OLUSTEE BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC STATE PARK
Park Chapter

NORTH FLORIDA HIGHLANDS REGION

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Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park

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Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park

Agency: Dept. of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks

Planning Region: North Florida Highlands

County: Baker

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 3639

Overview: Classified as a State Special Feature Site, Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park protects the site of Florida's largest and most significant battle of the Civil War, which occurred on February 20, 1864. The majority of the park is co-managed with the U.S. Forest Service; significant stands of mesic flatwoods and scattered basin swamps are found within the park boundary.

Total Acreage: 67.24

Natural Communities	Acres
Mesic Flatwoods	549.89
Basin Swamp	12.51

Acquisition: The core three acres of Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park were initially acquired by the State of Florida on September 27, 1909. On July 31, 1978, the State of Florida's Department of Natural Resources (predecessor in interest to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection), Division of Recreation and Parks (Division) obtained Special Use Permit from the United States Department of Agriculture and Forest Service (USDAFS) to manage a 267-acre property as part of Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park. Over time, this special use permit evolved into a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Presently, the division co-manages a 688-acre property owned by USDAFS under a 20-year MOU. This MOU will expire on Sept. 18, 2025.

Resource Management Component

Hydrology

- Assess the park's hydrological restoration needs.
- Continue to monitor, review and comment on proposed land use or zoning changes within lands bordering the park.

Natural Communities

- No natural community restoration is planned for this park. The U.S. Forest Service conducts all resource management activities on property leased to the Division by the U.S. Forest Service.

Imperiled Species

- Continue to record any occurrences of imperiled species observed within the park.
- Coordinate with the USFS to protect imperiled species during the annual reenactment and other events on site.

Invasive and Nuisance Species

- Annually treat 0.1 infested acres of invasive plant species pursuant to an annual plant management work plan.
- Implement control measures on nuisance species on an as needed basis. Collaborate with the U.S. Forest Service as needed.

Cultural Resources

- Assess and evaluate 32 of 32 recorded cultural resources in the park.
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources by updating the Florida Master Site file, developing, and adopting a Scope of Collections Statement, and conducting oral history interviews
- Bring 32 of 32 recorded cultural resources into good condition.

Land Use Component

Conceptual Land Use

Interpretive Center/Museum

- Remove the existing museum and construct a new interpretive center

Support Area

- Remove the existing park residence and shop
- Construct a new park residence and shop in one of two new locations, including one that is currently within the park optimum boundary.

Parking Area

- Expand parking capacity along the park entrance road

Eastern Loop Trail

- Construct interpretive loop trail through the eastern portion of the park.

Western Service Road Network

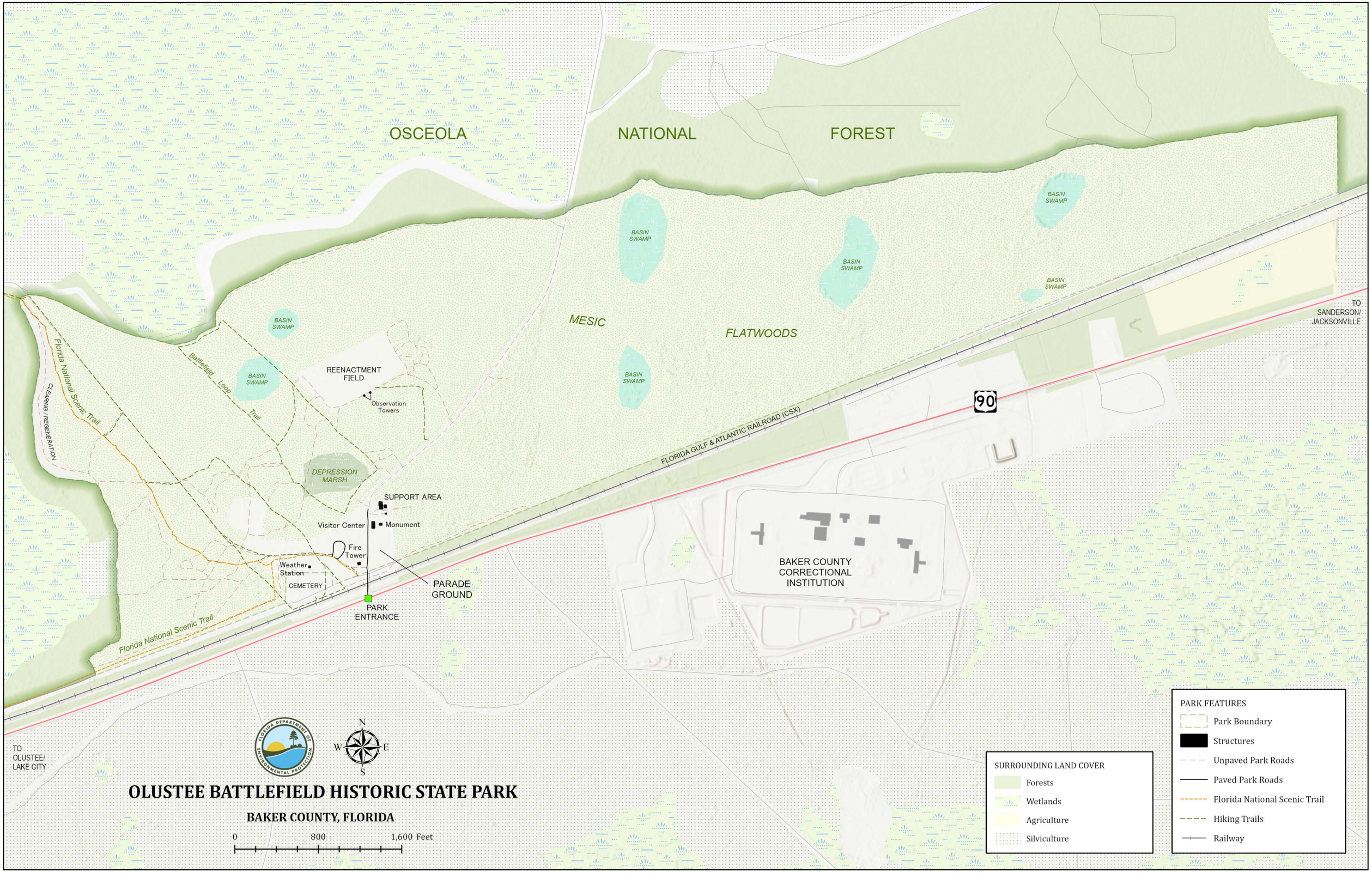
- Work with the U.S. Forest Service to reduce the number of service and management roads within the western portions of the park.

Union Account and Battlefield Graves: Commemoration of U.S. Army Casualties and Recognition of Associated Graves

- Thoroughly document the military engagement, ensuring that a record of the Union account of the battle is interpreted.

Optimum Boundary

The current optimum boundary for Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park consists of a single 70-acre triangular parcel on the south side of U.S. Highway 90, immediately south of the park entrance. This parcel is a potential location for a new park residence and shop, should the relocation of those two facilities become necessary due to the construction of a new interpretive center.



OLUSTEE BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC STATE PARK

BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA

INTRODUCTION

LOCATION AND ACQUISITION HISTORY

Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park is located in Baker County (see North Florida Highlands Region Map). Access to the park is from U.S. Highway 90 on the southern perimeter of the Osceola National Forest. The North Florida Highlands Region Map also reflects significant land and water resources existing near the park.

On Aug. 6 and Sept. 27, 1909, the state of Florida obtained title to an approximately 3-acre property constituting the initial area of Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park. Of this initial area, approximately 2 acres were donated by Austin B. Fletcher and the remaining acre was donated by John and Eliza Brown in August and September, respectively. The park opened to the public in 1949.

On July 31, 1978, the state of Florida's Department of Natural Resources (predecessor to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection), Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) obtained Special Use Permit from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDAFS) to manage a 267-acre property as part of Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park. Over time, this special use permit evolved into a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Presently, DRP co-manages a 688-acre property owned by USDAFS under a 20-year MOU. This MOU will expire on Sept. 18, 2025.

Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park is designated single-use to provide public outdoor recreation and conservation. There are no legislative or executive directives that constrain the use of this property. A legal description of the park property can be made available upon request to the Department of Environmental Protection.

SECONDARY AND INCOMPATIBLE USES

In accordance with 253.034(5) F.S., the potential of the park to accommodate secondary management purposes was analyzed. These secondary purposes were considered within the context of DRP's statutory responsibilities and resource values. This analysis considered the park's natural and cultural resources, management needs, aesthetic values, visitation, and visitor experiences. It was determined that no secondary management purpose could be accommodated in a manner that would be compatible and not interfere with the primary purpose of resource-based outdoor recreation and conservation.

DRP has determined that uses such as water resource development projects, water supply projects, stormwater management projects, linear facilities and sustainable agriculture and forestry (other than those management activities specifically identified in this plan) would not be consistent with the management purposes of the park.

In accordance with 253.034(5) F.S., the potential for generating revenue to enhance management was also analyzed. Visitor fees and charges are the principal source of revenue generated by the park. It was determined that no additional revenue generating activities are appropriate during this planning cycle. Generating revenue from consumptive uses or from activities that are not expressly related to resource management and conservation is not under consideration.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARK

Park Purpose

The state of Florida acquired Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park to manage, protect and restore the natural and cultural values of the property for the people of Florida.

Park Significance

- Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park is Florida's first state park.
- The largest Civil War battle in the state of Florida occurred on the site of the park on Feb. 20, 1864.
- The predominant natural community of the park, mesic flatwoods, provides habitat for several clusters of the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.

Central Park Theme

The sounds of war once echoed around Olustee Battlefield, where those who walk the somber grounds of Florida's largest Civil War battle can contemplate what conflict meant to the Florida frontier.

Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park is classified as a special feature site in the DRP unit classification system. In the management of a Special Feature Site, a special feature is a discrete and well-defined object or condition that attracts public interest and provides public benefit through interpretive observation and study. A state special feature site is an area that contains such a feature and is set aside for controlled public enjoyment. Special feature sites, for the most part, are either historical or archaeological by type, but they may also have a geological, botanical, zoological or other basis. State special feature sites must be of unusual or exceptional character or have statewide or broad regional significance. Management of special feature sites places primary emphasis on protection and maintenance of the special feature for long-term public enjoyment. Permitted uses are almost exclusively passive in nature and program emphasis is on interpretation of the special feature. Development at special feature sites is focused on protection and maintenance of the site, public access, safety and the convenience of the user.

OTHER DESIGNATIONS

The unit is not within an Area of Critical State Concern as defined in section 380.05; Florida Statutes and is not presently under study for such designation. The park is a component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System, administered by the DEP Office of Greenways and Trails.

All waters within the park have been designated as Outstanding Florida Waters, pursuant to Chapter 62-302, Florida Administrative Code. Surface waters in this park are also classified as Outstanding Florida Waters by the Department. The park is not adjacent to an aquatic preserve as designated under the Florida Aquatic Preserve Act of 1975 (Section 258.35, Florida Statutes).

PARK ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Painted and deep cleaned the museum with the help of staff and volunteers.
- Annually hosted the reenactment of the Battle of Olustee, which averages over 15,000 visitors.
- Began restoration of the park entrance sign.
- Continued to work closely with U.S. Forest Service to address resource management goals on the 688 acres managed by U.S. Forest Service.
- Continued to monitor cultural resource impacts.

OLUSTEE BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC STATE PARK
Management Zones

N

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection
This graphical representation is provided for informational purposes and should not be considered authoritative for navigational, engineering, legal, and other uses.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMPONENT

Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park Management Zones			
Management Zone	**Acreage**	**Managed with Prescribed Fire**	**Contains Known Cultural Resources**
OLB-1	3.12	N	Y
OLB-2	202.02	N	Y
OLB-3	70.7	N	Y
OLD-4	341.84	Y	Y

TOPOGRAPHY

The Olustee Battlefield site lies within the Atlantic Coastal Plain physiographic province and more specifically the Central Highlands region. Surface elevations range from 170 to 178 feet NGVD. Elevation is largely determined by marine terraces that formed in response to sea level fluctuations during the Pleistocene. The site is situated on the Sunderland terrace, as named and described by Cooke (1945). This terrace and the Coharie terrace form a ridge that acts as a divide between the upper Suwannee River drainage basin to the north and the Santa Fe River basin to the south. Depending on conditions, drainage from the site is to the west toward Ocean Pond, to the

SOILS

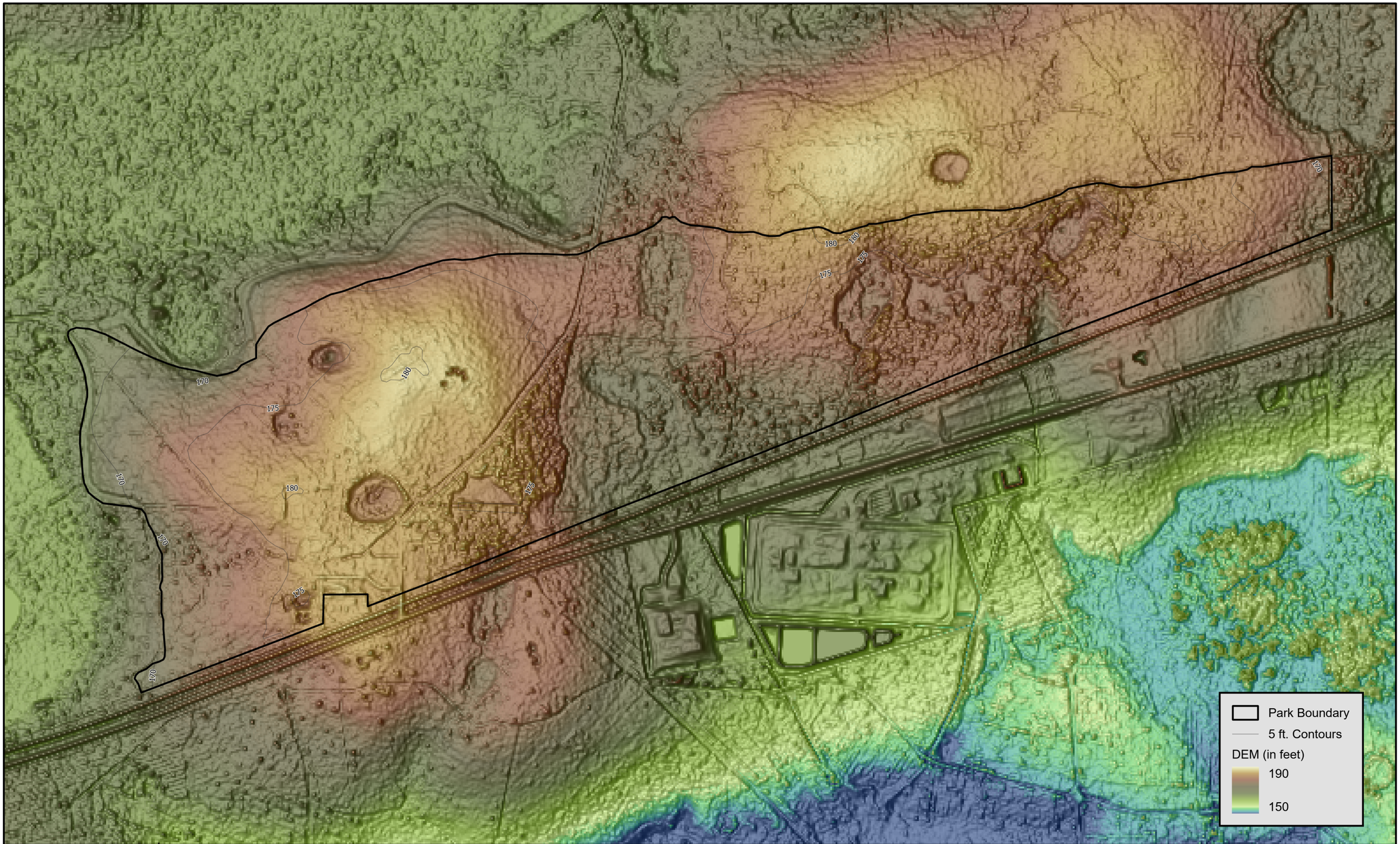
The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) issued the soil survey of Baker County in April of 1996. Nine different soil types are included within the Olustee Battlefield (see Soils Map; Watts 1996). Complete descriptions of these soil types, derived from the NRCS Baker County soil survey, are included in Addendum 2.

Most soil disturbances at the site are those associated with silvicultural activities. Such disturbances include construction of roads and swales, improvements to drainageways, and establishment of fire lanes. Typically, soils at the site contain a spodic horizon (hardpan) less than two feet beneath the surface. This hardpan, a layer of consolidated organic material, iron, and silica, may reach a foot in thickness, usually has a very rigid structure, and generally slows the vertical movement of water. Soils are generally poorly drained.

HYDROLOGY

Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park is situated atop a broad flat plateau that was once the floor of an ancient sea. It is nearly level, with slopes less than 2%. Scattered basin swamps within the flatwoods function as collection basins. The flatwoods and depressional wetland soils found usually contain a spodic horizon that slows the downward movement of water and roots. These soils are poorly drained and are therefore prone to flooding. These factors, along with the local pattern of rainfall, govern the hydrology of the site. Surface drainage is generally directed toward depressional areas where some of it gradually seeps downward, recharging the surficial aquifer.

Since the site is located north of the Cody Escarpment, which is an ancient erosional feature, there are few, if any, natural stream channels, springs or sinks typical of the karst terrain found in north central Florida. Most drainageways have intermittent or sluggish flow and may have been altered by past land-



OLUSTEE BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC STATE PARK
Topography

N
0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection
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OLUSTEE BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC STATE PARK
Soils

N

Feet
0 500 1,000 2,000

Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection
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use practices. These alterations may have affected the regional hydroperiod. Although there are no point-source pollution generators identified, septic tanks, the standard method for treating sewage in rural settings, may have some impact on groundwater resources since the soils are poorly drained and the water table lies at or near the surface for part of the year.

Managing the hydrology of a flatwoods system requires skill and sensitivity since minor alteration of the relief may have major impacts not only on the flatwoods, but also on adjacent natural communities. Especially affected are basin swamps, which require the presence of standing water at certain times of the year and for specific durations.

To keep roadways in a stable condition, it will be necessary to continue the maintenance of swales and other drainage features that prevent the roads from flooding. Likewise, firebreaks will need to be maintained to ensure the safe conduct of prescribed fires. Ideally, roads and fire lanes that are no longer needed should be restored to natural grade. Future development of the site should avoid unnecessary disturbance of fragile soils.

Assessment of Needs

Objective: Assess the park's hydrological restoration needs.

Actions:

- Continue to cooperate with other agencies and independent researchers regarding hydrological research and monitoring programs.
- Continue to monitor, review and comment on proposed land-use or zoning changes within lands bordering the park.

DRP will continue its tradition of close cooperation with state and federal agencies and independent researchers engaged in hydrological research and monitoring programs within the park.

District 2 staff will continue to monitor Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) and Water Use Permit (WUP) requests for the region to provide timely and constructive comments that promote protection of water resources within the park. Additional cooperative efforts may include facilitating the review and approval of research permits and providing researchers with assistance in the field, including orientation to park resources. Recommendations derived from these monitoring and research activities will be essential to the decision-making process during management planning. DRP staff will also continue to monitor land-use or zoning changes within lands bordering the park.

NATURAL COMMUNITIES

The system of classifying natural communities employed in this plan was developed by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI). The premise of this system is that physical factors, such as climate, geology, soil, hydrology, and fire frequency generally determine the species composition of an area and that areas which are similar with respect to these factors will tend to have natural communities with similar species compositions.

Obvious differences in species composition can occur despite similar physical conditions. In other instances, physical factors are substantially different, yet the species compositions are quite similar. For

OLUSTEE BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC STATE PARK
Natural Communities - Existing Conditions

N

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

Sources: ESRI; Florida Department of Environmental Protection
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example, coastal strand and scrub, two communities with similar species compositions, generally have quite different climatic environments and necessitate different management programs.

The park contains three distinct natural communities (see Natural Communities Map) in addition to altered landcover types. The Natural Communities Map is a graphic representation of the existing vegetative conditions in the park at the time this management plan was developed. Park-specific assessments of the existing natural communities are provided below.

Mesic Flatwoods

The majority of the area that is cooperatively managed by DRP and the USFS at Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park is mesic flatwoods dominated by longleaf and slash pines. Timber harvests and wildfires have occurred within the flatwoods in the past, yielding timber stands of variable age and condition. Several areas have been planted in slash pines, but the majority of the stands are primarily longleaf pine. The timber stands range from sapling stage to mature sawtimber. The mature longleaf stands are in good to very good condition and support several red-cockaded woodpecker colonies. Future management of timber and other resources in the flatwoods will no doubt be restricted or determined by the management needs for the red-cockaded woodpeckers. Soil disturbances from harvests or from fire plow lines historically occurred in the flatwoods and may have caused localized alterations in the water table. Most of the flatwoods community encompassed within the boundaries of the previous special use permit area was fenced at one time to exclude cattle and hunters from the battlefield and the main use areas. The former cattle allotments have been de-authorized by the USFS. Hunters, however, still have access to the USFS lands that lie outside the original 267-acre special use permit area. These lands remain part of the Osceola Wildlife Management Area.

Basin Swamp

The wetlands located within the flatwoods are generally basin swamps dominated by a gum and cypress tree canopy and underlain by a thick shrub layer. These swamps are hydrologically linked to the surrounding flatwoods and have been affected somewhat by the soil disturbances there. At least two of the basin swamps have hooded pitcher plants (*Sarracenia minor*) on their fringes.

Depression Marsh

The one depression marsh at the site is located just to the northwest of the Olustee Battlefield Monument. This marsh is hydrologically linked to the surrounding flatwoods and has been impacted somewhat by past soil disturbances such as fire plow lines and ditches associated with nearby U.S. Forest Service roads.

Altered Land Cover Types

Clearing/Regeneration

Range strips originally maintained for cattle grazing are located in the northwest corner of the leased area within the national forest. These strips are dominated by grasses and forbs and will continue to be maintained as canopy-free areas.

Developed

The developed area of the site includes the 3 acres of state-owned land that contains the Olustee Battlefield Monument, the Museum, and a ranger residence.

Additional developed areas include the open battlefield, open areas associated with the lookout tower, the former Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and U.S. Forest Service installation and the cattle pens. The areas used for camping during the reenactment and other special events are not considered developed since they retain native vegetation.

No natural community restoration is planned for the park. The U.S. Forest Service conducts all resource management activities on property it leases to DRP.

Table X contains a list of all fire-dependent natural communities found within the park, their associated acreage and optimal fire return interval and the annual average target for acres to be burned.

Prescribed Fire Management		
Natural Community	**Acres**	**Optimal Fire Return Interval (Years)**
Mesic Flatwoods	549.89	1-3
Depression Marsh	4.62	2-10
Annual Target Acreage	*	

** All prescribed fire activities are planned and conducted by the U.S. Forest Service on property it leases to DRP.*

IMPERILED SPECIES

Although no imperiled species are known to be resident on the state-owned property at Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park, several are known to occur on the adjacent USFS lands, including gopher tortoises and red-cockaded woodpeckers. Two active red-cockaded woodpecker colonies are located within the site, each containing a number of cavity trees. One inactive colony also falls within the site boundaries. Gopher tortoises are found scattered throughout the mesic flatwoods at higher elevations and a significant population is located on the old-field portion of the battlefield itself.

The USFS is responsible for monitoring the red-cockaded woodpecker colonies and the gopher tortoise populations within the Olustee Battlefield site. Management of the imperiled species found on the Olustee Battlefield site will be the responsibility of the USFS. The red-cockaded woodpeckers and gopher tortoises on the site will be protected and managed in accordance with all applicable federal and state guidelines and regulations.

Hooded pitcher plants (*Sarracenia minor*) occur adjacent to at least two of the basin swamps and the white fringed orchid (*Platanthera blephariglottis*) has been recorded from the site. Both plants occur in or on the fringes of wetlands. Although other imperiled and tracked plant and invertebrate species have not been documented on the site, they have been documented in other similar locales in the forest. The habitat type is appropriate to support several other imperiled species. An active fire management program would benefit the imperiled plant species on site.

Table 2 contains a list of all known imperiled species within the park and identifies their status as defined by various entities. It also identifies the types of management actions currently being taken by DRP staff and identifies the current level of monitoring effort. The codes used under the column headings for management actions and monitoring level are defined following the table. Explanations for federal and state status as well as FNAI global and state rank are provided in Addendum 6.

Imperiled Species Inventory						
Common and *Scientific* Name	**Imperiled Species Status**				**Management Actions**	**Monitoring Level**
	FWC	**USFWS**	**FDACS**	**FNAI**		
PLANTS						
White fringed orchid *Platanthera blephariglottis*			LT		1,4	Tier 1
Hooded pitcher plant *Sarracenia minor*			LT		1,4	Tier 1
REPTILES						
Gopher tortoise *Gopherus polyphemus*	ST			G3, S3	1, 10,13	Tier 1
Red-cockaded woodpecker *Dryobates borealis*	FE	LE, PT		G3, S2	1,6	Tier 3

Management Actions:
1. Prescribed Fire
2. Exotic Plant Removal
3. Population Translocation/Augmentation/Restocking
4. Hydrological Maintenance/Restoration
5. Nest Boxes/Artificial Cavities
6. Hardwood Removal
7. Mechanical Treatment
8. Predator Control
9. Erosion Control
10. Protection from visitor impacts (establish buffers)/law enforcement
11. Decoys (shorebirds)
12. Vegetation Planting
13. Outreach and Education
14. Other

Monitoring Level:
Tier 1.
Non-Targeted Observation/Documentation: includes documentation of species presence through casual/passive observation during routine park activities (i.e. not conducting species-specific searches). Documentation may be in the form of *Wildlife Observation Forms* or other district specific methods used to communicate observations.

Tier 2.
Targeted Presence/Absence: includes monitoring methods/activities that are specifically intended to document presence/absence of a particular species or suite of species.

Tier 3.
Population Estimate/Index: an approximation of the true population size or population index based on a widely accepted method of sampling.

Tier 4.
Population Census: A complete count of an entire population with demographic analysis, including mortality, reproduction, emigration and immigration.

Tier 5.
Other: may include habitat assessments for a particular species or suite of species or any other specific methods used as indicators to gather information about a particular species.

Inventory

Objective: Update baseline imperiled species occurrence list.

Action:

- Continue to record any occurrences of imperiled species observed within the park.

Protection

Objective: Continue protection measures for imperiled species identified in the above table.

Action:

- Coordinate with the USFS to protect imperiled species during the annual reenactment and other events onsite.

The annual Battle of Olustee reenactment brings a large number of visitors to the site. Staff will continue to ensure the protection of the red-cockaded woodpeckers and gopher tortoises on site during these events and will minimize disturbance of these imperiled species.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive species are those plants or animals that are not native to Florida but were introduced by of human-related activities. Invasives have fewer natural enemies and may have a higher survival rate than do native species. They may also harbor diseases or parasites that significantly affect non-resistant native species. Therefore, the policy of DRP is to remove invasive species from native natural communities.

In general, invasive species are not a significant problem at the Olustee Battlefield site. Several invasive plant species have been recorded on the site, including mimosa and silverthorn (*Elaeagnus pungens*). Invasive plants will be removed using mechanical or chemical methods. There is a potential for import of invasives on mowing equipment, particularly when mowing is contracted out. Mowing equipment should be clean before entering the site. Hay used in reenactment camps could also introduce unwanted invasives. The park service, in cooperation with the USFS, should continue to monitor for the introduction of new invasive plant species.

Although feral hogs occur in the vicinity and are considered a game species in the Osceola Wildlife Management Area, populations are not high enough to have caused noticeable damage to the Olustee Battlefield site.

Invasive Species Inventory			
Species Name ***Scientific Name* - Common Name**	**FISC Category**	**Distribution**	**Zone ID**
Elaeagnus pungens - Silverthorn	II	Scattered Plants or Clumps	OLB-1
Albizia julibrissin - Mimosa	I	Single Plant or Clump	OLB-1

Invasive Plant Treatment

Objective: Annually treat 0.1 infested acres of invasive plant species.

Actions:

- Annually develop invasive plant management work plan.
- Implement annual work plan by treating 0.1 infested acres in park annually.
- Continue maintenance and follow-up treatments as needed.

Invasive and Nuisance Animal Control

Objective: Implement control measures on nuisance species as needed.

Action:

- Collaborate with U.S. National Forest/Osceola National Forest as needed.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Florida Master Site File (FMSF) lists 50 sites within the collectively managed area. Numerous surveys have been completed within the unit, the majority being for the purposes of mitigating recreation-related disturbances within the unit (Repp 1992, Leigh 1994, Kimbrough 1994a, Kimbrough 1994b, Kimbrough 1994c, Kimbrough 1997, Cerrato 1999). A predictive model was completed for the park (Collins et al. 2012).

Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park preserves the site of the largest Civil War engagement that occurred in Florida. The 3 acres owned by the state of Florida occupy a small portion of the entire field of battle. Olustee Battlefield, the expanded interpretive area of 688 acres, was instituted by a Memorandum of Understanding between the Florida Division of Recreation and Parks and the USFS. This enlargement of the interpretive area allows more comprehensive treatment of the Confederate preparations, the Union and Confederate battle and the Union route of retreat. The extent of the battlefield as defined by the boundaries of Florida Site File No. 8BA15 reflects an amorphous wavering engagement. Combatants probably engaged each other outside this area, but the area presently interpreted as the center of the line was the site of the greatest action.

The battle occurred in what was largely a pine forest. Roads traversed the forest and there were dwellings and cleared fields within it. The battle took place over an extended area within one of the drier ridges south of the Okeefenokee Swamp. The physical context of the battle, a thinly inhabited pine woods, has been restored to some extent by the resource management efforts of the USFS.

A comprehensive archaeological assessment survey of the battlefield was conducted in the winter of 1994 (Penton and Leigh 1994). While the focus was the understanding of the location, extent and components of the Civil War battlefield, the assessment discovered archaeological sites of multiple eras and types. The cultures encompassed the span of time from prehistoric sites through the Civil War to 20th-century American.

Native American sites within the battlefield footprint include the Alachua culture (BA00037), a prehistoric campsite (BA00371), undefined prehistoric (BA00377, BA00406, BA00407, BA00420, BA00489, BA00492, BA00569) and Weeden Island (BA00407, BA00418).

Post-Civil War sites found within the battlefield area include probable stills from the 20th century (BA00380, BA00378), a demolished forestry work camp built by the CCC (BA00388), the forestry center dump (BA00387), a turpentine camp that was likely occupied in part by African American workers (BA00060), an old fence constructed of catface pines as posts indicating the presence of turpentining (BA00336) and a late-19th-to-early-20th-century homestead (BA00407).

The cultural resources of Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park include the well-known elements of 8BA15: the field of battle and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) memorial area, which are unidentified components of the battlefield's listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A few other sites indicate 19th- and 20th-century activities like turpentining or logging. Some indicate prehistoric contexts. A limited number of resources are associated with activities of the CCC in the 1930s. At least one cemetery is associated with the battlefield. It must be noted and emphasized that the recorded resources are rich in meaning for African-American history as well as Native Americans and people of European descent.

Cultural Sites Listed in the Florida Master Site File					
Site Name and FMSF #	**Culture/Period**	**Description**	**Significance**	**Condition**	**Treatment**
BA00377 NN	Twentieth century American, 1900-present; American Civil War, 1861-1865; Prehistoric	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00378 NN	Twentieth century American, 1900-present	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00379 NN	Nineteenth century American, 1821-1899; Twentieth century American, 1900-present	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00380 NN	Twentieth century American, 1900-present	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00381 NN	American, 1821-present	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00382 NN	American, 1821-present	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00383 NN	American Civil War, 1861-1865	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00387 NN	Twentieth century American, 1900-present; American Civil War, 1861-1865	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00388 Olustee 94-12	Twentieth century American, 1900-present; American Civil War, 1861-1865	Archaeological Site	NR	G	P
BA00397 NN	Twentieth century American, 1900-present; American Civil War, 1861-1865	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P

Cultural Sites Listed in the Florida Master Site File					
Site Name and FMSF #	**Culture/Period**	**Description**	**Significance**	**Condition**	**Treatment**
BA00406 Trail Bench	Prehistoric	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00407 USFS #94-8 OSC	Twentieth century American, 1900-present; American, 1821-present; Prehistoric	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00418 USFS #96-6 OSC (P)	Prehistoric; Weeden Island, A.D. 450-1000	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00420 Corral	Twentieth century American, 1900-present; Prehistoric	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00488 USFS #04-13(P) OSC "No Frills"	Prehistoric	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00489 USFS #04-14(P) OSC "Already Flagged"	Prehistoric	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00490 USFS #04-15(H) OSC "Beep Bing"	American, 1821-present	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00491 USFS #04-16(P) OSC "Swan Song"	Middle Archaic	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00492 USFS #04-17(P) OSC "Swampside II"	Prehistoric	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00569 USFS# 08-06 (OSC): Lighter Pine Fireline	Prehistoric	Archaeological Site	NE	G	P
BA00408 USFS #95-1 (H) OSC	C1930	Historic Structure	NS	NE	R
BA00583 Olustee Battlefield	1912	Historic Structure	NR	G	P

Cultural Sites Listed in the Florida Master Site File					
Site Name and FMSF #	**Culture/Period**	**Description**	**Significance**	**Condition**	**Treatment**
State Monument					
BA00610 Olustee Tower	C1933	Historic Structure	NR	G	P
BA00643 Olustee Battlefield Museum	Mid-Century Modern ca. 1940s-early 1960s	Historic Structure	NE	F	R
BA00644 Olustee Battlefield Ranger Residence	Mid-Century Modern ca. 1940s-early 1960s	Historic Structure	NE	F	R

Significance:
NRL- National Register Listed
NRE- National Register Eligible
LS- Locally Significant
NE- Not Evaluated
NS- Not Significant

Condition:
G- Good
F- Fair
P- Poor

Recommended Treatment:
RS- Restoration
RH- Rehabilitation
ST- Stabilization
P- Preservation
R- Removal

The Battle of Olustee was the largest and most significant Civil War engagement within the state of Florida. The encounter between U.S. Army and Confederate troops left physical evidence that has and continues to help historians interpret and contextualize the historic events preceding, including and following the battle.

Uses of the battlefield during the recorded past have been mostly limited to agriculture. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this included subsistence agriculture, timber cutting and cattle grazing. Ground disturbances which are invariably associated with agriculture and silviculture have occurred throughout the area, and development of the state historic site and national forest infrastructures further contributed to the patterns of disturbance. The battle itself left few permanent scars. Activity associated with the event left an extensive surface scatter composed mainly of metal objects and fragments over an area of several square miles. To this date, no known deep features, such as entrenchments, have been found on the known field of battle. A few sites outside the joint management area (8BA393, -394 and -395) were parts of a prepared Confederate defensive position that did not see battle use. They are among the few known entrenchments of the area.

The cemetery feature said to have been associated with the battle, a mass grave of Union dead, has not been definitively located. Pinpointing the feature would not change the interpretive focus of the park. However, it would answer questions about the battle and its aftermath.

It is important to note that the majority of the cultural resources of Olustee Battlefield either are not connected or are only marginally connected with the battle. Sites like 8BA60 and 8BA61 contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the lives of ordinary people who happened to dwell in the same physical area as the battle.

Management should guard against the tendency to inflate the importance of battle-specific sites and events. Battle sites are only diagnostic for a short burst of activity. Other sites are diagnostic for the lives and activities of people who dwelled in the area and used the site as a source for getting a living. Therefore, management should be considered as the active exercise of stewardship, meaning the exercise of proactive care in preserving the integrity of all the recorded cultural resources as well as those not yet recorded.

It is likely the area was used by humans for nearly 5,000 years. A cultural resources survey (1994) revealed much of this potential human past. Sand ridges which occur throughout the area are hospitable to isolated domiciles or groups of inhabitants. Remains associated with aboriginal use have been found in sand ridge areas, though no village sites have been recorded.

All sites are believed to be in generally good condition. Actual levels of physical integrity are difficult to estimate, since the battle left an enormous surface scatter as its cultural signature. Local traditional uses of the battlefield included relic hunting, and many objects have reportedly been recovered by private persons since the Civil War. In recent years, looting activity has been much less of a problem. It should be noted again that the nature of local cultural resources makes it impossible to estimate the amount of damage or the degree of loss of integrity to the battlefield site. The annual reenactment causes a certain amount of damage, whether through inadvertence (as in possible damage resulting from foot or horse traffic) or negligence (as in cases of reenactors digging unauthorized campfire pits). Park management actively works with reenactors to discourage inadvertent or negligent use of property resulting in damage.

Historic Structures

Five historic structures occur within the park. Two of these are associated with the Civilian Conservation Corps forestry camp: the Olustee Tower (BA610) and USFS No. 95-1 (H) OSC (BA408). The Olustee Battlefield Museum (BA643) and the Olustee Battlefield State Monument (BA408) interpret and commemorate the Civil War battle. The Olustee Battlefield Ranger Residence (BA644) is a park operations structure.

The Olustee Battlefield State Monument, the Olustee Tower and the USFS No. 95-1 (H) OSC fence are from the early 20th Century. The monument was erected in 1912 with funds raised by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to commemorate Confederate soldiers who died during the Battle of Olustee.

The Olustee Tower was constructed at least in part by the CCC as a fire tower. The USFS No. 95-1 (H) OSC (BA408) is a CCC-era fence that has been documented and may have been removed.

The limestone pillars framing the entrance to the park should be recorded with the FMSF. It is not known if they were constructed during the CCC era or later.

The Olustee Battlefield State Monument (BA408) appears to have some spalling or rust occurring.

The Olustee Tower (BA610) is in good condition.

The USFS No. 95-1 (H) OSC (BA408) CCC-era fence was in poor condition. It has been documented and may have been removed.

The Olustee Battlefield Ranger Residence (BA644) and the Olustee Battlefield Museum (BA643) are in fair condition but no longer serve their previous purposes. They should be documented, repurposed or demolished.

Collections

The collection consists of items associated with and from the era of the Civil War. These include uniforms, coins, armaments, bullets and cannon balls, items soldiers would have used in camp and two cannons from the Civil War. The park's collection is on loan from the Florida State Museum, now known as the Florida Museum of Natural History. The collection is housed in the park's museum building except for the cannons which are outside.

Some of the items originate from the Olustee Battlefield but most are Civil War artifacts from other sites.

The museum building itself was remodeled in 1977 from a pavilion-type structure to become the museum facilities in place today. Because of the aged and retrofitted structure, the museum facility has problems with water seeping into the building, as well as problems with insects and rodents.

There are plans to remove the existing museum building and replace it with a visitor center/interpretive exhibit space. During this time, the collection items will be returned to the Florida Museum of Natural History. When the new facility is completed, some or all of the items may be re-exhibited in the new space.

DRP will develop and implement procedures for regular monitoring of all cultural sites. Archaeological sites that have been looted in the past should receive more frequent visitation to ensure that no further looting occurs. Prior to any ground disturbance, staff should consult the ARM matrix and consult with DHR.

Condition Assessment

Objective: Assess and evaluate 32 of 32 recorded cultural resources in the park.

Action:

- Complete assessments/evaluations of archaeological sites.

Documentation of Recorded Sites

Objective: Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.

Actions:

- Ensure all known sites are recorded or updated in the Florida Master Site File.
- Develop and adopt a Scope of Collections Statement.

- Conduct oral history interviews.

Some descendants of the Battle of Olustee are likely still living in the Lake City area. Oral history interviews should be conducted to expand knowledge of the battle and the area's Civil War-era culture.

Preservation Measures

Objective: Bring 32 of 32 recorded cultural resources into good condition.

Actions:

- Design and implement regular monitoring programs for 32 cultural sites.
- Create and implement a cyclical maintenance program for each cultural resource.
- Continue to control and guide the activities of participants and spectators at the annual reenactment and other public events to prevent impacts to cultural resources.
- Follow the ARM matrix when monitoring ground-disturbing activity. Report encountered artifacts immediately to DHR; submit a summary of findings to DHR.

The Olustee Battlefield State Monument (BA408) needs to be evaluated to determine the best method to prevent and repair spalling or rusting of the structure.

The park is renovating its interpretive information and structures. In the process, two existing structures, the Olustee Battlefield Ranger Residence (BA644) and the Olustee Battlefield Museum (BA643) are recommended for documentation and demolition.

Objective: Develop a Scope of Collections Statement for the park to clearly define and set criteria for accepting or declining historical items and artifacts.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Arthropod Control Plan

All DRP lands are designated as "environmentally sensitive and biologically highly productive" in accordance with Ch. 388 and Ch. 388.4111 Florida Statutes. If a local mosquito control district proposes a treatment plan, the DRP works with the local mosquito control district to achieve consensus. By policy of DEP since 1987, aerial adulticiding is not allowed, but larviciding and ground adulticiding (truck spraying in public use areas) is typically allowed. The DRP does not authorize new physical alterations of marshes through ditching or water control structures.

Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park does not have an Arthropod Control Plan. Mosquito control plans temporarily may be set aside under declared threats to public or animal health, or during a Governor's Emergency Declaration.

LAND USE COMPONENT

VISITATION

On Feb. 20, 1864, Florida's largest Civil War battle was fought in the flatwoods surrounding Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park. The park interprets and memorializes the Battle of Olustee, a victory for the Confederate Army that reversed the westward march of the U.S. Army toward Tallahassee, forcing federal troops to return to their stronghold in Jacksonville.

The park was acquired by the Florida Legislature in 1909. In 1912, the current monument was built at the behest of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Olustee Battlefield became Florida's first state park. Today, the park is co-managed by DRP and the U.S. Forest Service via a 20-year memorandum of understanding. The memorandum allows for cooperative management of 3 acres of state-managed land and 688 acres of federally-managed land. The adjacent Osceola National Forest covers roughly 200,000 acres in northeast Florida and offers extensive outdoor recreational opportunities. Visitors to Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park are permitted to seamlessly traverse these public lands.

Visitor amenities include a museum housing several exhibits interpreting the Battle of Olustee, a "parade ground" in which the memorial is situated and an interpretive Battlefield Loop Trail. The Florida Trail, which traverses the western portion of the park and the Battlefield Loop Trail, allows visitors to explore the surrounding mesic flatwoods that are home to red-cockaded woodpeckers.

Trends

Visitation at Olustee Battlefield exhibits a significant spike in February during the annual battle reenactment. Otherwise, attendance marginally increases during months with cooler temperatures, which allow for more comfortable north Florida outdoor recreation conditions.

Economic Impact

Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park recorded 32,004 visitors in FY 2022/2023. By DRP estimates, the FY 2022/2023 visitors contributed $3,954,448 in regional economic impact, the equivalent of adding 55 jobs to the local economy (FDEP 2023).

EXISTING FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Existing facilities at Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park are concentrated in the western portion of the park. This area includes a visitor parking lot, an interpretive museum, a "parade ground" with three stone monuments, a small weather station and a U.S. Forest Service fire tower.

A park support complex is situated just to the north of the parade ground. This complex includes a park residence, maintenance shop and pumphouse. The interpretive Battlefield Loop Trail extends into the pine flatwoods to the north of the parade ground, as do a multitude of management roads. Approximately 1.27 miles of the Florida Trail traverse the park.

Facilities Inventory

Parade Ground/Entrance Area	
Monuments	3
Interpretive Museum	1
Parking Area	1
Parking Spaces	5
U.S. Forest Service Fire Tower	1
Weather Station	1
Reenactment Battlefield Area	
Observation Towers	2
Administrative Support Area	
Staff Residence	1
Maintenance Shop	1
Pumphouse	1
Trails and Roads	
Paved Road Mileage	0.24
Stabilized Road Mileage	0.56
Unstabilized Road Mileage	7.00
Trail Mileage	3.84
Florida Trail Mileage	1.27
Boardwalk (Feet)	316

CONCEPTUAL LAND USE PLAN

Interpretive Center

Objective: Remove and replace existing museum

Actions:

- *Remove existing museum*
- *Construct new interpretive center*

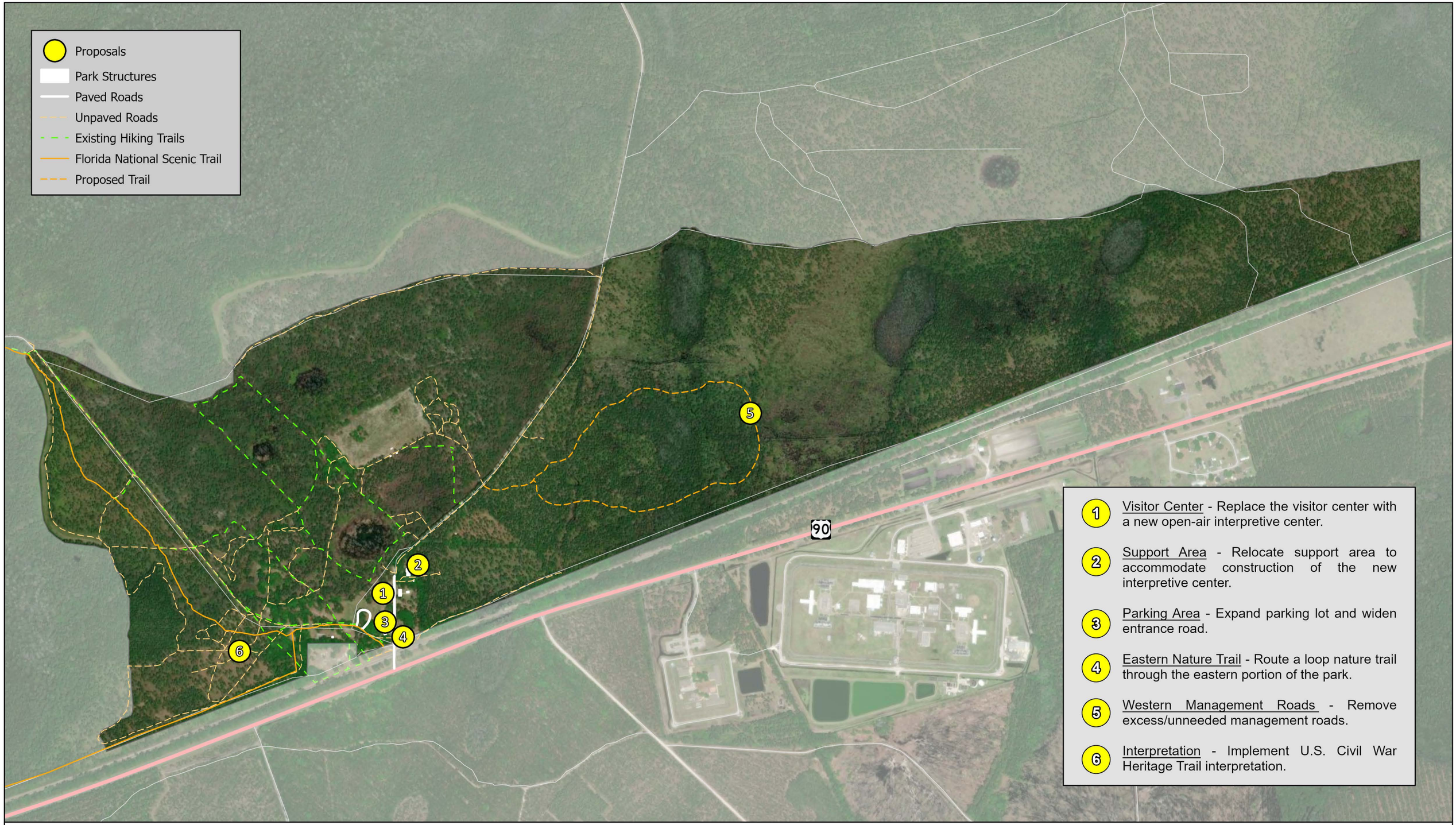
The current museum building at Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park is small and dated. The function of the museum should be replaced by a new interpretive center with updated displays. The anticipated enlarged footprint of the planned interpretive center will likely necessitate relocation of the park residence and shop.

Support Area

Objective: Remove and replace existing park support area

Actions:

- *Remove existing park residence and shop.*
- *Build new park residence and shop in one of two possible parcels.*



Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park

Conceptual Land Use Plan

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

N

Construction of the new interpretive center will likely require relocation of the support area to the north of the current museum and parade ground based on spatial constraints.

There are two alternative locations for construction of a new support complex. The first location is adjacent to U.S. Highway 90 on the south side of the highway, opposite the park entrance. This parcel is not currently included within park boundaries. Construction of a new support complex within this parcel is contingent on acquisition (more details regarding this parcel are available in the *Optimum Boundary* section). The second alternative location is a parcel of land immediately to the east of the current support complex. Development of a new complex in this location would include a new access road.

Entrance Road and Parking

Objective: Expand capacity in parking lot along entrance road

The entrance road is narrow, and parking is limited near the museum and parade ground. Widening the entrance road and modest enlargement of the parking area is recommended to improve organization that would alleviate rutting and subsequent erosion from current driving patterns in this archaeologically and culturally sensitive landscape.

Eastern Loop Trail

Objective: Construct a new interpretive loop hiking trail through the eastern portion of the park.

The eastern portion of the park is undeveloped, with significant opportunity for interpretation of various phases of the battle. The construction of an interpretive hiking trail through the eastern area of the park would ideally follow the federal retreat path, following existing management roadbeds.

Service Road Network

Objective: Reduce the number of service and management roads within the western portions of the park.

An excess of service roads meander through the western reaches of the park, primarily on U.S. Forest Service lands. With interagency coordination, selected roads that are not frequently used and not serving a critical purpose could be discontinued and natural habitats may be restored along these footprints. Reducing the grid of roads and paths would further protect archaeologically- and culturally-sensitive sites and maximize the appearance of the natural landscape as it would have existed at the time of the battle, enhancing the quality of the interpretive experience.

Civil War Heritage Trail Interpretation

Objective: Merge park interpretation with the broader Civil War Heritage Trail.

The park would also benefit from highlighting a proposed Civil War Heritage Trail in north Florida. interpretation would ideally connect Olustee Battlefield to other notable U.S. Civil War sites in north Florida, including Fort Marion, Fort Pickens, Fort Clinch, the Natural Bridge Battlefield, Fort Jefferson, and Yellow Bluff Fort.

Union Account, Battlefield Graves, and Parade Ground
Commemoration of U.S. Army Casualties and Recognition of Associated Graves

Objective: Thoroughly document the military engagement, ensuring that a record of the Union account of the battle is interpreted.

No record of the Union account of the Battle of Olustee is interpreted at the park. The probability of mass, unmarked war graves located within state park boundaries and surrounding national forest lands is widely recognized. A well designed and sequenced documentation of the military engagement, including post-battle events, is recommended to provide a balanced interpretation.

To ensure historical equability, this story should be told with objectivity and comprehensive detail, chronologically documenting relevant events from the weeks leading up to the battle to the weeks that followed.

Finally, out of respect to the fallen, the DRP should ensure that third-party events are not held on the Parade Ground.

OPTIMUM BOUNDARY

Northward expansion of the park boundary is not necessary due to the presence of the Osceola National Forest. However, limited expansion of the boundary is possible to the south.

The current optimum boundary for Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park consists of a single 70-acre triangular parcel on the south side of U.S. Highway 90, immediately south of the park entrance. This parcel is a potential location for a new park residence and shop, should the relocation of those two facilities become necessary due to the construction of a new interpretive center.

Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park

Optimum Boundary

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

N