

APPENDIX L

Equestrian Use Evaluation and Feasibility Assessment

Mobbly Bayou Wilderness Preserve

Equestrian Use Evaluation and Feasibility Assessment

Existing Use and History

Commercial equestrian use has been occurring on the property now known as the Mobbly Bayou Wilderness Preserve for approximately the last decade. Prior to this, equestrian use likely consisted only of local owners who were close enough to walk their horses to the Preserve. Current use is estimated to be between 100 and 200¹ horses per week within the eastern section of the Preserve (south end of Racetrack Road). The vast majority of this use is related to a commercial riding facility (Hire a Pony), with some use derived from private residents (<5%). Patrons of Hire a Pony typically use the Preserve for one-hour rides in groups ranging between 2 and +20 riders. Groups typically consist of less than 10 individuals. Over the last decade, riders have created an extensive network of trails through the Preserve, primarily in the tidal wetlands associated with Mobbly Bayou. The City of Oldsmar purchased the property comprising the northern section of the Preserve where much of the riding occurs in February of 2000. Pinellas County owns the central marsh area of the Preserve where the remainder of the riding occurs. The entire area of existing use however, is now under the jurisdiction of the Pinellas County Environmental Lands Division (ELD) as a "Preserve Management Area" per our Interlocal Agreement with the City; effective April 5, 2001 (see Appendix E).

A comprehensive analysis was performed to determine what areas of the Preserve may practicably support equestrian use without causing further ecological degradation and in consideration of other planned public uses for the Preserve (see latter section of this report). This study was initiated in consideration of the historic equestrian use of the Mobbly Bayou Wilderness Preserve, and in response to the recent City of Oldsmar Resolution (Resolution 2002-15), as well as public comment requesting that we analyze the issue in detail.

The existing equestrian use occurs almost exclusively with the tidal wetlands of Mobbly Bayou. Existing use in the tidal wetlands is inconsistent with the stated mission of the Pinellas County ELD to manage the County's environmental lands in a manner that promotes the health and quality of habitats native to the County. The wetlands in the area of existing use are some of the last remaining salt marshes and mangrove systems remaining in Tampa Bay. Consequently, the primary management goal will be to enhance and restore them in every way feasible. Further regulations and policies relating to the inconsistency of the current use include:

- The Goals and Objectives of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan Coastal Management Element, Recreation and Open Space Element, Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources Element, and Surface Water Element (see Appendix B).
- The Goals and Objectives of the Pinellas County Environmental Lands Division Ordinance including Section 90-104(a)(2), and (c)(1); and Section 90-105 (b), (j), and (r) (see Appendix C).

¹ During January and February 2003 public use patterns were monitored in the eastern section of the Preserve by volunteers of the Environmental Lands Division. The intensity of equestrian and pedestrian use of the Preserve was quantified. Additional baseline data concerning wildlife utilization and vegetation structure and composition were also collected (data presented as part of tables F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4 and H-1).

- The Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the City of Oldsmar Growth Management and Comprehensive Plan Coastal Management and Conservation Element (see Appendix D) including:
 - Goal 1:* “To ensure the highest environmental quality possible, The City of Oldsmar shall conserve, protect and appropriately manage the natural resources (aquatic, wetland, and terrestrial).
 - Policy 1.2.8:* “The city shall establish criteria for designating environmentally sensitive lands and adopt and enforce this criteria through its LDC (Land Development Code, Article XII, Section 12.28).
 - Objective 1.3:* “The City shall conserve or improve wetlands, aquatic resources, and wildlife populations and habitat to maintain their environmental and recreational value with its LDC (Land Development Code, Article IX, Sec. 9.3).
- The Goals of the Federal Clean Water Act which include 1) restoring and maintaining the “chemical, physical and biological integrity of the nations waters” 33 U.S.C.S 125(a) and 2) eliminating the “discharge of pollutants into navigable waterways” 33 U.S.C.S 125 (a)(1).
- The Florida Watershed Restoration Act which clarifies FDEP;s authority to establish Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and establishes a process for identifying and listing impaired waters and developing TMDLs and associated watershed management plans.
- The Tampa Bay Anclote Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.
- The Southwest Florida Water Management District SWIM Plan.
- The Tampa Bay Estuary Program Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for Tampa Bay.

Reasons which specifically detail the inconsistency of equestrian use in the wetlands with the goals and objectives as stated above include erosion control problems, invasive/exotic species problems, nutrient loading and pathogen introduction to Upper Tampa Bay, and general risk management issues.

The area where the current trail system occurs is in a tidal zone. Some contend this fact actually prevents erosion issues because regular tidal action may wash sediments back to areas rutted from overuse. While this may be true in areas with a relatively flat topography and where water tends to pool at low tide, what is occurring over the majority of the trail system is a continual and gradual loss of sediments. Areas void of vegetation from horse use have lost the main factor stabilizing the soils and preventing sediments from being washed away with the tide. This is a potential contributor to total suspended solids pollution to Upper Tampa Bay and potentially contributes to decreases in water clarity. Decreased water clarity ultimately impacts the overall health of the Bay.

Additionally, rutted trail systems now serve as flow ways, diverting overland tidal flows into narrow channels. This alters the normal hydrologic pattern in the tidal wetlands and creates an ecological disturbance by changing the normal hydrologic regime under which the existing vegetative communities developed. This disturbance often results in the invasion of weedy, opportunistic and non-native species, such as Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*). These species are common in disturbed areas and are often found adjacent to trail systems.

The following photos depict the present condition.



Photo 1. This photo shows the exposed root systems of oaks and palmettos adjacent to the trail – a direct result of tidal action on exposed substrates.



Photo 2. This photo further demonstrates the soil erosion and channelization of water as a result of the horse trails. During high tide, water depth in this trail is approximately 1 foot.

Nutrient loading is another potential problem created by the existing level of equestrian use in the wetlands of Mobbly Bayou. To illustrate this potential, on average, a 1000-pound horse will expel 8-10 tons of waste per year, which is approximately 66 lbs of waste per day (Lamb and Sullivan, 1993). Healthy horses defecate between 10-12 times per day (Dennis, 1991), which means the average dung is 6 pounds. Recent estimates for horse use on the Preserve during January and February 2003 averaged between 100-200 horses per week (with densities even greater with large groups). If we take the average of 150 and assume a horse is likely to defecate at least once while walking for an hour on the trail, this amounts to up to 900 lbs. of manure deposited essentially directly into Upper Tampa Bay every week. This is not an insignificant source of nitrogen loading to the Bay (as well as pathogens such as fecal coliform). This level of use is far greater than previously suspected by land managers from the County and City.

Seagrasses, which are vital fisheries habitat and a critical component to the health and function of the Tampa Bay estuary, are extremely sensitive to increases in nitrogen. Nitrogen is a primary factor initiating the process of eutrophication whereby primary producers such as algae display increases in growth from elevated levels of nutrients (Bricker, 1999). The increased amount of algae adversely affects the photosynthetic ability of seagrasses and leads to their decline (Greening, 1997). In Tampa Bay seagrass levels have declined from 31,000 hectares throughout the Bay (pre-1930's levels) to 10,050 hectares in 1999. This decline is directly attributable to humans, primarily from dredging operations and excessive nitrogen loading. (Greening, 2002)

The decreases in seagrass coverage have been most dramatic in Upper Tampa Bay, and particularly in Mobbly Bay. Mobbly Bay initially experienced a rebound in seagrasses from 1990-1992, however, from 1994-1996 seagrasses had notably decreased in Mobbly Bay. This is in contrast to overall increases of seagrasses throughout Tampa Bay (Janicki, 2000). This may simply be a result of land use changes at the watershed level. The Double Branch watershed (including Mobbly Bayou) is expected to have one of the greatest increases in nitrogen and phosphorous loads by the year 2010; a result of conversion of agricultural land uses to residential (SWFWMD, 2002). However, given that commercial equestrian use of the Preserve started in the early 90's, it is not inconceivable that it may have been a contributing factor. Further research on this issue is warranted.

Aside from the above documented structural changes to the vegetative communities of the estuary and degradation to water quality, there is a perhaps even greater risk management concern regarding the present location of the equestrian trails in the wetlands. The current trail system occurs nearly entirely in regularly inundated tidal areas. As such, these trails are not maintainable to any standard level of safety, and present a level of exposure to the County and the City. From the County's perspective, and very likely the City's, this is an unacceptable level of risk to assume.

Equestrian Use Feasibility Assessment

Trail Options

A feasibility analysis was performed to determine the potential upland areas of the Preserve which may practicably support equestrian use. Six options were chosen for analysis including a 'no build/use discontinued' option and an "unrestricted access" option. Pros and cons were examined for each. The six options are depicted on Figure L-1, Equestrian Feasibility Assessment, and are listed as follows:

- 1) *No build, existing use discontinued*
- 2) *Small upland loop (eastern Preserve)*
- 3) *Small upland loop (northern Preserve)*
- 4) *Connect eastern and northern uplands*
- 5) *Small upland loop (southern Preserve)*
- 6) *Unrestricted equestrian access (current use continued)*

The pros and cons for each of these options are detailed below.

- 1) *No build, existing use discontinued*

Pros:

- No habitat impacts.
- No conflicts with planned hiking trails.
- No conflicts with planned parking areas.
- No public access issues.
- Cessation of exclusive use.
- Consistent with SWIM Cooperative Agreement and habitat restoration plan.
- Consistent with sustainable use of property and stewardship goals of the Environmental Lands Division.

Cons:

- Would not satisfy some of the public's desire for horse trail.

- 2) *Small upland loop - eastern preserve (max length <0.5 miles)*

Pros:

- Reduced habitat impact when compared to existing condition.
- Would potentially meet public desire for horse trail.
- Trail loop location potentially acceptable to the City of Oldsmar.

Cons:

- No parking – Access to locals and Hire a Pony business only.

- Trail loop of <0.5 miles is typically considered too small by most equestrian riders. There are other, longer horse trails in the region including Brooker Creek Preserve (13 miles), J.B. Starkey Wilderness Preserve (8 miles), Withlacoochee State Forest (56 miles), and Hillsborough County Parks and Preserves (~30 miles).
- Trail would necessarily traverse behind adjacent property owners homes, an idea that has been met with disapproval by affected residents.
- Little enforcement, and no way to keep users off the previous trail in the wetlands.
- Additional trail maintenance, staffing issues.
- Increased potential for nuisance/exotic species growth in disturbed areas.

3) *Small upland loop - northern preserve (max length ~1 mile)*

Pros:

- Minimized habitat impact.
- Would potentially meet public desire for horse trail.
- A trail loop in this location may potentially accommodate horse trailers and allow for greater public access.
- Direct access could be maintained (via the Progress Energy corridor) for residents in the neighborhood west of Racetrack Road. This would also increase by approximately 0.5 miles the overall trail length for riders in this neighborhood.

Cons:

- This trail may still be considered too small by most horse riders.
- A trail in this location would conflict with planned hiking trails.
- Direct access for neighborhood at eastern edge of Preserve would require a Progress Energy easement to make a complete loop.
- Horse trailer parking in this location would potentially conflict with other recreational amenities and parking to be developed by the City Of Oldsmar. Not an acceptable location to the City of Oldsmar.
- Additional trail maintenance, staffing issues.
- There would be no direct access for users of Hire a Pony.
- Increased potential for nuisance/exotic species growth in disturbed areas.

4) *Connect eastern and northern uplands (max length ~2 miles)*

(Trailer parking for general public access would be provided at north recreational support area – City of Oldsmar Parks and Recreation Dept. managed)

Pros:

- This trail would provide direct access for users of Hire a Pony and the neighborhood on Racetrack Road with an entrance at the eastern edge of the preserve near where it currently occurs, as well as access to the general public with parking at the northwestern edge of the Preserve.

- This trail would create decreased conflict with planned hiking trails in the northwestern section of the Preserve because a linear trail rather than a loop would be installed.
- If Progress Energy allows access along their corridor, and additional 0.5 miles could be added to the trail length and a complete loop could be made for residents in the neighborhood west of Racetrack and the clients of the horse riding facility.

Cons:

- Resource impacts – would create wetland impacts within tidal areas requiring stabilization and/or fill.
- Water quality impacts from continual flushing of manure and wastes into Upper Tampa Bay.
- A permitted horse trail through wetlands is unprecedented and would be difficult to impossible to have permitted with state and federal agencies (SWFWMD and ACOE).
- Trail would necessarily traverse behind adjacent property owner's homes, an idea that has been met with disapproval by affected residents.
- A Progress Energy easement would be required to make a complete loop through to neighborhood at eastern edge of Preserve.
- This trail would create potential conflict with planned recreational developments in the northwestern section of the Preserve. Location unacceptable to City of Oldsmar.
- This trail may still be considered too small to be a worthwhile, relative to other regional equestrian facilities available (probably only true for those who would trailer their horses to the Preserve).
- No enforcement, and no way to keep users off the previous trail in the wetlands.
- Cost for wetland soil stabilization (geoweb, horse boardwalk, etc.) may preclude any further consideration. Public interest in this amenity over hiking trails would not justify cost.
- A new trail entrance would have to be created at the south end of Racetrack Road away from the existing one in the tidal wetlands.
- Additional trail maintenance, staffing issues.
- Increased potential for nuisance/exotic species growth in disturbed areas.

5) *Small upland loop - southern preserve (max length ~2 miles)*

(Trailer parking for general public access would be provided at south recreational support area – City of Oldsmar Parks and Recreation Dept. managed)

Pros:

- A trail in this location would serve the greater public by providing access and parking for those requiring trailer access to the Preserve.
- This trail loop would be longer than options 2 and 3 above.

Cons:

- Progress Energy easements would be required to cross power line corridor into southeaster section of Preserve.
- Horse trailers traveling down Shore Drive, a narrow residential street, would potentially create traffic conflicts.
- Horse trailer parking would potentially conflict with the planned beach park development by the City of Oldsmar. Location is unacceptable to the City of Oldsmar.
- A trail in this location would not provide direct access to Hire a Pony business or other horse owners at the north end of the Preserve.
- A horse trail in this location would conflict with planned hiking trails at the southern end of the Preserve.
- A trail in this location would potentially conflict with commitments to the State/FCT with regard to resource management.
- Additional trail maintenance, staffing issues.
- Increased potential for nuisance/exotic species growth in disturbed areas.

6) *Unrestricted equestrian access (current use continued)*

Pros:

- Current use continues and current users are appeased.

Cons:

- Not meeting the commitments to the State or County with regard to resource management.
- Environmental degradation in wetland continues; including water quality, hydrological impacts, soil erosion, and exotic species persistence.
- No general public access available in this location; would exclude general public.
- Would not remedy complaints of adjacent residents dissatisfied with the existing condition.
- Not enough staff to effectively maintain.
- Not enough security to enforce rules and ordinances.
- Unacceptable level of exposure and risk to the County and the City because current trail system is on unconsolidated tidally inundated substrates which are not possible to maintain for safety.
- Would continue exclusive use by Hire a Pony, a handful of Oldsmar residents, and other residents of adjacent Hillsborough County.



**MOBBLY BAYOU
WILDERNESS PRESERVE**

**Figure L-1
Equestrian Feasibility
Assessment**

- Preserve Boundary
- Option 1: No build
- Option 2: Small upland loop (eastern Preserve)
- Option 3: Small upland loop (northern Preserve)
- Option 4: Connect eastern and northern uplands
- Option 5: Small upland loop (southern Preserve)
- Option 6: Unrestricted access (current use continued)
- Potential trail extension (per Progress Energy agreement)



This map is a graphical representation of land data for planning purposes only. These data have not been collected under the supervision of a licensed Professional Surveyor and Mapper. Pinellas County makes no warranty as to the accuracy of the data contained within this map. This map was compiled in January 2003 by the DEM/ELD from best available sources.

The summary of the analysis is that in addition to Option 1 (No build, existing use discontinued), there are only two marginally practicable options; Options 2 and 3, and only Option 2 does not pose a direct conflict with the planned recreational developments of the City of Oldsmar Parks and Recreation Department. Option 6, involving use of the wetlands, was discussed in detail earlier in this report and will not be considered further. Option 4 conflicts directly with the planned recreational developments of the City and would introduce traffic and parking problems, while Option 5 would require unprecedented and cost prohibitive and permitting, design and construction costs. Options 4 and 5 will also not be considered further.

Option 2.

Option 2 is the small upland loop in the eastern section of the Preserve north of the existing trail. The Environmental Lands Division has examined this option in depth and has determined that from an ecological and management perspective it is not practical. The reasons are detailed below.

Insufficient Length – During discussions with the representatives from the Florida Trail Blazers, Altoona Trail Riders and other local equestrian groups, we were informed the minimum length of trail is 5-10 miles for horse owners who must trailer their horses, and the preference is a length of at least 12-15 miles. It is doubtful that horse owners in the region would trailer their horses to an area where less than an hour ride was available (hour ride is estimated to be about 2.5-3 miles and is based on average equine walking speed). The upland pine flatwoods habitat abutting the current trail system to the north is approximately 6.6 acres in size, and as such, would support a trail no more than 0.5 miles in length. Furthermore, in regards to horse owners who live adjacent to the Preserve; of the 80 people who responded to the question relating to minimum trail length on the public survey, only 12 (15%) said a trail length of 0-1 miles would be acceptable.

Public Opinion - The results of the public use survey indicate that with the exception of residents in the north neighborhood (60% pro horses, 40% opposed), adjacent residents feel equestrian use to be the *least* important potential public use available for the Mobbly Bayou Wilderness Preserve (see Appendix K). Eighty percent of respondents rated hiking and walking trails to be important to them, while only 29% of respondents rated equestrian trails to be important. These two uses are incompatible with each other within this Preserve because of its relatively small size (383 ac) and even smaller percentage of available upland habitat (only 30% of total area). Also, the uplands that occur within the Preserve are located in three separate areas with no feasible connection points. Hiking and Equestrian trails may not be collocated because of the anticipated level of use. The ELD feels there is not enough area to accommodate both.

While it is acknowledged that the current business (Hire a Pony) provides an amenity to the residents of Pinellas and surrounding areas, it is clear from the responses to the public survey, and other comments sent to the County and the City during the past year, the majority of neighbors to the Preserve do not support the continuation of equestrian use at the expense of other amenities such as hiking and walking trails. And other residents are quite adamantly against it as evidenced by the number of people who rated equestrian use at a 1 or even 0 (53% of all respondents). They cite reasons that include recognition of environmental degradation,

) carelessness of inexperienced riders, discourteous behavior towards residents and hikers, and little demonstrable regard for the resource. This is not to say there are not many capable, conscientious and courteous riders that use the Preserve, but these behaviors have been noted on numerous occasions. Additionally, residents abutting the Preserve to the north have expressly requested that no trails be installed adjacent to their property. It would be difficult to get a trail of even 0.5 miles length without installing the trail near the boundary of the residential properties.

Intensity of Use - At current levels of use (100-200+ horses per week), Pinellas County does not possess the staff required to maintain a <0.5 mile horse trail to a level that retains/protects the ecological characteristics of site, and maintains safe conditions for riders and their horses. The Environmental Lands Division currently employs *two* full time maintenance workers assigned to all of the north County Preserves and Management Areas (MA's). These include, in addition to Mobbly Bayou Wilderness Preserve, Brooker Creek Preserve and associated Anclote Islands lands (+8,500 ac), Allen's Creek MA (14 ac), Mariner's Point MA (65 ac), McMullen MA (113 ac), Cow Branch MA (85 ac), Lake Tarpon Hammock MA (42 ac), Ozona MA (8 ac), and Alligator Lake MA (95 ac). The ELD does not possess staff to accomplish maintenance of trails at Mobbly Bayou beyond that required from normal use by hikers. Additionally, the length of trail dictated by the size of the remaining upland in the eastern section of the Preserve is less than 0.5 miles. This length of trail could in no way feasibly support the current level of equestrian use.

) *Security Issues* - Pinellas County does not currently have the resources to police this area to the level required to ensure proper use of equestrian trails and ensure that users stay on established trails, while at the same time providing general security to other areas of the Preserve. At present, there are seven deputies allotted to all of the County's Preserve lands. The majority of their time is spent patrolling the three established County preserves, Brooker Creek Preserve, Weedon Island Preserve, and Shell Key Preserve; a necessity given the size of these areas. Without adequate enforcement there is no guarantee users will stay on the new trail because of the close proximity of the old one, the small size of the new one, and the documented disregard for existing signage prohibiting use in the wetlands (St. Petersburg Times Article, 9/16/02).

Public Access - In the eastern section of the Preserve where the current equestrian trail network occurs, there is no available area to provide for public access and parking for horse owners who must trailer their horses to the Preserve. This is of primary importance to Pinellas County; we cannot selectively provide an amenity to patrons of private business and the business owner, while effectively excluding the general public from utilizing said amenity. Other locations within the Preserve, which may have supported parking for horse trailers, conflict with proposed recreational development by the City of Oldsmar and/or possess a majority of wetlands and as such may not be supported (see below).

Option 3.

A horse trail could be fully developed on the property managed by the City. The City has indicated via the aforementioned resolution passed by the Council that they wanted to see "the installation of horse trails in the upland portions of the preserve". Although there are no areas on the lands managed by the County that could be developed for a horse trail without impacting wetlands or creating other management issues, there may be available a portion on the City

property that is currently proposed for trail development. To accomplish this, however, the City would have to: conduct a jurisdictional wetland determination, identify a separate trail location (outside the wetlands), perform traffic analyses, develop the appropriate parking accommodations, secure a right of way use agreement with Progress Energy, and modify an existing City ordinance prohibiting equestrian use in the City Park system.

In consideration of the above, it is the opinion of the Environmental Lands Division that equestrian use may never be practicably incorporated into the proposed public uses for the Mobbly Bayou Wilderness Preserve. The ELD recommends that all equestrian use be discontinued on portions of the preserve managed by Pinellas County effective upon Board of County Commission acceptance of the Final Resource Management Plan.

References

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APPENDIX L ADDENDUM

Final Equestrian Use Policy for Mobbly Bayou Preserve

Pursuant to the October 14, 2003 Board of County Commission Meeting, equestrian use is permitted on the six-acre upland tract in the northeastern section of the Preserve. Equestrian use of wetlands within the Preserve will be discontinued following trail development of the eastern upland tract.

On the above date the Board met to discuss adoption of the Mobbly Bayou Wilderness Preserve Draft Resource Management Plan. Several members of the horse riding community attended and voiced support for continued riding within the Preserve, particularly children associated with the Hire-A-Pony Riding Academy located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Preserve on Racetrack Road. The Board determined that it would support equestrian use in the uplands of the Preserve in accordance with the City of Oldsmar Resolution 2002-15 (adopted May 21, 2002) recommending allowance of riding in the uplands, but followed staff recommendation regarding the incompatibility of equestrian use of the wetlands.

The Board instructed staff that final approval of the Resource Management Plan, which will include concurrent discontinuation of equestrian use of the wetlands, would be deferred until an upland horse trail adjacent to the existing wetland horse trail was constructed in the eastern section of the Preserve. A trail in this location will provide continued access to clients of Hire a Pony and uninterrupted use of the Preserve for equestrian riding.

In January 2004, Pinellas County staff completed a horse trail approximately 1 mile in length. The layout is depicted on the attached figure (Figure L-2). Construction of this trail fulfills the commitment made to the public during the October 14, 2003 Board of County Commission workshop meeting. The trail is ready for use pending authorization of a Use Agreement between the City and Hire a Pony. It is currently available for the general public.

The Interlocal Agreement between the City of Oldsmar and Pinellas County (dated April 5, 2001) specifies that management of active recreation areas are the responsibility of the City and management of preserve areas are the responsibility of the County. Whereas the new horse trail is located on land previously managed by the County as a "Preserve Management Area," it will now be managed for active recreational use by the City as a "Recreation Management Area." The Mobbly Bay Public Lands Management Interlocal Agreement has been amended specifically to address the change in management responsibility for the new upland equestrian riding area (see Figure 2. Exhibit "B" attached). The Agreement remains in accordance with the intent of the original Interlocal Agreement which maintained that areas within the Preserve requiring heightened public recreational use and thus increased maintenance and management would be under the management of the City. The City intends to officially open the trail following execution of a Use Agreement between the City and Hire a Pony.

Figure L-2 Mobbly Bayou Wilderness Preserve Upland Horse Trail



-  Preserve Boundary
-  New Horse Trail (GPS'd 1/23/04)
- Follows flagging set in field by DEM staff and community horse trail supporters)
-  Trail Boundary - Riding not permitted west/south of line
-  Parcel Boundary



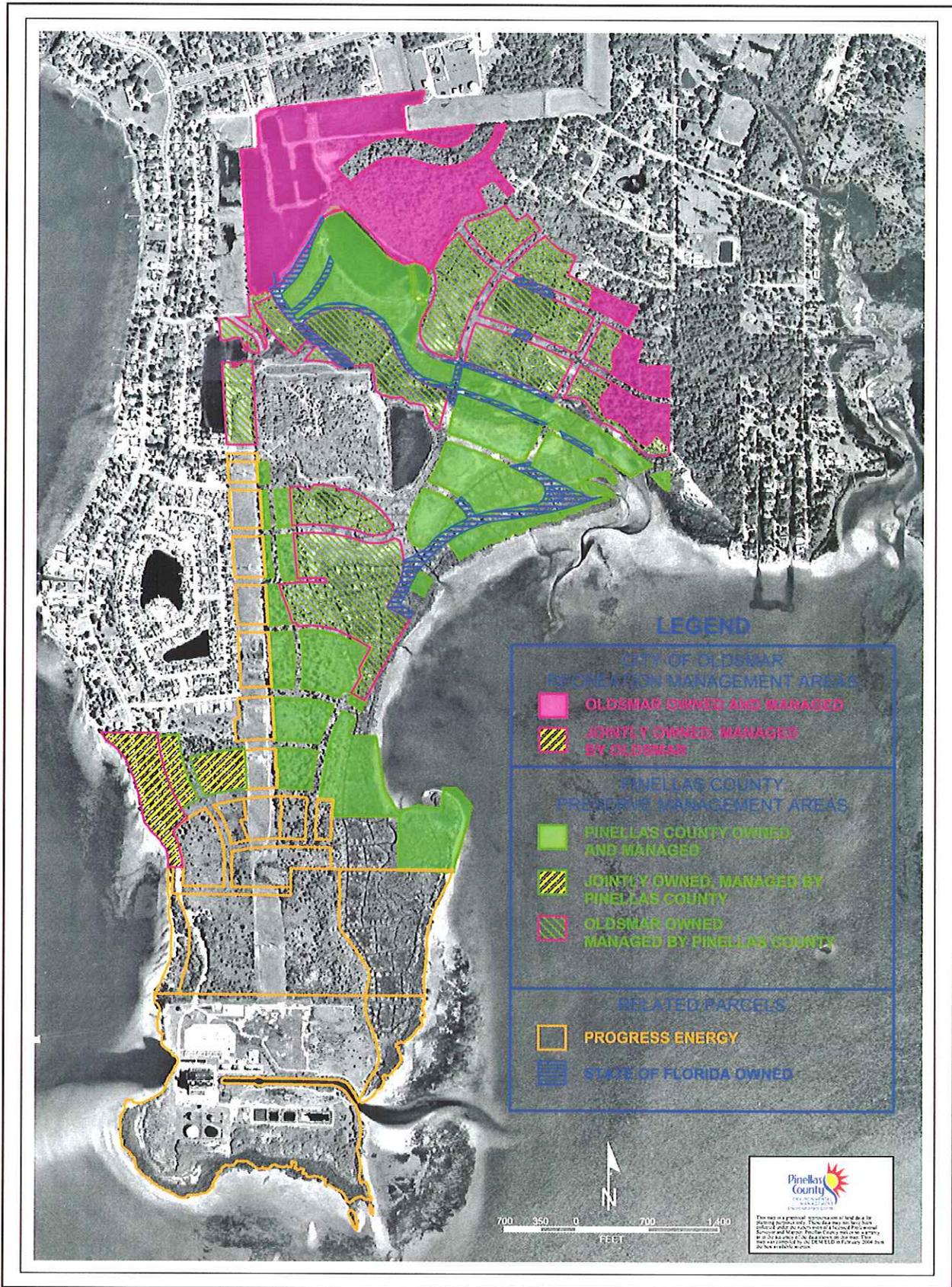


Figure 2: Exhibit "B".