.) to implement and manage the CELC Program within the state. The Florida Forever Program is nationally recognized for its successes in land acquisition to conserve unique natural and cultural resources and has been "buoyed by phenomenal support from the general public, [and] Florida's Legislature...that have resulted in the purchase and protection of over six million acres of conservation lands" (Farr & Brock, 2006, p.1).

The public accessibility of the Florida Forever Program along with its selection criteria for acquisitions makes it an ideal program upon which to base the Florida CELCP process. Moreover, the existence of

such a successful program makes it both unnecessary and burdensome to create a single, new process to identify potential projects for acquisition within the state. Incorporating elements of existing state plans such as the Florida Forever Program that include public review and comment capitalizes on an established and proven process with which the public and other stakeholders are already familiar. The structure and execution of the Florida Forever Program ensures that a wide variety of stakeholders are able to participate and provide comment through a mixture of public hearings and meetings resulting in projects that have been evaluated and appraised for sale within the public domain. In fact, there are two project selection cycles each year wherein anyone can submit an application to the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) to have a project considered for acquisition through Florida Forever (Farr and Brock, 2006). Applications are routinely received from private landowners, real estate agents, and other representatives, state and federal agencies, local governments, water management districts and conservation groups (Farr and Brock, 2006).

Although the Florida Forever Program uses a wide range of tools (refer to Sections II.b., II.c., and II.d) to evaluate potential project sites so that those with the highest resource value can be negotiated for purchase, not all of the projects on the Florida Forever list would be eligible for CELCP. It is expected that the rigorous Florida Forever selection criteria will result in projects that will compete well in the national CELCP process. Furthermore, the application of additional CELCP criteria (detailed in Section III (c)) to the Florida Forever acquisition list by FCMP staff will result in the selection of the most competitive projects. This phased process ensures that projects chosen from the Florida Forever list are consistent with the state and national CELCP goals, objectives and eligibility requirements.

Based on these factors, the FCMP has determined that the Florida CELCP plan will be intimately linked to the Florida Forever Program because many of its goals are closely correlated with national CELCP requirements. Sections II (c), II (d) and III (c) further refine the linkage of the Florida Forever process with the implementation of the CELC Program within the state.

II. Priorities for Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection

a. Description of the geographic extent of coastal and estuarine areas.

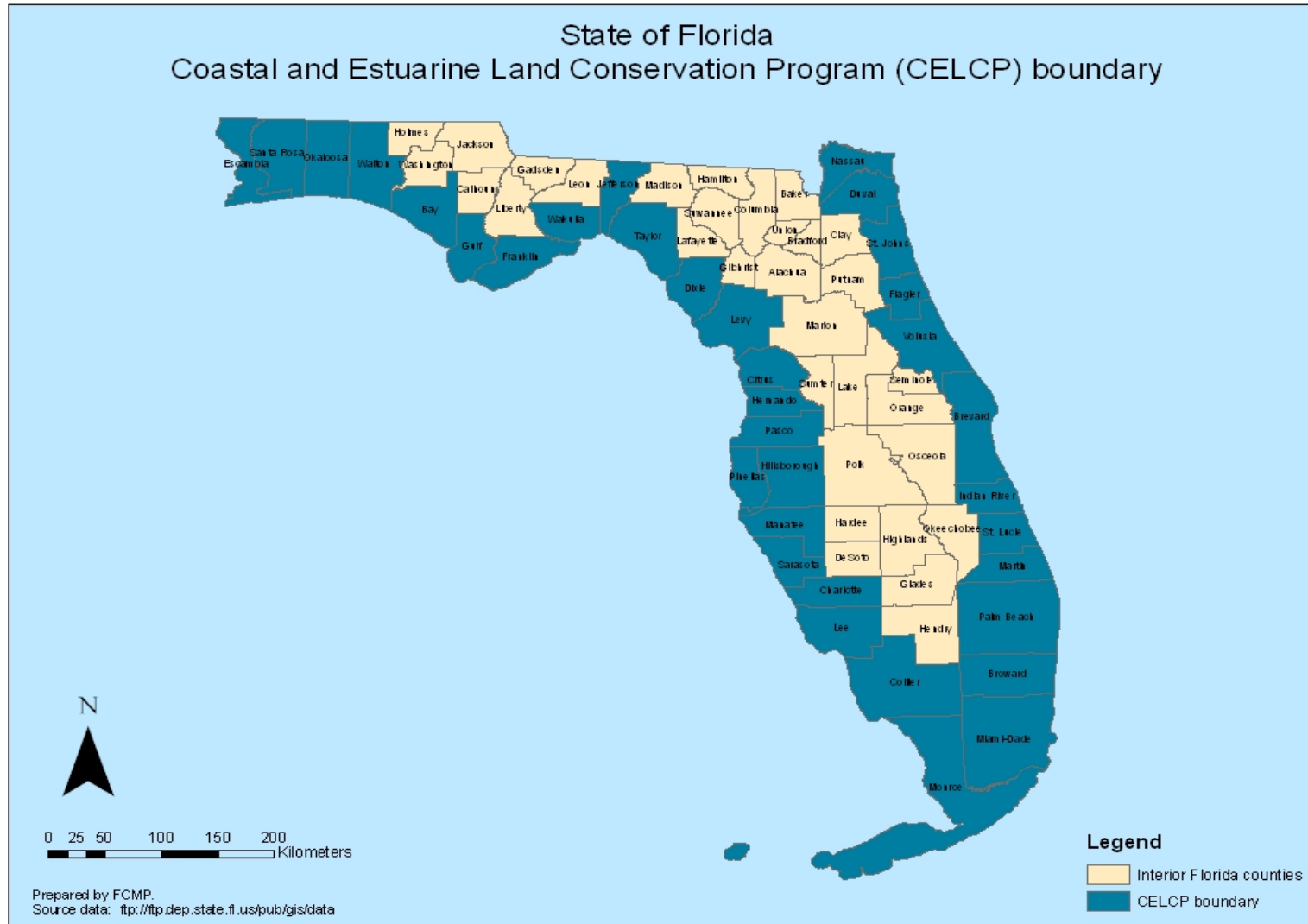
According to NOAA's CELCP guidance, coastal and estuarine areas are defined as: "those areas within a coastal state that are: part of the state's coastal zone, as designated in the state's federally approved coastal management program under the CZMA or within the state's coastal watershed boundary as described in NOAA's Coastal Zone Boundary Review (October, 1992). The coastal watershed boundary is defined: for estuarine drainage areas by the inland boundary of those 8-digit USGS hydrologic cataloguing units that contain the head of tide." (CELCP Final Guidelines, 2003, p.3).

Geographically, Florida has low land elevation, a generally high water table, and an extensive coastline with many rivers emptying into coastal waters. Few places in Florida are more than seventy miles from either the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico. The result is an interrelationship between land and coastal waters which make it difficult to establish a scientifically supportable boundary which would exclude inland areas as having no significant effect on coastal waters (FCMP, 1981). As a result of this, the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) Document (1981, p.xvii) identifies the boundary of the FCMP as "the entire state to the limits of the territorial sea in the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico." This approved Coastal Management Program boundary encompasses all 67 counties within the state, a combined land and water acreage of approximately 38 million acres, not including territorial waters (BEBR, 2005). Despite the statewide designation, the Florida Coastal Management Act focuses special attention on the 35 counties abutting the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. The coastal counties are required to include coastal protection elements in their local government comprehensive plans. Only

Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

coastal counties are eligible to receive CZMA funds through the FCMP's grant programs. In keeping with the CELCP purpose and goals, the 35 coastal counties also represent an appropriate geographic area in which to implement the CELC Program. Acquisitions proposed within this geographic boundary are likely to meet CELCP priorities and guidelines.

Map 1: Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) boundary



b. Description of the types of lands or values to be protected through the program and assessment of need for conservation through acquisition.

Pursuant to the national CELCP guidelines, states must identify specific types of lands or values to be protected through the CELC Program. Although the Florida Forever land acquisition program's conservation goals and environmental protection purposes are similar to the priorities and goals of CELCP, the projects selected for the national CELCP competition must meet the goals, objectives and eligibility requirements of the national CELCP process and as such represent a subset of the wider Florida Forever Program's project selections. The state's historical commitment to protecting its coasts and estuaries is reflected in the 2,723,000 acres of state-owned land and sovereign submerged lands included in coastal State Parks and Aquatic Preserves. In fact, this commitment is codified in Section 380.21 (4) Florida Statutes (F.S.) which states that

The legislature recognizes that land acquisition has great potential to support the state's coastal management and regulatory efforts. Removing coastal properties from the pool of developable acreage reduces the adverse land use and environmental impacts the state coastal zone management program is attempting to eliminate or diminish, while at the same time minimizing public expenditures and reducing risk to life and property in storm-prone areas. To this end, the acquisition of coastal lands shall be an important component of the coastal zone management program.

The Florida Forever Program, created by the Florida Legislature in 1999, follows in the footsteps of earlier successful land acquisitions programs in the State of Florida (*i.e.* Preservation 2000 (P2000), Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL), Environmentally Endangered Lands) by continuing to focus land acquisition efforts in the following resource categories (see Appendix A for detailed information):

- A. Natural Communities
- B. Forest Resources
- C. Plants
- D. Fish and Wildlife
- E. Fresh Water Supplies
- F. Coastal Resources
- G. Geologic Features
- H. Historical Resources
- I. Outdoor Recreational Resources

(CARL Report, 1999, p.568)

Project areas acquired through the Florida Forever program are particularly valuable because many of them satisfy multiple criteria that extend beyond land acquisition to include restoration and public access goals among others. Acquisition of resources within the state's coastal and estuarine area, and by extension the state's CELC Program, will be guided by the following:

Coastal Resources

1. Acquire undeveloped coastal islands, spits, peninsulas, coral or limerock keys, and mainland seashores to conserve their significant natural, recreational, and aesthetic attributes, giving priority to projects that
 - (a) contain representative examples of various physiographic coastal forms
 - (b) include entire islands, long stretches of beaches, entire widths of coastal barriers, or natural inlets, or
 - (c) are associated with sensitive estuarine systems, particularly those that are designated State Aquatic Preserves

2. Acquire upland and wetland buffers to protect the State's significant commercial and recreational saltwater fisheries, particularly those fisheries that are designated State Aquatic Preserves, National Estuarine Research Reserves, or Marine Sanctuaries, Areas of Critical State Concern, Special Water category of Outstanding Florida Water, or Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Class II Waters.
3. Acquire upland and wetland buffers to protect the State's most significant reef communities, particularly those areas that are within or adjacent to designated Areas of Critical State Concern, State Aquatic Preserves, State Parks, or National Estuarine Research Reserves, Marine Sanctuaries, Wildlife Refuges, Parks, or Seashores.

(CARL Report, 1999, p.568)

Acquisition of these types of resources is critical in a state such as Florida where development pressures continue to intensify. Coupled with increasing development pressure is the ever-increasing price of land and the dwindling opportunities to preserve valuable land. The cost of acquisition for many of these pristine areas of land is exacerbated by the near urban location of the lands and the active real estate market. As a result of these factors, competition for these resources is fierce, and any loss to development pressure effectively eliminates the option to acquire the resource for use as conservation or recreation land (CARL Report, 1999).

Development pressure in Florida continues to be driven by population growth within the state. Census 2000 data indicates that Florida's overall population change between 1990 and 2000 was 23.5%, and it is projected that the State of Florida will be the third largest state by 2011 given its current population growth trends. Growth in Florida's coastal counties continues to occur at staggering rates with the Gulf counties experiencing the largest growth rates within the last decade. Growth rates for Collier (65.3%), Walton (46.3%) and Santa Rosa (46.9%) counties (*refer to Map I*) coupled with the statewide private residential building permit activity change of 20.9% for the same referenced period reinforces the need to accommodate sustainable growth with a focus on protecting pristine, undeveloped areas along the coast from further development.

The need for land protection in coastal areas is three-pronged; it ensures that natural resources are conserved for future generations to enjoy; it provides a natural buffer against storm activity which in turn protects populations already living along the coast; and it protects the economic engine of Florida. Among the many land protection tools available in the planning toolbox, acquisition offers the most long-term benefits. Acquisition is much more successful since it allows willing landowners who wish to conserve land to donate or sell it outright at a fair market value to a public agency. The public entity that purchases the land, which is generally held in trust for public use, has full control over the property's future. Other land protection tools such as comprehensive planning and zoning, conservation easements, purchase of development rights or transfer of development rights can be complicated by the stipulations regarding implementation, management, and use of the lands. Acquisition ensures that the land, judged for "highest and best use", is removed from the development arena allowing it to be managed and preserved for ecologically sustainable uses.

The Florida Coastal Management Act, Chapter 380 Part II, F.S. addresses acquisition goals for coastal land acquisition. Section 380.22 (4) F.S. states that a "process for identifying, and setting priorities for acquiring coastal properties in coordination with the Acquisition and Restoration Council, or its successor," is necessary. Such a process should recognize that though acquisitions of pristine coastal areas are important, "hazard mitigation, beach access, beach management, urban recreation and other policies necessary for effective coastal management" (Section 380.22 (4), F.S.) are critical. Section 380.22 (5), F.S., lists the following acquisition priority values,

- i. Value of acquiring coastal high-hazard parcels, consistent with hazard mitigation and post-disaster redevelopment policies, in order to minimize the risk to life and property and reduce the need for disaster assistance
- ii. Value of acquiring beachfront parcels, irrespective of size, to provide public access and recreational opportunities in highly developed urban areas
- iii. Value of acquiring identified parcels the development of which would adversely affect coastal resources

Consistent with the goals in Chapter 380, F.S., the Florida Forever Program follows processes for selecting and evaluating projects based on criteria established by the Florida Statutes and the Florida Forever Advisory Council. Any project nominated to the Florida Forever Program must be evaluated before addition to the acquisition list. This evaluation, conducted by FNAI, assesses potential acquisition projects using 34 measures (Appendix B.2.) which include resource and habitat values, sustainable management of natural resources, as well as public access, education and recreation. Florida Forever Program acquisitions are guided by the Florida Forever Conservation Needs Assessment which identifies conservation priorities for the state (Appendix B.3.). Some of these conservation priorities will be highlighted as “project areas” for concern consistent with CELCP guidelines.

The State of Florida’s Florida Forever Program has proven to be an effective tool for acquiring and protecting areas of exceptional ecological and conservation value. The rigorous, public process of selection, evaluation, and appraisal of potential acquisition properties in the Florida Forever Program provide an excellent complement to the Florida CELC Program. By linking the Florida CELCP process to the existing Florida Forever Program, FCMP envisions greater success with acquisition and protection of threatened coastal and estuarine areas.

c. Identification of “project areas” that represent the state’s priority areas for conservation.

Project areas are defined as “discrete areas” that will be identified in the CELCP plan and that describe the state’s priority areas for conservation based on national and state criteria (CELCP Final Guidelines, 2003). These project areas can include geographic areas, habitat types, watershed management plans or other priority areas for conservation (CELCP Final Guidelines, 2003).

Though the Florida Forever Program purposely selects acquisition projects related to its major goal areas, the Florida CELCP will concentrate on conservation priorities specific to the coastal and estuarine area. Consequently, the Florida CELCP will focus on fragile coastal upland and wetland resources in need of protection, as described in Measures C7 and C8 (Appendix B.2).

Fragile coastal uplands include:

- a. beach dune
- b. coastal strand
- c. coastal grassland
- d. coastal scrub
- e. tropical hammock
- f. maritime hammock
- g. coastal rock barren
- h. coastal berm

Fragile coastal wetlands include:

- i. salt marsh (marine and estuarine tidal marsh)
- j. mangrove (marine and estuarine tidal swamp)

These communities generally occur within one kilometer of the shoreline of marine or estuarine waters as described in the 2005 study conducted by Johnson and Gulledge (FNAI, 2006). Fragile coastal habitats are increasingly vulnerable to disturbance, development and encroachment of exotic species (FNAI, 2006). Acquisition of fragile coastal upland and wetland areas will enhance protection of significant existing resources and protected areas, including National Estuarine Research Reserves, Aquatic Preserves and Marine Sanctuaries.

Fragile coastal upland resources

(a) Beach Dune

“This is characterized as a wind-deposited, foredune and wave deposited upper beach that is sparsely to densely vegetated with pioneer species, especially sea oats. Other typical pioneer species include beach cordgrass, sand spur, dune or bitter panic grass, railroad vine, beach morning glory, seashore paspalum, beach elder, dune sunflower, sea purslane, and sea rocket. Typical animals include ghost crab, six-lined racerunner, kestrel, red-winged blackbird, savannah sparrows, beach mouse, and raccoon. Beach dunes are the primary nesting habitat for numerous shorebirds and marine turtles including many rare and endangered species” (FNAI 1990, p.8).

Beach dunes are very mobile environments subject to topographic alterations caused by hurricanes, winter storms and coastal development. Maintaining intact beach dunes is primarily dependent on the unique characteristics of dune vegetation to tolerate nutrient poor, static soils as well as constant exposure to wind, salt spray and intense sunlight. Because beach dunes provide an important barrier from coastal storms, and offer protection to inland natural communities, it is essential to protect them from trampling, off-road vehicles and coastal developments that affect the natural sand supply process that creates these valuable coastal uplands (FNAI, 1990).

(b) Coastal Strand

FNAI (1990) characterizes this community as a stabilized, wind-deposited coastal dune, vegetated with a dense thicket of salt-tolerant shrubs, such as saw palmetto. Some typical plants inhabiting this environment include sand live oak, cabbage palm, sea grape, lantana and Florida rosemary. Typical animals include gopher tortoise, diamondback rattlesnake and beach mouse.

Coastal strand occurs on deep, wind-deposited sands that have been “wind-sorted and wave-washed” (FNAI, 1990). Coastal strand dunes are generally stable but highly susceptible to severe damage if the vegetation is disturbed. Shrubs in the coastal strand are “dwarfed and pruned as a result of the salt spray-laden winds that kill twigs on the seaward side, producing a smooth, dense upward-slanting canopy resembling a sheared hedge” (FNAI, 1990, p.11).

Coastal strand is rapidly disappearing in Florida. It is most extensive along the Atlantic Coast where it originally occurred as a nearly continuous band along the Atlantic shorelines; now it occurs as broken and isolated small stretches (FNAI, 1990). Threats to this natural community include resort or residential development as well as invasion by exotic species, principally Brazilian pepper and Australian pine. Coastal strand assists in protecting inland communities from severe effects of storms.

(c) Coastal Grassland

This community is characterized as a “treeless flat land or gently undulating land with barren sand or a sparse to dense ground cover of grasses, prostrate vines and other herbaceous or suffrutescent species that are adapted to harsh maritime conditions” (FNAI, 1990, p.9). Typical plants in this environment include sea oats, beach cordgrass, dune panic grass, beach morning glory, sea oxeye, beach elder, sea purslane, glasswort, sand spurs, evening primrose, pennywort, ground cherry, sedges, crowfoot grass, dropseed, prickly pear cactus, rushes, love grass, wax murtle and groundsel bush (FNAI, 1990). Typical animals in this environment include “ghost crab, blackbirds, and savannah sparrows” (FNAI 1990, p.9).

Coastal grassland is the low flat area behind the foredunes and is generally found on broader barrier islands. They are subject to flooding due to overwash processes occurring on barrier islands where overwash frequency is dependent on the “height and continuity of the seaward beach dunes” (FNAI, 1990, p.10).

Coastal grasslands are often colonized by shrubs and trees and may eventually succeed to Coastal Strand and Flatwoods.

(d) Coastal scrub

Scrub is generally characterized as a closed to open canopy forest of sand pines with dense clumps of scrub oaks and other shrubs dominating the understory (FNAI, 1990). Ground cover is dominated by lichens and herbs and is generally exposed to more intense sunlight. Typical plants include sand pine, sand live oak, myrtle oak, saw palmetto, hog plum and rosemary, among others. Typical animals include scrub jay, Florida mouse, Florida scrub lizard, scrub wolf spider and oak toad.

Scrub generally occurs on sand ridges along past shorelines, where these sand ridges may have originated as wind-deposited dunes, or wave washed sand bars (FNAI, 1990). Scrub is very prevalent in Florida, and may be associated with Sandhill, Scrubby Flatwoods, or Coastal Strand (FNAI, 1990).

According to FNAI (1990), scrub is rapidly being lost to development. Off-road vehicular traffic as well as foot traffic, destroys its ground cover and causes sand erosion which affects the growth and recovery of the ground lichens.

(e) Tropical Hammock

This may be characterized as a hardwood forest on upland sites in regions where limestone is very near the surface or exposed. Some of the typical plants within this community include live oak, wild tamarind, mahogany, sea grape, Spanish moss, cabbage palm, laurel oak, wild pine, poison ivy and fox grape. Typical animals include tree snail, Schaus swallowtail, white-crowned pigeon, woodrat, and cottonmouse.

Tropical Hammock (or Rockland Hammock) occurs on high ground that is not subject to flooding. These Hammocks have dense canopies that minimize temperature fluctuations, as well as, a rounded profile which deflects winds, leading to reduced desiccation during dry periods and reduced storm damage on the interior of the canopy (FNAI, 1990).

This community is an advanced successional stage of Pine Rockland which may grade into Coastal Rock Barren and intergrade with Shell Mounds (FNAI, 1990). Tropical Hammocks need to be protected from fire, canopy disruption and ground water reduction; this is even more important since this community is threatened by development.

(f) Maritime Hammock

The FNAI Guide to Natural Communities of Florida published in 1990 characterizes maritime hammock as “having a narrow band of hardwood forest lying inland of the Coastal Strand community” (FNAI 1990, p.9). Among the typical plants inhabiting this community, live oak, cabbage palm, and redbay form a dense wind-pruned canopy. Other vegetation includes sea grape, saw palmetto, poison ivy and ferns. Squirrel treefrogs, ring-necked snake, rat snakes and gray squirrel are typical examples of the fauna found in this environment.

Maritime Hammock occurs on old, stabilized coastal dunes where tree growth has occurred between the old dune ridges and has gradually coalesced into a continuous forest (FNAI, 1990). The humus buildup contributes to moisture retention, while its dense canopy minimizes temperature fluctuations. This

community is relatively resilient so long as the canopy remains intact and the landform stable; removal of exotics should ensure minimum disturbances to the canopy.

Maritime Hammock is the terminal stage of succession in coastal areas. Maritime Hammock offers a relatively protected location along the coast making it extremely desirable to real estate developers. Though Maritime Hammock once occurred in continuous bands along with coastal strand, it too, has become dissected into short strips due to developmental pressures (FNAI, 1990).

(g) Coastal rock barren

This is an ecotonal community occurring along rocky coastlines in the Florida Keys. It is characterized as flat rocklands with exposed and eroded limestone, and sparsely vegetated with stunted, xeric and halophytic shrubs, cacti, algae, and herbs (FNAI, 1990). Some typical plants include white mangrove, black mangrove, sea grape, lantana, sea purslane, shore grass, and saltwort.

Coastal Rock Barren is located close to coastal water which makes them highly susceptible to saltwater inundations during storm events and high tide; plants are adapted to salt spray, inundation by saltwater and tropical marine influences (FNAI, 1990).

Coastal Rock Barren has been identified by FNAI as a rare community, occurring as tiny patches along some shorelines in the Florida Keys. It is rapidly disappearing because it occurs on sites near water in a region that is undergoing intensive resort development (FNAI, 1990). Coastal Rock Barren may be affected by visitor overuse, offshore dredging, and beach renourishment activities which increase sediment loads and may convert the existing community features to that of coralline Beach Dune.

(h) Coastal Berm

Coastal Berm “is generally a ridge of storm-deposited marine debris that is parallel to the shore, occasionally occurring in a series with alternating swales” (FNAI 1990, p. 9). Some of the typical plants found in the Coastal Berm include cabbage palm, sea grape, marsh elder, evening primrose, poison ivy, sea oats and beach morning glory. Typical animals include those associated with a beach dune habitat such as the beach mouse, ghost crab and savannah sparrows.

Coastal Berm habitats develop on ridges of storm deposited sand, shells and debris found along low energy coastlines, and surrounded by mangrove or salt marsh communities (FNAI, 1990). Coastal Berm like coastal strand may be influenced by the impacts of real estate development.

Fragile coastal wetland resources

(i) Salt marsh (marine and estuarine tidal marsh)

These marine and estuarine tidal marshes are floral based natural communities characterized by a wide expanse of grasses, rushes and sedges along low energy coastlines (FNAI, 1990). The locations of these strands vary depending on the tide level and elevation, which in turn influences nutrient cycling and faunal marine and estuarine access to the marsh. Typical plants in this environment include saltgrass, saltmeadow cordgrass, cattail, big cordgrass and glassworts. These plants must be able to survive the harsh tidal environment characterized by high salt content, intense sunlight, poor soil aeration, and frequent inundation.

Animals found within this environment include marsh snail, mud snail, fiddler crabs, muskrat, seaside sparrows and raccoon. “A myriad of invertebrates and fish, including most of the commercially and recreationally important species such as shrimp, blue crab, oysters, sharks...” (FNAI 1990, p.69) inhabit this environment for a significant portion of their life cycles.

Tidal marshes are valuable for their storm buffering capacity and filtering actions making them an important natural community. Urban development of tidal marshes results in reduced water quality, increased erosion, and loss of valuable marsh land – all of which can contribute to detrimental effects on the surrounding land and water resources.

(j) Mangrove (marine and estuarine tidal swamp)

These are “dense, low forests occurring along relatively flat, intertidal and supratidal shorelines of low wave energy” (FNAI 1990, p.69). Typical plants include three (3) varieties of mangrove; red, black and white, and buttonwood. The location of these species within the mangrove environment is primarily determined by water levels. The mangrove water snake, brown pelican, white ibis, osprey and bald eagle inhabit this environment.

Tidal swamps occur in flat coastal areas and there are at least five (5) variations of tidal swamps (FNAI, 1990). Tidal swamps’ size and extent is influenced by temperature, salinity, tidal fluctuation, substrate and wave energy. Tidal swamps occur along both coasts in Florida, buffered by barrier island formations; they are most extensive in the southwest Florida area (Ten Thousand Islands) (FNAI, 1990).

Tidal swamps or mangroves provide important breeding and nursery grounds for fish and shellfish with significant commercial and recreational value. Important recreational fish species include snook, gray snapper, tarpon, sheepshead, and red drum. Mangroves also provide important habitat for several federally and state listed threatened and endangered species, including the key deer, American crocodile, peregrine falcon, and Atlantic saltmarsh snake (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission).

The mangroves also produce

- (1) considerable amounts of organic matter which are important in the aquatic ecosystem and
- (2) provide important buffering functions against significant storm events.

Mangrove swamps are significantly affected by developments in the uplands. These developments alter freshwater inflows into the mangrove community which in turn affects the native wildlife habitats.

Prioritization of CELCP Project Areas

Prioritizing coastal areas to be protected by the CELC Program will be achieved through a 2-step process that uses Map 1 as a base layer (pg.4) and the regional maps presented in this section as overlays. The regional maps identify sites that contain fragile coastal resources and were created by FNAI in 2005 using data collected by Johnson and Gullede.

Each of the detailed regional maps provides a visual indication of the areas that have been protected through federal, state and local partnerships while the regional table summaries indicate the remaining acreages to be acquired to ensure full protection of these fragile resources. Areas that are already in state or local ownership will not be priority acquisition sites for CELCP, however, some of these parks and protected areas continue to have outstanding inholdings and additions that will be a suitable match for acquisition based on the CELCP criteria. Additionally, the table highlights that there are many natural areas (uplands and wetlands) in each region that are neither protected nor managed as part of another conservation area. These areas will be acquisition targets for the CELCP program consistent with the Florida Forever site assessments.

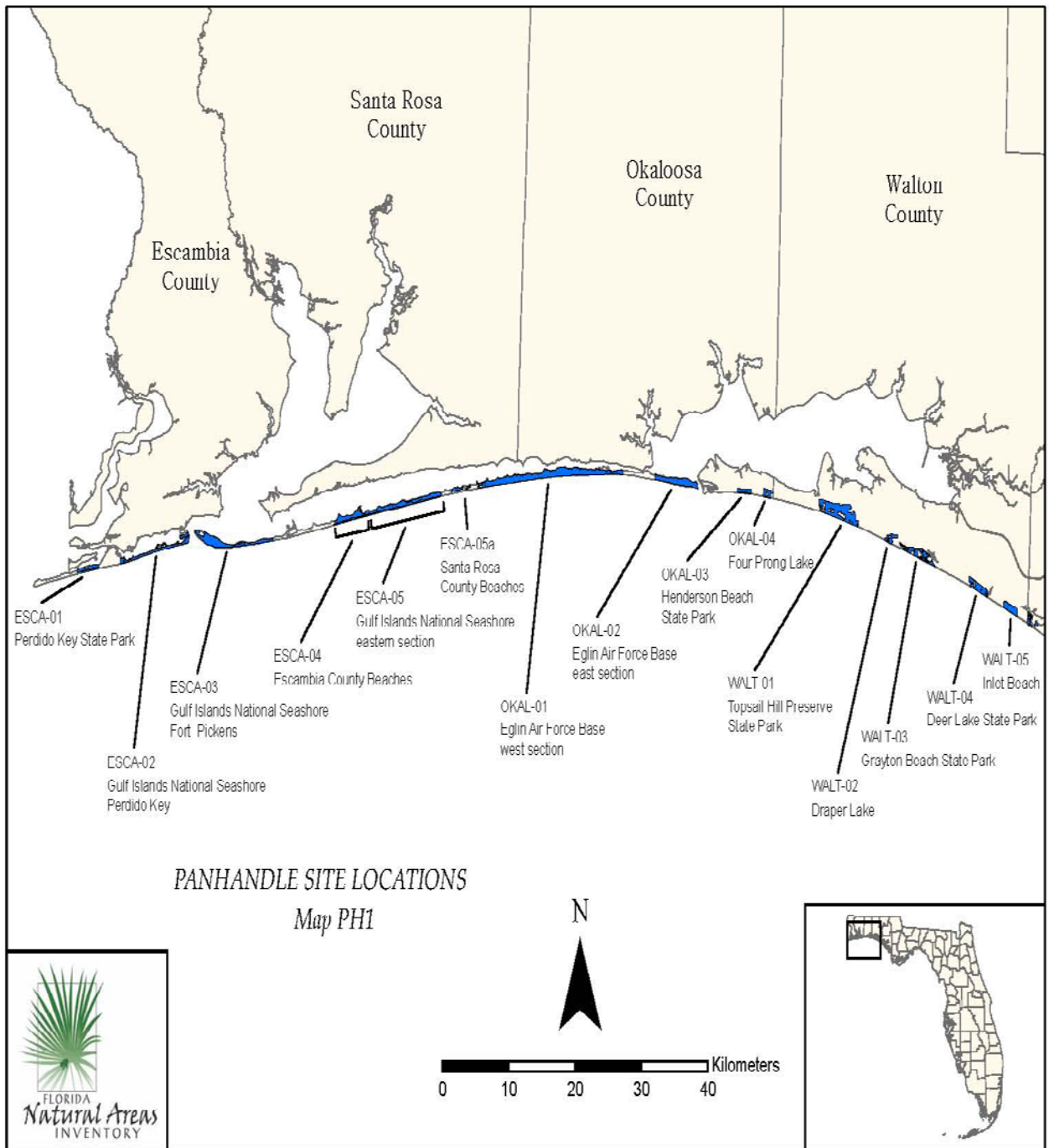
Though the study focused on private and public lands it is likely that the listings are not exhaustive of all lands that may be available for acquisition within the state. Therefore, it is possible that additional lands may be presented for acquisition in future Florida Forever funding cycles.

Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

In spite of the significant effort to protect fragile coastal resources in the state approximately 30% are still vulnerable. The regional maps and site summaries will be used to direct CELCP efforts towards protecting

- (1) the remaining vulnerable coastal resource areas, and
- (2) completing acquisition projects by acquiring inholdings in areas not yet completed

PANHANDLE REGIONAL MAPS



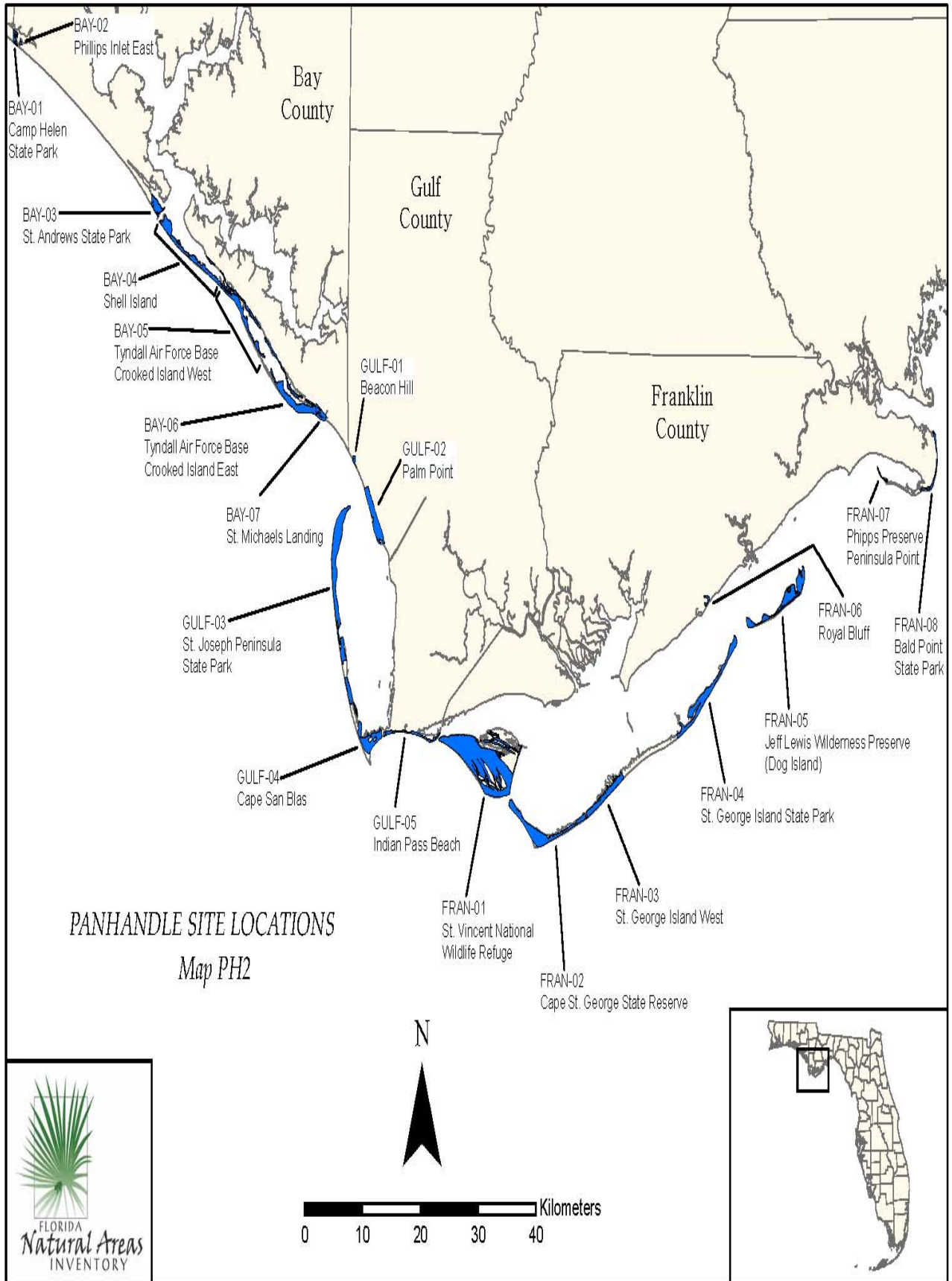
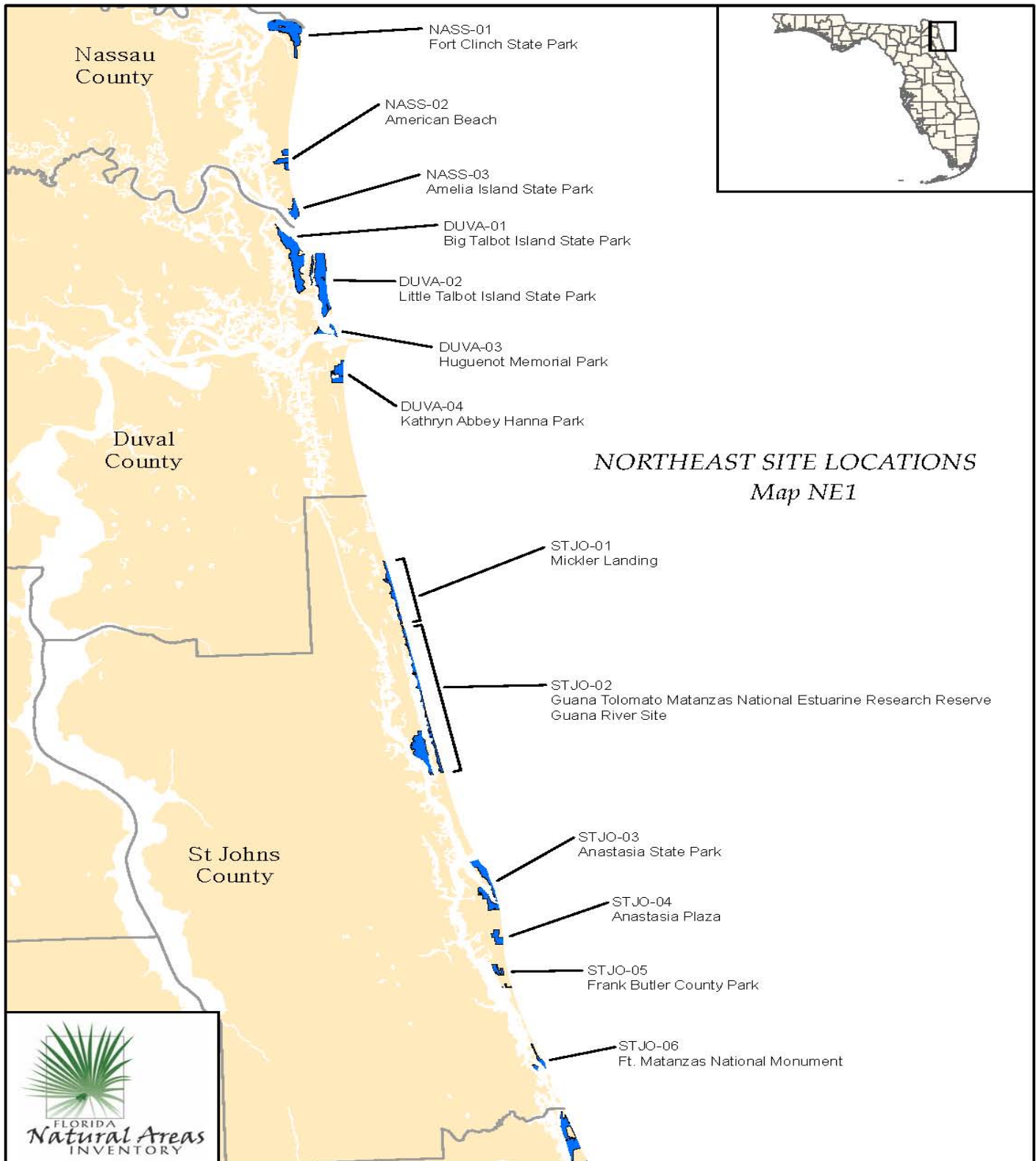


Table 1: Panhandle Site Summaries

<i>Site ID</i>	<i>Total natural acres (2005)</i>	<i>Total in public ownership (2005)</i>	<i>Total natural remaining outside public ownership (2005)</i>	<i>Managed area name</i>
BAY-1	128.4	128.4	3.9*	Camp Helen State Park
BAY-2	18.0	0	18.0	N/A
BAY-4	1426.8	1417.1	9.6	St. Andrews State Park, Tyndall Air Force Base
BAY-7	336.2	0	336.2	N/A
ESCA-5a	152.3	121.1	31.2	N/A
FRAN-3	156.8	19.9	136.9	Apalachicola NERR
FRAN-5	1685.0	1313.3	371.7	Jeff Lewis Wilderness Preserve
FRAN-6	73.0	58.5	14.5	Tate's Hell State Forest
FRAN-8	239.7	107.8	131.9	Bald Point State Park
GULF-1	40.5	32.2	8.2	N/A
GULF-2	1109.0	0	1109	N/A
GULF-3	2854.1	2764.3	89.9	T.H. Stone Memorial, St. Joe Peninsula State Park, St. Vincent NWR
GULF-4	1025.9	927.5	98.4	St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve, Eglin AFB, Cape San Blas Satellite Property
GULF-5	182.1	33.8	148.3	Salinas Park, St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve
WALT-1	1601.6	1545.4	56.2	Topsail Hill Preserve State Park, Coffeen Nature Preserve
WALT-2	124.4	0	124.4	N/A
WALT-3	508.8	441.7	67.1	Grayton Beach State Park
WALT-4	317.1	130.6	186.5	Deer Lake State Park
WALT-5	143.9	0	143.9	N/A

* Baseline acreage values collected in 1992 were corrected in 2005 using 2004 DOQQ aerial photography at 1m resolution.

NORTHEAST REGIONAL MAPS



Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

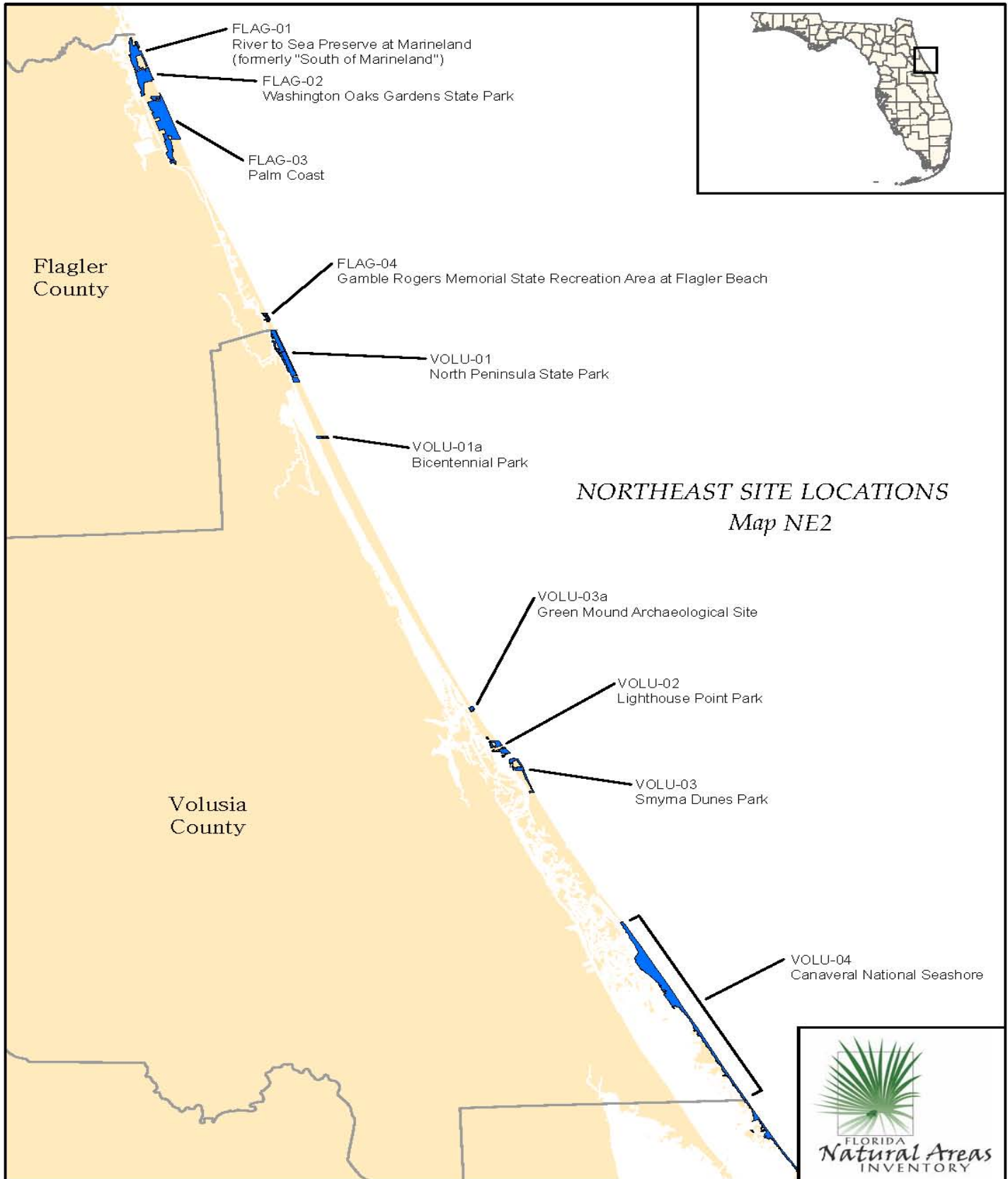
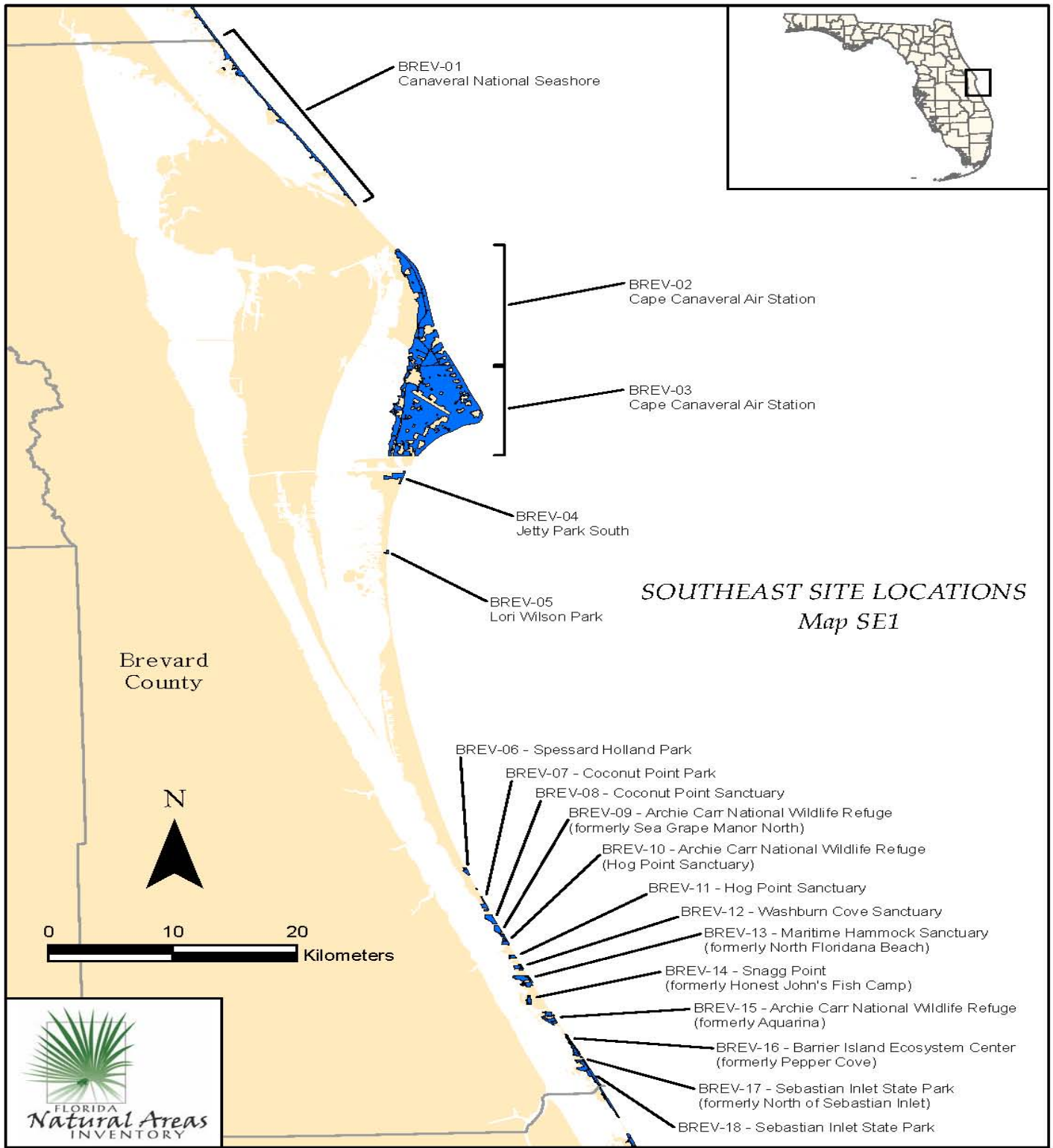


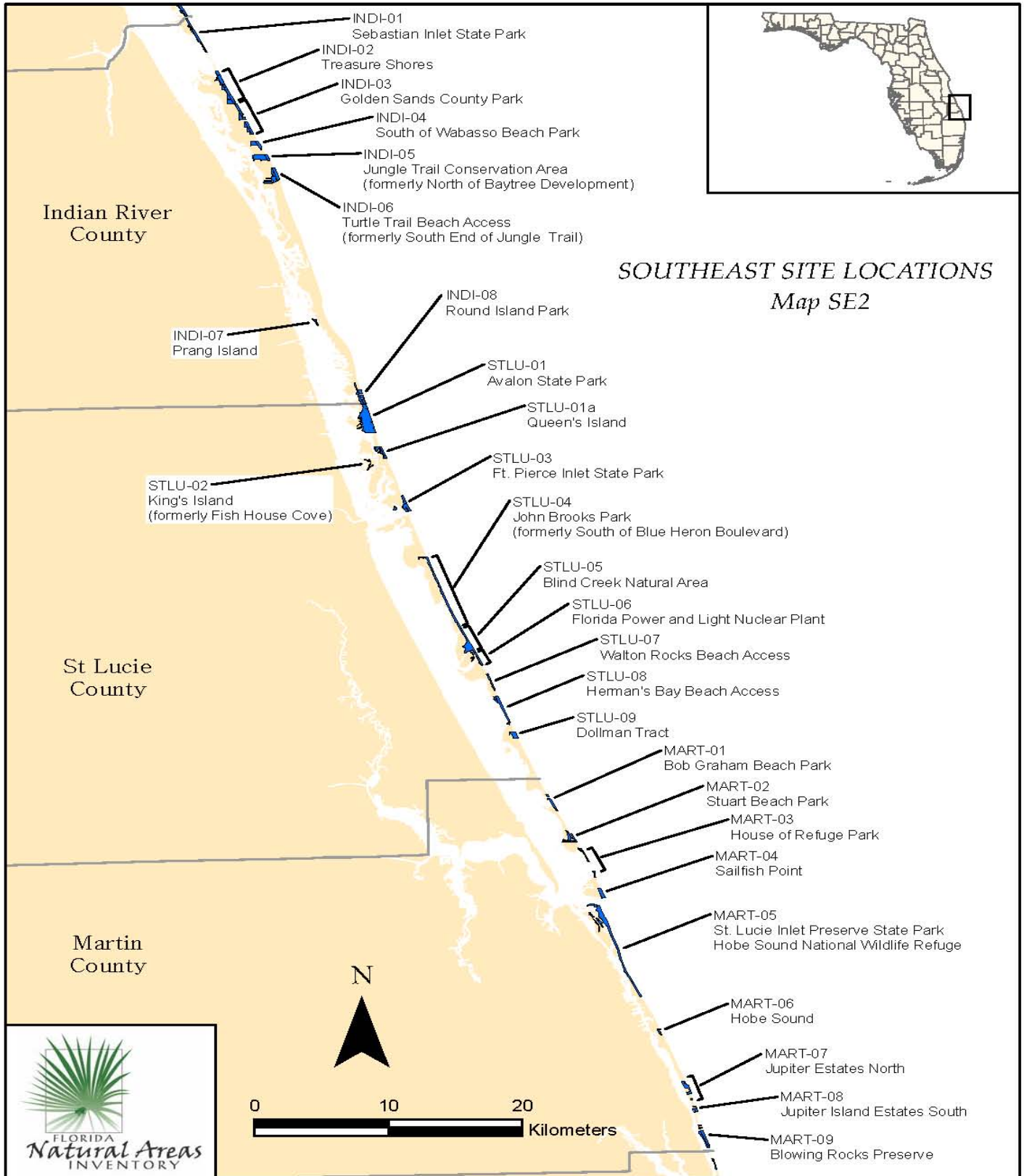
Table 2: Northeast Site Summaries

<i>Site ID</i>	<i>Total natural acres (2005)</i>	<i>Total in public ownership (2005)</i>	<i>Total natural remaining outside public ownership (2005)</i>	<i>Managed area name</i>
DUVA-01	1451.8	1400.1	51.7	Big Talbot Island State Park
DUVA-03	262.1	259.4	2.7	Hugenot Memorial Park
FLAG-01	370.4	76.0	294.4	River to Sea Preserve @ Marineland
FLAG-03	687.1	484.7	202.3	N/A
NASS-02	130.8	3.2	127.6	N/A
NASS-03	260.1	189.9	70.2	Amelia Island State Park
STJO-01	413.9	0	413.9	N/A
STJO-02	1737.5	1712.7	24.8	Guana River Site
STJO-04	102.4	0	102.4	N/A
STJO-05	70.7	15.4	55.3	Frank Butler County Park
STJO-06	248.9	232.6	16.2	Ft. Matanzas National Monument
VOLU-01	500.1	491.7	8.4	North Peninsula State Park
VOLU-02	119.9	75.0	44.9	Lighthouse Point Park
VOLU-03	187.0	141.8	45.2	Smyrna Dunes Park
VOLU-03a	30.0	27.0	3.0	Green Mound Archaeological Site

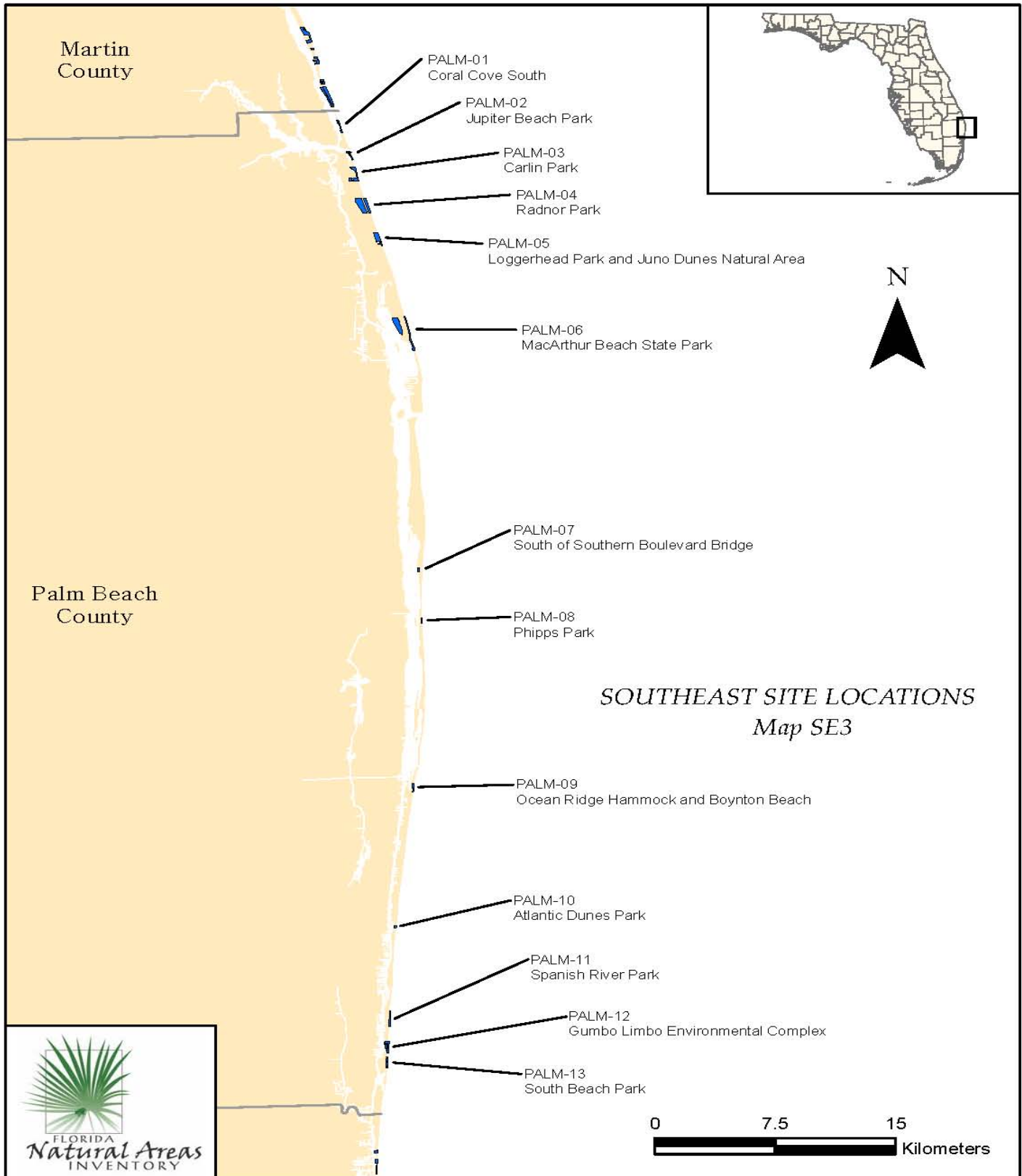
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL MAPS



Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan



Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan



Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

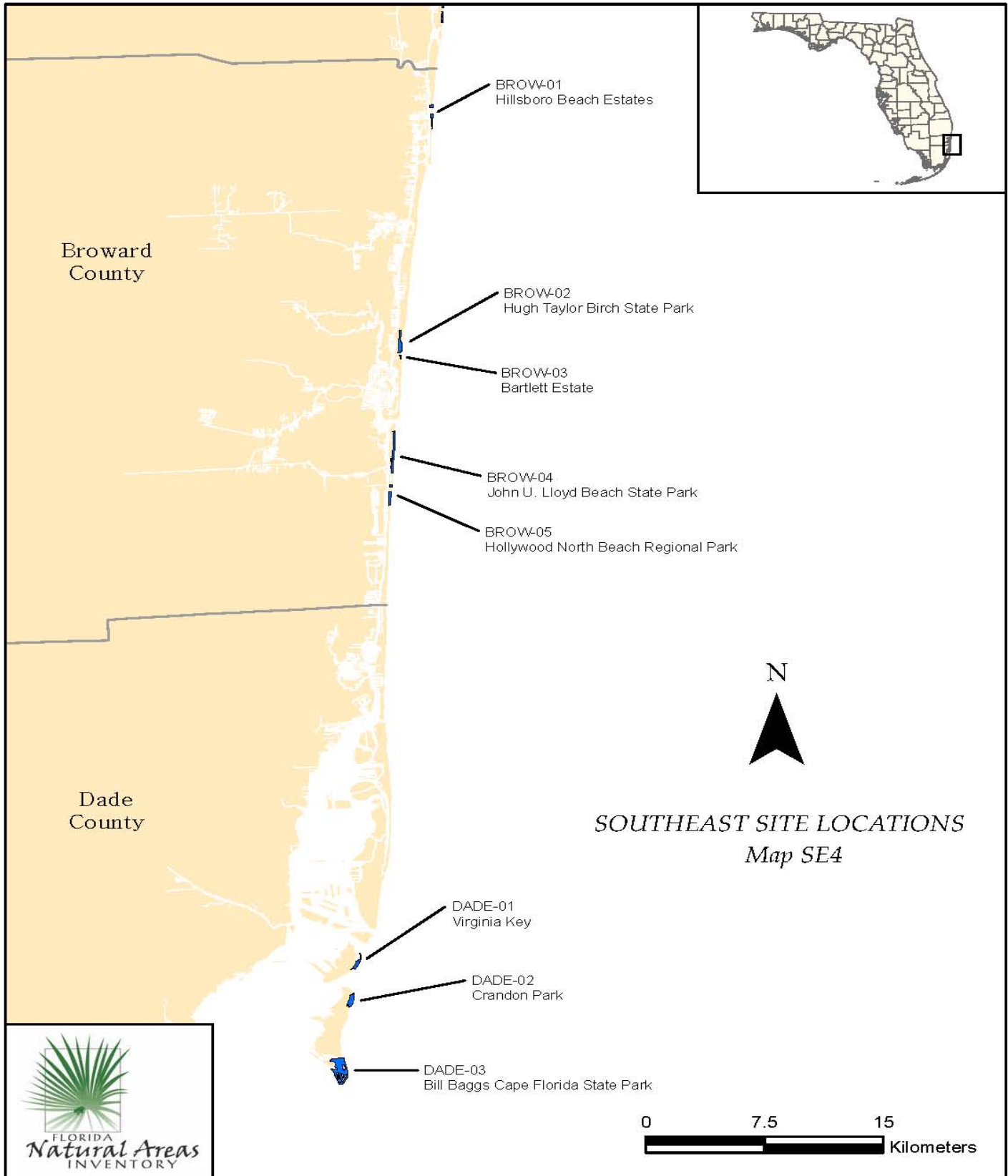
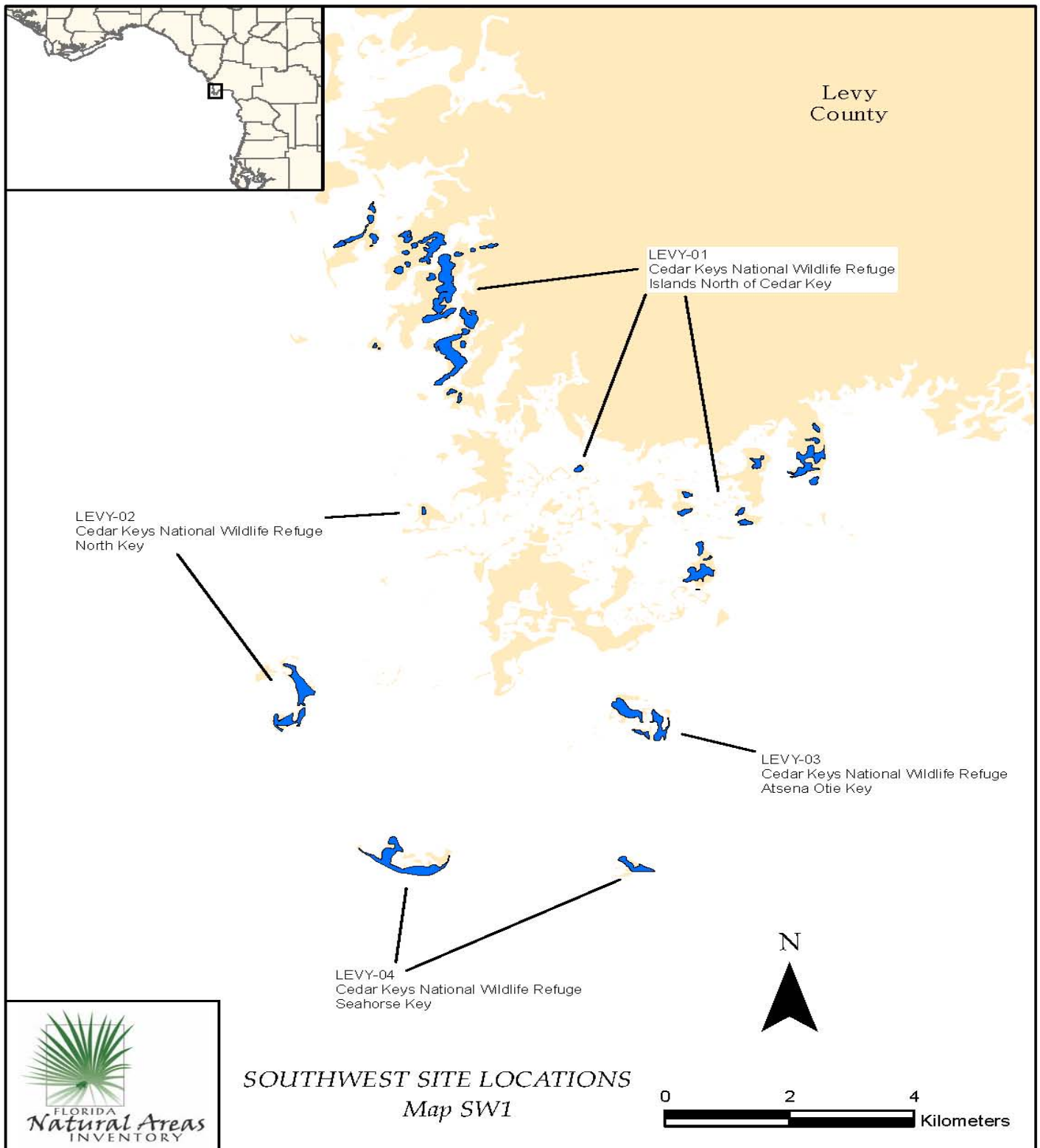


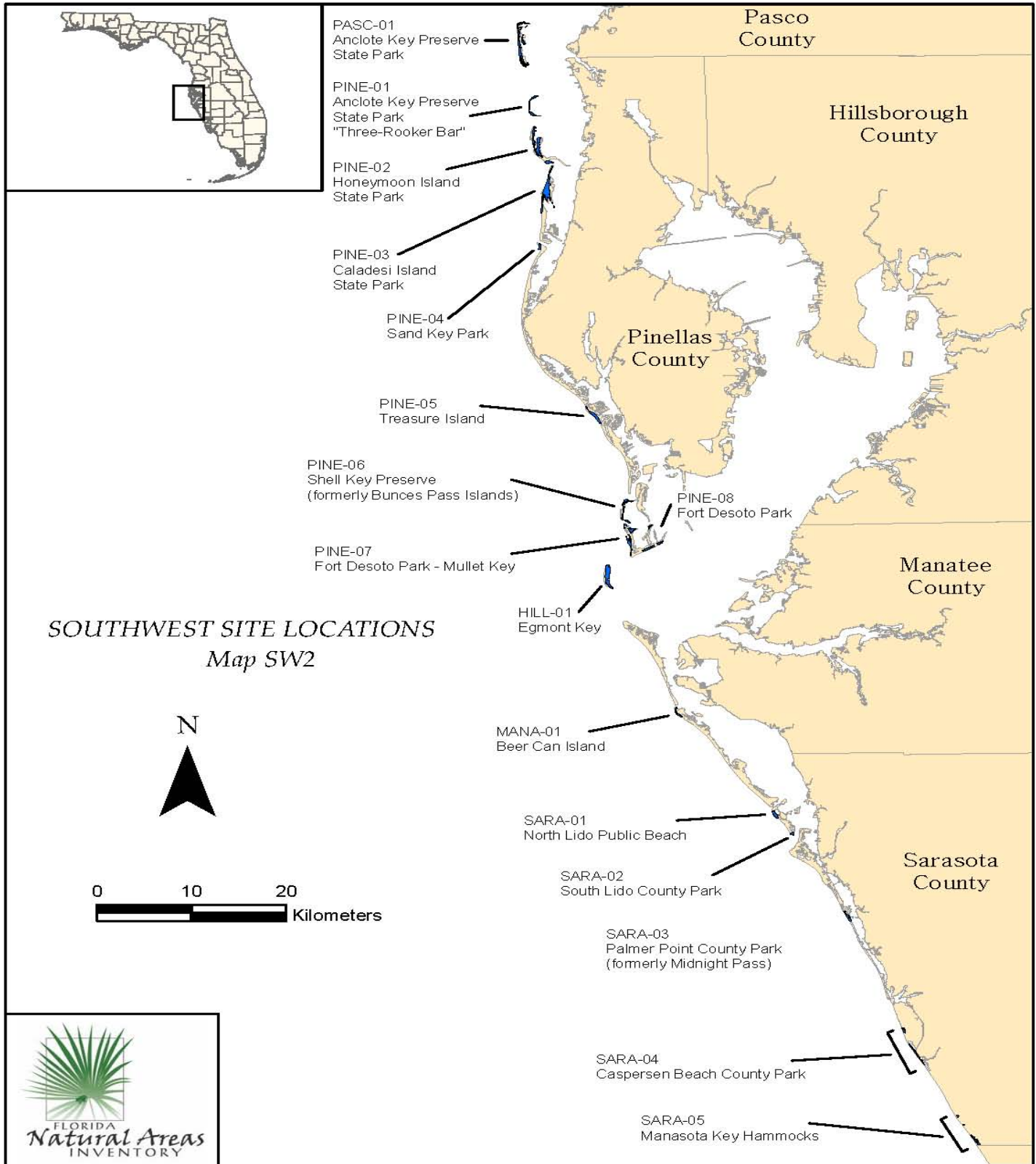
Table 3: Southeast Site Summaries

<i>Site ID</i>	<i>Total natural acres (2005)</i>	<i>Total in public ownership (2005)</i>	<i>Total natural remaining outside public ownership (2005)</i>	<i>Managed area name</i>
BREV-04	114.6	15.1	99.4	Jetty Park
BREV-11	17.6	14.2	3.4	Hog Point Sanctuary
BREV-12	53.5	38.8	14.7	Washburn Cove Sanctuary
BREV-13	194.2	188.4	5.8	Maritime Hammock Sanctuary, Archie Carr NWR, Judith Resnick Memorial Park, Apollo Eleven Park
BREV-14	59.3	36.5	22.8	Snagg Point
BREV-15	46.3	3.8	42.5	Archie Carr NWR
BREV-16	19.7	14.9	4.8	Barrier Island Ecosystem Center, Archie Carr NWR, Louis Bonsteel Memorial Park
BREV-17	227.6	165.9	61.8	Sebastian Inlet State Park, Archie Carr NWR
BROW-01	17.8	0	17.8	N/A
INDI-02	179.9	135.7	44.2	Archie Carr NWR, Pelican Island NWR, Treasure Shores
INDI-03	67.9	8.4	59.5	Golden Sands County Park
INDI-04	40.1	0	40.1	N/A
INDI-05	113.9	107.0	6.9	Jungle Trail Conservation Area
INDI-06	64.9	0	64.9	Turtle Trail Beach Access
INDI-08	55.8	26.1	29.7	Round Island Park
MART-01	42.4	39.7	2.7	Bob Graham Beach Park, Beachwalk Pasley, Sundia, Bryn Mawr Beach, Alex's Beach Park, Curtis Beach Park, Muscara
MART-02	60.5	32.4	28.1	Stuart Beach Park
MART-03	35.9	23.7	12.2	Santa Lucca, House of Refuge Park, Bathtub Beach Park
MART-04	19.8	0	19.8	N/A
MART-07	54.5	0	54.5	N/A
MART-08	17.1	0	17.1	N/A
MART-09	87.0	86.0	1.0	Blowing Rocks Preserve
PALM-07	5.4	2.2	3.2	N/A
STLU-01	417.3	396.3	21.1	Avalon State Park
STLU-01a	68.2	45.7	22.5	Queen's Island
STLU-03	98.6	69.2	29.4	Ft. Pierce Inlet State Park
STLU-05	144.9	115.1	29.8	Blind Creek Natural Area
STLU-06	50.1	0	50.1	N/A
STLU-07	33.1	0	33.1	N/A
STLU-08	28.8	12.4	16.4	Herman's Bay Beach Access, Normandy Beach Access

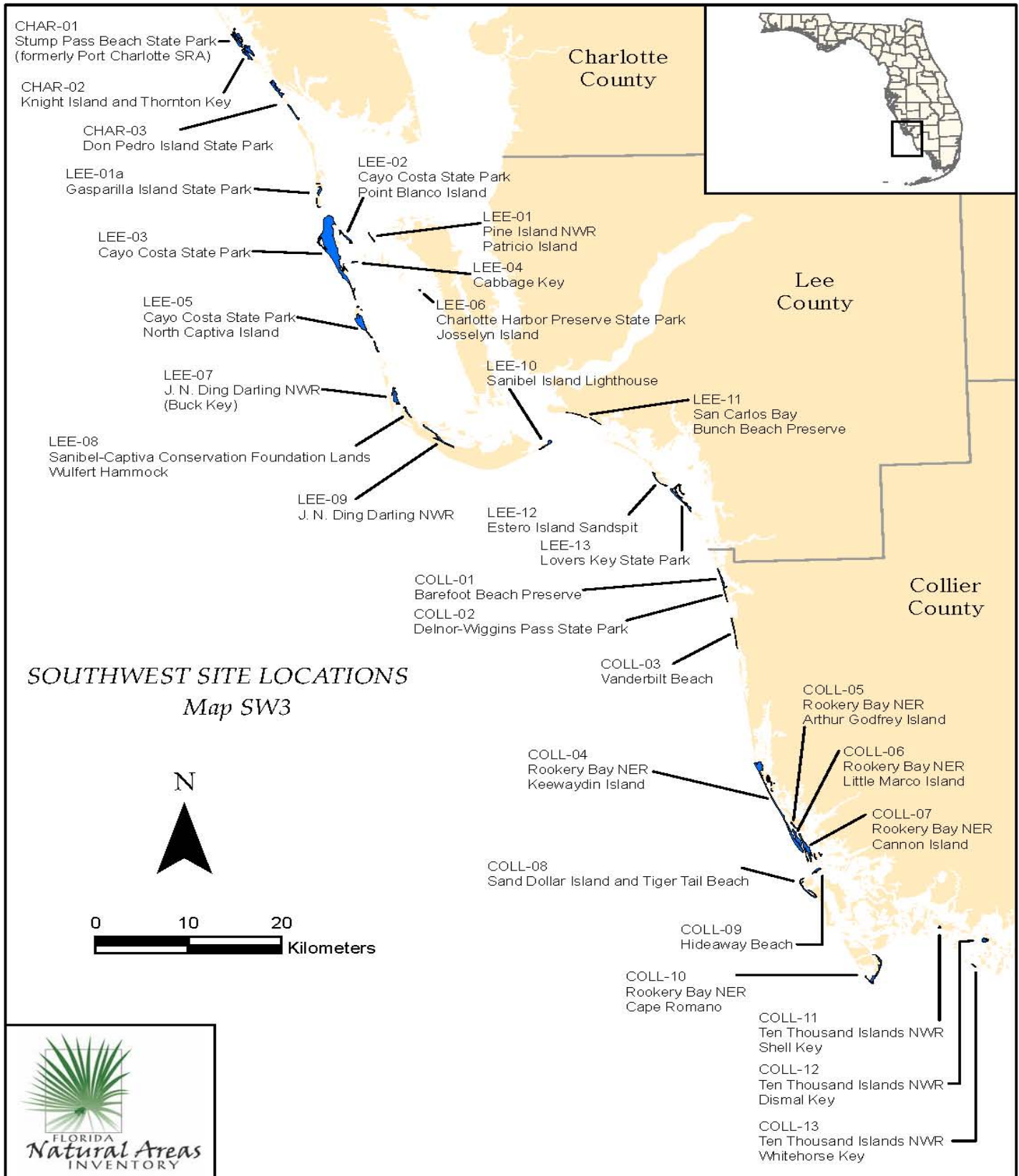
SOUTHWEST REGIONAL MAPS



Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan



Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan



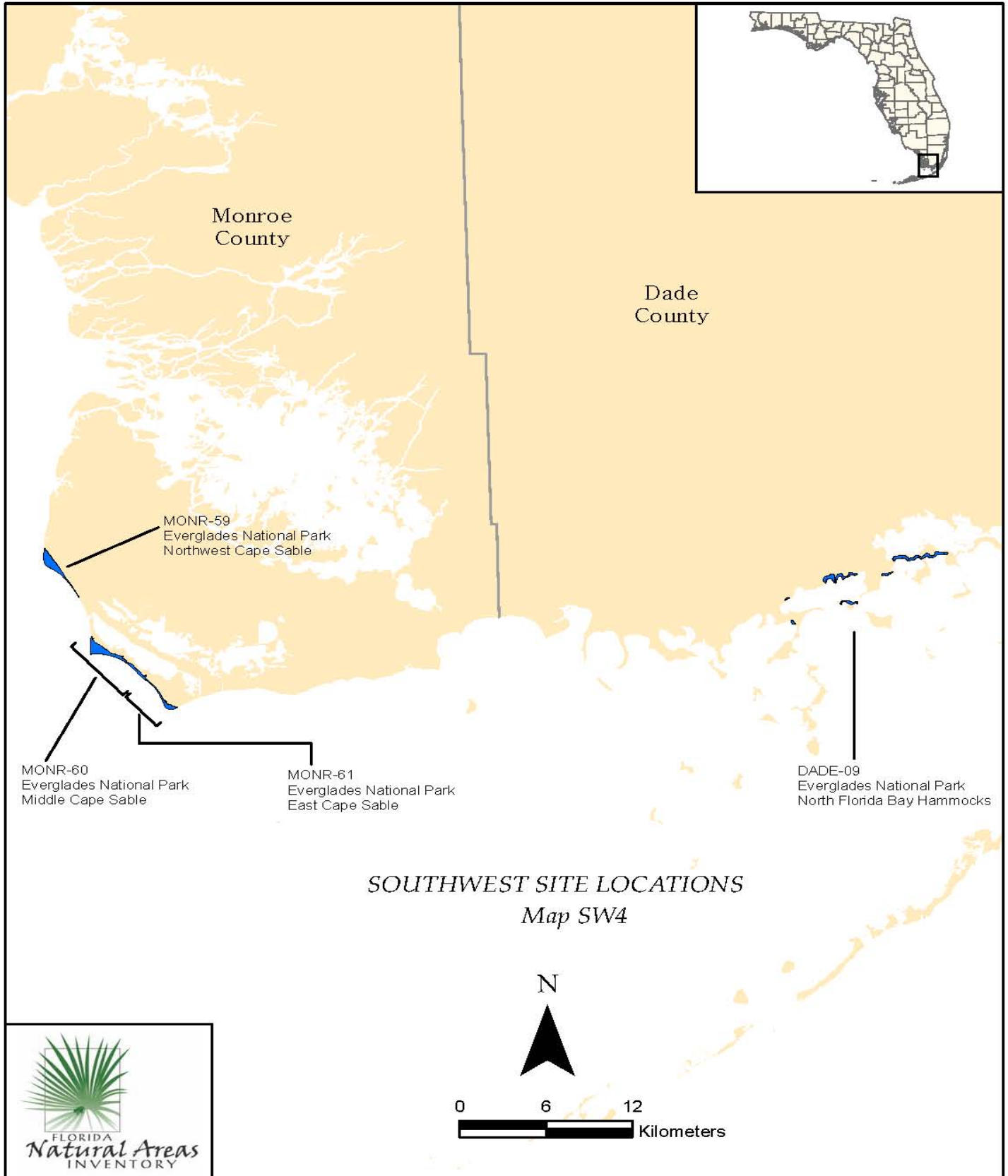
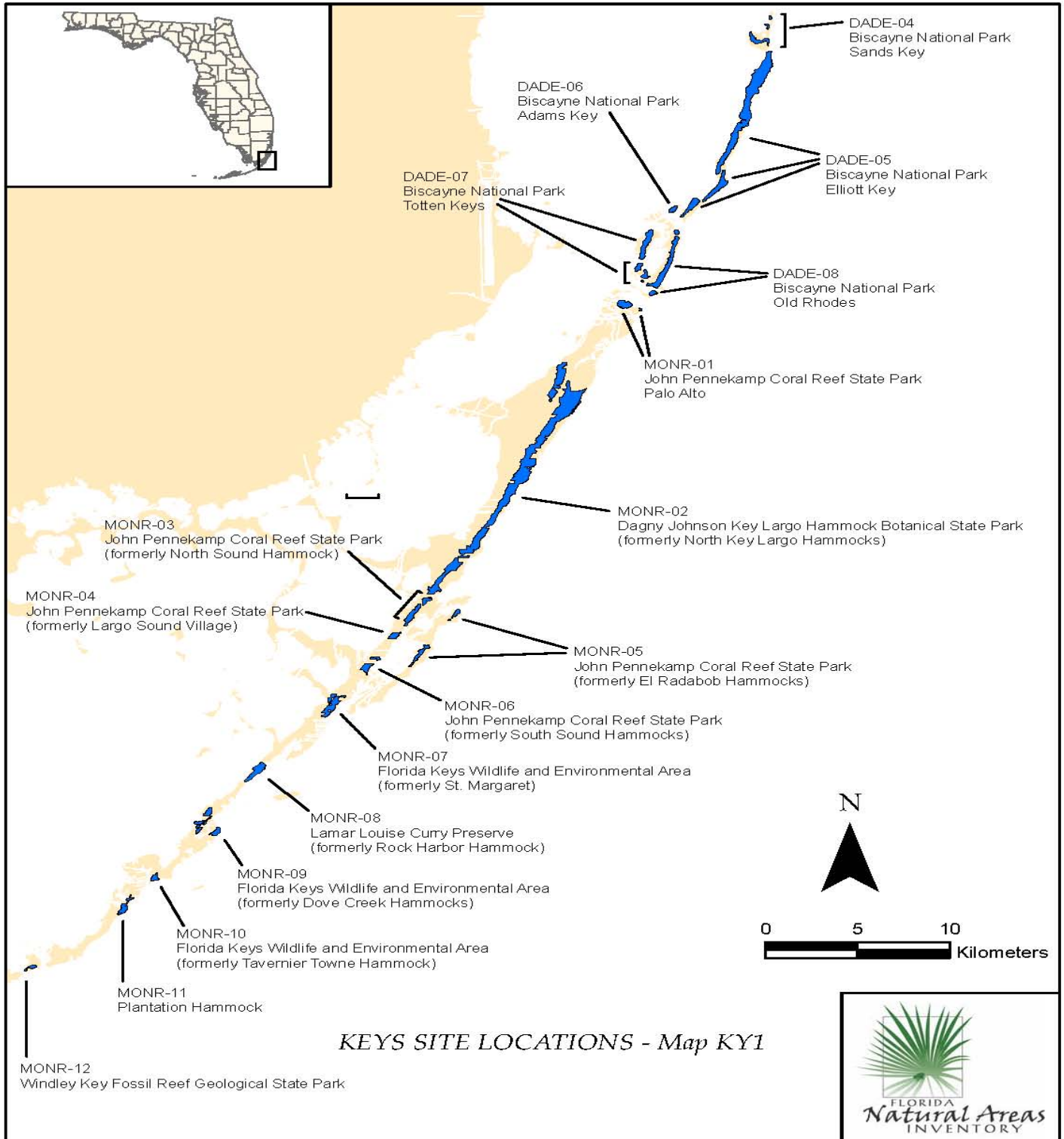


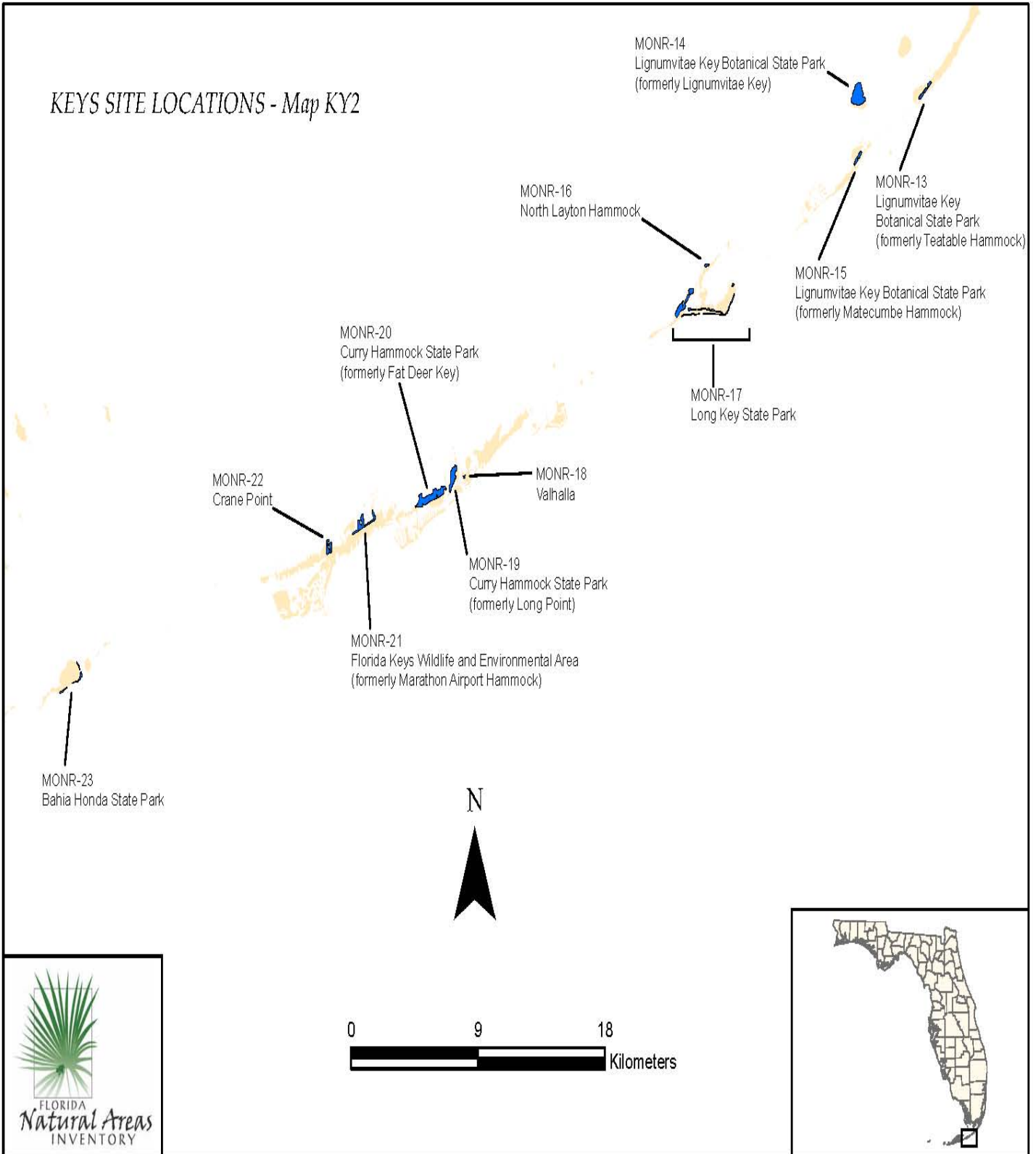
Table 4: Southwest Site Summaries

<i>Site ID</i>	<i>Total natural acres (2005)</i>	<i>Total in public ownership (2005)</i>	<i>Total natural remaining outside public ownership (2005)</i>	<i>Managed area name</i>
CHAR-02	186.4	0	186.4	N/A
CHAR-03	164.9	111.1	53.8	Don Pedro Island State Park
COLL-03	69.0	28.9	40.1	N/A
COLL-04	480.0	443.8	36.2	Rookery Bay NERR (Keewaydin)
COLL-06	119.5	94.7	24.8	Rookery Bay NERR (Little Marco Island)
COLL-07	258.7	234.5	24.2	Rookery Bay NERR (Cannon Island)
COLL-09	22.4	2.9	19.5	N/A
COLL-10	153.1	117.8	35.3	Rookery Bay NERR (Cape Romano)
LEE-03	1899.5	1849.8	49.7	Cayo Costa State Park
LEE-04	13.9	0	13.9	N/A
LEE-05	305.3	275.4	29.9	Cayo Costa State Park
LEE-07	161.6	153.4	8.2	J.N. Ding Darling NWR, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation Lands (Buck Key)
LEE-10	50.2	24.0	26.2	Sanibel Island Lighthouse
LEE-11	42.2	30.0	12.2	San Carlos Bay – Bunche Beach Preserve
LEE-13	171.8	153.4	18.4	Lovers Key State Park
LEVY-01	304.6	273.4	31.2	Cedar Key Scrub State Preserve, Cedar Keys NWR, Lower Suwannee NWR
MANA-01	44.7	5.3	39.4	N/A
PASC-01	292.7	256.3	36.4	Anclote Key Preserve State Park
PINE-03	408.7	336.8	71.9	Caladesi Island State Park
SARA-03	46.8	26.5	20.3	Palmer Point County Park
SARA-05	51.9	0	51.9	N/A

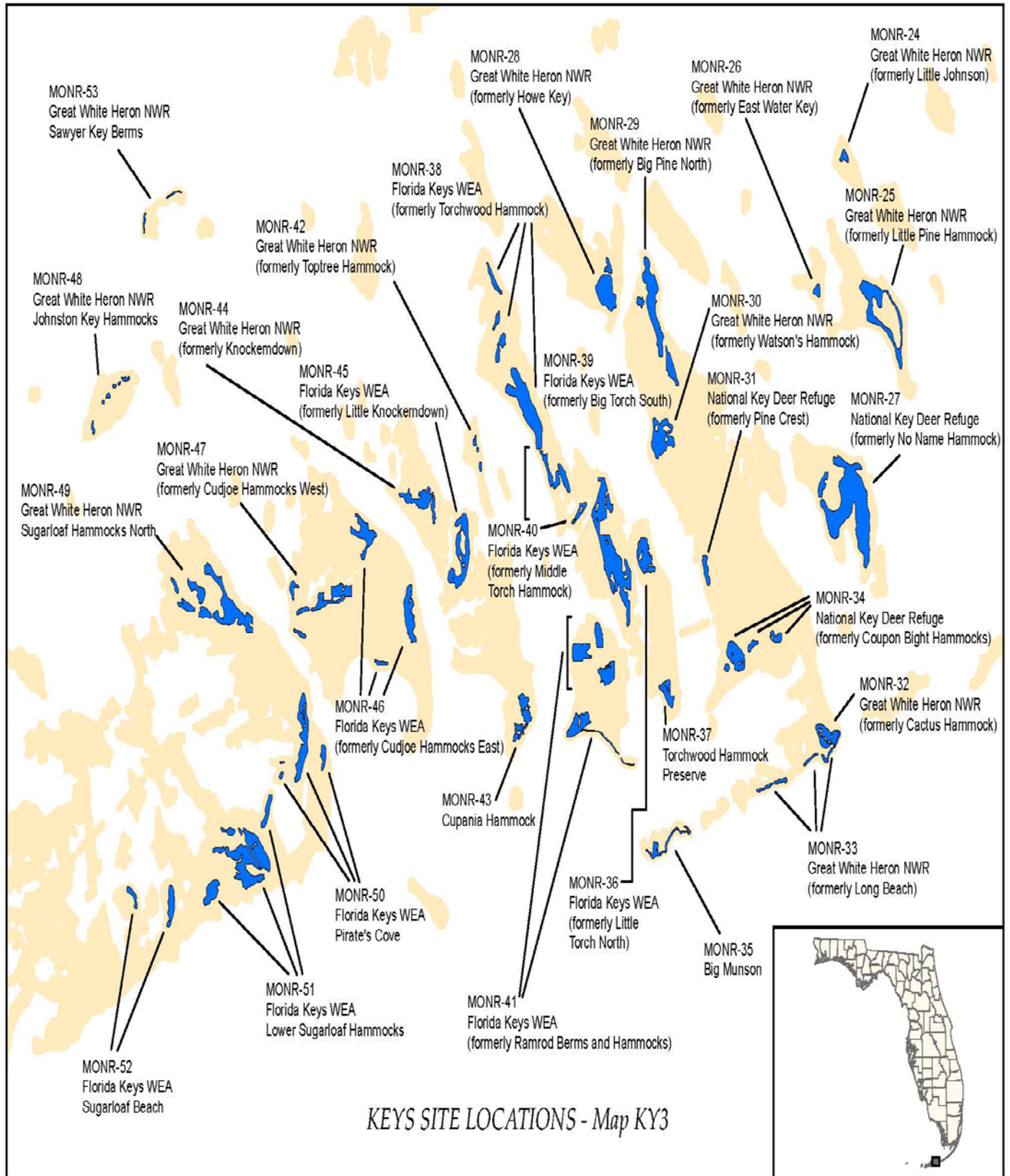
FLORIDA KEYS REGIONAL MAPS



KEYS SITE LOCATIONS - Map KY2



Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan



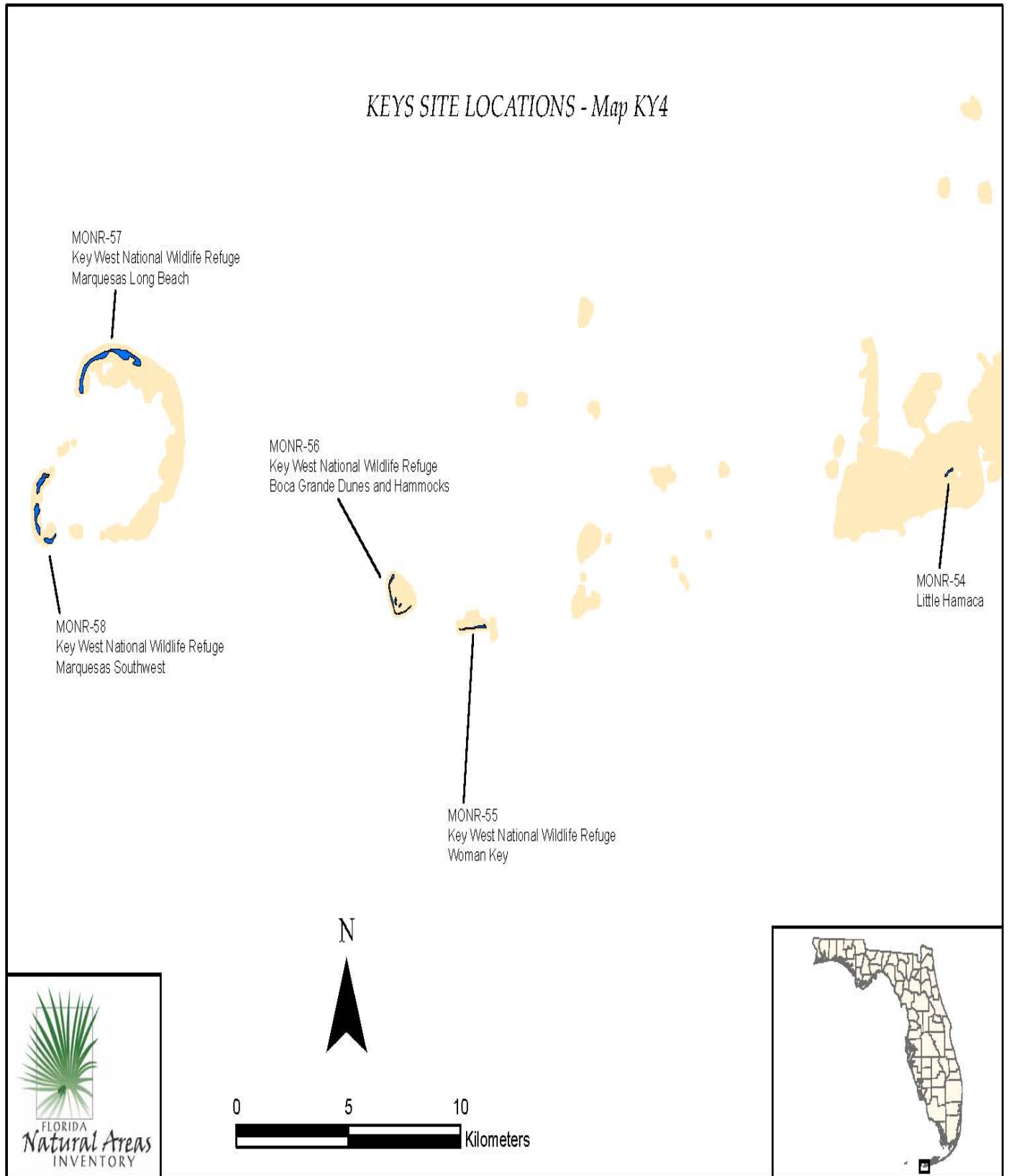


Table 5: Florida Keys Site Summaries

<i>Site ID</i>	<i>Total natural acres (2005)</i>	<i>Total in public ownership (2005)</i>	<i>Total natural remaining outside public ownership (2005)</i>	<i>Managed area name</i>
MONR-02	2118.9	2103.5	15.4	Crocodile Lake NWR, Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park
MONR-03	132.9	97.9	35.0	John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park
MONR-07	158	69.9	88.1	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area, John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park
MONR-08	112.1	91.1	21	John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, Lamar Louise Curry Preserve
MONR-09	141.3	120.7	20.6	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area
MONR-11	71.1	8.2	62.9	N/A
MONR-13	29.7	18	11.7	Lignumvitae Key Botanical State Park
MONR-15	22.5	17.8	4.7	Lignumvitae Key Botanical State Park
MONR-16	8	0	8	N/A
MONR-18	3.2	0	3.2	N/A
MONR-27	465.3	428.9	36.4	National Key Deer Refuge
MONR-33	31	25.5	5.5	Great White Heron NWR
MONR-34	104.4	72.1	32.3	National Key Deer Refuge
MONR-35	35.4	0	35.4	N/A
MONR-36	75.9	38.7	37.2	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area
MONR-38	223.8	213.8	10	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area, Great White Heron NWR
MONR-39	73.9	38.9	35	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area
MONR-40	320.4	255.4	65	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area, Great White Heron NWR
MONR-41	205	80.4	124.6	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area
MONR-43	58.5	16.9	41.6	N/A
MONR-45	128.8	27.2	101.6	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area
MONR-46	162	159.5	2.5	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area, Great White Heron NWR
MONR-47	114.4	106.7	7.7	Great White Heron NWR
MONR-49	248	218.9	29.1	Great White Heron NWR
MONR-50	134.2	40.8	93.4	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area
MONR-51	335.1	112.8	222.3	Florida Keys Wildlife and Environmental Area

d. A description of existing plans, or elements thereof, that are incorporated into this plan.

The approved FCMP document for the State of Florida emphasized the need to develop and implement a program to protect coastal resources. To achieve this goal in accordance with the CZMA guidelines, the Florida Legislature directed that the FCMP be based upon existing laws and regulations. Subsequently, 23 chapters of the Florida Statutes were approved by NOAA as the basis of the FCMP. The overall intent of this approach was to improve the implementation and enforcement of existing state programs affecting key coastal uses and areas (FCMP, 1981). The statutes incorporated in the approved Florida Coastal Management Program, though administered by multiple agencies, work together to provide effective coastal resource management. The following five chapters of the Florida Statutes, included in the FCMP, are pertinent to the implementation of the CELC Program.

<u>Chapter of Florida Statutes</u>	<u>Corresponding Legal Discussions</u>
❖ Chapter 258, F.S.	Outdoor Recreation and Conservation with specific attention to State Parks and Aquatic Preserves
❖ Chapter 259, F.S.	Outdoor Recreation and Conservation with specific attention to Land Acquisition for Conservation and Recreation, otherwise known as the <u>Land Conservation Act of 1972</u> (see Appendix B)
❖ Chapter 260, F.S.	Outdoor Recreation and Conservation with an emphasis on Florida Greenways and Trails
❖ Chapter 375, F.S.	Outdoor Recreation and Conservation
❖ Chapter 380, F.S.	Land and Water Management, Part II, Coastal Planning and Management (ss. 380.20 – 380.285)

Source: FCMP, 1981, p. II-14 and Florida Statutes, 2005.

The 1981 approved FCMP document identified four state programs of particular interest where “special management measures are applied to ensure protection of Florida’s land and water resources” (p. II-145). These included the Aquatic Preserve System, the State Wilderness system, Areas of Critical State Concern, Conservation and Recreation Lands and Environmentally Endangered Lands. Many of the resources included in these geographic areas of interest are fragile and vulnerable, in close proximity to developing urbanized areas, and subject to secondary effects of neighboring development such as pollution, disruption of habitat, and over intensive recreation (FCMP, 1981). For these reasons, the state noted that “wild or natural areas possess certain features which are valuable resources” (FCMP, 1981, p.II-151) and this exceptional ecological value make them noteworthy areas for preservation. The State of Florida continues to focus conservation efforts in these major program areas, but has refined the elements of acquisition, selection criteria and process, as well as management guidelines and authorities.

The Land Conservation Act (Appendix B) provided a state mechanism to guide land acquisitions recognizing the effectiveness of the method for protecting valuable environmental resources threatened by rapid population growth and increased urbanization. Since the passage of the 1972 Land Conservation Act, the State of Florida has continued to be a national leader in developing and implementing programs for land acquisition, conservation and preservation. Each of the acquisition programs enacted since 1972 continues to complement the goals of the FCMP.

As mentioned before, the State of Florida’s CELCP plan will incorporate many of the elements of the current and highly successful land acquisition program created by the Florida Legislature in 1999 – the Florida Forever Program. Although the Florida Forever Program and the CELC Program are similar, the selection of projects for the national CELCP competition will require more scrutiny to ensure that the

projects selected from the vetted Florida Forever list meet the goals, objectives and eligibility requirements of CELCP. This will be achieved using the procedure detailed in Section III (c). The Florida Forever Act implemented in 2000 reinforced Florida’s commitment to conserve its natural and cultural heritage, provide open space, and better manage the land acquired by the state. The Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) (Appendix C) created by the Florida Legislature is an advisory body composed of private citizen members and state agency representatives who make recommendations about acquisition, management and disposal of state-owned lands (www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/acquisition/process.htm).

The goals of the Florida Forever Program extend beyond land acquisition and include environmental restoration, water resource development and supply, increased public access, public lands management and maintenance, and increased protection of land by acquisition of conservation easements (www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/acquisition/default.htm). Since 1999, the Florida Forever Program and its predecessors (P2000 and CARL) have been instrumental in protecting a wide variety of habitats and special areas (Table 6).

Table 6: Special areas protected through the Florida Forever Program.

Description of type and acreage protected through Florida Forever Program
>458,000 acres strategic habitat conservation areas
845,000 acres of habitat conservation areas
>1180 listed species locations 328 different species 143 state listed as endangered 52 state listed threatened 23 species of special concern
>680,000 acres of ecological greenways
>107,000 acres of under represented natural communities
>120,000 acres of natural floodplains
>1,120,000 acres of importance to significant water bodies
>27,000 acres of fragile coastline
580,000 acres of functional wetlands
> 1, 000,000 acres of significant groundwater recharge areas
>240,000 acres for priority recreational trails
>425,000 acres of sustainable forest land
5,400 acres of archaeological and historic sites protected
133,926 acres added to state parks and buffer preserves

Source: The 2006 Annual Report of the Florida Forever Program, p. 7.

Notes:

1. Values presented may include data from P2000 and CARL
2. Acreages derived from updated Florida Forever data layers.
3. Acreages for each measure overlap and should not be combined.

The State of Florida also maintains State Land Management Plans¹ and Aquatic Preserve² Management Plans for its state-owned coastal lands and sovereign submerged lands. Though these management plans are specific for these areas, they employ similar procedural elements in the identification, acquisition and management of properties located in coastal and estuarine environments. These plans provide a “basic

¹ <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/publications/default.htm>, www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/planning/plans.htm

² <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/programs/aquatic.htm>

statement of policy and direction for the management”³ of the property and identify specific measures that will be implemented to meet the management objectives. Many of these plans consist of a resource management component, which addresses the natural and cultural resources of the area, as well as a land use component, which focuses on the recreational resource allocation plans for the area.

Florida also has three (3) National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs) located within its boundaries and CELCP guidance requires that the state’s CELCP plan “advances the goals, objectives or implementation of...NERR management plans approved under the CZMA” (CELCP Final Guidelines, 2003, p.10). Each of the management plans for the Florida NERRs identify land acquisition as an ongoing goal because it assures that the ecological integrity of the Reserves will be maintained through active resource protection and management while simultaneously providing opportunities for research and education.

The federal-state partnerships created through the NERR programs have been instrumental in delineating the buffer areas necessary to ensure adequate protection of these fragile coastal ecosystems. These buffer lands are critical to the long term protection of the resource and acquisition will assist in restoring habitat and hydrological connections as well as protection of the water quality in the Reserves. Through the state acquisition programs, CARL, P2000 and Florida Forever, some of these additional lands have already been purchased consistent with the need for greater resource protection.

Much of the lands remaining to be added to the NERRs are categorized as additions and inholdings. These parcels are generally private inholdings (surrounded by state owned and managed lands), outparcels (adjacent to state owned and managed lands), and connector parcels (connecting critical hydrological flowways and habitat corridors). Although these additions and inholdings are eligible for funding through the Florida Forever Program, the program does have limitations on the need for acquisition relative to the funds available, thus making it difficult to acquire these parcels without additional external funding sources. The inability to acquire the remaining parcels increases the vulnerability of the existing protected areas and undermines the ability of the NERRs to consolidate boundaries to represent a larger, contiguous estuarine ecosystem. Incorporation of the Florida Forever Program into the state’s CELCP plan will assist in the efforts to acquire additional buffer lands that will address the critical management needs of the NERRs.

Elements of the Florida Forever Program incorporated into the CELCP Plan

Because the Florida Forever Program provides the principal framework for the Florida CELC Program many of the processes of the Florida Forever Program are included in the Florida CELCP plan:

1. The types of lands and values protected through the Florida Forever land acquisition effort.

The Florida Forever Program focuses its land acquisition and conservation efforts in specific areas relative to its eight (8) goal areas. Coastal acquisition goals related to Florida Forever measures C7 and C8 addressing protection of fragile coastal resources are integrated into the CELCP plan (see Appendix A and B).

2. Use of Division of State Lands acquisition list

The Florida Forever Program has an annual operating budget of \$300 million which is distributed among seven (7) different state agencies and Water Management Districts (WMDs). The June 2006 Florida

³ www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/planning/

Forever Status report provides the following information detailing the percentages allotted to participating agencies (Table 7).

Table 7: Florida Forever Agency Funding Distributions

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Percent Distribution</i>
DEP – State Lands	35.00%
DEP – Rec & Parks	1.50%
DEP – FRDAP	2.00%
DEP – Rails to Trails	1.50%
FWCC	1.50%
DACS – Forestry	1.50%
DCA	22.00%
DEP – WMD	35.00%
▪ NFWWMD	7.50%
▪ SFWMD	35.00%
▪ SJRWMD	25.00%
▪ SRWMD	7.50%
▪ SWFWMD	25.00%
TOTAL	100.00%

Source: Florida Forever Status Report, June 2006.

Table 7 indicates that the largest appropriations are made to the Division of State Lands (DSL), the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the Water Management Districts (WMD). Each of these agencies prioritizes available projects for acquisition differently within their respective program areas.

The DSL is the primary support staff for the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) and performs work related to evaluation of proposals, recommendations for further evaluation, determining final project boundaries and establishing program priorities. FCMP determined that the DSL project acquisition list would serve as the primary listing from which CELCP projects would be selected. In future updates to the CELCP plan, other agencies may be included in the CELCP project solicitation process.

3. Agency data and information used in the Florida Forever Program

The Florida Forever Program relies on the data prepared by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) to review potential candidates for acquisition. The FNAI “maintains a comprehensive database on the status, distribution, and management of exemplary communities, rare and endangered plants and animals, aquatic and marine habitats, geological and other natural features” (CARL Report, 1999, p. 13). Overall, this data is used to identify and assess areas for state acquisition based on “natural attributes, vulnerability and endangerment” (CARL Report, 1999, p.13). Appendix D identifies additional functions performed by the FNAI.

Each Florida Forever project summary must contain a project name, listing group, subgroups, acreage, cost and general project information (CARL Report, 1999). Availability and acquisition of projects is limited by (1) estimated funds available for acquisition within any funding cycle and (2) prioritization by the ARC. In sum, the information from the Florida Forever database will be used to gather additional data (if necessary) to determine the suitability of the project for use within the domain of the CELC Program.

4. Project solicitation and evaluation process

Project proposals for the Florida Forever Program are accepted from “any source” (CARL Report, 1999, p.13), and may include, state agencies, local governments, conservation organizations and landowners. This broad solicitation process guarantees that projects are submitted from a wide variety of organizations and individuals and encourages these interest groups to identify notable projects that should be considered for preservation within the State.

Projects submitted to the Florida Forever Program are subject to a comprehensive evaluation process which includes:

(1) ecosystem management evaluation

The project area is evaluated using biological and natural resource criteria to determine the extent of the boundary required to protect the natural communities and resource values available at that particular site.

(2) public and recreational accessibility evaluation

Public access and recreational opportunities can enhance a project’s desirability, thus, most projects are evaluated for these features.

(3) inter-disciplinary survey and review

An inter-disciplinary review team consisting of land planners, land managers, land surveyors, real estate appraisers and land acquisition agents perform a quality assessment of the project area. This assessment addresses the resources to be protected, the costs for acquisition, the existing regulations, the possibility of coordination with other agencies and the method of acquisition (CARL Report, 1999).

(4) development of an acquisition plan for project area

Subsequent to the acquisition feasibility and manageability assessment, an acquisition and management plan is prepared for the project area. This plan must identify (a) how the lands will be acquired and (b) how the lands will be managed and used by the public. A managing agency may also be identified depending on the outcome of the resource assessment.

This data is used to compile the project proposals submitted to the ARC.

5. The public process

Public involvement is encouraged throughout the Florida Forever land acquisition process. **Figure 1** provides a detailed look at the Florida Forever process and the provision of specific opportunities for public involvement. Public hearings provide an opportunity for project sponsors and the general public to provide testimony in support of, or, in opposition to the project acquisitions being considered in the current cycle (CARL Report, 1999). Information provided at the first public hearing (see Figure 1) is used to determine which projects will be considered for the full review and evaluation process. Public hearings also provide an opportunity for ARC members to request additional information regarding a particular project proposal. These supporting data requests may be requested at the first or second public hearing (Figure 1).

Public hearings regarding the Florida Forever Program are also conducted on a statewide basis. These statewide hearings are announced 30 days in advance using major newspapers and state publications (Florida Administrative Weekly) (CARL Report, 1999). These hearings allow affected and interested persons an opportunity to provide additional testimony regarding existing projects on the list and new projects proposed to be added to the list.

Clearly, the Florida Forever process provides ample opportunity for public involvement thereby satisfying the CELCP requirement for public scoping and comment.

6. The Land Acquisition Process

The Division of State Lands administers the land acquisition process for the Florida Forever Program. Some of the major features of the land acquisition process include appraisal, negotiation and closing (Appendix E.1.). **Figure 2** presents some of the preliminary steps that occur before final acquisition of the project area, and complements Figure 1 which documents the opportunities for public involvement. Many of the processes illustrated in Figure 2 will be followed by the CELCP review process in the final stages of acquisition.

There may be occasions where land acquisition is most feasible when undertaken at the local level and therefore, deviation from typical Florida Forever acquisition procedure is warranted. In the event of acquisition by a local government entity, the acquisition must be approved by the local government's governing commission, council, or board at a notice public meeting, thereby affording opportunity for public involvement.

Ranking and location of the project area is determined by the project assessment consideration which is used in concert with design considerations. Design considerations for acquisition (Appendix E.2.) must address the ease of acquisition as determined by tax assessed values, and number of owners, as well as other encumbrances that may negatively impact the acquisition or management of the project area. Project assessments consist of examining the size of the area as well as the resources available, location relative to urban areas and Areas of Critical State Concern, as well as other public lands and political boundaries. Together, these factors will influence the final project area that is selected by the CELCP review team for submission to the national competition.

Figure 1: Acquisition and Restoration Council project selection process

Source: Greg Brock, Chief, OES-DSL, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2006.

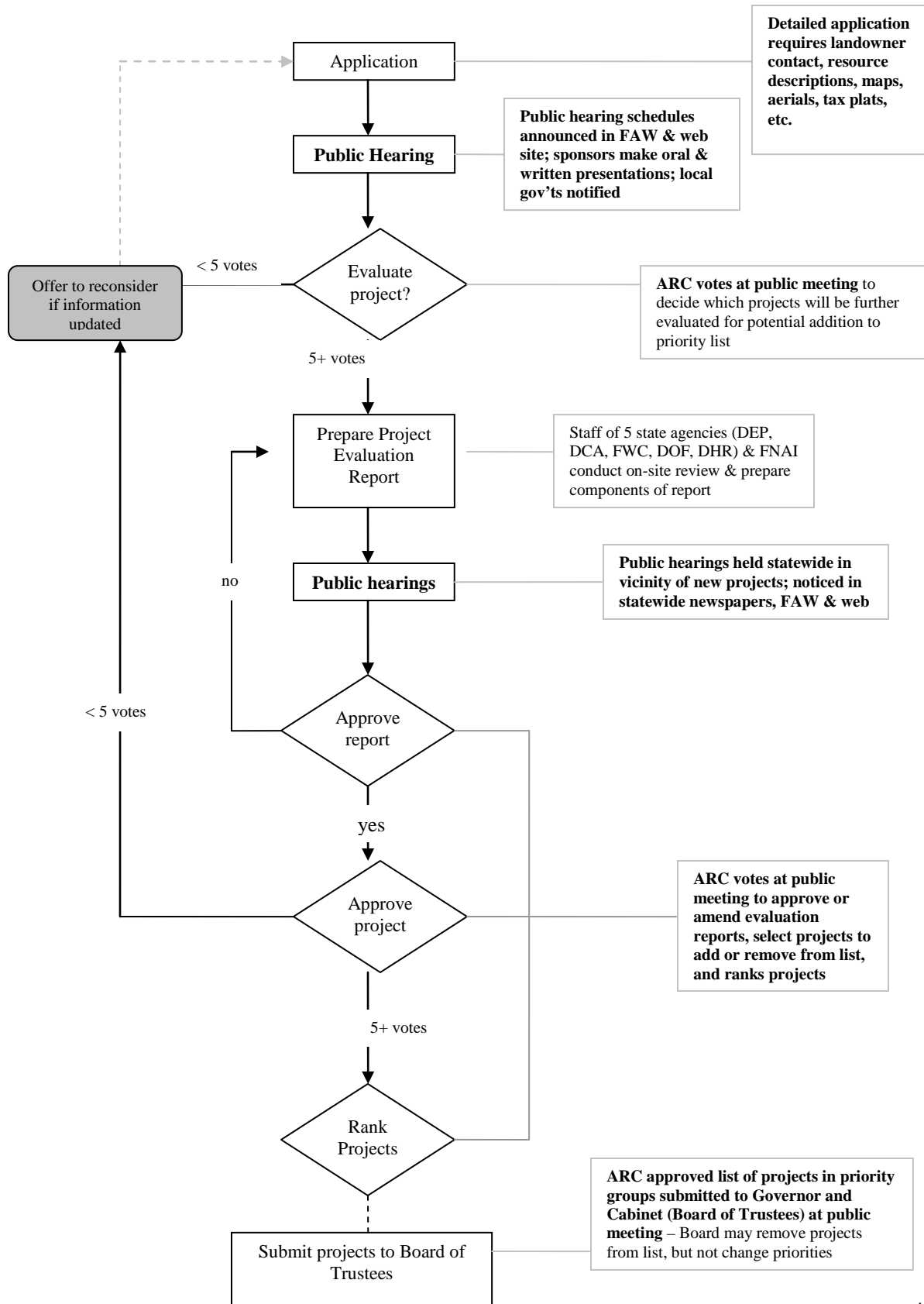
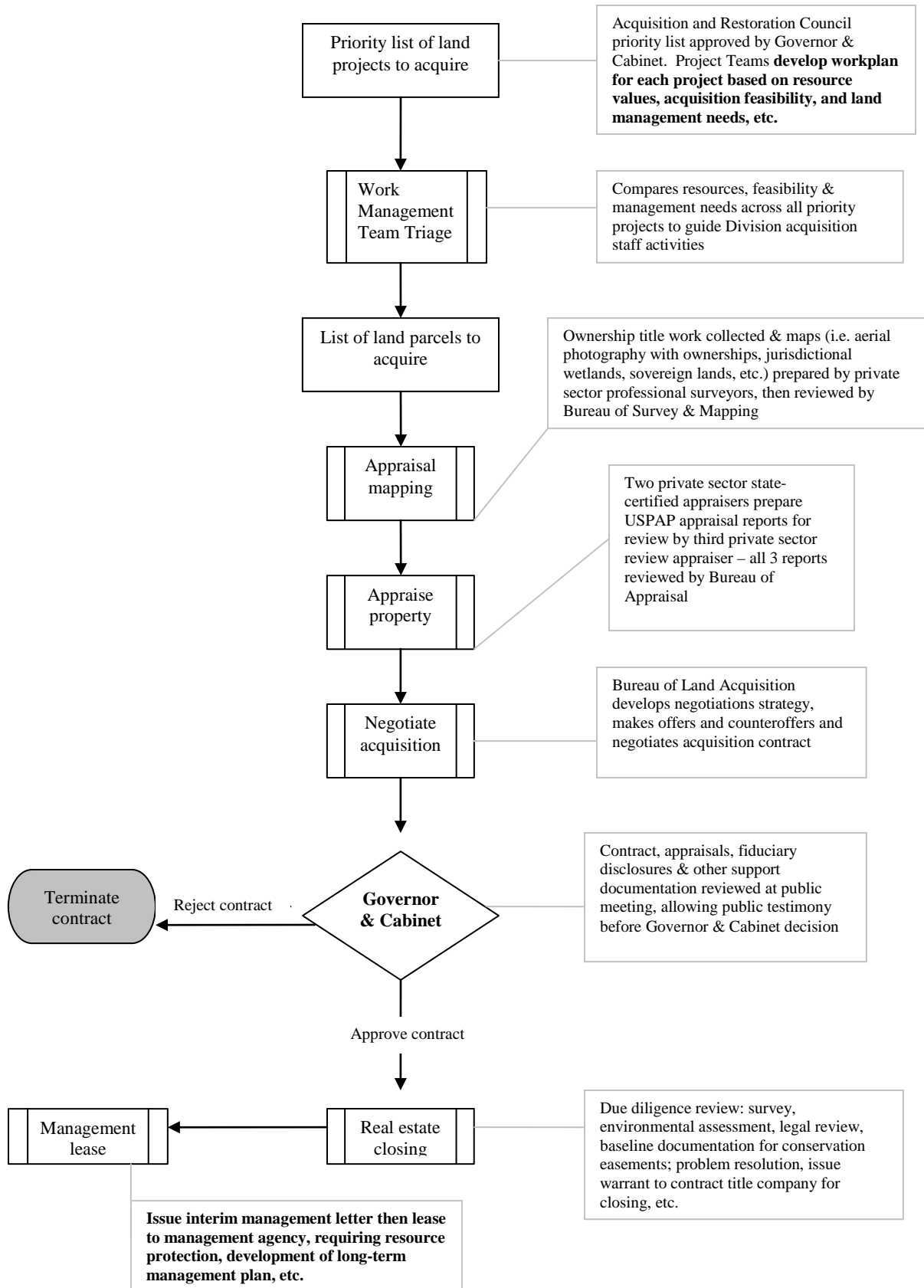


Figure 2: Florida Division of State Lands, land acquisition process

Source: Greg Brock, Chief, OES-DSL, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2006.



III. State process for implementing the CELCP

a. Identification of state lead agency

The Florida Coastal Management Program within the Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state's lead agency for implementing and administering the CELC Program. The FCMP has particular responsibility for management and implementation of policies approved pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act. FCMP will work with the Division of State Lands, the Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas, the Division of Recreation and Parks and other agencies as needed to identify lands and properties from the Florida Forever Program that meet CELCP criteria for possible acquisition. Additionally, FCMP will coordinate CELCP activities with non-profit acquisition partners such as the Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy. Technical assistance for project acquisition will be provided by the FNAI.

b. List of state or local agencies, or types of agencies, that are eligible to hold title to property acquired through the CELCP.

According to the NOAA CELCP guidelines, the title of property or interests in property will be held in perpetuity by the grant recipient or other appropriate public agency designated by the recipient. As a condition of any grant award, NOAA will require that the recipient or the designated public agency, register and furnish to NOAA a lien, covenant or other appropriate notice of record to advise that the property has been acquired or improved in whole or in part with federal financial assistance funds and assurances that the land will be held for conservation in perpetuity.

In this regard, NOAA requires a list of the types of agencies that may be eligible to hold title to properties acquired through CELCP. Under the current structure of the Florida Forever Program, title to lands is held only by the Board of Trustees of the State of Florida. Though the Florida Forever Program coordinates with several partners (Table 8) and either shares or designates property management responsibilities to agencies on this list, sole ownership of lands acquired under the program resides with the Board of Trustees. Thus, title to any land acquired through the CELC Program will be held by the Board of Trustees.

The Florida Forever Program identifies its partners as entities that provide either funds for purchase or significant staff contribution that assists in the purchase of the project lands. The partners identified in Table 8 have routinely provided assistance that includes at a minimum the preparation of an application sponsoring the acquisition of a specific parcel. The selected state and non-profit partners have demonstrated expertise in their respective areas as it relates to habitat conservation and restoration, provision of technical assistance and grant programs, and the maintenance and provision of adequate public access, a requirement of the Florida Forever Program. Many of the upland areas that are managed for public purposes are a part of the state's larger watershed protection focus emphasizing the protection and preservation of the affected coastal resources.

The structure of the Florida Forever Program facilitates the selection of the most appropriate partner from those listed in Table 8 to manage acquired properties. Management responsibility for the acquired properties is determined based on location of the property, its adjacent managed uses and the suitability of the agency's mission. Many of the properties acquired through the Florida Forever Program serve multiple purposes and the partners listed in Table 8 have proven their ability to manage a variety of natural resources within the state's coastal zone including upland and wetland properties. It must be noted that properties acquired through the Florida Forever Program are generally managed as State Parks, State Preserves, State Reserves, State Aquatic Preserves, State Botanical or Geological Sites, State

Recreation Areas, State Archaeological or Historical Sites, Wildlife Management Areas, Wildlife and Environmental Areas, Wildlife Refuges, and State Forests. The dedicated effort of the Florida Forever Program to manage these lands in trust for the public ensures that any property acquired through the Florida CELCP process will be managed in a manner consistent with the guidelines established by the national CELC Program.

The legislative mandates governing the Florida Forever Program do not identify or approve local governments as entities eligible to hold title to lands acquired through the state acquisition program. Local governments, however, are often identified as solitary management partners for specific projects acquired within their jurisdictional boundaries or paired with another state identified management agency to provide management responsibilities for the project area. In the event that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection determines that it is in the best interest of the state, a local government considered eligible under NOAA’s CELCP guidelines may contribute match funds, perform the acquisition, and hold title to a property acquired through CELCP.

Table 8: Agency partners in the Florida Forever Program

<i>Government Units</i>	<i>Non Governmental Units</i>
Florida Department of Environmental Protection Florida Coastal Management Program Division of State Lands Department of Recreation and Parks Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas Office of Greenways and Trails	The Nature Conservancy
Water Management Districts (WMD) Suwannee River WMD St. Johns River WMD South Florida WMD Southwest Florida WMD Northwest Florida WMD	The Trust for Public Land
Florida Department of Community Affairs Florida Communities Trust	Florida Conservation Trust
Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission	
Florida Division of Forestry	
Florida Department of State Division of Historical Resources	
National Park Service U.S. Department of Agriculture U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	U.S. Forest Service U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

Source: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/FFAnnual/C3_ProjectPartnerships.pdf

c. Description of State’s project nomination process.

Because the state has such a large, established and successful land acquisition process, it is not necessary or appropriate to develop a separate new procedure to nominate, evaluate and prioritize project proposals for acquisition through the CELCP. Therefore, Florida will draw its CELCP proposals from those projects that have been evaluated, ranked and coordinated with the public through the Florida Forever process. Upon receipt of the Notice of Availability of Funds for the CELCP, the FCMP will initiate a

series of meetings with a review team to identify projects that meet the state and national CELCP criteria as described in this plan. The review committee will consist of representatives from the FCMP, the DSL, FNAI, CAMA, and DRP. As needed, additional input may be received from other state agencies and nonprofit organizations involved in the identification and acquisition of conservation lands in Florida. In the future, if the geographic scope of the CELCP changes or new acquisition priorities emerge, other representatives may be included on the review committee. The CELCP review committee will use the approved Florida Forever project listing for the assigned Fiscal Year (FY) in conjunction with the following criteria to identify eligible CELCP projects (see **Figure 3**):

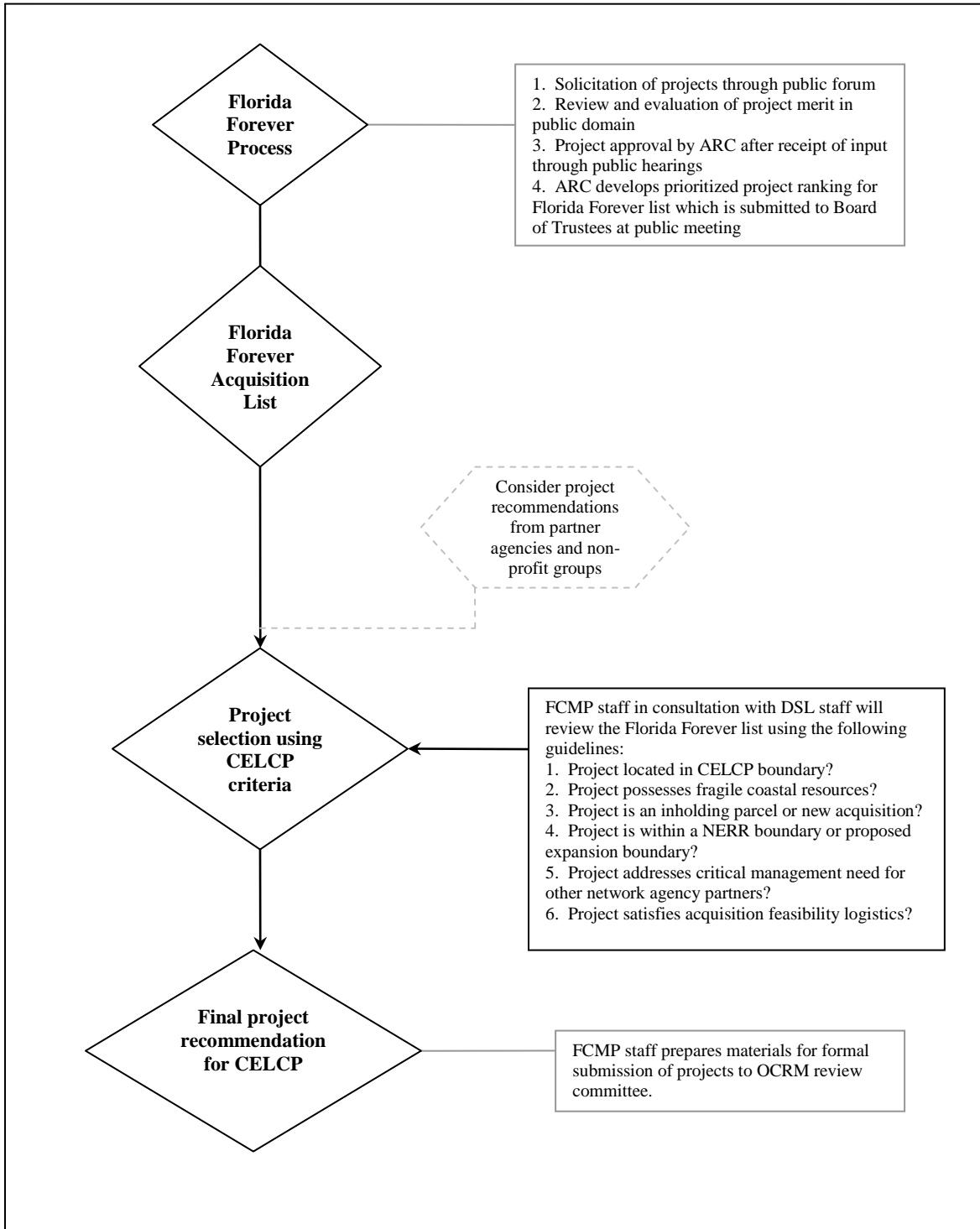
1. The project area is located in a coastal county illustrated on Map 1.
2. The project area is within the overlay zone of fragile coastal resources displayed on regional maps, an indication of its high resource value based on the FNAI evaluation.
3. The project area will support the objectives of the CELCP as well as the Florida Forever Program outlined in Section II of this plan particularly as it relates to enhancing protection of a NERR, Marine Sanctuary, ACSC and/or Aquatic Preserve.
4. The project area is within an existing Florida Forever boundary and acquisition can be accomplished within a reasonably short time frame.
5. Project readiness addressed through (1) willing seller and buyer relationship and (2) a final appraised value.
6. The project application provides documentation of a management plan for long term maintenance and protection of the property.
7. Matching cost share ratio is confirmed.
8. Conservation of the property in perpetuity is confirmed.
9. Title, lease or easement agreements will be in keeping with the current state law and federal CELCP regulations for property acquired for public use.
10. Access to the general public is ensured with no or minimal user fee charges.

Application of the above criteria will enable the review committee to select projects that meet the national and state CELCP criteria for submission to NOAA.

Though the ranking assigned to projects on the Florida Forever list is important in determining the priority for acquisition, it will not be a primary factor motivating the selection of projects for the CELCP competition. Rather, FCMP staff and the review team will identify projects based on the Florida CELCP criteria indicated in Figure 3 thereby ensuring that projects meet the national CELCP suitability requirements. The ability of the FCMP staff to use the Florida Forever list, which has been developed and vetted in the public domain, and which has a documented and proven track record of identifying suitable projects for acquisition based on a pre-determined set of measures, ensures that the projects selected from the list will compete well in the national CELCP competition. The Florida CELCP criteria basically narrows the focus of what is already an ideal listing of properties so that it corresponds with the national CELCP requirements.

The final selections nominated by the review team will be approved by the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection prior to submittal.

Figure 3: Florida CELCP project nomination process.



IV. Coordination and Public Involvement

a. Description of interagency coordination that occurred during the development of the plan.

The CELCP guidance requires that state plans be developed and submitted by the state lead agency, in conjunction with the National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs) as well as any other state or federal agencies involved in coastal land acquisition, conservation, or management, and other interested parties.

The Division of State Lands and the Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas participated in the development of Florida's CELCP plan and in identifying and prioritizing projects previously submitted for funding in FY 2007. CAMA is the state's representative and network partner for management of the NERRs and the Aquatic Preserve system. The Florida Natural Areas Inventory works closely with the DSL and is a significant contributor to the ecological and conservation assessment of the project areas selected for inclusion in the Florida Forever Program. Consultation with these partners ensured that a broad range of interests were identified and addressed in developing the plan and that it can be effectively implemented in coordination with the Florida Forever process.

The element of public participation and interagency coordination is a recurring feature of the Florida Forever Program as is evident by the processes involving nomination and selection of projects as well as management and provision of public access on the lands acquired. The Florida Forever Program (Program) is well recognized throughout the state and the decision to incorporate the Program into the CELCP plan is primarily based on its public accessibility and interagency coordination. The FCMP also consulted with land conservation organizations such as the Trust for Public Lands and The Nature Conservancy during the development of this plan. These organizations provided positive feedback on the decision to incorporate the Florida Forever Program in the draft CELCP plan.

b. Description of public involvement in the development of the plan.

The FCMP published a public notice in the Florida Administrative Weekly (FAW), a statewide publication, in November, 2006 indicating that the draft CELCP plan was available for review on the FCMP website. The draft CELCP plan has been available on the FCMP website <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/cmp/default.htm> since October, 2006. The FCMP received two (2) inquiries regarding the draft CELCP plan (see comments below).

Another public notice was published in the FAW in April 2007 soliciting further comment on the final draft CELCP plan. The final draft CELCP plan was also circulated among state agency partners for federal consistency review in accordance with FCMP procedural requirements. During this second comment period, the FCMP received comments from two (2) state agency partners. All comments received have been incorporated into the final CELCP plan submitted to NOAA.

COMMENTS:

1. I located information on the CELC Program, but did not see any detail on how projects might be submitted by the local government to the state. Also, can you advise how the State selects projects to submit to NOAA for funding consideration?

RESPONSE:

FCMP indicated that local governments could submit projects through the Florida Forever Program. FCMP staff also provided information about how the Florida Forever measures would be used to determine the resource value of the project. Additional CELCP criteria such as location of the project, project readiness and adjacent project boundaries would be influential in selecting the final three projects. Final projects would be selected by the review team consisting of representatives from FCMP, DSL, CAMA, DRP, and other state agencies and land conservation organizations, if applicable. FCMP emphasized that the Florida Forever Program provided the foundation for the draft CELCP plan.

2. How will projects be nominated and selected for the CELCP?

RESPONSE:

Projects will be selected from the Florida Forever list for any given calendar year and may include additions and inholdings from previous lists. Additional criteria such as the location of the project and adjacent project boundaries will also be used to determine the final three projects selected for the CELCP.

3. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recommends the following actions:

- Page 7.c. The addition of submerged resources such as seagrasses, oyster reefs and freshwater springs that flow into estuarine areas of Florida should also be included in the fragile coastal wetlands list of priority areas for conservation.
- Page 11.j. Mangroves also support important recreational fish species including snook, gray snapper, tarpon, sheepshead, red drum (*scientific names included but omitted*) as well as providing important habitat for several federally and state-listed threatened and endangered species including the key deer, American crocodile, peregrine falcon and Atlantic saltmarsh snake (*scientific names included but omitted*).
- Page 12-32. The regional summary maps do not include any areas in Citrus or Hernando counties. FWC believes this area of the state should be included in the Florida CELCP plan since there are a number of conservation lands within these counties including St. Martins Marsh Aquatic Preserve, Crystal River Archaeological State Park, Crystal River Preserve State Park, Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park, Weeki Wachee Springs and the Chassahowitzka and Crystal River national wildlife refuges.

RESPONSE:

The FCMP revisited the section on priority areas for conservation and concluded that the current list of priority areas for conservation is consistent with the CELCP requirements. The current plan

COMMENTS:

RESPONSE (cont'd):

recognizes that the state's priorities might change and includes language indicating that there is flexibility to revise the plan to address emerging priorities. At this time, the purchase of submerged resources is not a priority.

The FCMP will revise the mangrove section to include the suggested changes regarding the importance of fisheries and habitat for threatened and endangered species.

The regional summary maps were prepared in 2005 and provided an update of the available remaining acreages to be acquired on listed Florida Forever projects or private lands with substantial natural resources to be acquired. The report and resulting maps focused on upland properties since these were facing higher development threats. FNAI did not prepare regional maps for available wetland properties and instead created a shapefile of wetland properties that could be acquired. The report identified that private properties bordering the Chassahowitska Wildlife Management Area and Weeki Wachee Preserve in Hernando county presented opportunities for the state and other public agencies to acquire land to consolidate existing acreages that had already been acquired. As was noted by FWC, many properties have already been acquired in Citrus and Hernando counties and although the regional maps do not identify any acquisition priorities in these counties the current CELCP process does not exclude these counties or any of the state land managing agencies from submitting projects or parcels that would require new management strategies, or that would complement existing management plans in these counties. The CELCP plan contains language that recognizes that new acquisition priorities may emerge and highlights that the regional maps only act as a guide in the project selection process. It is possible that there are other properties that are not currently identified on the regional maps that may be presented in future Florida Forever funding cycles and that these projects may take precedence over existing listed projects.

4. The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) offers the following comments and suggestions:

- Consider sharing land title with other state agencies or local governments if land is bought using a cost-share acquisition approach. This approach will assist in developing and implementing purchasing partnerships with other entities.
- County land acquisition lists should be automatically included in the CELC Program so as to broaden the available listings of projects that can be selected for the national competition
- Coordinate the CELCP with the Surface Water Improvement and Management programs and the National Estuary Programs

RESPONSE:

The FCMP facilitated a follow-up discussion with SWFWMD staff regarding the comments submitted and indicated that the current uncertainty regarding funding and longevity of the CELCP at the national level was the basis for the current structure of the Florida CELC Program. Although the suggestions for sharing title and automatic county acquisition list inclusion are valid, it is not currently possible for the FCMP to coordinate a state or county level review process that is analogous to the Florida Forever Program. FCMP emphasized that the Florida Forever Program does provide an opportunity for state agencies, local governments and private individuals to submit projects for consideration thereby encouraging participation from a broad range of participants.

COMMENTS:

RESPONSE (cont'd):

During the discussions, FCMP highlighted that the SWFWMD concerns could be incorporated in an updated CELCP plan prepared within the five (5) year specified timeframe established by NOAA. During the five year window, the FCMP will evaluate the development of the CELC Program to determine whether consistent funding levels and stability are forthcoming. Should the CELCP become a consistently well-funded program, the FCMP would consider amending its model for project nomination and selection.

The SWFWMD concurred with the decisions taken by the FCMP regarding implementation of CELCP within the state and is satisfied that the opportunity exists to revise and update the plan to represent emerging priorities at both the national and state level.

V. Certification and Approval

a. Certification that plan is consistent with the state/territory's approved coastal management program.

I certify that the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation plan is consistent with the state's approved coastal management program. I confirm that this plan has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines established by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management and meets all of the requirements. I also declare that this plan has been vetted in the public domain and that all affected interests have been adequately addressed.

Signature Date

b. Approval of plan by designated official of state lead agency.

I hereby approve the Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation plan.

Lynn Griffin Date
Florida Coastal Program Administrator

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APPENDIX A

Florida Forever Resource Categories

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
A. Natural Communities	Acquire examples of those Natural Communities and their sub-types that: (1) are inadequately represented on protected lands in Florida, or (2) represent the best remaining examples giving priority to those communities or subtypes that are most endangered or rarest.
B. Forest Resources	Acquire lands to: (1) maintain representative examples of the various forest or timber types, and (2) conserve and maintain Florida’s forests so as to perpetuate their environmental, economic, aesthetic and recreational values; giving special consideration to (a) manageable forests that have income producing potential, which helps defray management costs, and (b) upland forests that help meet the resource-based recreational needs of Florida’s growing population.
C. Plants	Acquire lands that contain habitat for rare, endangered, or threatened plant species, giving priority to those sites that: (1) are critical to their survival, (2) contain important assemblages of rare or endangered species, or (3) are necessary to maintain the state’s native plant species diversity.
D. Fish and Wildlife	Acquire lands that: (1) are critical to the survival of rare, endangered, or threatened animals, (2) provide protection for nesting concentrations of wildlife species or other locations where species concentrate or aggregate for some time during their life cycles, or (3) are necessary to maintain the state’s native animal species diversity.
E. Fresh Water Supplies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acquire protective buffers along state waters designated as Outstanding National Resource Waters or Outstanding Florida Waters (OFWs), giving special consideration to the Special Water category of OFWs. 2. Acquire areas around first magnitude springs and their spring runs. Smaller springs should be incorporated, whenever practical, into project boundaries of projects being proposed primarily for other purposes. 3. Acquire protective buffers around significant lacustrine communities. Protective buffers around lakes found within proposals should be incorporated, whenever practical, into project boundaries of projects being proposed primarily for other purposes. 4. Acquire high or prime aquifer recharge lands when such lands also preserve or protect other significant natural resources. Areas which serve to protect or recharge ground water should be incorporated, whenever practical, into project boundaries of projects being proposed primarily for other purposes. 5. Acquire lands necessary for water conservation or water management when such lands also preserve or protect other significant natural resources.
F. Coastal Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acquire undeveloped coastal islands, spits, peninsulas, coral or limerock keys, and mainland seashores to conserve their significant natural, recreational, and aesthetic attributes, giving priority to projects that <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) contain representative examples of various physiographic coastal forms (b) include entire islands, long stretches of beaches, entire widths of coastal barriers, or natural inlets, or (c) are associated with sensitive estuarine systems, particularly those that

Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

<p>Coastal Resources (cont'd)</p>	<p>are designated State Aquatic Preserves. 2. Acquire upland and wetland buffers to protect the state's significant commercial and recreational saltwater fisheries, particularly those fisheries that are designated State Aquatic Preserves, National Estuarine Research Reserves, or Marine Sanctuaries, Areas of Critical State Concern, Special Water category of Outstanding Florida Water, or Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Class II Waters. 3. Acquire upland and wetland buffers to protect the state's most significant reef communities, particularly those areas that are within or adjacent to designated Areas of Critical State Concern, State Aquatic Preserves, State Parks, or National Estuarine Research Reserves, Marine Sanctuaries, Wildlife Refuges, Parks, or Seashores.</p>
<p>G. Geologic Features</p>	<p>Acquire examples of geological exposures, formations, and outcrops that: (1) are inadequately represented on public lands in Florida, or (2) represent the best examples of those features in the state.</p>
<p>H. Historical Resources</p>	<p>Acquire those archaeological and historic sites that best typify the various cultural periods and regions of the state, the classes of cultural activity, the various styles of architecture, and the works of notable individuals.</p>
<p>I. Outdoor Recreational Resources</p>	<p>1. Acquire lands that help meet resource-based recreational goals, objectives, and needs identified in Florida's statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. 2. Acquire lands that: (1) enhance the representation balance of natural and historical resources within the State Park and Reserve systems, or (2) contain prime examples of the state's natural and historical resources. 3. Acquire lands for fish and wildlife oriented outdoor recreation, giving special consideration to additional wildlife management and hunting lands in the southern half of the state. 4. Acquire beaches and other coastal areas of greatest suitability for outdoor recreation that meet identified outdoor recreation needs, giving special consideration to tracts that are within planning regions or near urban areas with greatest need as indicated in the comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. 5. Acquire abandoned railroad and other corridors of greatest suitability for public recreational trail use that meet identified outdoor recreation needs, giving special consideration to corridors that are near urban areas, provide linkages to existing recreational areas or other trails, and allow for multiple uses.</p>

Source: CARL Report, 1999, p. 568.

APPENDIX B

B.1. Florida Forever Program Goals and Measures (s. 259.105, F.S.)

259.105 The Florida Forever Act. –

(4) It is the intent of the Legislature that projects or acquisitions funded pursuant to paragraphs (3) (a) and (b) contribute to the achievement of the following goals:

(a) Enhance the coordination and completion of land acquisition projects, as measured by:

1. The number of acres acquired through the state's land acquisition programs that contribute to the completion of Florida Preservation 2000 projects or projects begun before Preservation 2000;
2. The number of acres protected through the use of alternatives to fees simple acquisition; or
3. The number of shared acquisition projects among Florida Forever funding partners and partners with other funding sources, including local governments and the federal government.

(b) Increase the protection of Florida's biodiversity at the species, natural community, and landscape levels, as measured by:

1. The number of acres acquired of significant strategic habitat conservation areas;
2. The number of acres acquired of highest priority conservation areas for Florida's rarest species;
3. The number of acres acquired of significant landscapes, landscape linkages, and conservation corridors, giving priority to completing linkages;
4. The number of acres acquired of under-represented native ecosystems;
5. The number of landscape-sized protection areas of at least 50,000 acres that exhibit a mosaic of predominantly intact or restorable natural communities established through new acquisition projects, or augmentations to previous projects; or
6. The percentage increase in the number of occurrences of endangered species, threatened species, or species of special concern on publicly managed conservation areas.

(c) Protect, restore, and maintain the quality and natural functions of land, water and wetland systems of the state, as measured by:

1. The number of acres of publicly-owned land identified as needing restoration, acres undergoing restoration, and acres with restoration activities completed;
2. The percentage of water segments that fully meet, partially meet, or do not meet their designated uses as reported in the Department of Environmental Protection's State Water Quality Assessment 305(b) Report;
3. The percentage completion of targeted capital improvements in surface water improvement and management plans created under s. 373.453(2), regional or master stormwater management systems plans, or other adopted restoration plans;
4. The number of acres acquired that protect natural floodplain functions;
5. The number of acres acquired that protect surface waters of the state;

Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

6. The number of acres identified for acquisition to minimize damage from flooding and the percentage of those acres acquired;
7. The number of acres acquired that protect fragile coastal resources;
8. The number of acres of functional wetland systems protected;
9. The percentage of miles of critically eroding beaches contiguous with public lands that are restored or protected from further erosion;
10. The percentage of public lakes and rivers in which invasive, non-native aquatic plants are under maintenance control; or
11. The number of acres of public conservation lands in which upland invasive, exotic plants are under maintenance control.

(d) Ensure that sufficient quantities of water are available to meet the current and future needs of natural systems and the citizens of the state, as measured by:

1. The number of acres acquired which provide retention and storage of surface water in naturally occurring storage areas, such as lakes and wetlands, consistent with the maintenance of water resources or water supplies and consistent with district water supply plans;
2. The quantity of water made available through the water resource development component of a district water supply plan for which a water management district is responsible; or
3. The number of acres acquired of groundwater recharge areas critical to springs, sinks, aquifers, other natural systems, or water supply.

(e) Increase natural resource-based public recreational and educational opportunities, as measured by:

1. The number of acres acquired that are available for natural resource-based public recreation or education;
2. The miles of trails that are available for public recreation, giving priority to those that provide significant connections including those that will assist in completing the Florida National Scenic Trail; or
3. The number of new resource-based recreation facilities, by type, made available on public land.

(f) Preserve significant archaeological or historic sites, as measured by:

1. The increase in the number of and percentage of historic and archaeological properties listed in the Florida Master Site File or National Register of Historic Places which are protected or preserved for public use; or
2. The increase in the number and percentage of historic and archaeological properties that are in state ownership.

(g) Increase the amount of forestland available for sustainable management of natural resources, as measured by:

1. The number of acres acquired that are available for sustainable forest management;
2. The number of acres of state owned forestland managed for economic return in accordance with current best management practices;
3. The number of acres of forestland acquired that will serve to maintain natural groundwater recharge functions; or

Florida Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

4. The percentage and number of acres identified for restoration actually restored by reforestation

(h) Increase the amount of open space available in urban areas, as measured by:

1. The percentage of local governments that participate in land acquisition programs and acquire open space in urban cores; or
2. The percentage and number of acres of purchases of open space within urban service areas.

B.2. FLORIDA FOREVER PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Each project on the Florida Forever list must be evaluated on 34 performance measures that are revised and approved by the Florida Legislature. These performance measures are grouped into eight major goals.

GOAL A: Enhance the coordination and completion of land acquisition projects.

Measure A1: The number of acres acquired through the state's land acquisition programs that contribute to the completion of Florida Preservation 2000 projects or projects begun before Preservation 2000.

Measure A2: The number of acres protected through the use of alternatives to fee simple acquisition

Measure A3: The number of shared acquisition projects among Florida Forever funding partners and partners with other funding sources, including local governments and the federal government.

GOAL B: Increase the protection of Florida's biodiversity at the species, natural, community and landscape levels.

Measure B1: The number of acres acquired of significant Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (SHCA).

Measure B2: The number of acres acquired of highest priority conservation areas for Florida's rarest species.

Measure B3: The number of acres acquired of significant landscapes, landscape linkages, and conservation corridors, giving priority to completing linkages.

Measure B4: The number of acres acquired of under-represented native ecosystems.

Measure B5: The number of landscape-sized protection areas of at least 50,000 acres that exhibit a mosaic of predominantly intact or restorable natural communities established through new acquisition projects, or augmentations to previous projects.

Measure B6: The percentage increase in the number of occurrences of endangered species, threatened species, or species of special concern on publicly managed conservation areas.

GOAL C: Protect, restore, and maintain the quality and functions of land, water, and wetland systems of the state.

Measure C1: The number of acres of publicly-owned land identified as needing restoration; acres undergoing restoration; and acres with restoration activities completed.

Measure C2: The percentage of water segments that fully meet, partially meet, or do not meet their designated uses as reported in the Department of Environmental Protection's State Water Quality Assessment 305(b) report.

Measure C3: The percentage completion of targeted capital improvements in surface water improvement and management plans created under s.373.453 (2), regional or master stormwater management system plans, or other adopted restoration plans.

Measure C4: The number of acres acquired that protect natural floodplain functions.

Measure C5: The number of acres acquired that protect surface waters of the State.

Measure C6: The number of acres acquired for acquisition to minimize damage from flooding and the percentage of those acres acquired.

Measure C7: The number of acres acquired that protect fragile coastal resources.

Measure C8: The number of acres of functional wetland systems protected.

Measure C9: The percentage of miles of critically eroding beaches contiguous with public lands restored or protected from further erosion.

Measure C10: The percentage of public lakes and rivers in which invasive, non-native aquatic plants are under maintenance control.

Measure C11: The number of acres of public conservation lands in which upland invasive, exotic plants are under maintenance control.

GOAL D: Ensure that sufficient quantities of water are available to meet the current and future needs of natural systems and the citizens of the state.

Measure D1: The number of acres acquired which provide retention and storage of surface water in naturally occurring storage areas, such as lakes and wetlands, consistent with the maintenance of water resources or water supplies and consistent with district water supply plans.

Measure D2: The quantity of water made available through the water resource development component of a district water supply plan for which the water management district is responsible.

Measure D3: The number of acres acquired of ground water recharge areas critical to springs, sinks, aquifers, other natural systems, or water supply.

GOAL E: Increase natural resource-based public recreational and educational opportunities.

Measure E1: The number of acres acquired that are available for natural resource-based public recreation or education.

Measure E2: The miles of trails that are available for public recreation, giving priority to those that provide significant connections including those that will assist in completing the Florida National Scenic Trail.

Measure E3: The number of new resource-based recreation facilities, by type, made available on land.

OBJECTIVE F: Preserve significant archaeological or historic sites.

Measure F1: The increase in the number of and percentage of historic and archaeological properties, listed in the Florida Master Site File or National Register of Historic Places that are protected or preserved for public use.

Measure F2: The increase in the number and percentage of historic and archaeological properties that are in state ownership.

OBJECTIVE G: Increase the amount of forestland available for sustainable management of natural resources.

Measure G1: The number of acres acquired that are available for sustainable forest management.

Measure G2: The number of acres of state owned forestland managed for economic return in accordance with current Best Management Practices.

Measure G3: The number of acres of forestland acquired that will serve to maintain natural groundwater recharge functions.

Measure G4: The percentage and number of acres identified for restoration actually restored by reforestation.

OBJECTIVE H: Increase the amount of open space available in urban areas.

Measure H1: The percentage of local governments that participate in land acquisition programs and acquire open space.

Measure H2: The percentage and number of acres of purchases of open space within urban service areas.

Source: www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/acquisition/FloridaForever/FFAnnual2004/Introduction/7.Performance.pdf

B.3. FLORIDA FOREVER CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

- B.1.* Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas
- B.2.* Priority Conservation Areas for Rare Species
- B.3.* Significant Landscapes, Linkages and Conservation Corridors
- B.4.* Under-represented Natural Communities
- B.5.* Landscape-sized Protection Areas
- C.4.* Natural Floodplain
- C.5.* Surface Water
- C.7.* Fragile Coastal Resources
- C.8.* Functional Wetlands
- D.3.* Aquifer Recharge
- E.1.* Natural Resource-based Recreation
- F.1.* Significant Archaeological Sites
- G.1. & G.2.* Sustainable Forest Management
- G.3.* Forest Land to Maintain Recharge Function

Source: Florida Forever, Conservation Needs Assessment, Summary Report to Florida Forever Advisory Council, December, 2000.

APPENDIX C
ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION COUNCIL (ARC) MEMBERS

The Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) is composed of nine voting members, four of whom are appointed by the Governor. The five remaining members are selected from state agencies as indicated in the table below. The ARC members evaluate, select and rank projects eligible for the Florida Forever program. Primary support for the ARC is provided by the Office of Environmental Services, Department of Environmental Protection.

ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION COUNCIL	
State Agency Representatives	
Department of Environmental Protection	Secretary
Department of Community Affairs	Secretary
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Director
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Forestry	Director
Department of State Division of Historical Resources	Director
Governors Appointees	
Governors Appointees (4)	Appointees serve 4 year terms

Source: s. 259.035, F.S.

APPENDIX D

D.1. FNAI Evaluation Functions for Florida Forever

- Initial review of all Florida Forever acquisition proposals for their natural resource values
- Preparation of acquisition proposals for unique natural areas within the state
- Preparation of natural resource assessments for all acquisition proposals assigned for full review
- Development of initial resource planning boundaries for all proposals assigned for full review
- Assistance in designing projects and recommending acquisition priorities or phases
- Other natural resource evaluations for the Florida Forever Program, including the establishment (and maintenance) of a geographical information system (GIS) for conducting ecosystem management and biodiversity analyses of Florida's natural resource protection needs.

FNAI Biological Conservation Database:

- Text files of element occurrences, research reports and related materials that describe the locations and management concerns for monitored species and natural communities
- Map files of specific or general locations of monitored species and natural communities
- Computer files, including GIS, of the most significant information for easy and accurate retrieval.

Categorical information provided on FNAI evaluation sheet:

Project Name FF# County # Acres

Biological Conservation Priority

Natural Resources Values/Comments

Natural Communities (interpreted from application and 1992 FDOT aerial photos)

FNAI elements on, near or reported from site

Managed areas within 15 miles

CARL/SOR projects/proposals within 15 miles

Applicants Recommended Management Use

Applicants Recommended Managing Agency

APPENDIX D

D.2. FLORIDA FOREVER RESOURCE EVALUATION DOCUMENTATION (2002)

RESOURCE TYPES

The Florida Forever Conservation Needs Assessment data sets are now combined into functional groups. Grouping the data serves to eliminate redundancy among similar data and provides a more concise picture of the natural resources within projects. Table 1 shows the original data sets and the new resource types into which they are combined.

Table 1: Original Conservation Needs Assessment data layers grouped into new Florida Forever resource types.

<u>FL Forever Measure</u>	<u>Original Data Sets</u>	<u>Resource Type</u>
B1 B2	Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities	Species
B4 C7	Under-represented Natural Communities Fragile Coastal Resources	Communities
C4 C5	Natural Floodplain Significant Surface Waters	Surface Water
C8	Functional Wetlands	Wetlands
E1 E2	Natural Resource-based Recreation Recreational Trails	Recreation
F1	Significant Archaeological & Historic Sites	Cultural
G1/G2	Sustainable Forestry	Forestry

Projects are also evaluated based on three other data sets that are under review or revision:

1. Recreation
2. Aquifer recharge
3. Development pressure

Source: www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/acquisition/FloridaForever/FFAnnual/Projects/C8.Evaluation.pdf

APPENDIX E

E.1. State Lands Acquisition Process

The overall acquisition process consists of three major components: appraisals, negotiations, and closings. Each of these components is explained in more detail below.

Appraisal

The appraisal component of the acquisition process consists of the steps necessary to determine the fair market value of a property being considered for acquisition. This value is then used to determine the approved value for the property. The approved value is provided to land acquisition negotiators for use as the basis for negotiations. While the steps of the appraisal process may overlap or even run concurrent, a summary of the steps associated with this process are as follows:

- ***Appraisal mapping***
An appropriate level of mapping is obtained which is then used to identify those physical characteristics and/or title issues that may impact the value of the subject property.
- ***Appraisal contracting***
A private sector fee appraiser is issued a task assignment, under their existing contract with the department, to perform an appraisal to determine the fair market value of the subject property.
- ***Determine approved value***
Upon completion of the appraisal review, a final approved value is established to reflect the current market value of the property. This value is then used by the Bureau of Land Acquisition as the basis to establish a negotiation strategy which is utilized in the negotiation process by the acquisition agent.

Negotiation

The negotiation component of the acquisition process consists of steps necessary to reach an agreement on price and terms that are mutually acceptable to the state and the property owner. A summary of the steps associated with this process is as follows:

- ***Negotiation strategy development***
The acquisition agent receives the approved appraisal (s) and reviews the appraisal data. A written negotiation strategy is developed based on the approved value of the property, comparable sales data, general market data, and any other information the department has regarding the property and the area. The strategy is reviewed by management and approved for negotiations.
- ***Negotiations***
Upon approval of the negotiation strategy, the agent proceeds with negotiations with the seller. Ultimately, if the negotiations are successful, the price and contractual terms and conditions are memorialized in a contract agreement which is executed by the parties.
- ***Approval of acquisition***
The contract is submitted for approval as part of an agenda item to the Board of Trustees, or is reviewed and approved, or declined, under the Department's delegation from the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees and staff reviews contracts, appraisals, and management needs and a decision is rendered.

Closing

The closing component of the acquisition process includes the steps necessary to close the transaction and acquire title to the subject property. A summary of the general steps with this process are as follows;

- ***Due diligence***
Through the use of private contractors, title work, an environmental site evaluation and some level of boundary determination are obtained to aid in the identification of any issues which may impact the title, boundary, value, manageability, and long term ownership of the property
- ***Issue resolution***
Staff reviews the due diligence products. Issues identified, evaluated and resolved by the DSL staff and the seller. The potential impacts on any remaining issues which the seller is not required to cure are evaluated by staff and a decision is made regarding how best to expeditiously proceed while protecting the Board of Trustees interests.
- ***Closing***
This phase of the closing process consists of execution of all legal documents between the parties and the delivery of monies necessary to consummate the terms and conditions of the contract. Title is transferred to the Board of Trustees and the property is then leased to the appropriate managing entity.

Source: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/acquisition/process.htm>

APPENDIX E

E.2. Primary Project Assessment Considerations:

- General location and size of the proposal
- Natural resources, including natural community types, endangered and threatened species, other plants and animals, forest resources, geologic resources, water resources, etc.
- Archaeological and historical resources
- Outdoor resource-based recreational potential
- Conformance with Florida Statewide Land Acquisition Plan, Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, and State Lands Management Plan
- Vulnerability and endangerment
- Suitability and proposed uses, including management policy statement, acquisition and management goals and objectives
- Location relative to urban areas, Areas of Critical State Concern, other public lands and political boundaries

Primary Project Design Considerations:

- Number of ownerships, tax assessed values, and ease of acquisition (i.e. owners' willingness to participate in state acquisition process)
- Public and management access and related concerns
- Easements, utilities and other encumbrances that could affect acquisition or management
- Sovereign and jurisdictional lands issues
- Public and non-profit ownerships within or near the proposed acquisition area
- Information on land use and development trends, including: land use maps, local comprehensive plans, and recent zoning changes, annexations, extension of utilities, etc.
- Alternative acquisition techniques (less-than-fee conservation easements, life estates, Transferable Development Rights, etc.) and the availability of other funding sources
- Management assignments, including proposed management prospectus and estimated costs

Source: CARL Report, 1999, p.15.