

Florida Keys Ecosystem

Monroe County

Purpose for State Acquisition

The unique hardwood hammocks of the Florida Keys, forests of West Indian plants that shelter several extremely rare animals, are being lost to the rapid development of these islands. The Florida Keys Ecosystem project will protect all the significant unprotected hardwood hammocks left in the Keys and many rare plants and animals, including the Lower Keys marsh rabbit and Key deer. It will also help protect the Outstanding Florida Waters of the Keys, the recreational and commercial fisheries, and the reefs around the islands, and also give residents and visitors more areas for enjoying the natural beauty of the Keys.

Managers

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) (19 sites); Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), (10 sites: Key Largo Narrows, Point Charles Hammock, Newport Hammock, Pennkamp North, Largo Sound Hammock, North Creek Hammock, Teatable Hammock, Lower Matecumbe Hammock, North Layton Hammock and Grassy Key Site). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Monroe County, City of Marathon, and City of Islamorada also manage some properties.

General Description

This project includes most of the remaining unprotected

Florida Keys Ecosystem FNAI Elements	
Key Deer	G5T1/S1
Lower Keys Rabbit	G5T1/S1
Loggerhead Sea Turtle	G3/S3
<i>Cape Sable thoroughwort</i>	G1/S1
<i>Garber's spurge</i>	G1/S1
<i>semaphore pricklypear</i>	G1/S1
<i>tree cactus</i>	G1/S1
<i>Cuban snake-bark</i>	G2G3T1/S1
<i>Florida Keys indigo</i>	G5?T1Q/S1
Key Ringneck Snake	G5T1/S1
Striped Mud Turtle, Lower Keys	G5T1Q/S1
Population	
Eastern Ribbon Snake, Lower Keys	G5T1Q/S1
Population	
70 rare species are associated with the project	

Climate Change Lands

rockland hammocks (tropical hardwood hammocks) in the Keys from South Key Largo to Sugarloaf Key. It is important to many rare plants and animals and consists of 17 sites in the Upper and Middle Keys encompassing the remaining fragments of unprotected tropical hardwood hammock greater than 12.5 acres. The project includes habitat for migratory birds and virtually all remaining Lower Keys marsh rabbits, Key deer, and the state-threatened white-crowned pigeon. In all, it provides habitat for at least 34 species of rare vascular plants and 34 rare animals. Many archaeological and historical sites are recorded from the area. All the project sites are threatened by intense development in the Keys.

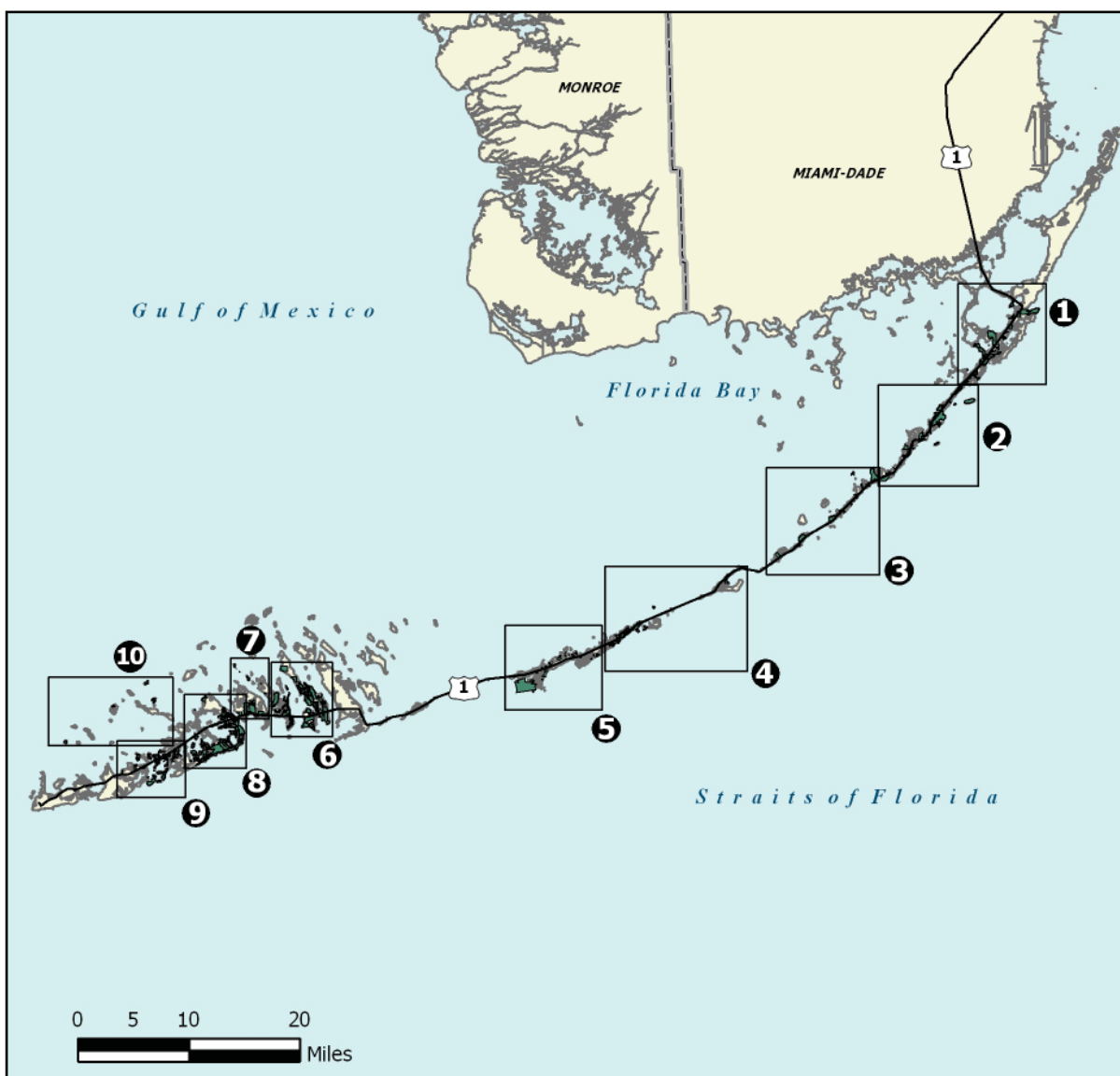
Public Use

The tracts will become botanical sites, parks, and wildlife and environmental areas. Some will offer camping, swimming, hiking, and boating, while others will be suitable only for nature appreciation.

Acquisition Planning

On December 7, 1995, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council (LAAC) approved combining the Hammocks of the Lower Keys and Tropical Flyways projects into a single project named Florida Keys Ecosystem. The combined project consisted of approximately 4,438 acres; 465 acres acquired for \$24,324,425 and 3,973 remained with a taxable value of \$9,619,059. Hammocks of the Lower Keys: No phasing is recommended; however, some sites are extremely vulnerable to immediate development: Cudjoe Key—Kephart tract; Big Torch Key—Outward Bound/Stelmok tract (acquired); Summerland Key—the area around the pond; and Little Torch Key—Torch Key Estates Subdivision (acquired). Estimated acreage

Placed on list	1992
Project Area (GIS Acres)	12,754
Acres Acquired (GIS)	6,579*
at a Cost of	\$91,025,252
Acres Remaining (GIS)	6,175
Estimated (Tax Assessed) Value of	\$38,187,008
*Includes donations	



FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM: OVERVIEW

MONROE COUNTY

Map 1

- A. North Creek Hammocks Site
- B. Largo Sound Hammock Site
- C. Pennkamp North Hammock Site
- D. Newport Hammocks Site
- E. Point Charles Hammock Site

Map 2

- A. Key Largo Narrows Hammock Site
- B. Rodriguez Key Site
- C. Dove Creek Hammocks Site
- D. Tavernier Creek Hammocks Site
- E. Tavernier Key Site
- F. Islamorada / Plantation Key Site

Map 3

- A. Windley Key Site
- B. Wilson Key Site
- C. Cotton Key Site
- D. Islamorada / Upper Matecumbe Site
- E. Lower Matecumbe Hammock Site

Map 4

- A. North Layton Hammock Site
- B. Channel Key Site
- C. Tom's Harbor Keys Site
- D. Grassy Key Hammocks Site
- E. Marathon/Crawl Key Site

Map 5

- A. Marathon / Fat Deer Key Site
- B. Marathon / Vaca Key Site
- C. Boot Key Site

Map 6

- A. Big Torch Key Site
- B. Middle Torch Key Site
- C. Little Torch Key Site
- D. Ramrod Key Site
- E. Summerland Key Site
- F. Little Knockemdown Key Site

Map 7

- A. Budd Key Site
- B. Knockemdown Key Site
- C. Little Knockemdown Key Site
- D. Summerland Key Site
- E. Cudjoe Key Site
- F. Sugarloaf Key Site

Map 8

- A. Sugarloaf Key Site
- B. Cudjoe Key Site

Map 9

- A. Saddlebunch Keys Site
- B. Boca Chica Key Site

Map 10

- A. Great White Heron Keys Site

JANUARY 2009

for each site is: Cudjoe Key, 38 acres; Big Torch Key, 450 acres; Little Torch Key, 217 acres; Summerland Key, 20 acres; Sugarloaf Key, 2711 acres; Little Knockemdown Key, 300 acres; Middle Torch Key, 811 acres; Ramrod Key, 615 acres; and Wahoo Key, added at the LAMAC's December 3, 1993 meeting, 26 acres (acquired).

Tropical Flyways: No phasing is recommended; all 17 sites are being acquired with the Monroe County Land Authority (MCLA) as intermediary. The 17 sites are: North Creek (two large ownerships, remaining subdivided—16 acres acquired through MCLA), Largo Sound (one major ownership—68 acres acquired through MCLA), Pennekamp North (one major ownership - acquired through MCLA), Newport (one major ownership, remainder subdivided), Point Charles (one major ownership), Key Largo Narrows (one major ownership—acquired through MCLA), Dove Creek (several large ownerships, remaining subdivided—187 acres acquired through MCLA), Tavernier Creek (one major ownership), Lake San Pedro (several large ownerships), Snake Creek (one major ownership - acquired through MCLA), Green Turtle (one major ownership), Teatable (one major ownership), Lower Matecumbe (one major ownership), North Layton (several large ownerships), Grassy Key (several large ownerships), Vaca Cut (one major ownership), Stirrup Key (one ownership).

On June 11, 1998, the LAMAC approved a fee-simple, 53-acre addition (Wilson & Cotton Keys) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the William Roberts, Estate trustee, and had a 1996 taxable value of \$115,106. On February 11, 1999, the LAMAC approved a fee-simple, 955-acre addition (Boot Key) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the FGFC, consisted of one owner, Azurite Corp. LTD Florida, and a 1998 taxable value of \$178,019. On July 29, 1999, the LAMAC approved an owner requested, 6-acre deletion (on Ramrod Key) from the project boundary.

In 2003 The Nature Conservancy (TNC) purchased 593.75 acres, known as Tarpon Basin, in the Newport Hammocks site. On 12/5/2003, the ARC approved a fee-simple, 11.5-acre addition (Channel Key Island) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the owner, Barbara Trueman, and had a 2003 taxable value of \$17,268. On June 4, 2004, the ARC approved a fee-simple, 3,063-acre addition to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the FWC, consisted of multiple owners, and a 2003 taxable value of \$7,400,000. The

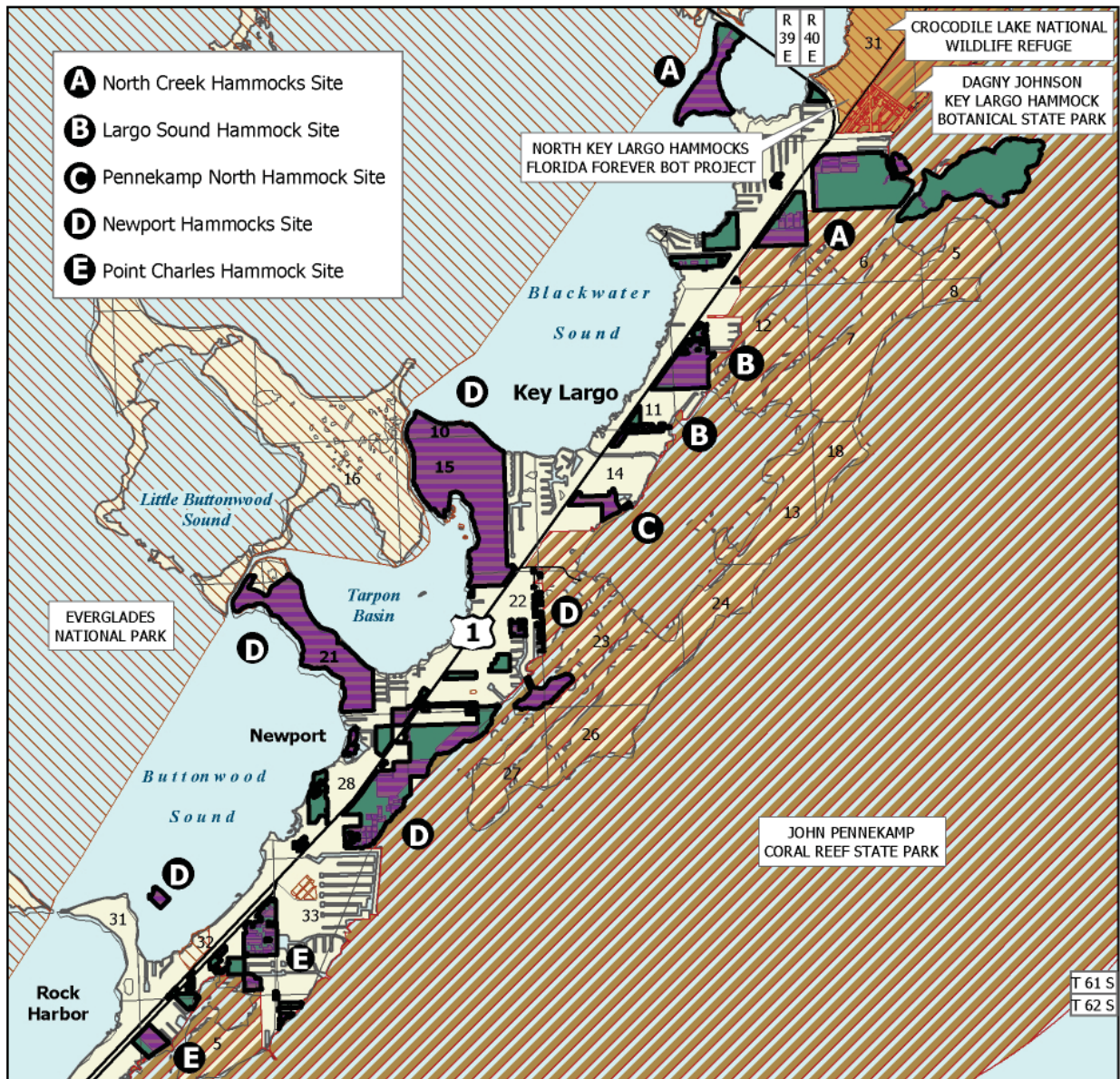
910 parcels are located on several offshore islands and six named Keys (Little Torch, Saddlebunch, Ramrod, Summerland, Cudjoe, and Upper Sugarloaf). FWC will manage 1,758 acres as an addition to the Florida Keys Wildlife Environmental Area (WEA) and the USFWS will manage the remaining acres as an addition to the Florida Key Deer Refuge.

On February 11, 2005, the ARC approved a fee-simple, ±3,695-acre addition to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the multiple entities, consisted of multiple owners, and a 2004 taxable value of approximately \$31,847,907.

On October 13, 2007, the ARC approved a fee-simple, 8.6-acre addition to the Sugarloaf Key portion of the project boundary. It was sponsored by the FWC, consisted of two parcels, a single owner (Community Sons of the Divine Will), and a taxable value of \$6,286,220. The proposed manager, FWC, does not consider the parcels essential. This boundary addition was approved with the understanding that FWC would share in the cost of the acquisition.

In June 2008, the 67-acre Camilus House exchange with University of Miami for other BOT land was completed, at no cost to Florida Forever funds. The following acres (ownerships) were purchased with DSL Florida Forever funds: 0.07 acre of Dove Creek (Cameron) for \$46,250; 1.3 acres (Neff) of Grassy Key for \$382,000; 0.15 acre (Marrerro) in Newport Hammocks for \$235,000; 42.22 acres (M&M Joint Venture, LLP) in Boca Chica Key for \$566,100; and 54.75 acres (Utility Board of the City of Key West) in Cudjoe Key for \$1,938,000, Monroe County as manager. In July, 2008, Florida Forever funds were used to buy 0.11 acre of the Pierce ownership in Charles Hammocks for \$46,250. Monroe County will manage this. In September, 2008, DSL Florida Forever funds were used to buy 3.03 acres (1.01 acre plus (2.02 acres) from the Otha Cox Estate in Cudjoe Key for a total of \$137,500 (\$47,500 plus \$90,000) Monroe County will manage this site. In November 2008, Florida Forever funds purchased 1.01 acre of the Smith ownership for \$37,000. FWC will manage this site.

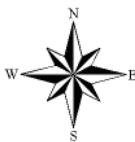
On February 6, 2009 the Department of Transportation (FDOT) donated a total of 14.18 acres on Sugarloaf (.86 acre inside the project boundary) with a total donated value of \$9,265,212. At the June 2009 meeting, ARC accepted a request by the Retus Group LLC to remove 7 acres of their ownership in Marathon from the project.



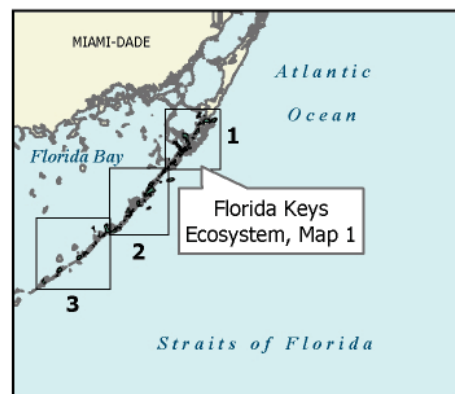
FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM, MAP 1 OF 10

MONROE COUNTY

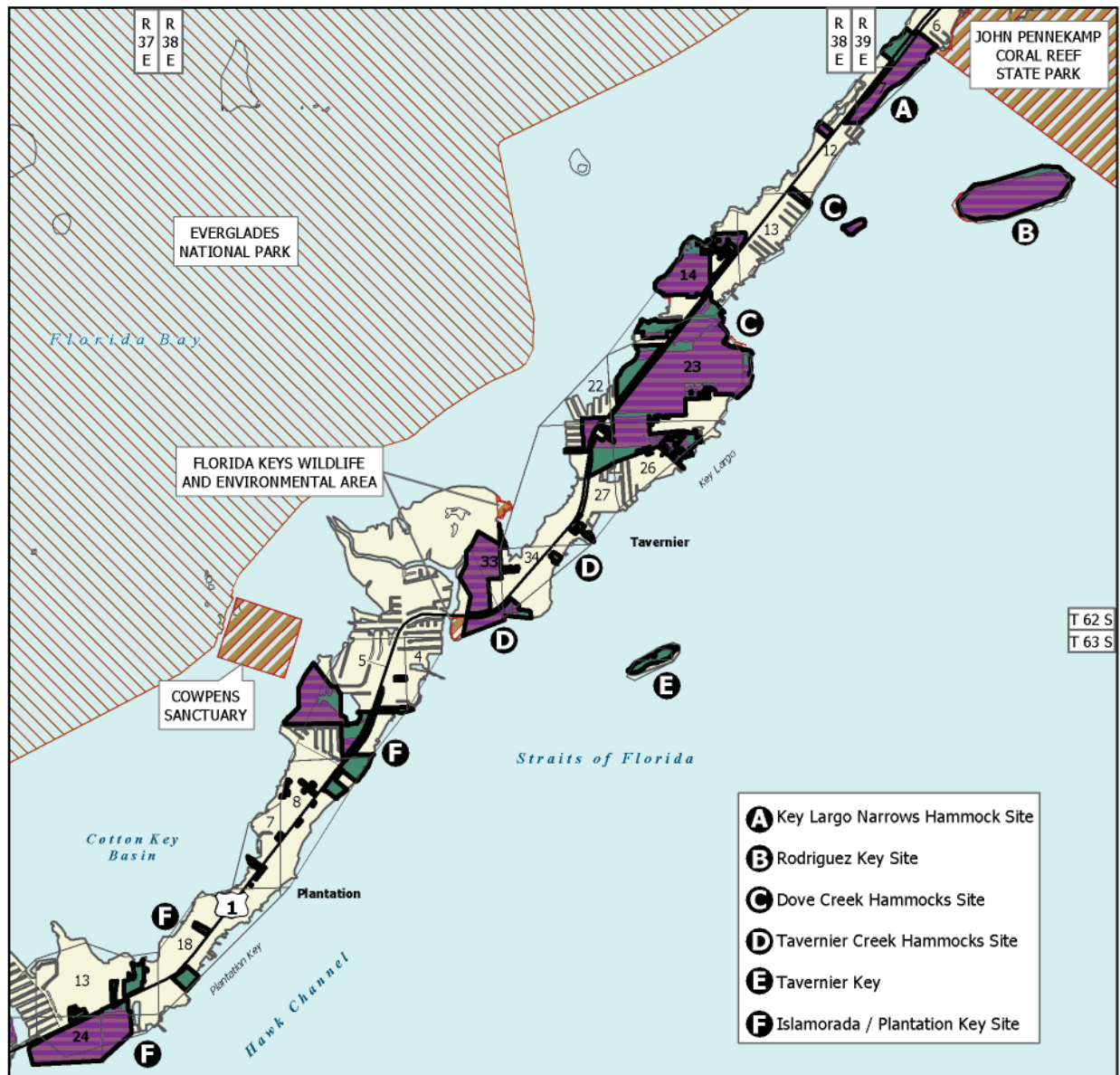
- Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
- Acquired for Conservation (Fee Simple)
- Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
- Other Florida Forever BOT Projects
- State Owned Lands
- Other Conservation Lands



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Miles



OCTOBER 2012



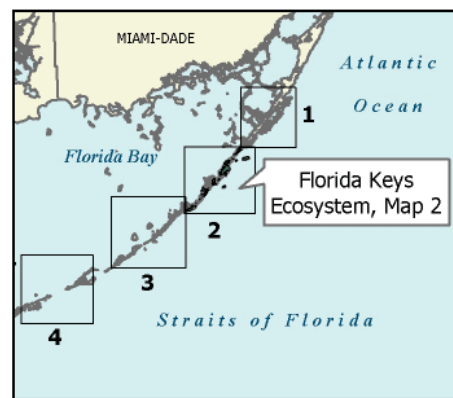
FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM, MAP 2 OF 10

MONROE COUNTY

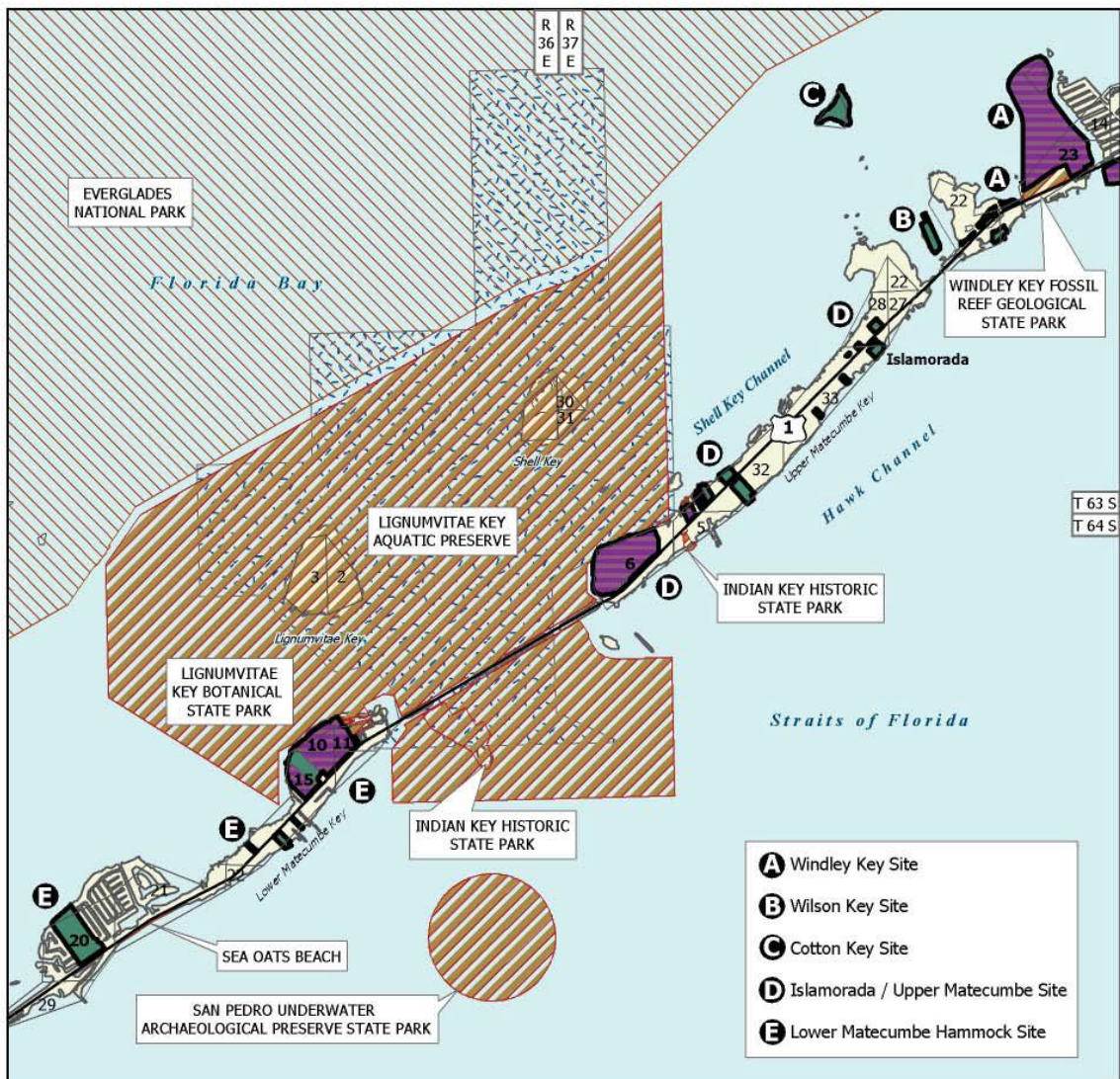
-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Acquired for Conservation (Fee Simple)
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
-  State Owned Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands



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OCTOBER 2012



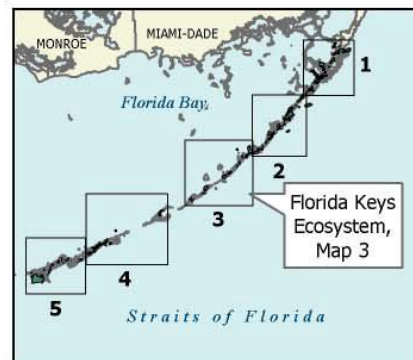
FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM, MAP 3 OF 10

MONROE COUNTY

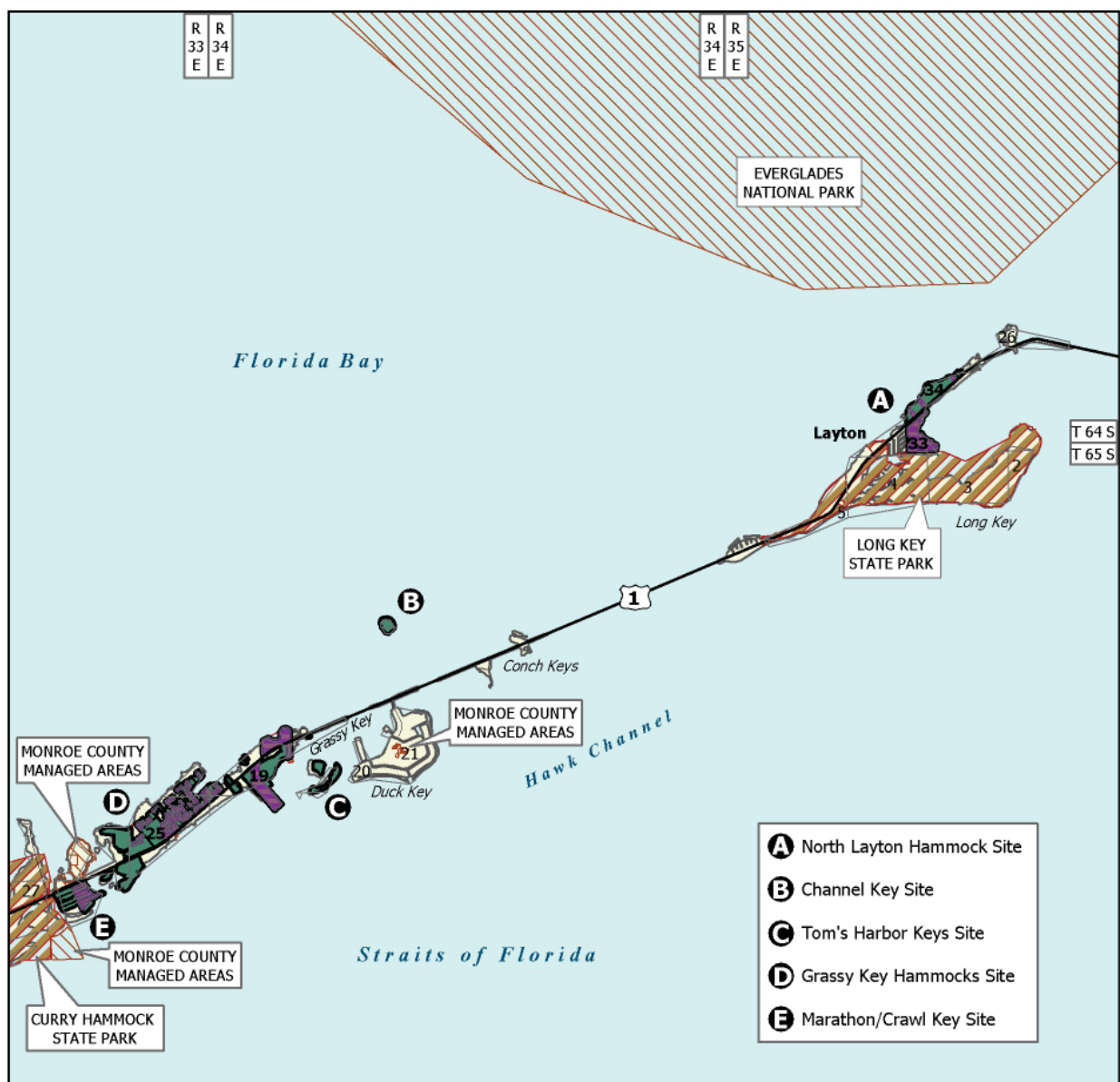
- Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
- Acquired for Conservation (Fee Simple)
- Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
- State Owned Lands
- Other Conservation Lands
- State Aquatic Preserve



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JANUARY 2012

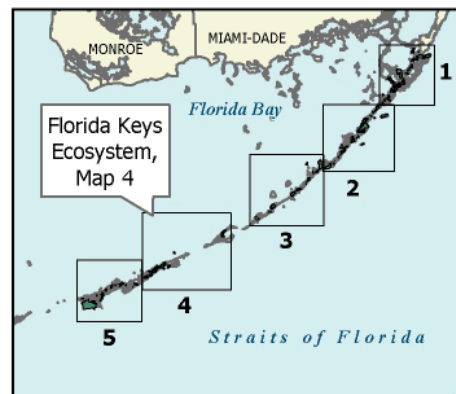


FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM, MAP 4 OF 10

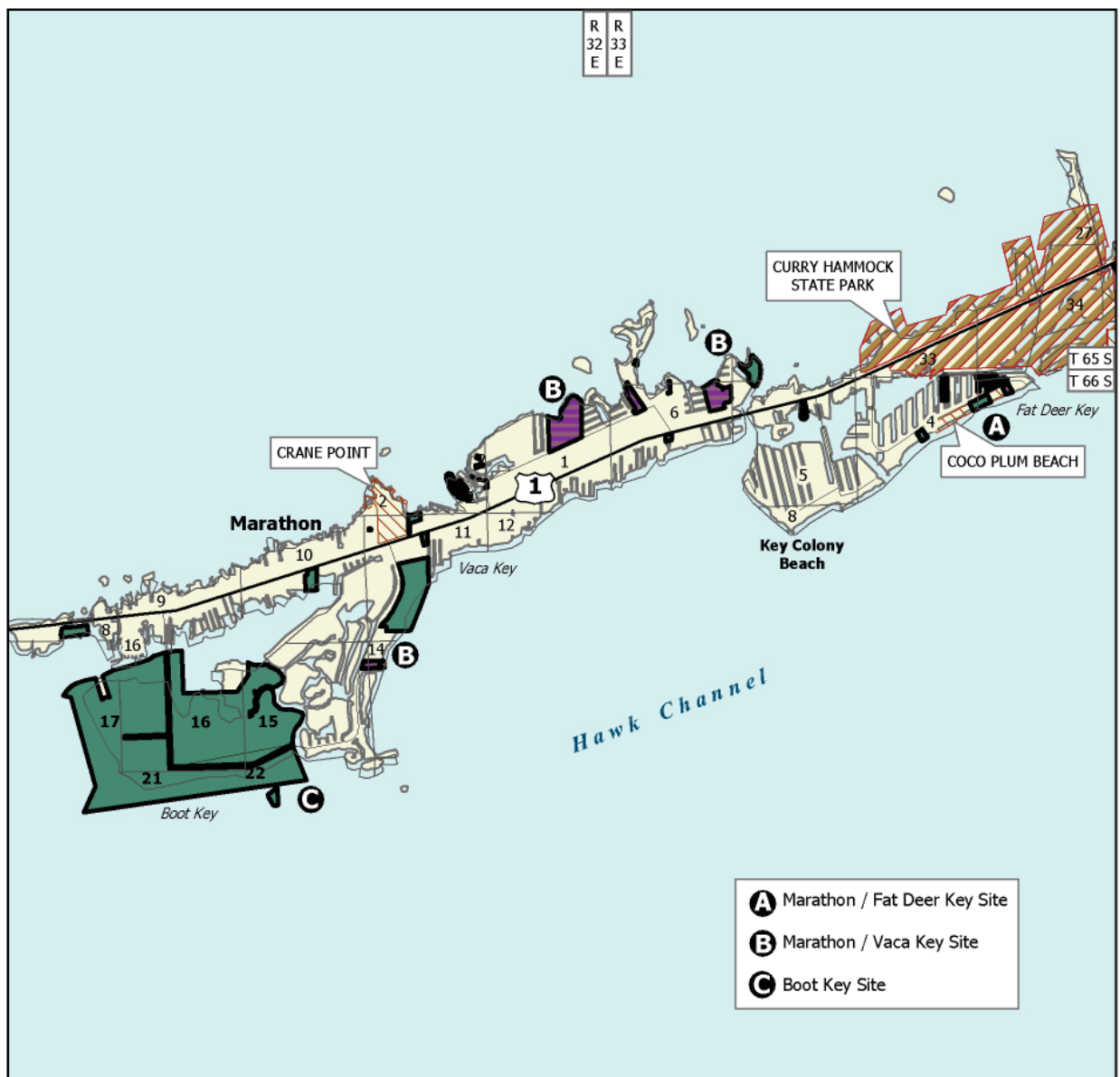
MONROE COUNTY

- 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

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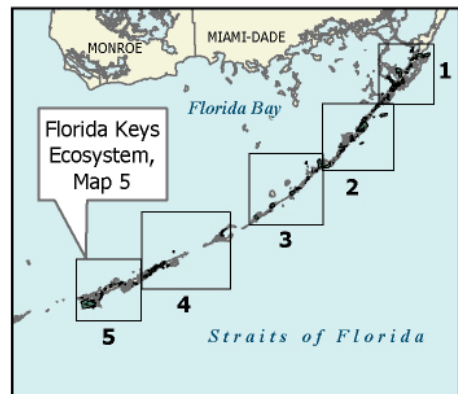
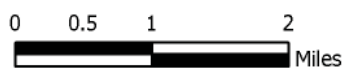
APRIL 2013



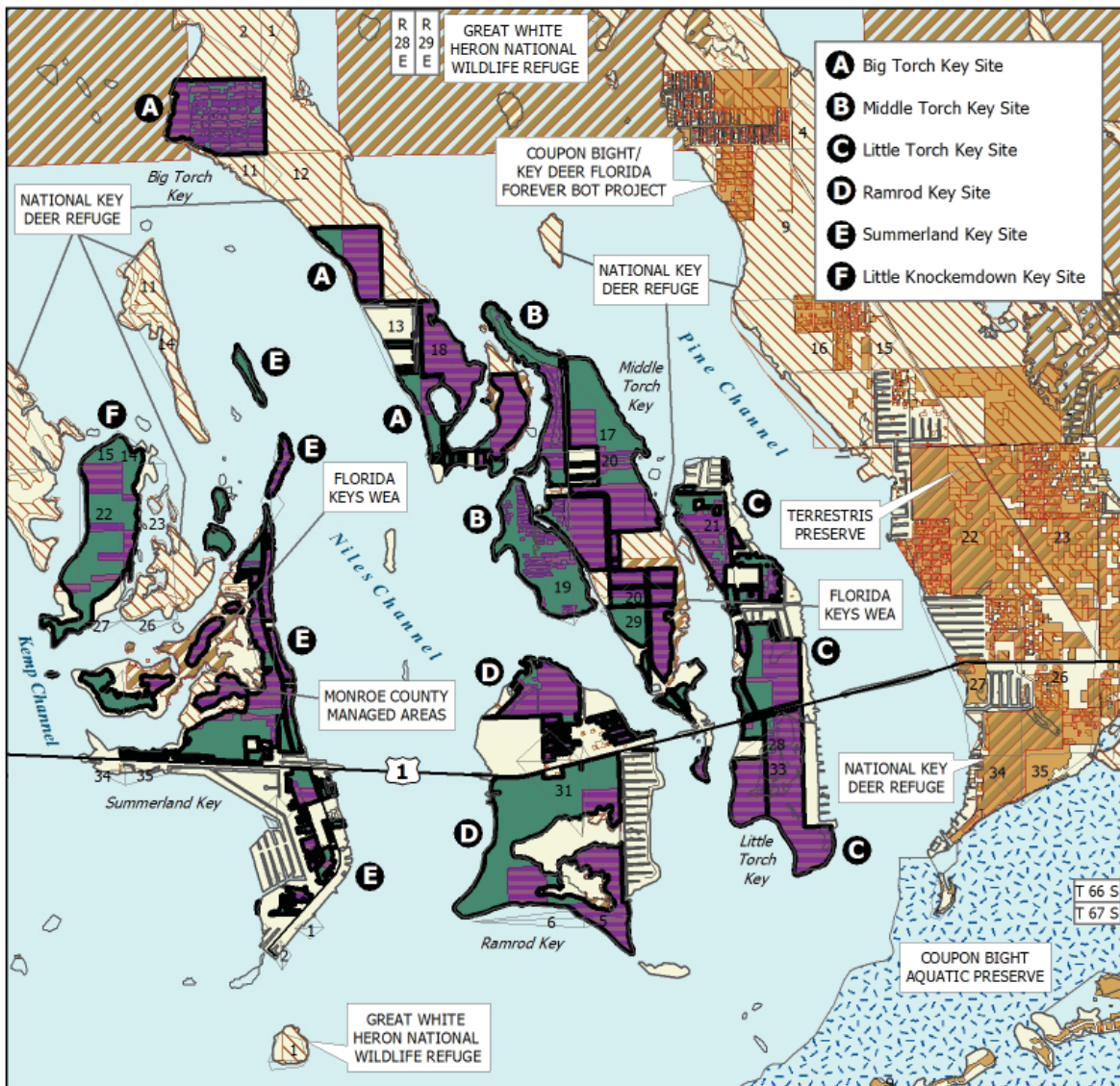
FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM, MAP 5 OF 10

MONROE COUNTY

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

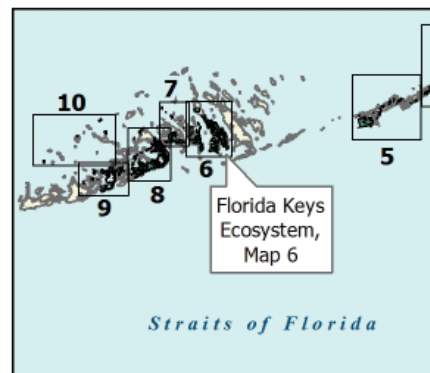
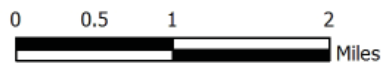
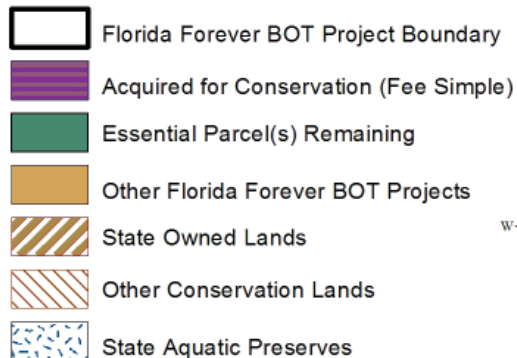


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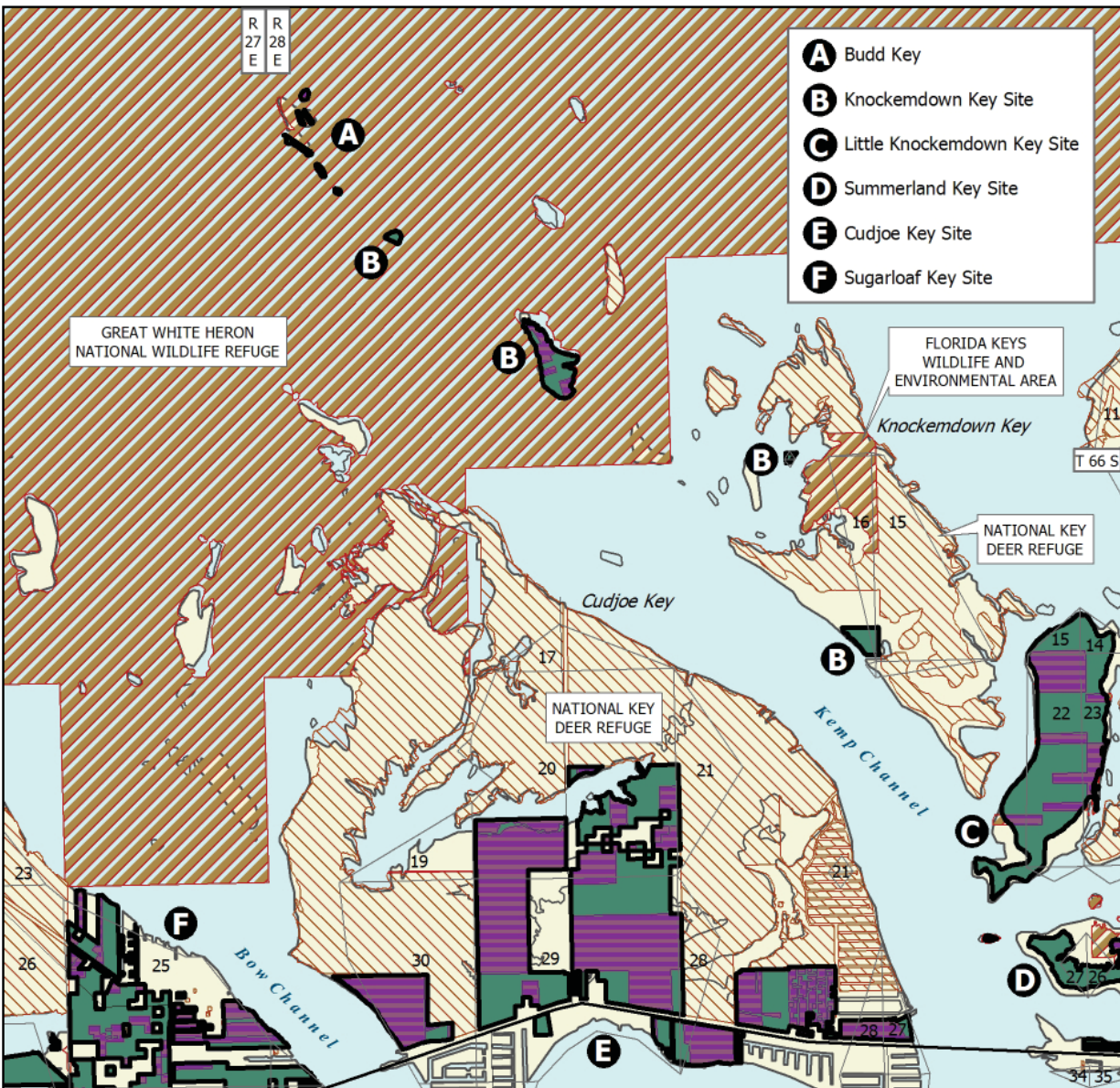


FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM, MAP 6 OF 10

MONROE COUNTY



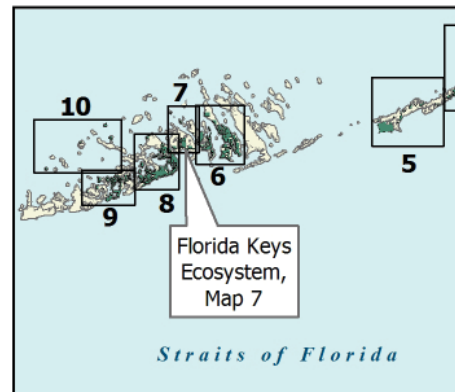
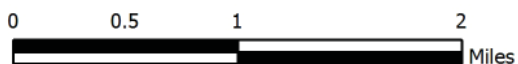
OCTOBER 2012



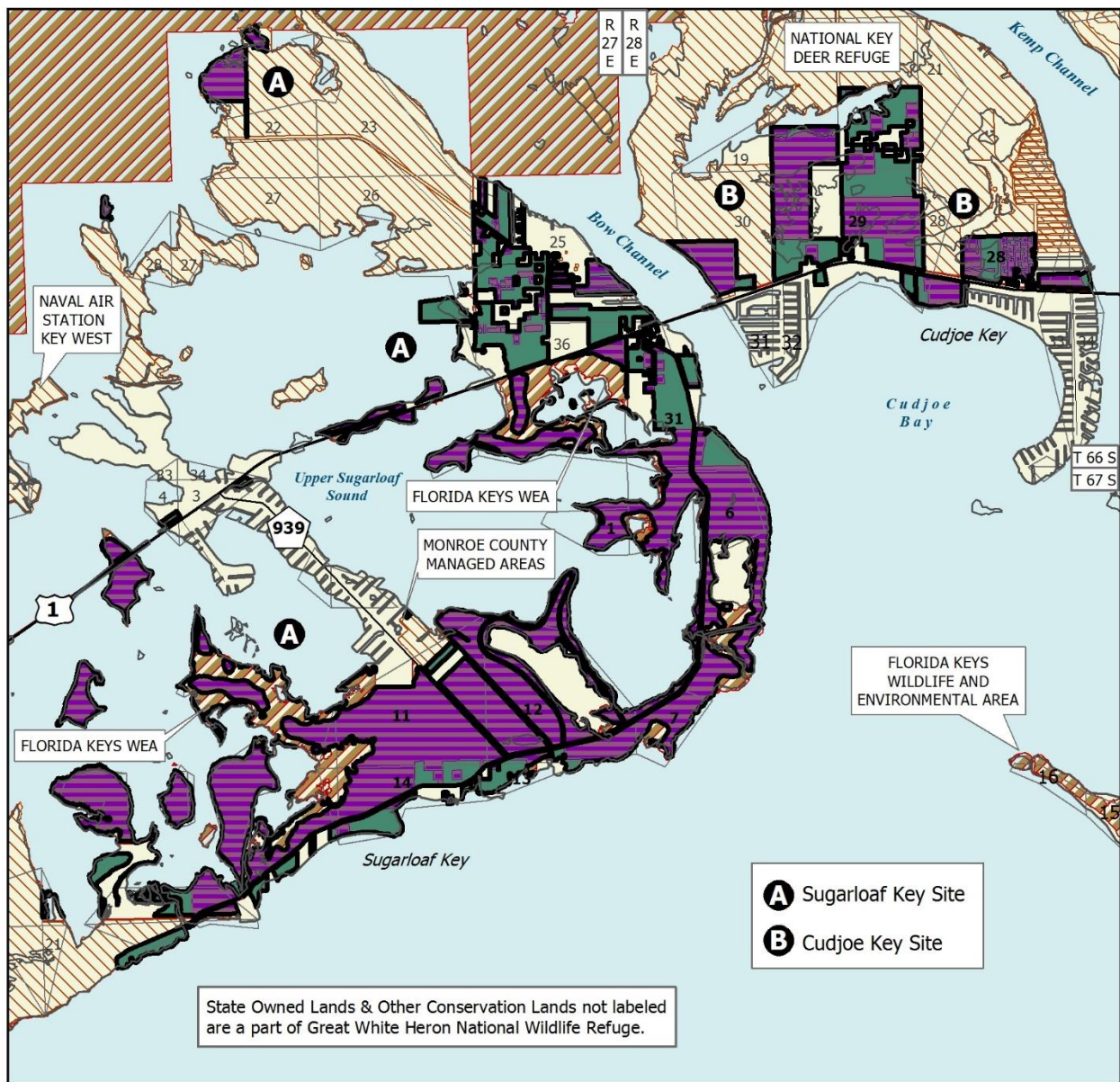
FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM, MAP 7 OF 10

MONROE COUNTY

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



SEPTEMBER 2013

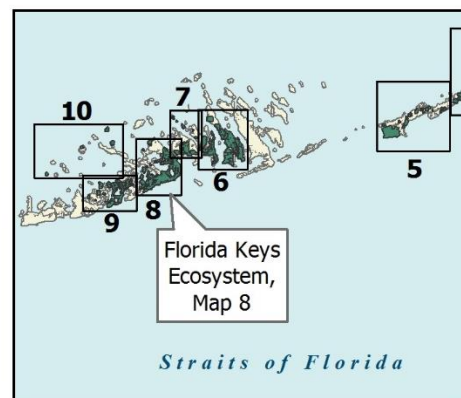


FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM, MAP 8 OF 10

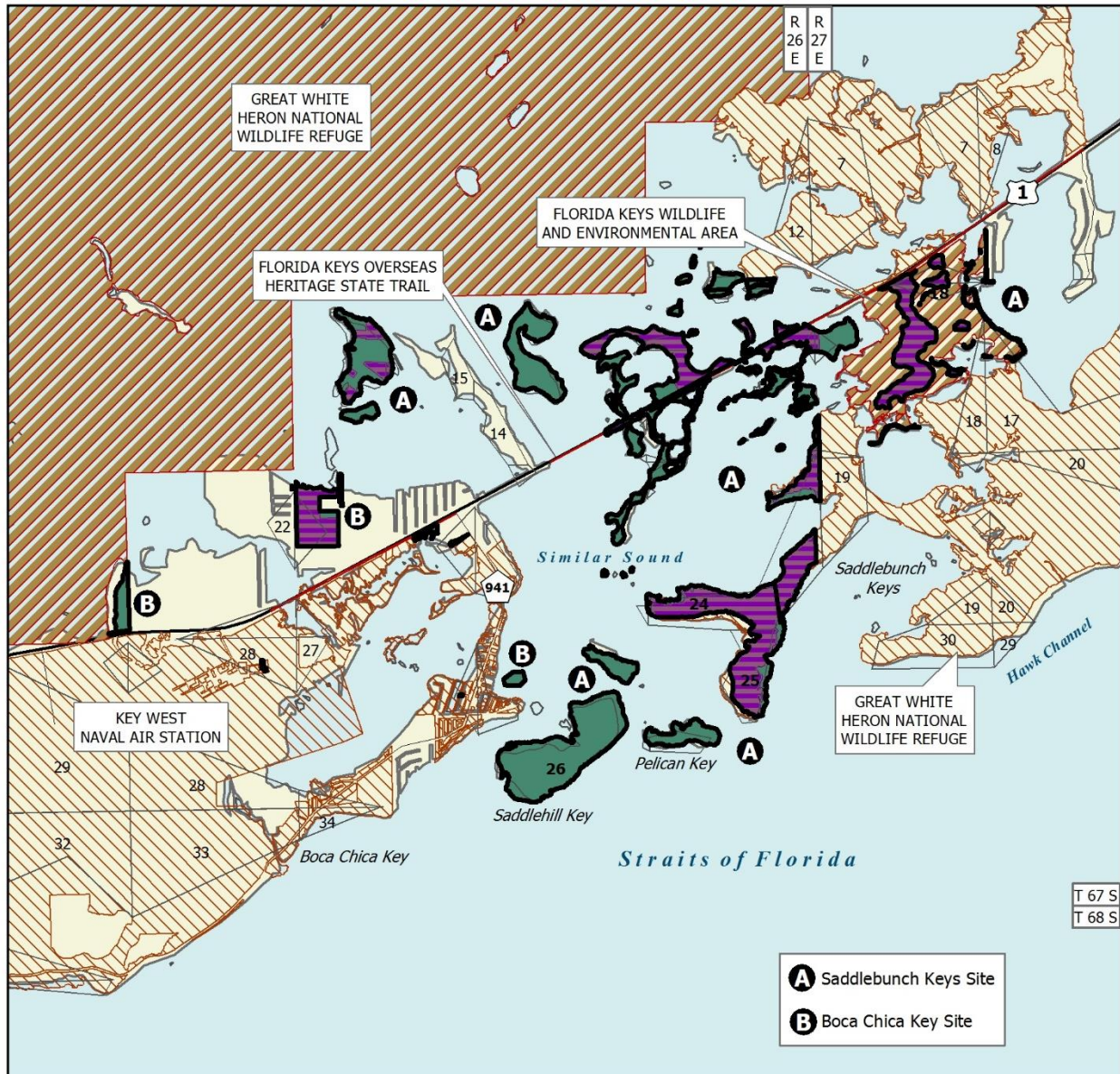
MONROE COUNTY

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

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Miles



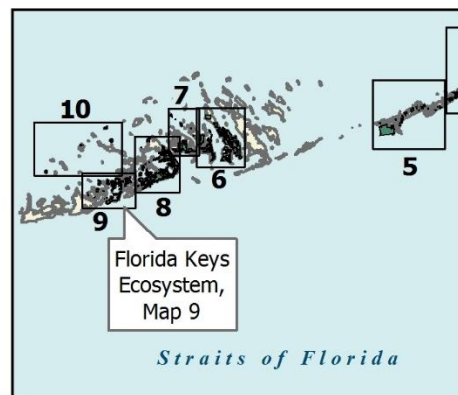
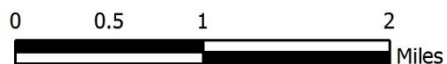
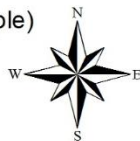
JULY 2015



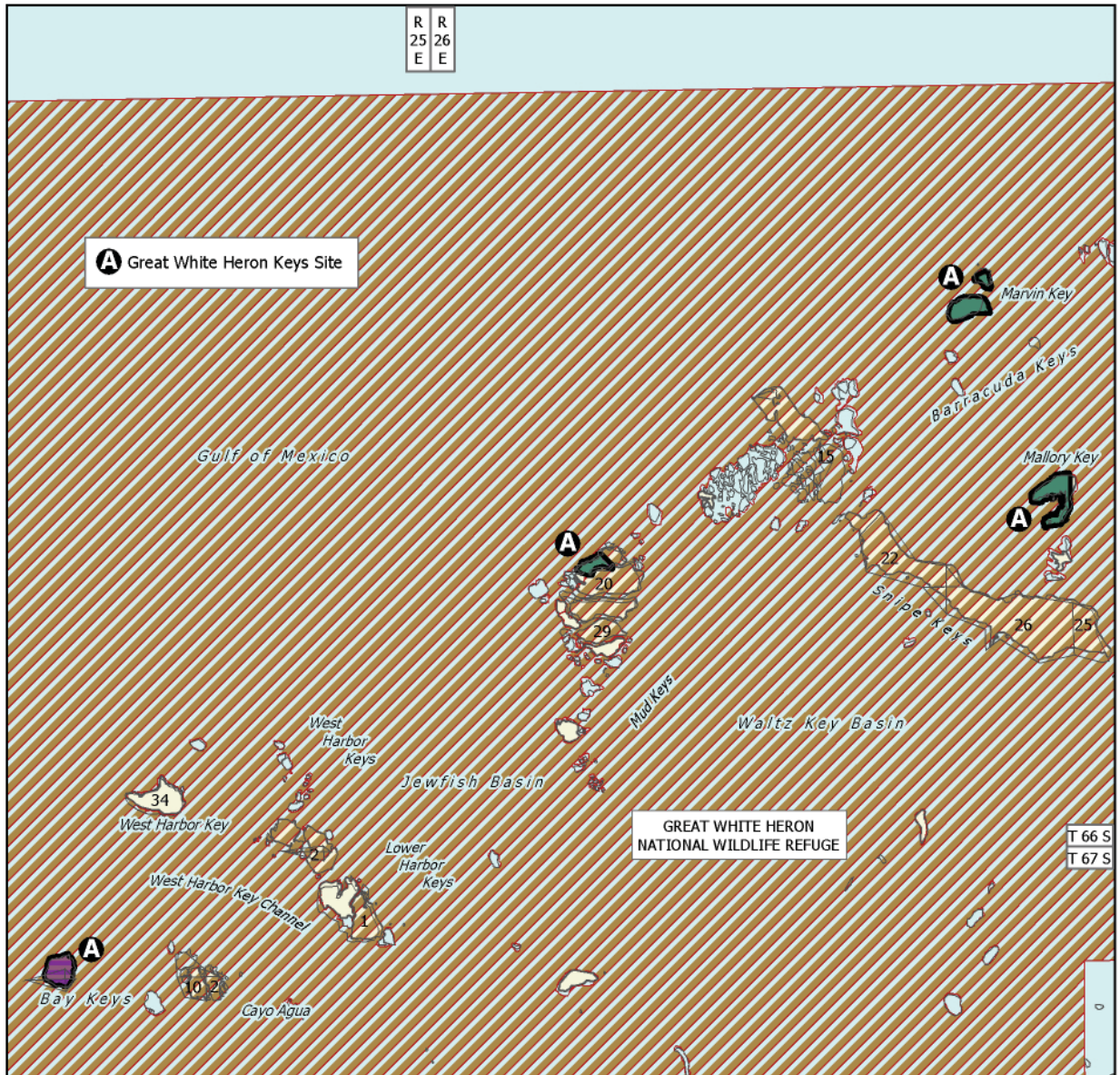
FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM, MAP 9 OF 10

MONROE COUNTY

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



JULY 2015



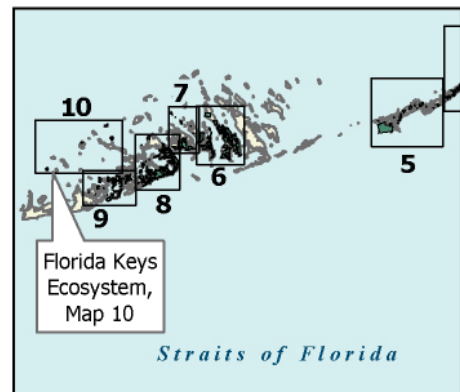
FLORIDA KEYS ECOSYSTEM, MAP 10 OF 10

MONROE COUNTY

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



0 1 2 4
Miles



APRIL 2013

On June 24, 2010 Gary Burchfield donated 1.78 acres on Sugarloaf Key (donated value of \$60,000). FWC will manage this. On October 15, 2010 ARC approved requests by property owners to remove 7 acres of their ownership within the project boundary (\$23,832 just value). On December 10, 2010 ARC approved an 11.25 acre boundary addition in Boot Key with a tax assessed just value of \$410,544, to assist with a Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) grant application. The City of Marathon is interested in purchasing all of Boot Key as proposed in the CELCP application.

On January 20, 2011 Anne Kirkly donated 7.39 acres (\$3,208) in Dove Creek Hammocks to be managed by FWC. On June 1, 11 James D. Hanson, Jr. donated 284.54 acres (Windley Key-value of \$200,000) to be managed by DRP.

On December 9, 2011, ARC placed this project in the Climate Change Lands list of Florida Forever projects.

On April 20, 2012 ARC removed 8.6 acres from the project at a landowner's request. On June 15, 2012 ARC deleted a 3.2-acre property on Plantation Key from the project boundary at the request of the landowner.

Coordination

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the National Audubon Society sponsored this project. TNC, the Monroe County Land Authority, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are participants and have been intermediaries in the acquisition of some of the sites within this project.

Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the 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; conserve and protect lands within areas of critical state concern; conserve and protect habitat for native species or endangered and threatened species; and 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 that local or state programs cannot adequately protect.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation The unique wildlife, plant, and recreational resources of the Florida Keys Ecosystem sites qualify them as wildlife and

environmental areas, botanical sites or preserves, and state parks.

Florida Keys Ecosystem sites managed by the DEP Division of Recreation and Parks:

Key Largo Narrows	Grassy Key Site
Point Charles Hammock	Teatable Hammock
Largo Sound Hammock	Pennekamp North
North Creek Hammock	Newport Hammock
Lower Matecumbe Hammock	N. Layton Hammock

Florida Keys Ecosystem sites managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission:

Cudjoe Key	Tavernier Creek
Little Torch Key	Lake San Pedro
Middle Torch	Key Snake Creek
Big Torch Key	Green Turtle
Summerland Key	Vaca Cut
Sugarloaf Key	Stirrup Key
Little Knockemdown	Key Saddlebunch Key
Ramrod Key	Wahoo Key
Dove Creek	Upper Sugarloaf Key

Managers

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) (19 sites); Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), (10 sites). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Monroe County, City of Marathon, and City of Islamorada also manage some properties.

Conditions affecting intensity of management The Florida Keys Ecosystem project generally includes high-need tracts because of their small size and proximity to intensive residential and commercial development. They require basic natural areas land management including exotic-species removal, avoidance of actions that further fragment the hammocks, general trash and debris removal, posting and some fencing, and the establishment of some basic visitor amenities at selected sites. Special species may require specific management actions. The project areas are a high-need management area which, because of their location, size and nature, will require a high level of attention to maintain and perpetuate their individual resources.

Timetable for implementing management and provisions for security and protection of infrastructure Within the first year after acquisition, the FWC will give management priority to natural resource inventory and planning. Sites will be surveyed for rare and endangered species and management plans

will be prepared. In future years, management will concentrate on implementing the plans with emphasis on exotic species eradication and maintenance, trash and debris removal, and posting and fencing for security. Long-range management will focus on using the sites to build public awareness and support for natural areas protection in general, and for tropical hardwood hammock preservation in particular. Most tracts will provide passive recreational activities for the general public. Longer range goals would include development of a detailed management plan focused on perpetuation and maintenance of natural communities. An in-depth resource inventory would be carried out to identify and map all sensitive areas that warrant special consideration. Visitor amenities will be planned and constructed at appropriate sites within the project and public environmental-education programs will be

Revenue-generating potential Public use of sites managed by the FWC will be relatively low because no infrastructure will be provided. For the sites managed by the DRP, no significant revenue is expected to be generated initially. After acquisition, it will probably be several years before any significant level of public use facilities is developed. The amount of any future revenue generated would depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities.

Cooperators in management activities The FWC will cooperate with and seek the assistance of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, other state agencies, local government entities and interested parties as appropriate.

Updated January 31, 2018

Management Cost Summary/FWC

Category	Startup	Recurring
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Salary	\$85,000	\$85,000
OPS	\$17,500	\$9,000
Expense	\$45,000	\$35,000
OCO	\$75,000	\$15,000
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$222,500	\$144,000

Management Cost Summary/DRP

Category	Startup	Recurring
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Salary	\$22,167	\$285,000
OPS	\$24,560	\$10,000
Expense	\$10,000	\$95,000
OCO	\$61,978	\$1,000
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$118,705	\$391,000

Management Cost Summary/FWC

Category	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL	CARL
Salary	\$0	\$10,950	\$85,000
OPS	\$0	\$0	\$17,500
Expense	\$0	\$8,010	\$45,000
OCO	\$0	\$2,838	\$75,000
FCO	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$0	\$21,798	\$222,500

Management Cost Summary/DRP

Category	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Source of Funds	SPTF/GDTF/ LATF/CARL	SPTF/LATF/ GDTF/CARL	SPTF/CARL
Salary	\$424,040	\$436,761	\$449,684
OPS	\$15,491	\$14,000	\$14,000
Expense	\$262,556	\$268,000	\$268,000
OCO	\$18,829	\$8,200	\$8,200
INT.MGT.	\$1,698	\$1,698	\$1,698
HOSP	\$13,561	13,561	\$13,561
FCO	\$1,081,952	\$1,332,319	\$0
TOTAL	\$1,818,127	\$2,074,539	\$755,323

first year will include site security, natural and cultural resource protection, and efforts toward the development of a plan for long-term public use and resource management.