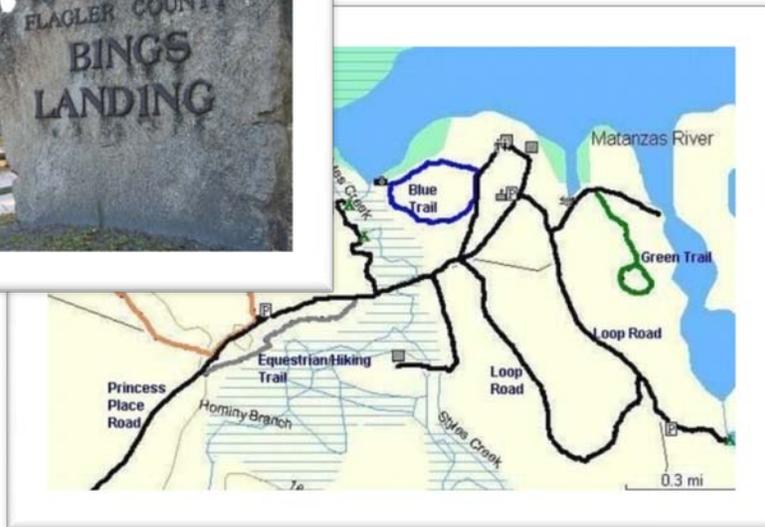




Flagler County Comprehensive Plan 2010-2035
Flagler County, Florida

Recreation and Open Space Element
Data and Analysis



Transmittal Date: October 18, 2010

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**RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT
DATA AND ANALYSIS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Flagler County Commission identified maintaining and enhancing a “family-friendly” environment for the residents and visitors to Flagler County as one of their primary goals. Recreational opportunities and open space provide a foundation for strong neighborhoods, communities and regions. There are over 15,700 acres of parklands in Flagler County consisting of a variety of state parks, community and neighborhood parks, beaches, community centers, greenways and natural resources. These parklands include Washington Oaks, Bulow Plantation State Park and Historic Ruins, Gamble Rogers State Park, Haw Creek State Preserve and Graham Swamp Conservation Area. In addition, there is over 29,000 acres of public and private open space areas located within Flagler County. These areas include private golf courses, wetland mitigation banks and conservation easements held by public agencies on private lands. Flagler County is fortunate to have such vast amounts of parklands, open space and environmentally sensitive lands providing quality recreational opportunities and access to valuable open spaces.

The development of Flagler County’s Recreation and Open Space Element for the Comprehensive Plan requires that it be based on sound data and analysis to support the goals and mission the County has identified for its system of parks, recreation and open space. The following is a mission statement created by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee for Flagler County Parks and Recreation.

“The Strategic Planning Steering Committee for Flagler County Parks and Recreation exists to work cooperatively to promote recreational and leisure activities for all citizens by providing opportunities to enjoy nature, and to participate in individual and group activities, which contribute to their physical, intellectual, and emotional well-being. These activities and facilities build community, enhance property values, reduce crime, preserve the natural environment, and contribute to economic development of the County by making it a better place to work and live.”

The goals, objectives and policies of this Element are intended to guide public investment in open space and recreation and establish standards for development regulations. Chap. 163, F.S. provides a non-charter county planning authority for the total unincorporated area under its jurisdiction or in such unincorporated areas not included in an interlocal planning agreement with a constituent municipality. The standards contained herein are applicable to unincorporated Flagler County however; the vision that guides this Element is countywide in breadth: It is of a seamless and cost-effective system of State, County, School Board and municipal park and recreation facilities supported by nonprofit leagues and supplemented by private investment in common recreational amenities. The municipalities are the primary providers of neighborhood and community parks. The County provides such facilities for rural settlements and urban unincorporated areas and is the principal provider of regional and sub-regional parks and environmental land acquisition for the entire population.

The citizens of Flagler County recognize the benefits of these parklands and have twice supported bond issues for the acquisition of natural resources and development of a first class park and recreation system. As part of the planning process, the Parks and Recreation Strategic Planning Steering Committee held countywide public workshops during July-August-September 2002 to develop long-range strategies for Flagler County. The following goals for the program were developed:

1. Expand and improve greenways and blueways
2. Develop new multi-use recreational facilities
3. Upgrade and expand existing recreational facilities
4. Provide lifeguards at the beach and call phones at public facilities

5. Provide strategically located recreational/leisure opportunities
6. Provide educational opportunities related to the County's natural, historic and cultural resources

In 2007 the Flagler County Futures Committee further strengthened the commitments for a balanced approach to the provision of recreational and open space pursuits by acknowledging the importance that these items play in the County's strategies for sustainable growth. The County Commission again reiterated the importance of recreational and preservation efforts in the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan.

This Element addresses several major issues, namely Flagler County's rapid population growth and the needed acreage for the different types of parks based on the adopted parks and facilities standards. The following analysis resulted in the development of standards to guide Flagler County in determining the types of parks and recreational facilities that will serve the needs of the current and future population and its visitors through the year 2035.

II. INVENTORY OF EXISTING RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

Recreation standards are generally based upon Florida's *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP), 2000 as modified to suit the particular need of Flagler County. Additional resources included *Park Planning Guidelines, 3rd Edition* by George E. Fogg (1981 and 1990), *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines* by James D. Mertes, Ph.D, CLP and James R. Hall, CLP (1996) and *Management Planning for Park and Recreation Areas* by George E. Fogg and J. William Shiner (1981 and 1989). The National Recreation and Park Association standards were also reviewed.

A. Park Classifications

Parks can be classified in a number of ways and serve a variety of functions, from providing open space in urban areas to large athletic complexes, and everything in between. The size of the park, the population served, service radii, and the types of programming within the park generally determine park classifications. Programming can be passive or active, organized or 'drop-in'. Passive programming includes adult learning classes such as art or cooking. Active programming includes open fields for activities like flying a kite or a fitness trail. Organized programming includes league sports, like soccer or baseball and drop-in programming includes pick-up games that are not part of an organized group or practice time for individual teams. At any given time, residents of Flagler County may desire to use different park types and participate in different kinds of programming.

1. Resource-based recreation facilities are those places where recreation is driven by the natural landscape, such as a river, forest or lake, or cultural resources such as historical and archeological sites. Resource-based recreation can be passive, such as walking along an interpretive trail, or active, such as mountain biking or scuba diving.
2. Activity-based parks provide facilities for playing a specific sport or game such as basketball, baseball, and soccer. These facilities are geared toward team sports and are managed for frequent use. Such facilities are frequently located in neighborhood, community, and special use parks and are sometimes located within large resource-based parks as well.

Activity-based and resource-based parks can further be classified by park type. Most parks are typically designated as neighborhood parks, community parks, or regional/countywide parks such as beach access and sports complexes.

Flagler County will classify its parks as neighborhood, community and countywide. Beach access parks are classified as countywide parks and are considered sub-regional because they draw residents from other counties as well as tourists. Sports complexes are also considered

sub-regional and are classified as countywide parks. In general, counties typically provide larger parks such as regional parks and large sports complexes. This is true in Flagler County, where the majority of the parks are classified as countywide parks and are resource-based. Although counties generally provide larger scaled parks, there are standards that must be met for smaller parks such as community and neighborhood parks within unincorporated areas.

A key issue facing Flagler County today is streamlining its parks system so that resources are used efficiently and provide the public with the most recreation opportunities possible. This may mean placing needed recreation facilities such as tennis courts and volleyball courts on existing parklands.

The following presents general guidelines and a brief description of each park classification.

B. Overview of Recreation Standards and Guidelines

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks could include practice areas or green spaces/playing courts for drop-in games of all types. Neighborhood parks could be located adjacent to an elementary or middle school site. They are not designed for extensive programmed activities and are generally used by the immediate community they serve. In more urbanized areas, these parks should ideally be accessible on foot or on bicycle. Within suburban areas, they should be accessible by bicycle or a short drive. In unincorporated Flagler County these parks would ideally be located near rural settlements and in concentrated population centers. The following are secondary characteristics of neighborhood parks.

1. 1-5 acres
2. NRPA Optimum guideline is 10 acres
3. 1 acre per 1000 population
4. ¼ to ½ mile service area radius
5. located within or adjacent to neighborhoods
6. takes on character of surrounding areas
7. accessible by walking, bike riding or short drive by car or public transportation
8. casual play with very little programming, if any at all
9. provides a compatible balance of activities and resource-based recreation
10. facilities may include playgrounds, multipurpose courts/fields, tennis courts, landscape areas, benches, recreation buildings, picnic areas, and walkways

Community Parks

Recreational facilities in community parks should be designed for flexibility along with specific uses allowing the recreation provider to respond to changing programming trends. Community parks could be located adjacent to schools (elementary, middle or high school). The primary function of such parks is for providing places where typical recreation programming occurs. Community parks serve broader community areas and provide for a wide range of athletic and/or team sports opportunities as well as cultural and artistic programs and services. In unincorporated Flagler County, community parks would ideally be located such that they are accessible to several concentrated population centers or in rural settlements. Community parks would provide community gathering places and a centralized area for various community services. The following are secondary characteristics of community parks.

1. >5 to <20 acres
2. 3 acres per 1000 population

3. up to a 3-mile service area radius for urban areas
4. up to a 6-mile service area radius for rural areas
5. access by walking, biking, but more often by car or public transportation
6. usually located near major collector streets or arterial roads
7. serves needs of several neighborhoods
8. more intensely developed than neighborhood parks
9. are primarily activity-based recreation sites, but can be resource-based as well
10. can include such facilities as athletic fields, swimming pools, multi-purpose fields, and recreation centers
11. natural areas should be incorporated to provide biking, fitness, picnicking, and open space activities
12. other community services (i.e., libraries, law enforcement substations, or fire/emergency services) may be located within a community park

Countywide Parks

Countywide parks, also known as regional parks, are almost always resource-based. Countywide parks are usually located in areas of diverse natural resources such as lakes, rivers, flora, fauna or topography. These are usually very large tracts of land and provide camping, equestrian activities, canoeing, boating, fishing, and other resource-based activities. Such parks often serve to protect environmentally sensitive lands with facilities limited to resource-based activities. Care should be taken not to over use the land or allow activities that tax the stability of the resources contained within or adjacent to the park. The service area of a countywide park could be multi-county.

The following are secondary characteristics of regional parks.

1. 50+ acres
2. 30 acres per 1000 population
3. offers same type of activities as community but on a larger scale
4. up to 60 minute driving time
5. access by car, public transportation, bikeways or trails

Beach Access with Parking

Beach access points and parking areas generally support facilities for public beaches. Beach Access parks are included in the countywide park classification and are considered sub-regional. They are typically within a ¼ mile of urban coastal beach or on its periphery. However, some beach access points are located within larger parks that may contain other activity or resource-based facilities. Many beach access points include pedestrian paths and/or raised wooden walkways which lead to the beach area.

The following are secondary characteristics of a typical beach access facility.

1. 1 access point for every ½ mile of shoreline
2. ½ acre per every 1000 population
3. Minimum of 1 acre
4. Resource oriented facilities may include walkways, parking, mass transit stops and restrooms
5. County-wide service area

Sports Complex

Sports complexes are always activity-based. They are countywide facilities located in strategic areas and consolidate heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities at larger and fewer sites. Sports Complexes draw residents from other counties, therefore they are considered sub-regional. Typically they are moderately sized tracts of land with an optimal size of 40-80 acres. Multiple activities are usually provided at a sports complex. These parks offer activities such as baseball, softball, tennis, soccer, etc.

The following are secondary characteristics of a typical sports complex facility.

1. > 25 acres; optimal is 40-80 acres
2. Activity based facilities may include ball fields, soccer fields, football fields, tennis courts, play structures, hard courts, volleyball, internal trails, or picnic areas
3. Size varies depending on facility
4. Access by car, bikeways or trails
5. Located based on the center of activity or where the population demands it

C. Open Space

Open space is another key component of a community's recreation system. Open space is undeveloped land that is used for passive recreation and/or conservation uses. There are three classifications for open space; utilitarian open space, environmentally sensitive open space and corridors/greenways. Utilitarian open space provides resource based and user oriented recreation. Federal, state and regional parks, forests, historic sites, beaches and all areas that protect the site's natural resources or aesthetic beauty are considered utilitarian open space. Environmentally sensitive open space is defined as lands not suitable for development due to their ecological value. They are limited to recreational activities that will preserve the land. Included in this classification are wetlands with high functional value, lakes, creeks, floodplains and prime water recharge areas. Greenways are defined as linear open spaces located along a natural corridor, which can be anything from a riverfront to a scenic road. Greenways are used to connect open spaces, conservation areas, and parks. Trails are described as linear corridors and any adjacent support parcels on land or water providing public access for recreation or authorized alternative modes of transportation. Greenways and trails have many benefits and are extremely popular across the nation and in Florida. Greenways provide connectivity and aide in environmental protection. According to the State of Florida's Office of Greenways and Trails, benefits include increased property values for adjacent properties, protection of ecological corridors to help support wildlife and protect watersheds, enhanced quality of life through increased alternative transportation opportunities, increased access to cultural and historical resources, and increased public health benefits through recreational use. By linking the County's system of parks and natural resources, the effectiveness of the park system is increased and quality of life is improved for all residents.

Flagler County is continuously working to protect, enhance and expand open spaces, environmentally sensitive lands and greenways. Flagler County has created and/or implemented several programs to assist this process. Some programs in place to do this include the Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisition Program, Blueway Corridor along the Intracoastal Waterway and its tributaries, Coastal Greenway, National Scenic Byway and Florida Scenic Highway. Flagler County is working in partnership with the general public, all levels of government, School District, voluntary associations, St. Johns River Water Management District and cities within the County to preserve open space and natural resources. The County has several strategies in place to acquire property for parks and open space. Some of these strategies include working with willing sellers, leveraging state and water

management district acquisition grants, working in partnership with Department of Environmental Protection and the St. Johns River Water Management District to acquire natural resources.

The following are current programs or mechanisms being implemented to aid in the goal of protecting, enhancing and expanding open spaces.

Environmentally Sensitive Lands Program:

Flagler County Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) program was initiated in 1988 to use funding from a voter-authorized ad valorem tax to acquire environmentally sensitive lands. This program has helped the County institute policies and programs to protect its natural resources and provide nature-based recreational opportunities for residents and tourists. A direct result of this program is the County's acquisition of an abundance of environmentally sensitive lands including beaches, waterways, historic ruins and freshwater lakes. Environmentally sensitive land acquisitions are based upon the character of the land, willingness of the seller and terms of sale. They occur within constituent municipalities and in unincorporated Flagler County wherever the opportunity presents itself. Some of the environmental land acquisitions include Bings Landing Park, Lake Disston Access, Haw Creek Preserve, Flagship Harbor, Washington Oaks Addition, Princess Place Preserve and River to Sea Preserve and Shell Bluff on Lake Crescent. The County also accepts dedication of environmentally sensitive lands from developers for perpetual preservation.

Florida Forever Program

The Florida Forever program, replaced the Preservation 2000 Program, and is responsible for public acquisition and protection of more than 1.25 million acres of land throughout Florida. The program has many goals including restoration of damaged environmental systems, water resource development and supply, increased public access, public lands management and maintenance, and increased protection of land by acquisition of conservation easements.

Scenic Highway Corridors:

The A1A Scenic Highway corridor is a unique river to sea experience that encompasses exceptional natural, scenic, cultural, archeological, historical, recreational and educational resources. The Florida Scenic Highway designation means that these important resources will be preserved for residents, visitors and future generations. The A1A River & Sea Trail Scenic Highway is located beginning at the St. Johns County/Flagler County line and extending south to the northern city limits of the Town of Beverly Beach and is a distance of about 11.3 miles. The A1A Ocean Shore Scenic Highway extends from the northern town limits of Beverly Beach south to the Flagler County/Volusia County line, a distance of about 7.3 miles. Along the corridor travelers can see unobstructed shoreline views, rich natural resources, and there are many centers with marine and land based educational programs including the Whitney Laboratory, the Marineland Oceanarium, the Sea Grant Marine Education Center, the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve Headquarters and Washington Oaks Gardens State Park. The County portion of the Scenic Highway is connected to the Oceanshore Scenic Byway in the City of Flagler Beach and Historic A1A in St. Johns County. Collectively the entire corridor has been designed as a National Scenic Byway. The efforts of Flagler County have been complimented with similar actions immediately south where Volusia County and the City of Ormond Beach successfully obtained approval of the Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail (OSL&T) as a Florida Scenic Highway and a National Scenic Byway.

Rails to Trails:

Flagler County secured F.D.O.T. enhancement funding and constructed Phase 1 of the Lehigh Greenway Rail Trail in 2007. Flagler County is the lessee and managing agent of this major bicycle and pedestrian facility that is owned by the Office of Greenways and Trails. When completed it will connect Bunnell, Flagler Beach and Palm Coast and will provide an alternative method of travel between these communities. As of 2010, there is 4.1 miles of trail in place. The trail starts on Colbert Lane and traverses towards the west and ultimately ends at Belle Terre Parkway. The trail will ultimately consist of approximately 6.8 miles and will provide recreational opportunities such as hiking, biking, canoeing and horseback riding as well as educational opportunities. The City of Palm Coast has secured developer commitments for the construction of trail systems linking to Lehigh e.g., the interior trail system within the Town Center DRI. The City of Bunnell is contemplating a downtown pedestrian circulation system that will link to the western terminus of the Lehigh Greenway Rail Trail.

State and Federal Grants

Numerous state and federal grants are available to help acquire environmentally sensitive open space lands. The following are existing programs; Florida Forever Funds, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Conservation and Recreation Lands Funds (CARL), Florida Recreational Development Assistance Program (FRDAP), Florida Communities Trust (FCT) Coastal Management Program, Boater Improvement Fund, Florida Greenways and Trails Funds, acquisition of surplus State and Federal government lands.

Coastal Greenway:

In 1993, Flagler County established a Coastal Greenway, which is a continuous corridor of the County's natural resources and is centered along the Intracoastal Waterway. The Greenway protects aquatic preserves and conservation areas from its northern border at Pellicer Creek/Marineland to its southern border at Bulow Creek and the Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve. A primary goal of the Coastal Greenway is to link all greenway features to each other. Graham Swamp, a 4,500-acre hardwood swamp, is one of the largest protected areas contiguous to the Coastal Greenway.

Blueway Program:

Flagler County Blueway is a State of Florida land acquisition program administered through F.D.E.P. that seeks to acquire undeveloped property along the Intracoastal Waterway. The program strives to preserve the natural communities found along the Intracoastal Waterway. The purpose is to maintain a healthy water body and provide access to the water body and its associated activities. The Flagler County Blueway has received a Category "A" designation, raising its priority and making it eligible for 100% State funding.

Beach Management:

The Atlantic Ocean beach is a major countywide resource. Flagler County has a total of 19.8 miles of beach within four political jurisdictions: Flagler Beach, Beverly Beach, Marineland and Flagler County. The unincorporated County beach is a continuous 11.8 mile stretch and includes several beach parks and other access points. Varn Park and Malacompra Oceanfront Parks represent the major facilities.

The hard sand beaches of St. Johns, Flagler and Volusia Counties were among the last in Florida to allow unrestricted public beach driving. Facing Federal litigation under the Endangered Species Act, in 2004 the County banned beach driving. The challenge for Flagler County during this planning period and beyond will be to balance the potentially competing interests of habitat protection, oceanfront development and maintenance of full public access for

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customary recreational activities. The latter is a right guaranteed under Florida law and a priority for the County. Flagler County recognizes the need to provide vehicular parking for beach access.

D. Inventory of State, County and Municipality Parklands in Flagler County

The following table identifies existing parklands in Flagler County. The status of a park refers to whether it's developed (D) or undeveloped (U). The type refers to whether it is a community park (CP), neighborhood park (NP) or countywide park (CW). The class identifies whether it is activity based (A-B) or resource based (R-B). There is a total of 44,972-acres of publicly and privately held recreation and open space lands in Flagler County.

Table H-1: Existing Parklands in Flagler County

Acres	Management Entity	Neighborhood Park Name	Status	Type	Class
1	Flagler County	Haw Creek Community Center	D	NP	A-B
1	Flagler County	Korona Play Ground	D	NP	A-B
n/a	City of Palm Coast	Bird of Paradise Nature Reserve	U	NP	R-B
3	City of Bunnell	Bunnell Community Park	D	NP	A-B
3	City of Flagler Beach	Moody Wickline Park and Center	D	NP	A-B
0.28	City of Flagler Beach	Palm Drive Custer Park	D	NP	A-B
1.1	City of Flagler Beach	Veterans Park	D	NP	A-B
13.12	City of Palm Coast	Lehigh Woods	U	NP	A-B
0.1	City of Flagler Beach	Palmetto Ave. Park	D	NP	A-B
1.4	City of Flagler Beach	Santa Maria Catholic Church	D	NP	A-B
3	Flagler County	Pellicer Community Center	D	NP	A-B
1	Flagler County	St. John's Community Center	D	NP	A-B
3	Flagler County	Carver Community Center and Gym	D	NP	A-B
31+	Total Neighborhood Parkland Acreage				
12	Flagler County	Espanola Community Park	D	CP	A-B
20	Flagler County	Herschel King Sr. Park	D	CP	R-B
17	Flagler County	Hidden Trails Community Park	D	CP	A-B
6	Flagler County	Hammock Dunes Bridge Park	U	CP	R-B
10	Flagler County	Hammock Community Park	D	CP	A-B
14.59	City of Palm Coast	Cypress Knoll Neighborhood Park	U	CP	A-B
12	City of Palm Coast	Frieda Zamba Swimming Pool	D	CP	A-B
56	Flagler County	Quail Hollow Park	U	CP	A-B
26.75	City of Palm Coast	Palm Coast Community Park	D	CP	A-B
12.4	City of Palm Coast	Seminole Woods Neighborhood Park	U	CP	A-B
32.71	City of Palm Coast	Indian Trails Park	U	CP	A-B
11.5	City of Palm Coast	North Park	U	CP	A-B
116.05	City of Palm Coast	Royal Palms	U	CP	A-B
14.0	Flagler County	Seminole Woods [proposed]	U	CP	n/a
361	Total Community Parkland Acreage				

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Table H-1: Existing Parklands in Flagler County

Acres	Management Entity	Neighborhood Park Name	Status	Type	Class
2	Flagler County	Jungle Hut Road Park	D	CW	R-B
36	Flagler County	Malacompra County Park	U	CW	R-B
47	Flagler County	Malacompra Oceanfront Park	U	CW	R-B
195.00	Flagler County	Lehigh Greenway Rail-Trail	D	CW	R-B
2	Flagler County	Bay Drive County Park	D	CW	A-B
1	Flagler County	Old Salt Road Park	D	CW	R-B
90	Flagler County	River to Sea Preserve at Marineland	D	CW	R-B
8	Flagler County	Varn Park	D	CW	R-B
217	Flagler County	Flagship Harbor Preserve & Moody Boat Launch (Betty Steflik Memorial Preserve)	D	CW	R-B
1,005.00	Flagler County	Haw Creek Preserve & Russell Landing	D	CW	R-B
1,505.00	Flagler County	Princess Place Preserve	D	CW	R-B
64	Flagler County	Shell Bluff	U	CW	R-B
8	Flagler County	Bing's Landing Preserve	D	CW	R-B
45	Flagler County	Wadsworth Park	D	CW	A-B
50	Flagler County	Flagler County Recreation Area	D	CW	A-B
2	Flagler County	Disston Boat Launch	D	CW	R-B
28	Flagler County	Bull Creek Fish Camp	D	CW	R-B
13	Flagler County	Bay Drive Park Addition	D	CW	R-B
3	Flagler County	Bing's Landing Addition	D	CW	R-B
97	Flagler County	Bulow Park	D	CW	R-B
3	Flagler County	Moody Homestead	D	CW	R-B
60	City of Palm Coast	Mulberry Branch	U	CW	R-B
9	City of Palm Coast	Long's Landing	D	CW	R-B
164.11	City of Palm Coast	Indian Trails Sports Complex	D	CW	A-B
26.75	City of Palm Coast	James F. Holland Memorial Park	D	CW	A-B
48	City of Flagler Beach	Silver Lake Preserve	U	CW	R-B
56.77	City of Palm Coast	St. Joe Walkway/Palm Coast Linear Park	U	CW	R-B
3,084	SJRWMD/Flagler County	Graham Swamp Conservation Area	D	CW	R-B
500	State of Florida	Bulow Creek State Park	D	CW	R-B
410	State of Florida	Washington Oaks State Gardens	D	CW	R-B
152	State of Florida	Bulow Plantation Ruins Historic State Park	D	CW	R-B
145	State of Florida	Gamble Rogers Memorial Park	D	CW	R-B
3,865	DEP, State of FL	Pellicer Creek Conservation Area	D	CW	R-B
3,065	State of Florida	Haw Creek State Preserve	U	CW	R-B
60	DEP, Flagler County	Harbor Island	U	CW	R-B
15,067	Total Countywide Public Parks and Preserves				

Table H-1: Existing Parklands in Flagler County

Acres	Management Entity	Neighborhood Park Name	Status	Type	Class
125	Private	Cypress Knolls Golf Course	D	CW	A-B
140	Private	Matanzas Woods Golf Course	D	CW	A-B
est. 125	Private	Ocean Hammock Nicklaus Signature Golf Course	D	CW	A-B
38	Public	Ocean Palm Golf Course	D	CW	A-B
125	Private	Palm Harbor Golf Club	D	CW	A-B
125	Private	Pine Lakes Country Club	D	CW	A-B
est. 125	Private	Plantation Bay Golf Club	D	CW	A-B
est. 125	Private	Hammock Dunes Creek Course	D	CW	A-B
est. 125	Private	Hammock Dunes Tom Fazio Golf Course	D	CW	A-B
est. 125	Private	Grand Haven Golf Course	D	CW	A-B
est. 125	Private	Proposed Bunnell Course	U	CW	A-B
est. 125	Private	Proposed Hunters Ridge	U	CW	A-B
est. 125	Private	Proposed West Lake GC	U	CW	A-B
1,000.00	Private	Black Branch Swamp Preserve	U	CW	R-B
100	Private	Long Creek Conservation Area	U	CW	R-B
19,672	Private (managed by State)	Relay Wildlife Management Area	D	CW	R-B
Unknown	Private	Hagstrom Conservation Easement	U	CW	R-B
3,000	Private	Old Brick Mitigation Bank	U	CW	R-B
1,877	Private	Lake Swamp Mitigation Bank	U	CW	R-B
65	Private	Sweetwater Estates	U	CW	R-B
584	Private	Bud Henry Conservation Easement	U	CW	R-B
690	Private	Evans Conservation Easement	U	CW	R-B
970	Private	Stanley Conservation Easement	U	CW	R-B
252	Private	Skinner Conservation Easement	U	CW	R-B
29,513	Total Privately Held Open Space				

E. Environmentally Sensitive Land

Flagler County has an abundance of environmentally sensitive lands that are owned and managed by many different entities, and are a great asset to all residents and visitors. Environmentally Sensitive Lands are a subset of Table 1. Acquiring these lands for perpetual preservation and public purpose will continue to be a top priority for many reasons including their importance in water quality, natural resources, wildlife habitats, aesthetic values and open space for all residents and visitors. Table 2 identifies major public acquisitions of Flagler County’s environmentally sensitive lands. Committed developer contributions include the 359-acre Von Bulow Islands, approximately 1,100 acres of Bulow Creek headwaters, and a total of 352 acres of wetlands south of the Flagler County Airport. The status of a ESL park refers to whether it’s developed (D) or undeveloped (U). The type refers to whether it is a facility of the State of Florida (SF), regional park (RP), community park (CP), neighborhood park (NP),

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countywide park (CW). The class identifies whether it is activity based (A-B) or resource based (R-B).

Table H-2. Environmentally Sensitive Open Spaces					
Acres	Management Entity	Address	Status	Type	Class
1,000	Private	Black Branch Swamp	U	SF	R-B
500	State of Florida	Bulow Creek State Park	D	RP	R-B
410	State of Florida	Washington Oaks State Gardens	D	RP	R-B
152	State of Florida	Bulow Plantation Ruins Historic State Park	D	RP	R-B
145	State of Florida	Gamble Rogers Memorial Park	D	RP	R-B
3,084	SJRWMD/Flagler County	Graham Swamp Conservation Area	D	RP	R-B
3,865	DEP, State of FL	Pellicer Creek Conservation Area	D	RP	R-B
3,065	State of Florida	Haw Creek State Preserve	U	RP	R-B
100	Private & Sovereign	Long Creek Conservation Area	U	RP	R-B
19,672	Private (managed by State)	Relay Wildlife Management Area	D	SF	R-B
13	State of Florida	Bulow Creek Canoe Trail	U	SF	R-B
4	State of Florida	Pellicer Creek Canoe Trail	U	SF	R-B
217	Flagler County	Flagship Harbor Preserve/Moody Boat Launch	D	CW	R-B
1,505	Flagler County	Princess Place Preserve	D	CW	R-B
90	Flagler County	River to Sea Preserve at Marineland	D	CW	R-B
64	Flagler County	Shell Bluff	U	CW	R-B
300	Flagler County	Mala Compra Greenway	U	CW	R-B*
1,100	Flagler County	Bulow Creek headwaters	U	CW	R-B
36	Flagler County	Mala Compra Park	D	CW	R-B*
359	DEP, State of FL	Von Bulow Islands	U	CW	R-B
352	Flagler County	Airport Wetlands	U	CW	R-B
28	Flagler County	Bull Creek Fish Camp	D	CW	R-B
13	Flagler County	Bay Drive Park Addition	D	CW	R-B
3	Flagler County	Bing's Landing Addition	D	CW	R-B
97	Flagler County	Bulow Park	D	CW	R-B
3	Flagler County	Moody Homestead	D	CW	R-B
60	DEP, Flagler County	Harbor Island	U	CW	R-B
36,237	Total Environmentally Sensitive Open Spaces				

III. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Recreation and open space standards and guidelines are used to estimate present and future recreation needs. Determining the adopted standards for parkland acreage involves identifying the type of park, population served by the park and the location of the park relative to a neighborhood, community or region.

A. Standards for Parkland Acreage

The standards contained in the following table are adopted as the level of service standards for parks and recreation. These standards are used to determine the need for parkland acreage and also to determine parkland locations.

Table H-2: Parkland Acreage LOS Standards			
Park Type	Area per 1000 population	Location	Service Area
Countywide Park	30 acres	On the periphery of an urban area – 30-60 minutes driving time	Located within an hour's driving distance of the residents
Community Park	3 acres	Serves two or more neighborhoods and .5 to 3 miles distance	"ride-to" park located near major streets
Neighborhood Park	1 acres	Neighborhood area - .25-.5 mile distance	"walk-to" park, located along streets where people can walk or bicycle without encountering heavy traffic
Beach Access	Acreage not relevant	Within .25 mile of urban coastal beach or on its periphery, 1 access/.5 mile of shoreline	Countywide – serves a regional population
Sports Complex	Acreage not relevant	Strategically located community-wide facilities	Countywide - serves a regional population

Source: Flagler County, 2000 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

B. Guidelines for Resources and Facilities

The following table shows the population standards for common recreation facilities. These standards are generally based on State standards but modified to meet the particular vision of Flagler County. These recreation facility guidelines assist the County in determining where they have a surplus or deficit of recreational activities. These guidelines are non-binding and are not adopted within the Goals, Objectives and Policies or as a part of this Element. They should be used as a general guide to help the County locate deficiencies in recreational activities and determine facilities needed in new and existing parks.

Table H-3: Resource and Facility Guidelines		
Resource and Facility Guidelines		
Activity	Resource/Facility	Population Served
Camping (primitive)	1 acre of camp area	6,750
Beach activities	Mile of freshwater or saltwater sandy beach shoreline	8,000
Freshwater and Saltwater fishing	800 feet of pier, catwalk or jetty	5,000

Table H-3: Resource and Facility Guidelines		
Resource and Facility Guidelines		
Activity	Resource/Facility	Population Served
Freshwater and saltwater fishing, power boating, water skiing, sailing	Boat ramp lane	4,000
Hiking	Linear mile of trail	6,750
Baseball	1 field	6,000
Softball		3,500
Basketball	1 court	5,000
Football/Soccer/Rugby	1 field	6,000
General Play	Equipped play area	15,000
	multipurpose field	10,000
Golf	Semi-public	20,000
	Public	70,000
Racquetball/Handball	Racquetball Court	10,000
Tennis	Tennis Court	2,500
Volleyball	Volleyball Court	6,000

Source: Florida's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Maximum Population Served Standards; Flagler County

III. Future Needs Analysis

A. Population Data

Population projections are developed by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR), the State of Florida’s official source. Flagler County has experienced tremendous population growth from 1970 to the present. From the year 1990 to the year 2000, Flagler County experienced a 74 percent change. By the year 2025, the County is expected to almost double in size. This amount of growth will have huge implications on the County’s parklands and recreation facilities. It is also important to note that the median age, as of April 1, 2003, was 50.7, and by 2035 is expected to rise to 62.8. This large age group will require recreational facilities such as golf, tennis, bicycling and trails. The following table summarizes the historical population trends and the population projections for Flagler County. This data includes only permanent residents, which are residents residing in the County for six months or more throughout the year.

Table H-5 Historical Population Trends And Projections											
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
TOTAL	4,454	10,913	28,701	49,832	78,617	95,700	114,700	137,400	159,500	180,600	200,300

Source: Flagler County, BEBR, 2009 Medium Projection

It is important to take into consideration Flagler County’s seasonal population. Because Flagler County is a coastal community, recreational activities and natural resources are a large part of its tourism draw. It is important to recognize the direct and/or indirect effects recreational facilities and natural resources have on the local economy. At the peak of tourist season, the population can increase by 5,000 people. This has significant implications on the park system and its recreational facilities.

The following table displays seasonal population.

Table H-6. Population Projections Flagler County				
Year	County Population	Unincorp. Population	Total Seasonal Population	Permanent and Seasonal Population
2010	95,700	12,221	11,227	106,927
2015	114,700	14,121	12,702	127,402
2020	137,400	16,391	14,371	151,771
2025	159,500	18,601	16,260	175,760
2030	180,600	20,711	18,397	198,997
2035	200,300	22,681	20,814	221,114

Source: BEBR 2009 Population Projection, Flagler County, US Census CSA 2006-2008; US Census Table 7

The largest populated city within the County is Palm Coast. The City of Palm Coast officially incorporated on December 31, 1999, and on October 1, 2000 many services were transferred to the City. In 2000, Palm Coast residents comprised of 66 percent or 32,732, of the County’s total

population of 41,674. By the year 2035, the City is projected to have 163,499 residents and the County is projected to have 200,300. The unincorporated share of the County's overall population will be approximately 22,681 people or about 12% of the total population. If the population reaches the projected amounts by the year 2035, the City would make up 84 percent of the residents in the County.

When the City of Palm Coast incorporated in 2000, the County transferred some of its parklands to the City. In 2002, the City of Palm Coast owned approximately 13 parks or 410.56 acres of park and recreation lands, not all but many of which were transferred from the County to the City. Some of these parks were classified as neighborhood and community parks and would have increased the existing supply of the County's parklands and its recreational facilities. It is important to note the repercussions this transfer of parklands and recreational facilities has had on the County. Palm Coast owns and operates Indian Trails Sports Complex and Jim Holland Park both of which qualify as countywide facilities. On occasion, the City and County share facilities to accommodate regular league play and tournaments. User fees based on residency requirements do not exist and would be an anathema to the vision of a seamless system of countywide parks.

Since 2005 there have been significant annexations by the cities of Palm Coast and Bunnell that factor into the current and projected population of unincorporated Flagler County. The revised population projections reflect that the demand for neighborhood park facilities will decrease within Flagler County due to the annexations by the local cities. This trend reflects that Flagler County needs to preserve and maintain its current inventory of neighborhood parks and focus of funding the potential expansion of community and countywide Parks.

The 2009 Evaluation and Appraisal Report indicated that County needed to maintain and enhance its role in the coordination of trails and connectivity of parks, school and open space facilities. This means that Flagler County, cities, state, regional and federal agencies, will be working with each other to ensure maintenance and expansion of road, parks and school facilities include viable pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

B. Application of Parkland Acreage Standards

Level of service (LOS) measures the quantity of existing and planned public facilities to define the adequacy of a particular public service or infrastructure. There are a number of different ways to measure LOS for parks and recreation. Flagler County applies the traditional way of measuring LOS for parks and recreational facilities, which is based on a per capita approach, i.e. number of acres per 1,000 population. Flagler County has developed a three-tiered LOS standard that requires a separate LOS for countywide parks, community parks and neighborhood parks. Adopted LOS for countywide parks is 30 acres per 1,000 residents (based on Countywide seasonal population). Adopted LOS for community parks is 3 acres per 1,000 (unincorporated) residents and adopted LOS for neighborhood parks is 1 acre per 1,000 (unincorporated) residents. The adopted LOS represents a minimum standard.

The overall system of parks and recreation for any community is provided by several entities, both public and private. The Flagler County LOS standard for parks is structured so that a variety of park types and recreation activities are available to all residents. The County's 3-tiered adopted LOS approach reflects the particular functions of the three types of parks provided by Flagler County, whether they are countywide, community or neighborhood parks. The total County population data was used to calculate the countywide parkland LOS, whereas the unincorporated County population data was used to calculate the community and neighborhood LOS. Since the cities within the County are also providing neighborhood and community parklands to their residents, neighborhood and community park LOS was calculated

based upon the unincorporated population. Because the service areas of countywide parklands are sub-regional, the LOS for countywide parks was determined using the entire County's permanent and seasonal population.

As indicated in the following table, Flagler County exceeds all of the LOS standards throughout the 2010 to 2035 planning horizon. This should not dissuade local leaders from acquiring critical lands for active and passive recreation. Most of the countywide parks are resource-based parklands, and many of them have access to beaches or some type of water body as well as environmentally sensitive lands. There are opportunities to co-locate recreation resources with elementary and middle school site. This should be used as cost-effective methods of providing recreational opportunities to neighborhoods and communities. Also the increasing median age and tourist-based economy would benefit considerably if there are a multitude of recreational opportunities throughout the County.

Table H-7. Flagler County LOS Analysis for the 2010-2035 Planning Horizon								
Park Type	Total Park Area 2010	LOS Standard (acres/1000)	2010 LOS*	2015 LOS*	2020 LOS*	2025 LOS*	2030 LOS*	2035 LOS*
Countywide Park	15,067	30	11,859	11,245	10,514	10,282	9,097	8,434
Community Park	361	3	324	319	312	305	299	361
Neighborhood Park	31	1	19	17	15	12	10	8
Total Park Acres	4229.6							

*These figures represent surplus or (deficits) based on the application of the LOS standard to the population for the planning period. Total County and Seasonal population was used for the calculations for Countywide Parks. Unincorporated population projections were used for calculations for Community and Neighborhood Parks.

The recreational facilities the County needs can be accommodated most cost-effectively in countywide and community parks. The greatest need facing Flagler County is continuing to acquire countywide facilities for the entire County population and tourists, as well as neighborhood and community parklands with needed recreational facilities for unincorporated areas. It is important to note the private sector and the cities, particularly the City of Palm Coast, are providing some of these recreational facilities to the entire County. For example, County residents currently have access to six golf courses owned by the private sector.

C. Parkland and Recreational Facility New Acquisitions and Strategies

The County is currently working on obtaining several properties and providing recreational facilities on existing County owned land. Current projects include;

1. Additional boat ramps will be provided through the planned expansion of the Shell Bluff boat access to Crescent Lake and the expansion of the boat access at Lake Disston
2. Youth Center on Bulldog Drive adjacent to Flagler/Palm Coast High School, will have youth-oriented after school and weekend recreational and educational programs
3. Skating rink which is on the same property as the Youth Center, designed for skating and roller hockey
4. Covered Arena at the Fairgrounds on CR 13, will have rodeo events, car shows, craft fairs, etc.
5. Acquisition of School Board property next to the Fairgrounds, which would be a prime location for recreational facilities
6. Community park in Flagler Estates
7. National Scenic Byway park and aesthetic improvements within A1A Scenic Corridor

As was discussed earlier, Flagler County should coordinate with the Flagler County School Board so that newly constructed public schools to develop a portion of their land as baseball fields, soccer fields, football fields, tennis, volleyball, etc. Also, the County could add recreational facilities to existing school properties. The collocation of neighborhood and community parks could provide the needed parks facilities in a cost effective and efficient manner.

Flagler County will need to continue to collect the Park and Recreation Impact Fee based upon revised population projections, levels of service and the cost of land acquisition and capital improvements. Recognizing the inherent cost advantages of private developers over public agencies, the County may increasingly negotiate impact fee credits with developers of larger subdivisions to acquire turnkey park sites or raw land for future development.

The Environmentally Sensitive Lands Fund needs to be leveraged to the maximum extent possible using grants, donations and in-kind services. During this planning horizon, the electorate may need to be approached regarding an extension or possible increase in the voted ESL mileage rate.

IV. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

A. Funding Sources

Funding for park improvements will primarily come from three sources: park impact fees, Ad Valorem taxes, and grants, which may be available through outside sources.

Impact Fees:

Impact fees are a method used to help pay for new capital facilities and to maintain service levels as a result of population growth. They are assessed to new development, usually at the time of a building permit. Flagler County adopted a parks and recreation impact fee in 1989, lowered the fee in 1994 and increased it in 2004. The current fee is \$ 268.45 per residential unit which is substantially lower than any surrounding area. This fee is applicable to unincorporated Flagler County and to municipalities agreeing to participate through interlocal agreements. Currently, the Cities of Flagler Beach and Bunnell are participants in the collection of impact fees. The City of Palm Coast levies their own impact fee, which is \$402.35 per residential unit. The funds are used for the purpose for which it was collected to ensure that the improvements benefit those who paid.

As identified through the application of the parkland acreage standards, Flagler County should increase its community and neighborhood parkland acreage and recreational facilities, as well as continue to acquire countywide parklands and environmentally sensitive areas for the entire County and tourists. After careful review and comparison of Flagler County's impact fee to other jurisdictions, it is obvious the County's impact fee is substantially lower than surrounding jurisdictions, including the City of Palm Coast's. The following table identifies surrounding jurisdiction's impact fees.

Jurisdiction	Park Impact Fee
Volusia County	\$581.71
City of Palm Coast	\$1,230.83
Flagler County	\$268.45

All of the adjoining counties and the City of Palm Coast have raised the impact fee for parks and recreation. The impact fee for Flagler County has remained the same since the original draft of this report in 2005. The economic conditions in 2010 make an increase at this time difficult, but the need for additional study and potential increase in this fee still in warranted. As the population continues to increase it becomes harder to meet and maintain desired levels of service. An increase in the impact fee will help create more funds to acquire and construct parklands and recreational facilities. The County's Parks and Recreation Department provides many regional parks and resource-based facilities that are utilized by all residents living in the County and its Cities, as well as tourists. An increase in the County's park impact fee will assist with the rising costs associated with maintaining and purchasing parklands.

In addition to increasing the impact fee, it is apparent that a study is needed to create a more flexible ordinance that will allow the County to use the monies collected from the impact fees in the most effective manner.

Ad Valorem Taxes:

The County has historically budgeted about \$100,000 of revenue collected through ad valorem taxes on an annual basis for parkland development.

B. Intergovernmental Coordination

Flagler County offers many regional parks and natural resources, while the City of Palm Coast offers many recreational facilities and community and neighborhood parks. It is important that Flagler County and the City of Palm Coast continue coordinating recreation, parks, greenways and trails, cultural arts programs, land acquisition and facility development where appropriate. This will help foster and enhance recreational opportunities for everyone living within the County. A coordinated approach must be continued for the benefit of residents and visitors.

The County shall continue to coordinate with the Flagler County School Board, SJRWMD, and the State of Florida to ensure that grants and low-interests loan minimize the financial impacts resulting from the acquisition and development of a viable parks and recreation system.

C. Prototypical Designs and Cost Estimates to Develop Facilities

1. Neighborhood Park

1. Development costs typically average \$212,000.00 (in 2005 dollars) depending on size and amenities
2. Typically activity-based facilities
3. Land costs will vary depending on location and year of purchase
4. Facilities may include playgrounds, multipurpose courts/fields, tennis courts, landscape areas, benches, walkway, recreation buildings, picnic areas, and walkways

Figure 6: Neighborhood Park



2. Community Park

1. Development costs typically average \$500,000 (in 2005 dollars) depending on size and amenities
2. Activity-based and resource-based facilities
3. Land costs will vary depending on location and year of purchase
4. Can include such facilities as athletic fields, swimming pools, multi-purpose fields, and recreation centers
5. Natural areas should be incorporated to provide biking, fitness, picnicking, and open space activities

Figure 7: Community Park



3. Countywide Park

1. Development costs typically average \$2,500,000.00 (in 2005 dollars) depending on size and amenities
2. Activity-based and resource-based facilities
3. Land costs will vary depending on location and year of purchase
4. Offers same type of activities as community but on a larger scale

Figure 8: Countywide Park



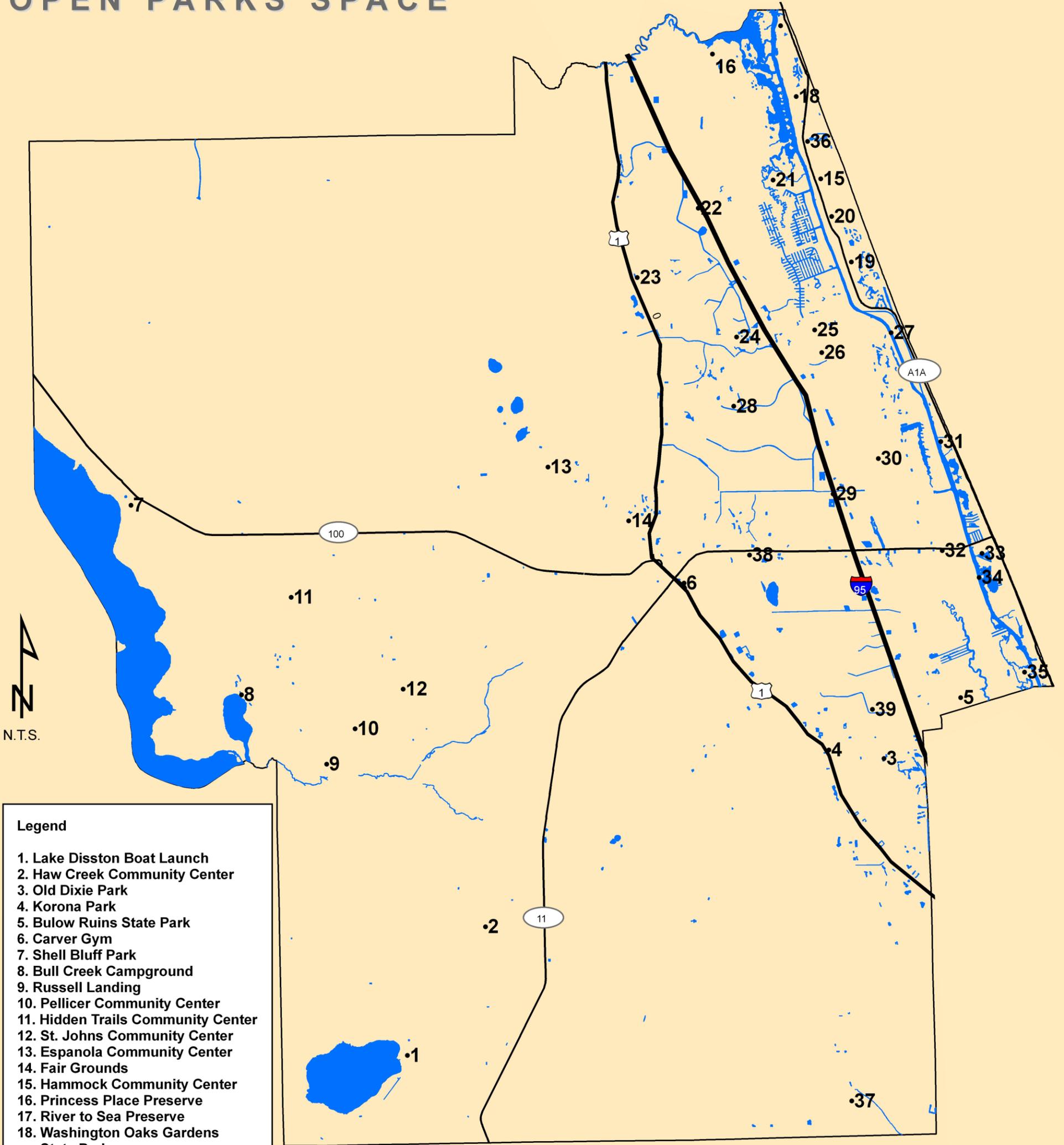
Flagler County Recreation and Open Space Element Map Series

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EXISTING RECREATION AND OPEN PARKS SPACE



Legend

1. Lake Disston Boat Launch
2. Haw Creek Community Center
3. Old Dixie Park
4. Korona Park
5. Bulow Ruins State Park
6. Carver Gym
7. Shell Bluff Park
8. Bull Creek Campground
9. Russell Landing
10. Pellicer Community Center
11. Hidden Trails Community Center
12. St. Johns Community Center
13. Espanola Community Center
14. Fair Grounds
15. Hammock Community Center
16. Princess Place Preserve
17. River to Sea Preserve
18. Washington Oaks Gardens State Park
19. Jungle Hut Park
20. Old Salt Road Park
21. Bings Landing
22. Bird of Paradise
23. Indian Trails Sports Complex
24. James F. Holland Memorial Park
25. Palm Coast Community Center
26. Palm Coast Linear Park
27. Varn Park
28. Belle Terre Park
29. Lehigh Rail Trail
30. Graham Swamp
31. Herschel King Park
32. Wadsworth Park
33. Betty Stefflick Park
34. Moody Boat Launch
35. Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area
36. Mala Compra Park
37. Relay Wildlife Management Area
38. Moody Homestead
39. Seminole Woods Park

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