

MANAGEMENT PLAN

**GEORGETOWN RIVERFRONT PARK
FCT 08-020-FF8**

AUGUST 2010

PUTNAM COUNTY

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I. INTRODUCTION

The **Georgetown Riverfront Park** is located in the southernmost part of Putnam County. The St. Johns River flows past the southern side of the property which is directly across the river from Drayton Island, the northern side of the property fronts on County Road 309. The closest municipalities are Welaka to the north and Crescent City to the east.

This 25.65 acres site is the former homestead of the Biggs family. Structures remaining on the property include some homestead related structures including a polebarn and an animal pen. The property is in natural condition with pineland, mixed hardwood and floodplain vegetative communities. Some improved pasture/open space exists in the north and central portions of the site. There is approximately 600 linear feet of riverfront with the majority of it being in cypress wetlands. On the northern end of the property nearest the entry area off of CR-309 is located the Georgetown Community Building and the Georgetown Volunteer Fire Department.

Grant funding for the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) was used to acquire the project site. The Management Plan was developed to ensure that the project site will be developed in accordance with the Declaration of Restrictive Convents and in furtherance of the purpose of the grant application.

Funding sources used to acquire the project site include the Florida Communities Trust and the Land and Water Conservation Program Fund.

Adjacent land uses are predominately residential with some limited agricultural to the north. The County sees no potential conflict regarding the uses or management of the project site.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose for acquiring the Georgetown Riverfront Park is to provide the residents and visitors to south Putnam County with an area to enjoy outdoor recreation including access to the St. Johns River, a boat ramp, picnic pavilion and hiking trail. The park will also provide a trailhead for the Georgetown link of the Putnam County Multi-Use Trail System adjacent to the site. Public ownership and management of the site will also preserve and restore important wildlife habitat, both upland and wetland, along the river and preserve other natural and historical resources that exist on the site.

Putnam County acknowledges that the project site will be managed only for the conservation, protection and enhancement of natural resources, and for public outdoor recreation that is compatible with the conservation, protection and enhancement of the site.

Desired future conditions and uses of the site include boat ramp, including a dock and an observation deck that will be located in the southwestern end of the property. A picnic pavilion area will be situated to afford a view of the river. A hiking trail loop, as well as the picnic pavilion area will be accessible from the park entrance. A kiosk and interpretive markers will provide visitors with information on the ecology and history of the area. A trailhead for the Georgetown Link of the County Multi-Use Trail System will be constructed on the site. Parking for the boat ramp and the trail head will be located within the areas previously disturbed. A stormwater retention pond will be constructed adjacent to the boat ramp parking area to provide treatment of the storm water from the CR 309 right of way and both parking areas before reaching the St. Johns River. Located adjacent to the Georgetown Community Center, the hiking trail and planned facilities will enhance the Centers offerings.

Prioritized Management Objectives:

1. Protection of Natural Resources
2. Provide river access
3. Provide recreational opportunities
4. Protect historic and cultural areas
5. Improve trail connectivity
6. Provide wildlife habitat and corridor access

Major Comprehensive Plan directives that would be furthered by managing the site as proposed:

Objective A.1.4: Putnam County shall manage natural resources through implementing the following policy.

Policy A.1.4.14: The County shall, through available state and federal programs, promote the acquisition of floodplains along the St. Johns and Ocklawaha Rivers.

Objective A.1.5: The County shall adopt Land Development Regulations, and upon plan adoption, shall implement the following policies, which provide incentives to maintain and restore historically significant areas and structures within Putnam County.

Policy A.1.5.4: The County shall seek funding and technical support from the Department of State, Division of Historic Resources, and other agencies to review and conduct further field surveys to conduct and update historical/archaeological surveys in Putnam County.

Objective E.1.2: The County shall implement the following policies that are to conserve, appropriately use and protect the quality and quantity of current and projected water sources and waters that flow into estuarine waters.

Policy E.1.2.4: New waterfront development shall be designed so that stormwater runoff and erosion are retained on-site or are channeled so as to not degrade ambient water quality of adjacent waters.

Objective E.1.4: The County shall implement the following policies that are to conserve, appropriately use and protect marine and wildlife habitat.

Policy E.1.4.59: The County shall ask the St. Johns River Water Management District and Florida Department of Environmental Protection to identify the stormwater drainage from County maintained roads and facilities that is causing degradation of the St. Johns River and its tributaries. Upon identification, the County shall apply for State and Federal funds to improve stormwater management and restore degraded aquatic ecosystems caused by stormwater runoff.

Objective F.1.3: The County shall continue to ensure that parks and recreational facilities are adequately and efficiently provided.

Policy F.1.3.1: The County shall ensure that there are sufficient park lands to meet adopted levels of service in accordance with its Concurrency Management System.

Putnam County does commit to amend the Future Land Use designation to conservation, outdoor recreation, open space, or other similar category within a year of acquiring the site.

Putnam County does commit to amend the Zoning designation to conservation, outdoor recreation, open space, or other similar category within a year of acquiring the site.

Putnam County does ensure that the project site will be identified in all literature and advertising as acquired with funds from the "Florida Communities Trust" and operated as a natural conservation area, outdoor recreation area or other appropriate descriptive language.

III. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Natural Communities:

Based on field observations and 2003 land cover information from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, approximately 75% of the land cover on the site is natural communities. Refer to Exhibit C. These include the following:

1. Mixed hardwood-pine forest (approximately 9.1 acres), occurring in the middle to northern portion of the site, the representative species include Sabal Palmetto, *Quercus virginiana*, *Carya glabra*, *Pinus elliottii*, *Pinus taeda*, and *Pinus palustris*. *Sapium sebiferum* also occurs here and will be removed.
2. Hardwood hammocks and forests (approximately 6 acres), occurring in the center of the site and towards the river, the representative species include *Carya tomentosa*, *Fragus grandiflora*, *Cletis laevigata*, *Quercus nigra*, *Magnolia virginiana*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, and *Nyssa* spp. When a boardwalk is constructed in this area as well as the hardwood swamp, the placement of posts and decking will take into consideration the root zones of these mature trees.
3. Pinelands (approximately 3.9 acres), this flatwood area, primarily near County Road 309, contains *Pinus elliottii*, *Pinus palustris* and *Pinus taeda*.
4. Hardwood swamp (approximately 0.5 acres), this area is directly adjacent to the St. Johns River and contains *Taxodium distichum*, *Nyssa sylvatica*, *Nyssa aquatica*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, and *Acer rubrum*.

5. Freshwater marsh (approximately 0.3 acres), is along the river's edge both tall emergents and floating-leaved species occur. The submerged aquatic vegetation includes *Vallisneria* spp.
6. Shrub and brushland (approximately 3.9 acres), this area occurs on the edge of the pasture and around the former location of a residence. It includes *Myrica cerifera*, *Ilex glabra*, *Lyonia lucida* and seedlings of oak and pine.
7. Improved pasture (approximately 1.3 acres), occurs near County Road 309 and in the center of the site.

The natural communities are all in good to fair condition. The large trees (oaks, sugarberries, sweetgums, and cypress) are quite beautiful. Every effort will be made to keep all large trees, thus the root zones will be protected during construction. The County staff will implement a photo-monitoring program of selected natural communities on the site.

Invasive Exotic Plants:

Invasive species including camphor and Chinese tallow are present, particularly along the margins of the disturbed areas. After acquisition, a vegetation survey will be performed. Use of the Exotic Pest Plant Council's list of Florida's Most Invasive Species will be used in identifying invasive exotics on the project site. Initially, invasive exotics throughout the property will be removed by hand or sprayed, as appropriate. Twice yearly inspections for invasive exotics will be performed by County staff followed by appropriate treatment to control them. The control program developed will be to eliminate the known invasive plant species and the development and maintenance of a diverse association of native vegetation.

Refer to Exhibit E for the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council's List of Invasive Plant Species.

Vegetative Enhancement:

Approximately two and a half (2.5) to three (3) acres of the upland area on the project site will be planted with native vegetation. The number of native plants installed would be largely dependant on size availability at the time but should be in the area of two to three hundred total plants. While some of the approximately six (6) acres of disturbed uplands will be retained for parking and trailhead facilities, approximately 10% of the entire site will be planted with native vegetation. Where

soils are suitable for mixed hardwood-pine forest, native species such as shortleaf and loblolly pine, water oak, mockernut hickory and dogwood would be planted. For pinelands, slash pine and gallberry would be typical native plants to be planted. In addition, some of the upland natural community areas that have a degree of disturbance will be augmented with native vegetation planting. Planting in these areas will include species such as huckleberry, staggerbush and wax myrtle. Native plants selected for planting will be compatible with soil types on site. Native plant installation will begin after the roadway and parking improvements are completed in the upland area and should be completed by June of 2013 as indicated in the Priority Timeline. County staff will implement a photo-monitoring program of the restoration area.

Water runoff from the site and CR-309 will be retained and improved through construction of a retention pond in relationship with the proposed parking area to be developed. The retention and runoff improvements will be the first priority in development of the site and will be scheduled as funding is provided. Putnam County will design the stormwater facilities in a park like manner that mimics a natural system and provides wildlife habitat or provides recreational open space. The design of stormwater facilities shall include shallow slopes and should not be fenced.

Prescribed Burn Plan:

It is not anticipated that a prescribed burn would be necessary or appropriate for the site. The site is small, urban and would present difficulty to construct control lines. Any removal or control plans would most likely be handled manually through chemical or mechanical methods.

Feral Animal Program:

There is no known need for a feral animal program on the site but the site would be monitored by County staff for future needs.

Listed Plant Species:

A formal listed plant species survey has not been conducted on the site. The property is primarily in natural condition with pineland, mixed hardwood and floodplain vegetative communities. The site currently contains oak hammocks, Southern Magnolias, Southern Red Cedar, Sabal Palms and Sweet Gum. Within the first three years after acquisition of the site a survey will be conducted and reported.

Listed Animal Species:

Wildlife including great blue heron, osprey, anhinga and wild turkey were noted during site visits. Based upon the surrounding area, little blue herons, night herons, tri-colored heron, American alligator, wood stork, swallowtail kite, kingfisher, bald eagle and Florida sandhill crane can also be expected to utilize the area. The site does contain habitat and is located in a Strategic Habitat Conservation Area, see Exhibit J. County staff will work and cooperate with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission staff to establish management techniques to protect and enhance habitat for the various listed species expected to utilize the site.

Inventory of Natural Communities:

Within the first three years after acquiring the project site the County will initiate a detailed biological inventory survey of natural communities. When acquired, the County will attempt to establish a three to five year monitoring cycle and will establish a procedure to forward information to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory.

FNAI Report Forms, Exhibit D, are the mechanism for reporting listed plants, animals and communities if they are observed during site surveys.

Archeological, Cultural, and Historical Resources Protection:

At this time there are no known archeological or historical resources located on the project site. The Division of Historical Resources has indicated that the project area is a high probability is for encountering archaeological resources. There are four recorded archaeological resources on the adjacent property, consisting of either mounds or middens. They have recommended a systematic professional archaeological and historic survey prior to any development on the site and the County has agreed to comply with that recommendation. The County will notify the Division of Historical Resources immediately if evidence is found to suggest an archaeological or historic resource is discovered on the project site. Putnam County will provide for interpretation of significant resources that may be discovered. Putnam County will coordinate with the Division of Historical Resources on the projection and management of archaeological and historical resources including the understanding that the collection of artifacts or the disturbance of archaeological and historic sites on the project site will be prohibited unless prior authorization has been obtained from the Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. Putnam County will comply with the provision of Chapter 267, Florida Statutes specifically Section 267.061 2(a) and (b) regarding management of any archaeological and historic resources.

IV. SITE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Acknowledgment Sign:

Putnam County will install an acknowledgment sign identifying the project site being purchase with funds from "Florida Communities Trust" near the entrance to the site. The sign shall be at least 3 feet by 4 feet in size and include the FCT logo and the year the site was acquired.

Existing Physical Improvements:

The project site currently contains a pole barn used for farm equipment, an animal pen, a dirt road, perimeter fencing, improved pasture and a small spoil mound.

Proposed Physical Improvements:

Proposed resource-based recreation improvements for the site include a single lane boat ramp with a dock and observation platform; a non-powered boat launch/landing; a 20' x 20' picnic pavilion with picnic tables, grill and trash cans; two horseshoe pits; an internal hiking/nature trail of approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile in length and a trail head information area with kiosk; and an improved parking area for approximately twenty (20) vehicles. It is not anticipated that the proposed improvements will present any negative impact to the site or to any listed plant or animal species.

The project will enhance a local, land-based, trail network by providing a trailhead and improved access to the Putnam County Multi-Use Trail System. The Trail System Plan was adopted by the County in January 2007 and shows the Georgetown Loop of the Multi-Use Trail System in relation to the project boundary. The County would provide bike racks at the trailhead and other appropriate locations in the park. Refer to Exhibit G for Putnam County Trails Master Plan.

The County will provide benches at major activity areas and along trails. Trash cans will be providing at appropriate locations within the park including the picnic area, the trailhead and boat ramp.

Putnam County acknowledges that any proposed modification of the Management Plan and or undertaking any site alterations or physical improvements that are not addressed in the approved Management Plan requires prior FCT review and approval.

Wetland Buffer:

A 100 foot buffer will be established between parking lots, major facilities and wetlands.

Parking:

It is anticipated that a parking area that will hold twenty vehicles will be constructed, using pervious material wherever feasible and that the vehicles would be contained using a split rail fence and bollards.

Stormwater Facilities:

Any stormwater facilities will be designed to provide recreational open space or wildlife habitat in a parklike setting. Stormwater facilities will be designed with shallow slopes and without fences. Stormwater facilities will be provided for parking areas and other development areas.

Hazard Mitigation:

Conceptually, the hazard mitigation principles to be applied in the design and construction of the project site would include building major structures on pilings or not building any major structures within the park site, which is entirely within the 100 year flood plain.

Education Signs:

Putnam County will provide interpretive signs intended to educate visitors about the natural environment and nay known archeological and historical resources on the project site.

Education Program:

Putnam County will provide at least 12 regularly scheduled environmental or historical educational programs per year at the project site conducted by trained educators or resource professional. Programs would be conducted to school age children, summer camp programs and civic organizations to include all ages. It is anticipated that education programs would begin within the first three years after acquisition of the site.

Permits:

US Army Corps of Engineers:

Section 404 Dredge and Fill Permit, wetlands

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Dock permit

St. Johns River Water Management District
Dredge and Fill associated with the wetlands
Stormwater Management Permit

Putnam County Planning and Development Services Department
Planning Division:
Land Use Plan amendment to PF
Rezoning to P1
Building Division:
Site work Permit
All required permits for new and existing structures and electrical work as required by the Florida Building Code

Putnam County Public Works Department
Driveway Permit
Road Construction Permit

Easements, Concessions, and Leases:

There are no known easements, concessions or leases and none are anticipated in the operation and management of the project site.

Putnam County will provide FCT 60 day prior written notice and information regarding any lease of any interest, the operation of any concession, any sale or option, the granting of any management contracts, and any use by any person other than in such person's capacity as a member of the general public and no document will be executed without the prior written approval of FCT.

All fees collected will be placed in a segregated account solely for the upkeep and maintenance of the project site.

V. MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Trail Network:

The project will enhance a local, land-based, trail network by providing a trailhead and improved access to the Putnam County Multi-Use Trail System. The trail will follow CR 309 but will be separate from it and paved pursuant to administrative directive where the County owns sufficient right of way for construction. The County already

owns 80 feet of right of way and approximately 30 feet will be available on the west side, adjacent to the site, for construction of the trail. This trail is currently listed in the Putnam County Trails Master Plan, refer to Exhibit G, as a Medium Priority with an estimated timeline for construction of six to ten years from the approval of the Plan in 2009.

The trail will connect Dunn's Creek State Park, Welaka State Forest, and Lake George Conservation Area to the main trails along US 17 from Volusia County to Palatka and from St. Augustine to Palatka to Lake City. Via the Ft. Gates ferry, there will also be connections to the Ocala National Forest and trails west of the St. Johns River. It will also provide connections between the communities of Crescent City, Georgetown, Welaka, Pomona Park and Palatka. The trail head will provide support to the County's recreational trail system and will also serve as a trailhead for the trail loop on the project site.

Greenways: Wildlife Corridors and Canoe Trails

The project will enhance a statewide ecological corridor by protecting property included in the 2005 Prioritized Ecological Greenways Network. The Florida Ecological Greenways Network and Critical Linkages Prioritization were approved by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council in November, 2005. These priorities represent the most important areas for protecting large connected landscapes in Florida as shown in Exhibit H. Additionally, the property abuts two significant ecological corridors; the St. Johns River which is owned and controlled by the State of Florida, and the Ocala National Forest, located immediately across the St. Johns River, which is owned and controlled by the USDA Forest Service. The Putnam County Comprehensive Plan encourages the identification, acquisition and conservation of lands within wildlife corridors and greenways. The project will conserve and restore natural vegetation and habitat along the St. Johns River providing stopover feeding and cover for migrating and endemic species.

In 2010, Putnam County approved and adopted a Blueways Trail Plan that includes numerous routes along the St. Johns River and its tributaries, including the project site as a launching/landing site. The Florida Greenways and Trails Council also approved and adopted the Putnam County Blueways Trail Plan into the State System of Blueway Trails.

Maintenance:

Maintenance activities on the project site will be typical of other parks in the Putnam County Parks and Recreation Department System, to include grounds maintenance,

hard surface maintenance, building and facility maintenance, waterfront maintenance and equipment maintenance. Maintenance will be on-going and typical of a daily/weekly system of tasks already being performed in the existing park system. This maintenance will be performed by staff from the Putnam County Parks and Recreation Department under the leadership and supervision of Certified Parks and Recreation Professionals employed by the Department.

Security:

Putnam County will be the responsible party for security at the project site. Putnam County desires to provide accommodations for an on-site resident that would provide a security presence as a deterrent to negative public use. On-going security activities would include patrol from the Putnam County Sheriff's Department staff, supervision and monitoring from the Putnam County Parks and Recreation Department staff and citizen monitoring. Additional deterrent activities would include fencing, gates, signage and lighting.

Staffing:

It is anticipated that existing staff in the Putnam County Parks and Recreation Department will be able to operate and maintain the project site. Assistance from organizations such as the Water Action Volunteer program and the Keep Putnam Beautiful program for workdays and special projects will be called upon.

VI. COST ESTIMATES AND FUNDING SOURCES

<u>Structures and Improvements:</u>	<u>By:</u>	<u>Estimated Cost:</u>
Boat Ramp	Putnam Co.	\$50,000.
Dock, Observation Platform	Putnam Co.	\$15,000.
Entry Road, Parking area	Putnam Co.	\$40,000.
Picnic pavilion, tables, grill	Putnam Co.	\$20,000.
Horseshoe pits	Putnam Co.	\$ 200.
Trailhead	Putnam Co.	\$ 1,000.

Internal Trail	Putnam Co.	\$ 5,000.
Fencing, gates	Putnam Co.	\$10,000.
Signage	Putnam Co.	\$ 1,500.
Non-powered boat launch/landing	Putnam Co.	\$ 1,000.

Natural Resource Protection: By: Estimated Cost:

Invasive Exotic removal	Putnam Co.	\$ 5,000.
Restoration, natives	Putnam Co.	\$10,000.
Retention ponds	Putnam Co.	\$ 8,000.
Burn/Chop	Putnam Co.	\$ unknown
Feral Animal program	Putnam Co.	\$ unknown
Listed Plant Survey	Putnam Co.	\$ 1,500.
Listed Species Survey	Putnam Co.	\$ 1,500.
Biological Inventory Survey	Putnam Co.	\$ 5,000.
Protection of Resources	Putnam Co.	\$ 3,000.

Resource Enhancement Activities: By: Estimated Cost:

Resource Signage	Putnam Co.	\$ 1,500.
Educational Programs	Putnam Co.	\$ 100.

Archeological and Historic Resource Protection

By: Estimated Cost:

Archeological & Historic Survey	Putnam Co.	\$ 5,000.
Resource Security	Putnam Co.	\$ 1,500.

Educational Program:	By:	Estimated Cost:
12 Programs Yearly	Putnam Co.	\$600.

Maintenance:	By:	Estimated Cost:
On-going park maintenance	Putnam Co.	\$10,000.

Security:	By:	Estimated Cost:
Residence set-up, if developed.	Putnam Co.	\$6,000.

Staffing:	By:	Estimated Cost:
On-going maintenance & supervision	Putnam Co.	\$3,000.

VII. PRIORITY SCHEDULE

Georgetown Riverfront Park Priority Timeline										
Project Number: FCT 08-020-FF8										
Project Name: Georgetown Riverfront Park										
Grant recipient: Putnam County										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Design		June								
Permitting		Sept								
Amend Future Land Use Designation		June								
Amend Zoning Designation		June								
Structures and Improvements:										
Entrance sign with FCT recognition (required)		June								
Parking			June							
Fencing			June							
Trash cans-as needed			June							
Interpretive kiosk				Jan						
Interpretive signs				Jan						
Stormwater facilities			June							
Resource-based facilities:										
Observation platform				June						
Boat ramp and dock				June						
Non-powered boat launch			June							
Picnic pavilion				June						
Nature trail			June							

User-oriented facilities:										
Horseshoe pits			June							
Key Management Activities:										
Archeological survey		June								
Archeological protection measures			June							
Landscaping				June						
Upland restoration				June						
Prescribed burn plan		June								
Plant survey/monitoring		June								
Wildlife survey/monitoring		June								
Photo-monitoring		Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
Exotic plant removal		Oct								
Feral animal removal program		Oct								
Educational programs		Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
Water quality or hydrological improvements			June							
Annual Stewardship Report (Required)		Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct

VIII. MONITORING AND REPORTING

Putnam County acknowledges that it is responsible for preparing an Annual Stewardship Report, due on October 30 of each year. Putnam County also acknowledges that any proposed modification of the Management Plan and/or undertaking any site alterations or physical improvements that are not addressed in the approved Management Plan requires prior FCT review and approval.