

# Terra Ceia

## Manatee County

### Purpose for State Acquisition

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

### Manager

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP). Parcels in Frog Creek already owned and managed by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) will continue to be managed by that agency.

### General Description

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

### Public Use

This project qualifies as a buffer preserve, with uses

Terra Ceia FNAI Elements	
Manatee	G2/S2
Hairy Beach Sunflower	G5T2/S2
Wild Cotton	G4G5/S3
Banded Wild-pine	G5/S3
4 rare species are associated with the project	

## Climate Change Lands

such as boating and fishing, and—in accessible uplands—activities like picnicking and hiking.

### Acquisition Planning

On 12/5/1996, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council (LAAC) added the Terra Ceia project to the Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) list. This fee-simple acquisition, sponsored by Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserve, consisted of approximately 2,612 acres, multiple owners, and a 1995 taxable value of \$8,059,357. The essential parcels were identified as: Hendry Corp; Reeder; Schater; Huber; Blalock; and First Union/Larson. Prior to the project's addition to the CARL list, our acquisition partner, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) acquired Terra Ceia Isles. The District acquired the Reeder (20-acres) and Schater parcels (39.1-acres) in 2000 with the State contributing half of the funding.

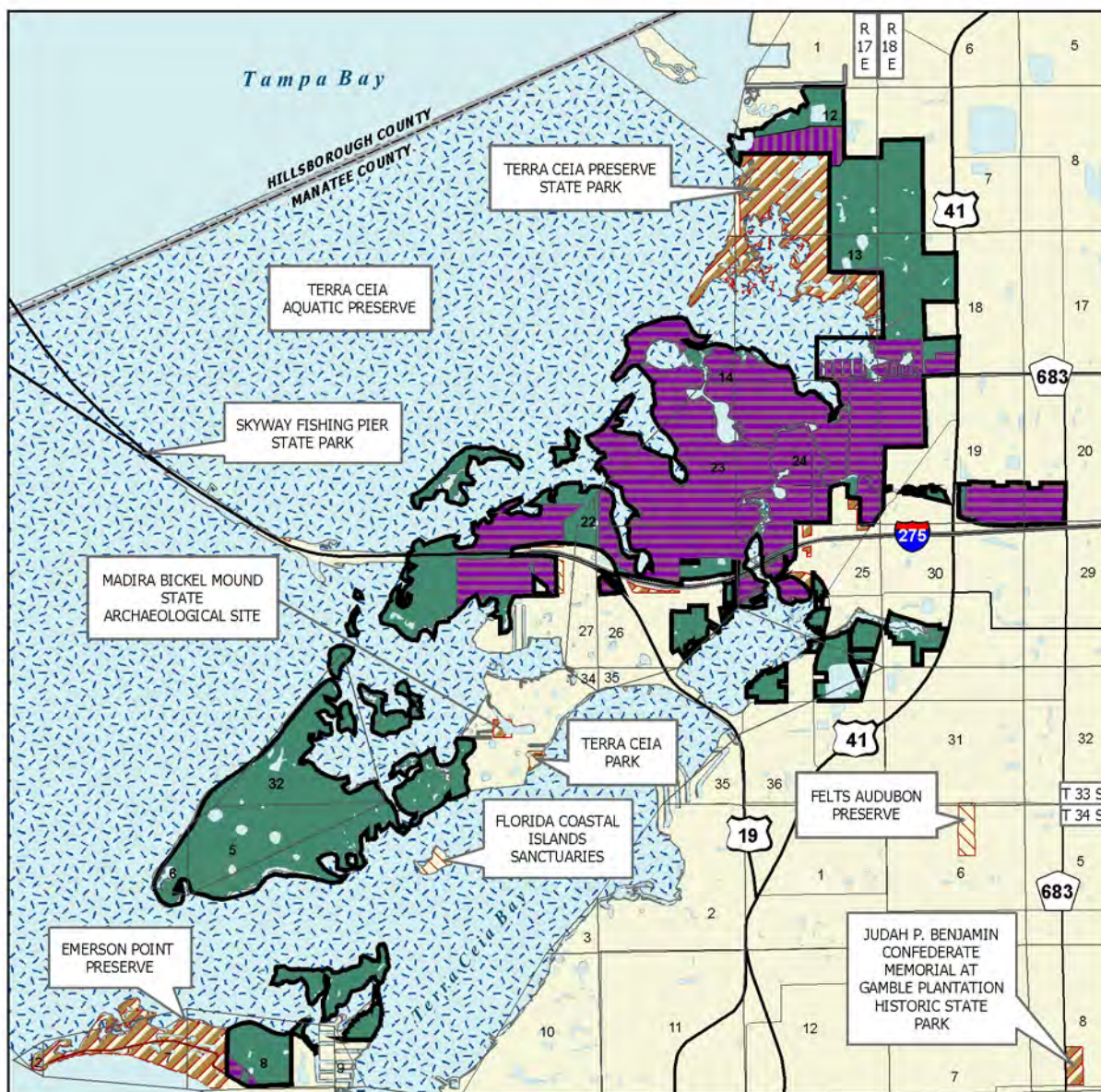
On 10/15/1998, the LAAC designated an additional 843 acres as essential.

On 6/15/2007, the ARC approved a fee-simple, 395-acre addition (aka Frog and McMullen Creek Addition) to the project boundary. The proposal was sponsored by the DEP's Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas (CAMA) and the DRP and the SWFWMD. The addition consisted of 33 landowners, 61 parcels, and a taxable value of \$5,700,188. The DRP is the recommended manager for most of the site. Parcels in Frog Creek already owned and managed by the SWFWMD will continue to be managed by them.

On 6/2009, a donation of 40.06 acres was received from SWFWMD.

<b>Placed on List</b>	<b>1996</b>
<b>Project Area (GIS Acres)</b>	<b>4,281</b>
<b>Acres Acquired (GIS)</b>	<b>1,807*</b>
<b>at a Cost of</b>	<b>\$4,962,500*</b>
<b>Acres Remaining (GIS)</b>	<b>2,474</b>
<b>with Estimated (Tax Assessed) Value of</b>	<b>\$7,137,528</b>
<b>* inclds. acreage/expenditures/donation by SWFWMD.</b>	

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### MANATEE COUNTY

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Acquired for Conservation (Fee Simple)
-  Acquired for Conservation (Less Than Fee)
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
-  State Owned Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands
-  State Aquatic Preserves

0 0.5 1 2  
Miles



JANUARY 2011



On 8/13/2010 ARC approved a 251-acre (\$51,544,946 just value) reduction to the project boundary due to residential/commercial/infrastructure development.

### Coordination

SWFWMD is an acquisition partner. DEP received a grant of \$504,731 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the acquisition of Rattlesnake Key and Joe's Island.

### Management Policy Statement

The primary objective of management of the Terra Ceia project is to preserve and restore the coastal natural communities, ranging from xeric and maritime hammocks to coastal strand and mangrove swamps, that remain around the Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve. Achieving this objective will protect the resources of the aquatic preserve (its seagrass beds used heavily by manatees, its nursery areas for fish and invertebrates, and its fishery). It will also play an important part in the protection and restoration of the Tampa Bay estuary, the largest open-water estuary in Florida. The project should be managed under the single-use concept: management activities should be directed first toward preservation of resources and second toward integrating carefully controlled consumptive uses such as fishing. Managers should control access to the project; limit public motor vehicles to one or a few main roads; thoroughly inventory the resources; restore hydrological disturbances; burn any fire-dependent communities in a pattern mimicking natural lightning-season fires, using natural firebreaks or existing roads for control; strictly limit timbering; and monitor management activities to ensure that they are actually preserving the resources of the aquatic preserve. Managers should limit the number and size of recreational facilities, ensure that they avoid the most sensitive resources, and site them in already disturbed areas when possible. The project includes nearly all the coastal undeveloped land south of Port Manatee and around Terra Ceia Bay, and consequently has the size and location to achieve its primary objective.

### Management Prospectus

**Qualifications for state designation** This project qualifies as a state buffer preserve to protect the resources

of the Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve.

**Manager** The DRP is the designated manager. Parcels in Frog Creek already owned and managed by SWFWMD will continue to be managed by them.

**Conditions affecting intensity of management** The Terra Ceia Project generally includes lands that are "low-need" tracts, requiring basic resource management and protection.

**Timetable for implementing management and provisions for security and protection of infrastructure**

The goals of management of the Terra Ceia Project are (1) to protect the water quality and the highly productive marine habitat of the aquatic preserve by maintaining the project area in a substantially natural condition; (2) to preserve and protect significant endangered and threatened species which include the West Indian manatee, Roseate Spoonbill, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Least Tern, Snowy Egret, Reddish Egret, American Oystercatcher; (3) to preserve and protect significant archaeological sites; (4) to restore islands to a natural state which will include removal of exotic vegetation and habitat restoration activities; and (5) to establish a self-guided canoe trail between the islands for use by the general public. Within the first year after state acquisition, initial and intermediate activities will concentrate on the site security of the mainland property and resource inventory. The site's natural resources will be inventoried and a management plan will be formulated. Long-range plans for this property will be directed toward exotic plant removal/restoration of disturbed areas and the perpetuation and maintenance of natural communities. Management practices will also stress the protection of the water quality of the aquatic preserve by maintaining the project area in a substantially natural condition, the protection of threatened and endangered species and the preservation of the significant archaeological sites for professional investigation.

**Revenue-generating potential** No revenue is expected to be generated from this property.

*Updated 2/3/2012*

### Management Cost Summary/Start-Up

Salary (2 FTE)	\$ 62,000
OCO – Park design	\$100,000
Expenses stabilizing ruins	\$ 10,000
Fixed capital – Parking lots, trails	\$500,000
Total	\$672,000