

Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem

Martin County

Partnerships

Purpose for State Acquisition

Cities spreading north from Miami and Fort Lauderdale have all but eliminated natural areas, such as coastal scrub, near the southeast Florida coast. The Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem project will protect one of the largest patches of natural land left on this coast by conserving important scrub, pine flatwoods, marshes, and South Fork's floodplain on the St. Lucie River. Protection will also be provided for the quality of water in the St. Lucie and Loxahatchee River basins and the public will have the opportunity to enjoy the original landscape of this fast-growing area.

Manager

Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

General Description

Mesic to Wet Flatwoods, which cover almost half (43 percent) of the project, extend from the floodplain forest along the South Fork St. Lucie River east to two ridges. One of the largest remaining islands of Atlantic Coastal Ridge scrub occupies these ridges. Most of the rare plants and animals known from the project inhabit the scrub, including the extremely rare and federally listed perforate reindeer lichen, and the Florida scrub jay. The area includes the headwaters of the South Fork St. Lucie River, part of the drainage basin of the Loxahatchee River, an Outstanding Florida Water, and is important for water supply to coastal Martin County. No archaeological sites are known from the project. The scrub, in particular, is being lost to development.

Public Use

This project is designated as a state park with uses such as picnicking, hiking, fishing and canoeing.

Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem FNAI Elements	
Florida Scrub-jay	G2/S2
Gopher Tortoise	G3/S3
Florida Sandhill Crane	G5T2T3/S2S3
<i>Piedmont Jointgrass</i>	G3/S3
Bald Eagle	G5/S3
5 rare species are associated with the project	

Acquisition Planning and Status

This project consists of approximately 28 ownerships; five relatively large ownerships. Essential parcels are those on the eastern project boundary including Davis, Shaw, and Commercial Bank Medalist (acquired under contract by SFWMD). Mobil-Seawind (acquired) is also an essential tract.

On February 14, 1995, the Governor and Cabinet directed the LAMAC to hold a public workshop with Martin County, South Florida Water Management District, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, interested environmental and economic development organizations, private landowners, and interested citizens to establish a workplan for this project. Further, the Governor and Cabinet directed that the "CARL committee report to the Cabinet with their determination prior to any purchases on that particular tract of land".

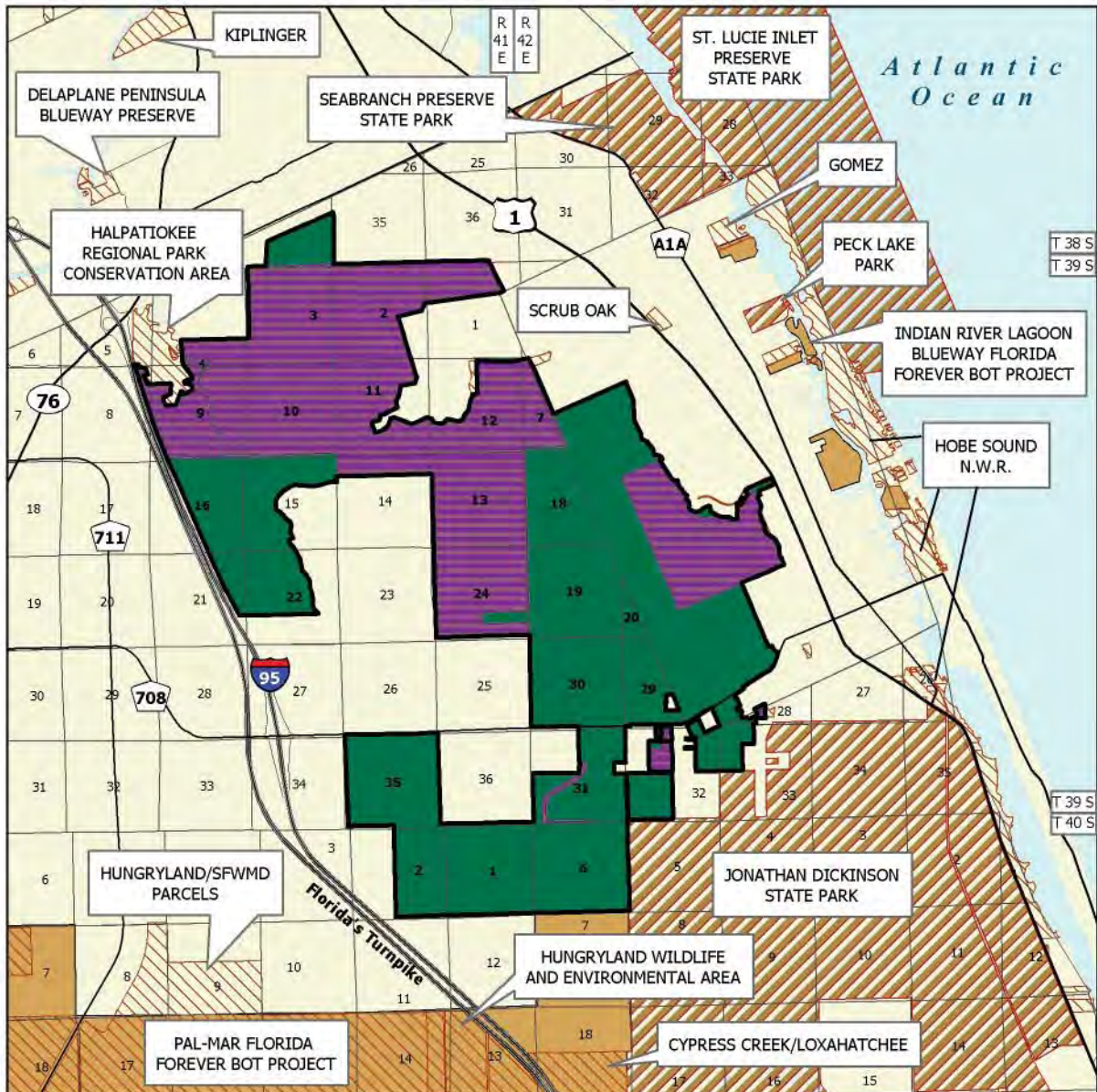
Public meetings were held on June 12, 1995, and October 5, 1995. As a result of the public meetings, the LAMAC deleted approximately 480 acres from the project boundary. The tracts had been recently developed.

On July 16, 1996, LAMAC added 41 acres to the project boundary and approximately 2,118 acres were delineated as the minimum acceptable acquisition boundary for the Mobil (Seawind) ownership within the project boundary.

On October 15, 1998, LAMAC designated the Phase II corridor to Jonathan Dickinson State Park as essential.

Placed on List	1995
Project Area (Acres)	14,470
Acres Acquired	6,042
at a Cost of	\$38,215,961
Acres Remaining	8,428
With Estimated (Tax Assessed) Value of	\$61,172,512

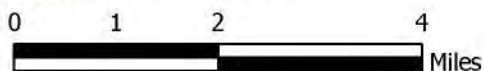
Note: 1,532 acres were removed 2/19/10 due to residential/commercial/infrastructure development.



ATLANTIC RIDGE ECOSYSTEM

MARTIN COUNTY

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



OCTOBER 2010

Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem

On October 21, 1999, the Council added 598 acres to the project boundary as essential parcels.

On August 22, 2000 the Acquisition and Restoration Council added 1,920 acres to the project.

On February 11, 2005 the Council approved adding 304 acres in 16 parcels (Kitching Creek Addition) to the boundaries of the project.

On December 8, 2006, ARC approved moving the project from Group B to Group A of the Florida Forever (FF) Priority list.

On February 19, 2010 ARC approved removing 1,532 acres (just tax value of \$489,091,150) from the project boundary that were disturbed by development and are no longer desirable for state acquisition.

Coordination

South Florida Water Management District is an acquisition partner.

Management Policy Statement

The goals of management of the Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem project are: to conserve and protect environmentally unique and irreplaceable lands that contain native, relatively unaltered flora and fauna representing a natural area unique to, or scarce within, a region of this state or a larger geographic area; to conserve and protect significant habitat for native species or endangered and threatened species; to conserve, protect, manage, or restore important ecosystems, landscapes, and forests, in order to enhance or protect significant surface water, coastal, recreational, timber, fish or wildlife resources which local or state regulatory programs cannot adequately protect; and to provide areas, including recreational trails, for natural-resource-based recreation.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation This project has the size and quality of resource desired for management under the state park system.

Manager The DRP.

Conditions affecting intensity of management The Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem is a high-need management area requiring intensive resource management and protection. Depending on the nature and extent of public use determined by the management plan process, there might be additional needs for management of public use activities and facilities.

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

Within the first year after acquisition, management activities will concentrate on site security, natural resource protection, and efforts toward the development of a plan for long-term public use and resource management consistent with the stated goals and objectives of the approved Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem Project Assessment.

Revenue-generating potential No significant revenue is expected to be generated initially. After the initial acquisition, it will probably be several years before any significant public-use facilities are developed. The degree of any future revenue generated would depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities. Revenue generated by the nearby Jonathan Dickinson State Park for Fiscal Year 1993-1994 was \$364,711.

Cooperators in management activities No local governments or others are recommended for management of this project.

Updated 12/30/2010

Management Cost Summary

Category Source of Funds	Startup CARL	Recurring CARL
Salary	\$52,994	\$52,994
OPS	\$8,000	\$8,000
Expense	\$26,307	\$26,307
OCO	\$129,212	\$1,000
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$216,132	\$88,301