

Town of Century
North Escambia River
Management Plan
Revision 2022

Prepared by:

Water Resource Associates, LLC



Funded by:

**Pensacola and Perdido Bay Estuary Program
Grant #FY2022-04**

This Document was funded by the Pensacola and Perdido Bay Estuary Program as part of the 2021-2022 Community Grant Program. The property was acquired under a Florida Communities Trust (FCT) Preservation 2000 Grant (FCT Project Number 96-033-P7A). The Management Plan has been revised through input from all partners and continues the reporting requirements of the FCT Grant.

Fischer Landing
Town of Century
Updated Management Plan
June 2022

Prepared by:

Water Resource Associates, LLC



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Fischer Landing/Town of Century
Management Plan

Introduction

The Fisher Landingsite is a 13.97-acre parcel is located along the northern banks of the Escambia River where the Escambia River outfalls in to the Escambia River in the north-end of Escambia County. The site is also adjacent to and north of an abandoned Florida Department of Transportation right-of-way (old highway 62/old state road 4). It is bordered on the north by the Big Escambia Creek. Other than a public access road to the ramp, the site is undisturbed and remains in its natural state. Both endangered, threatened, and listed species of special concern for both flora and fauna may be present on the site, as indicated by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory.

A Florida Communities Trust Preservation 2000 Grant was used to acquire the Fisher Landing Project Site for the Town of Century. This management plan is a requirement under the terms of the Grant Award Agreement. This is a proposed update to the Management Plan, to be provided to the FCT for approval in 2022.

Purpose

The purpose of acquiring the Fisher Landing site is the preservation, protection and of natural resources, and to provide for water-based recreational activities for the residents of north Escambia County and the Town of Century. The Fisher Landing project site will be identified in all signs, literature, and advertising as being publicly owned and operated as an outdoor recreational site, as well as having been purchased with funds from the Florida Communities Trust Preservation 2000 Program.

After the acquisition of the site in 2000, The Town of Century requested to change the designation of the property from Agriculture (AG). The current land use for this site is Recreation (Rec).

Since the Project Site is in Escambia County, the goals, objectives, and policies of the County's Comprehensive Plan that will be furthered by this project were listed and summarized in the original Management Plan.

Structures and Improvements

A dirt parking lot to support the boat ramp and nature trails has been constructed. The parking lot is a shaded area, designed and constructed to keep as many of the existing native trees as possible, including a tree island between the parking lot and the river. The parking lot is oriented to allow easy access for launching boats.

Access to the site is via public access road from the north. The access road, like the parking lot, is dirt. The only paved portion of this road will where the current Old State Road 4 is already paved. The access road begins where the existing old SR 4 ends and continues in the footprint of the removed old SR 4 to the project site.

Other future improvements may include: park benches, primitive camp sites, an observation deck and a nature/hiking trail. These improvements will be contingent on funding from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program or other funding sources. These structures will also be constructed in ways to minimize the area disturbed. Other than slight modifications, it is imperative to maintain the property in its natural state, as this is the most valuable feature of the property. Protection of these natural resources requires the identification of the resources and the actions needed to restore and maintain their integrity. The native vegetative communities that occur on the site shall be preserved and appropriately managed to ensure the long-term viability of these communities. No more than 30% of the native vegetative communities on the Project Site will be disturbed.

The Town of Century's wastewater treatment plant is located south and downstream from the North Escambia River Site. The fallout from this plant should not affect the recreational uses or conservation objectives of the site. There is an outfall pipe at the end of the existing old SR 4 roadway flowing into the natural wetlands in the area west of the project site. The placement of this pipe will have no impact on the recreational uses of the property.

Site Identification: A sign has been placed on the project site, next to the boat ramp, indicating that the site is open to the public and was purchased with funds from the Florida Communities Trust Preservation 2000 Program. The Town of Century recently installed three (3) education signs at the park to inform visitors about native freshwater fish that are found within the river. One sign provides an overview of the watershed and how interrelated the river is to the downstream estuaries and bays.

Stormwater Management: Since the majority of the project site will remain in its undisturbed state, stormwater runoff to the river should be minimal. Only the access road and parking area would provide possible stormwater problems. The parking area will be gravel or clamshell, which are pervious materials. This should reduce the amount of runoff and erosion from stormwater. The hiking trails will be natural paths.

Observation Dock: An observation deck has been part of the conceptual plan for the Fischer Landing, however it has yet to be designed or constructed.

Based on the original management plan, the observation deck, which would be constructed from wood, will not pose much of a runoff problem. During the design phase of the improvements, any potential stormwater problems will be noted and addressed. The design and location of any stormwater treatment facility will require the approval of FCT. The final designs of any stormwater facility will be forwarded to FCT for review and approval prior to construction. The engineering firm retained by the Town will be designing any needed stormwater management facilities has not yet begun work on the stormwater project. Any needed stormwater management structures or facilities will be designed to protect the floodplain wetlands on the site and the river adjacent to the project site. Any needed stormwater facility will be designed within one year of acquisition. The entire site is located within the 100-year floodplain, so no facilities related to the project site will be located out of the 100-year floodplain.

Easements, Concessions, or Leases: There is an overhead utility easement for power lines from Escambia River Electric Cooperative on the site. It can be seen on the Master Site Plan, but will not affect the recreational or management aspects of the site. The only other easement on the project site involves the mineral rights. The property owner stipulated that he retain the mineral rights on the project site after sale to the Town of Century. The Town will provide FCT a 60-day prior written notice and information regarding any other lease of interest, the operation of any concession, any sale or option, any management contracts for the North Escambia River Site, and any use of the project site by any other person other than in such person's capacity as a member of the general public.

Changes to the Management Plan: Written approval from the Florida Communities Trust will be requested before undertaking any changes, site alteration, or physical improvements and their locations not specifically identified in the approved management plan.

Key Management Activities

Maintenance: Site maintenance, which includes trash removal, security, grounds keeping and maintenance, and some aspects of actual construction and labor, will be the responsibility of the Town of Century, Department of Recreation and Parks and the Public Works Department. The Escambia County Public Works Department has committed to work with the Town to maintain the access road.

Security and Staffing: The Town of Century has no police force. Security for the Town is provided by the Escambia County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office will therefore provide security for the project site on their regular patrols of the area. Site maintenance, which includes trash removal, security, grounds keeping, and maintenance, and some aspects of actual construction and labor, is the responsibility of the Town of Century, Department of Recreation and Parks and the Public Works Department. There should be no additional cost assigned to the Town

budget. The Escambia County Public Works Department has committed to work with the Town to maintain the access road.

Coordinated Management: The Town will coordinate with the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission (FWC) and the North West Florida Water Management District (NFWMD) for appropriate guidance, recommendations and/or necessary permits to protect and enhance the natural hydrology of the project site. Management of the site will also be coordinated with the NFWMD, which owns much of the land along the Escambia River near the project site. The improvements to the project site will be minimal and should not impact the function of the flood plain. The parking lot material and spatial design of the parking lot will help minimize these impacts. The nature trails will be constructed of natural materials and will be in the form of paths. The benches and observation also should have minimal effect on the function of the floodplain.

Natural Resource Protection

Resource Identification: The original Management Plan stated:

“The site consists of predominantly native forested and non-forested vegetative communities that have not been disturbed. Based on the soil maps and the "26 Ecological Communities", the site is mainly Mixed Alluvial and Huckabee Loamy Fine Sand soils. The vast majority of the site is Mixed Alluvial, poorly drained. This soil type supports the bottomland hardwoods community. The small Huckabee portion supports the Longleaf Pine-Turkey Oak Hills community. Florida Natural Areas Inventory also lists the alluvial stream community as part of the Escambia River corridor. This community is imperiled at the state level- ranked S2 by FNAI.

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory lists many animals and plants occurring on or near the site. FNAI lists three plants on the site which are listed as threatened at the State level. These are the heartleaf, *Hexastylis arifolia*; the orange azalea, *Rhododendron austrinum*, and the sweet shrub, *Calycanthus floridus var floridus*.

Many other species are listed as being in the Escambia River which is adjacent to the site including Species of Special concern, threatened species and endangered species. The species of special concern include the Atlantic Sturgeon, *Acipenser axyrinchus*; bluenose shiner, *Pteronotropis welaka*; harlequin darter, *Etheostoma histrio*; and, alligator snapping turtle, *Macrolemys temminckii*. The Threatened species include the crystal darter, *Crystalluria asprella*, and mountain laurel, *Kalmia latifolia*, and those listed above as occurring on the site. The endangered species are the orange azalea, *Rhododendron austrinum*, listed above and the pyramid magnolia, *Magnolia pyramidata*, near the site. There are many other plants and animals that are not designated as endangered, threatened, or of special concern, but do have a global ranking.

Actions needed to protect the listed species discovered during the biological survey will be incorporated into the management plan within six months of the receipt of the survey results. To ensure that improvement of the site as proposed does not harm the listed species identified or the natural vegetative communities, the Town will request that the NFWMD and/or the FWC to periodically monitor the site. Any adverse impacts will be reported through the NFWMD to the Town and placed in the annual report due in March. This Management plan will be submitted to the FWC for review and recommendations to avoid impacts to listed species. Comments will be incorporated into the management plan within six months of receipt. All improvements to the project site will avoid harming the vegetative communities and listed species, to protect their long-term viability.”

An updated site-specific ecological survey was conducted by WRA in January 2022. The results of this ecological survey will be provided under separate cover.

Natural Resource Survey: Although FNAI data exists for the general vicinity, and especially since listed species have been noted on site visits, a site-specific ecological survey was conducted by the Town of Century to establish a

baseline condition. The baseline biological survey included the vegetative communities, plant species, animal species, and invasive/exotic species and the results of the baseline survey are available upon request to the Town of Century.

An updated site-specific ecological survey was conducted by WRA in January 2022. The results of this ecological survey will be provided under separate cover.

Protection of Natural Resources: Any newly-identified listed species found on the site will be forwarded to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory. The annual monitoring program will ensure that any site improvements and uses are not adversely impacting the vegetative communities and animal species found on the project site. This annual stewardship and monitoring report has been submitted to Florida Communities Trust March of each year. Since initial activities have been conducted and annual monitoring performed without any noted changes to vegetative or wildlife communities, we propose a reduction in the monitoring schedule to a 5-year report starting in March 2023, with the next due date being March 2028.

The Escambia River itself is also a natural resource that is in need of protection. Six of the twelve listed species are dependent on the creek and/or the river for habitat. Of the nineteen ranked species, sixteen are dependent on the river or creek for habitat. Data collected in 1992 by the North West Florida Water Management District shows the Big Escambia Creek having "good" water quality. This classification means that the creek meets its designated use with no evidence of non-point source problems.

Use of the project site by pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons on non-motorized vehicles shall be promoted except in those areas where resource protection considerations warrant limiting access.

Greenway: The North Escambia River Site will be protected and managed in coordination with the NWFMD lands which are just south of the project site and also directly across the river. This updated Management Plan will be forwarded to the NWFMD for review and comment. The Town will be open to any further coordination initiatives with the nearby NWFMD owned land.

Archaeological and Historical Resource Protection: This updated Management Plan will be forwarded to the Division of Historical Resources for review. Any recommended changes will be strongly considered and added if necessary. If any evidence is found on the site to suggest an archaeological or historic resource, the Town will immediately notify the Division of Historical Resources to take appropriate measures to protect the historical resources. The 1988 Florida Rivers Assessment states that there are three archaeological sites and no historical structures in this segment of the river. The collection of artifacts or the disturbance of any archaeological or historic sites that might be found on the project site will be prohibited unless prior authorization has been obtained from the Department of State, Division of Historical Resources.

Resource Enhancement

It is anticipated that development at the site will be in areas already disturbed, i.e., FDOT right-of-way and the boat ramp area. Undisturbed resources will be left in their natural state.

The 1988 Florida Rivers Assessment states that there are no exotics in the segment of the Escambia River containing the project site. Any invasive exotic vegetation found during the natural resources survey will be removed. If any is found, a plan for removal will be incorporated into this management plan. The Exotic Pest Plan Council's List of Florida's Most Invasive Species is included in the Attachments.

Invasive vegetation was not identified by WRA in the January 2022 site specific ecological assessment (to be provided under separate cover).

Monitoring and Reporting

Assessing the progress in meeting the goals set forth in this Management Plan is the responsibility of the Town of Century. The Town will also be responsible for preparing the annual stewardship report that evaluates implementation of the management plan.




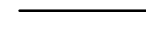
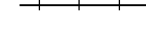
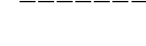





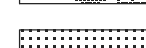
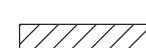






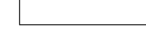
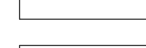



Conditions Particular to the Project Site

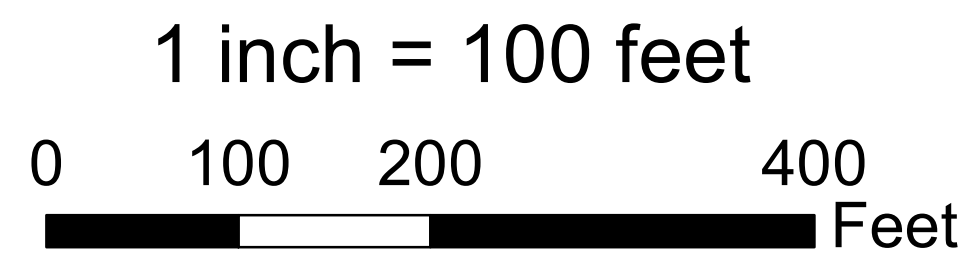
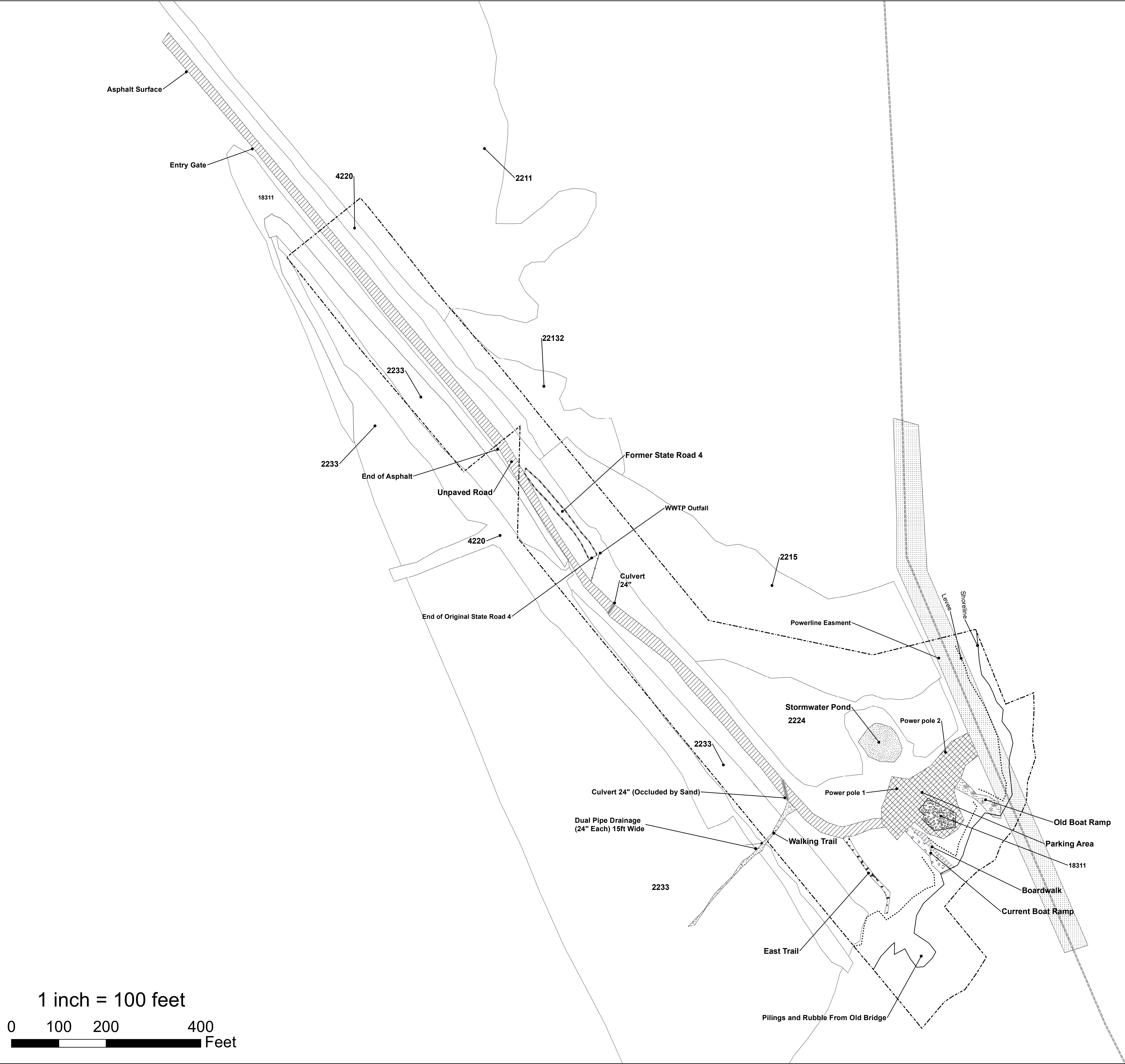
In accordance with the FCT Conceptual Approval Agreement the following conditions have been and continue to be met with the updated Management Plan:

1. Outdoor recreational facilities including nature trails, boardwalks, and interpretive displays shall be provided. The facilities shall be developed in a manner that allows the general public reasonable access for observation and appreciation of the natural resources on the project site without causing harm to those resources.
The Project has a public access point at the Old FL-4 Road, which is paved for approximately 0.22 miles and is dirt for the remaining distance to the dirt parking lot and boat ramp.
2. A survey of vegetative communities and plant species on the project site shall be completed before any development of the site. The survey shall be used during the planning and development of the site to insure the protection, restoration, and preservation of the natural resources on the project site.
An updated vegetative inventory has been conducted in January 2022 and is being provided under separate cover. The site consists of mostly native wetland and upland vegetation and has been maintained in accordance with the FCT agreement.
3. The native vegetative communities that occur on the project site shall be preserved and appropriately managed to ensure the long-term viability of these communities.
The site consists of mostly native wetland and upland vegetation and has been maintained in accordance with the FCT agreement.
4. The project site shall be managed in a manner that will protect and enhance the listed and non-listed native wildlife species and their habitat. The Town shall coordinate with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission to ensure the preservation and viability of listed and non-listed native wildlife species and their habitat.
The site has been maintained in a manner that will protect and enhance the listed and non-listed native wildlife species and their habitat.
5. The Town shall monitor adjacent development activities to ensure that such activities do not negatively affect the resources on the project site.
The Town has implemented a sedimentation study to identify potential causes for sedimentation on the boat ramp. This study will direct further study and implementation of recommendations to correct this issue.
6. The Town shall coordinate with the North West Florida Water Management District (NFWMD) to protect and enhance the natural hydrology of the flood plain area on the project site. Measures shall be taken to minimize the impacts of proposed improvements on the flood plain. If the Town elects to abandon the existing boat ramp on the project site, the improvement shall be removed and the impacted area restored to a natural condition.
The Town has minimized the amount of human alteration that occurs on the site. The entrance roadway and parking consist of impervious surfaces and a stormwater pond was excavated on the north side of

the parking lot.

7. The Town shall implement appropriate surface water management practices on the project site to safeguard against environmental impacts upon the Escambia River resulting from the project site.
The Town has constructed a stormwater pond on the north side of the parking lot to hold back water before it enters either the adjacent wetland or the river.
8. Invasive exotic vegetation that occurs on the project site shall be eradicated. The Exotic Pest Plant Council's List of Florida's Most Invasive Species shall be used to assist in identifying invasive exotics on the project site.
The updated, site-specific ecological study conducted by WRA in January 2022 did not identify any exotic plants within the park.
9. The Town shall coordinate the management of the project site with the land managers of other conservation and preservation lands in the project area, including the North West Florida Water Management District.
Management of the project site has been minimal. However, any management activities (other than site security, trash clean up, etc.) will be coordinated with the land managers of other conservation and preservation lands in the project area, including the NFWWMD.
10. Prior to the commencement of any proposed development activities, measures will be taken to determine the presence of any archaeological sites. All planned activities involving known archaeological sites or potential site areas shall be closely coordinated with the Department of State, Division of Historic Resources in order to prevent the disturbance of significant sites.
Any proposed development on the site will require authorization from the FDEP or the NFWWMD. During this authorization process, the state will typically implement Coastal Zone Noticing, which will allow for a formal review of the project with the DHR and FWC.
11. The Town shall ensure that the location and design of the access road and parking facility will have minimal impacts on natural resources of the project site.
The access road and parking facility were designed and constructed to minimize impacts to natural resources on the project site. Specifically, it was designed within already disturbed areas; minimized native tree removal and avoided impacts to the wetlands and river.
12. Use of the project site by pedestrians, bicyclists and persons on non-motorized vehicles shall be promoted except in those areas where resource protection considerations warrant limiting access.
The site is accessible for pedestrians, bicyclists and persons on non-motorized vehicles.
13. The project site shall be protected and managed as part of the linked conservation lands owned and managed by the North West Florida Water Management District.
Management of the project site has been minimal. However, any management activities (other than site security, trash clean up, etc.) will be coordinated with the land managers of other conservation and preservation lands in the project area, including the NFWWMD.
14. The requirements imposed by other grant program funds that may be sought by the Town for activities associated with the project site shall not conflict with the terms and conditions of the Florida Communities Trust award.
The Town of Century continues to maintain and manage the site in accordance with the FCT award.

-  Project Boundary (13.97 ac.)
-  Culvert 24"
-  Levee
-  Shoreline
-  WWTP Outfall Structure
-  Electric Power Transmission Line
-  Access Area (0.50 ac.)
-  Boardwalk (0.02 ac.)
-  Current Boat Ramp (0.05 ac.)
-  East Trail (0.03 ac.)
-  Edge of Mixed Hardwoods (0.08 ac.)
-  Old Boat Ramp (0.05 ac.)
-  Powerline Easement
-  Road (1.08 ac.)
-  State Road 4 (0.08 ac.)
-  Stormwater Pond (0.12 ac.)
-  Walking Trail (0.05 ac.)
- Wetlands**
-  2211-Cypress
-  22132-Basin Swamp
-  2215-Floodplain Swamp
-  2224-Slash Pine Swamp Forest
-  2233-Mixed Wetland Hardwoods
-  4220-Ditch/Artificial Intermittent Stream
-  18311- Edge of Mixed Hardwoods



R E V I S I O N S

Engineering ~ Environmental
Water Resource ~ Survey

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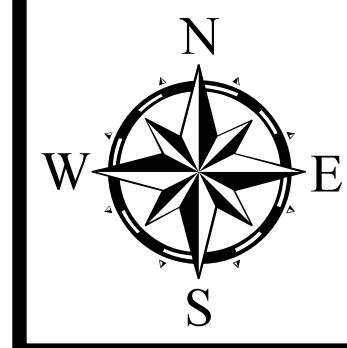


Current Conditions Map

Fischer Landing

ISSUED FOR: Town of Century
JOB #: 2333

SEC: 04, 09, & 22
TWN: 05N
RNG: 30W
DESIGNED: RJ



Date: 3/29/2022
Datum: NAVD88