

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

DATE: May 20, 2104

AGENDA ITEM NO. 28

Consent Agenda ☐

Regular Agenda ☐

Public Hearing ☒

County Administrator's Signature:

Subject:

Designate the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post as a Landmark and Landmark Site

Department:

Planning & Development Services

Staff Member Responsible:

Jacob Stowers, Interim Executive Director

Recommended Action:

I RECOMMEND THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (BOARD) RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT AND DESIGNATE THE PROPOSED FORT DE SOTO BATTERIES AND MILITARY POST AS A LANDMARK AND LANDMARK SITE.

Summary Explanation/Background:

The purpose of this Resolution is to designate the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post as a Landmark and Landmark Site, in recognition of their local historic value. This would be the first landmark and landmark site designation under the criteria and process amended into Chapter 146 of the County's Land Development Code in 2012.

According to Chapter 146, a Landmark is an archaeological or historical site or structure designated pursuant to the criteria in the Code, and may include the location of a significant archaeological feature or historical event. A Landmark Site is essentially the land area on which a landmark and its related structures, features or artifacts are located, providing the premises or setting for the landmark.

The Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post comprise an area of approximately 35 acres (within the more than 1,000-acre Fort De Soto County Park) with a history dating back to the 1800's. In fact, the value of establishing batteries and a military post at this strategic location (Mullet Key and Egmont Key) at the entry to Tampa Bay was clearly recognized by the U.S. military as early as the 1840's. But the idea took greater hold as the Tampa Bay area began to prosper, and after the Spanish American War, when the idea of needing better methods of protecting this significant new channel of commerce, transportation and economic development became more pressing. Construction finally began in the 1890's and moved into the early 1900's, ultimately resulting in a complete coastal defense artillery complex with all the concomitant support housing and infrastructure. Today, this military complex is significant as an example of the type of military coastal defense construction typical of the time period. The area includes two batteries - Laidley, which has been partially restored, and Bigelow, which is partially submerged. These are the only two original intact structures onsite; however, scattered throughout the boundary area proposed for designation are remnant foundations and/or evidence of the original barracks, storehouses,

bakery, hospital, quartermaster storehouse, recreation area for the soldiers, guardhouse, pathways and civilian quarters, etc. A landing wharf that was used for shipping supplies (now demolished and eroded) was located on the south, southeastern tip of the proposed area for designation. In particular, Battery Laidley is significant as it is one of very few such installations in the Country that retain a good portion of original mortars/armament.

The boundary for the area (see attached map) proposed for designation was described by staff (from the Departments of Planning and Development, Parks and Conservation Resources and Environment and Infrastructure).

In 2012, the County's Historic Preservation Board (HPB) was given the authority to review and make recommendations on the designation of historic landmarks, landmark sites or historic districts to the Board. The HPB reviewed the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post, their first application under the new Chapter 146 criteria, at a public hearing in March, 2014 and recommended that it be approved by the Board. The intent of this local designation is to recognize the site as a significant part of Pinellas County's history, and to provide some local control over activities that might affect this important historic resource. Even while the Fort De Soto Battery site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977, there are no specific protections afforded by placement on the National Register. This local designation will ensure that any onsite activities that might be undertaken in the future (e.g., rehabilitation of the parking lot, gift shop, etc., or other activities within the boundary area) will be done in a manner that complements the overall historic purpose and value of the designation.

In summary, the HPB recommends that this Landmark and Landmark site designation be approved. Staff has also reviewed the proposal and finds that the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post represent a significant part of Pinellas County's history warranting designation. Therefore, staff recommends that the Board now designate the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post as a Pinellas County Landmark and Landmark Site.

Fiscal Impact/Cost/Revenue Summary:

N/A

Exhibits/Attachments Attached:

1. Proposed Resolution to Designate the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post as a Landmark and Landmark Site
2. County Staff Report and HPB Recommendation (including back-up documents)

ATTACHMENT 1

Proposed Resolution to Designate the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military
Post as a Landmark and Landmark Site

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF PINELLAS, DESIGNATING THE FORT DE SOTO BATTERIES AND MILITARY POST AS A LANDMARK AND LANDMARK SITE PURSUANT TO SECTION 146-6 OF THE PINELLAS COUNTY CODE; RECORDING DESIGNATION OF THE FORT DE SOTO BATTERIES AND MILITARY POST LANDMARK AND LANDMARK SITE ON THE PINELLAS COUNTY ZONING MAP; PROVIDING FOR OTHER MODIFICATIONS THAT MAY ARISE FROM REVIEW OF THE RESOLUTION AT A PUBLIC HEARING AND/OR WITH RESPONSIBLE PARTIES; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, in 1977, the Fort De Soto Battery site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, Pinellas County conducted a historical and archaeological survey of the unincorporated area, and included the Fort De Soto Battery site in the County's historic resource database; and

WHEREAS, the Pinellas County Historic Preservation Board (HPB) is established by Chapter 146 of the Pinellas County Code for the purpose of furthering the County's historic preservation goals; and

WHEREAS, included in the role of the HPB is the ability to review, and recommend approval of local landmarks and landmarks sites that have local historic significance to the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the HPB identified the Fort De Soto Battery and Military Post as an important historic resource, and directed Pinellas County staff to prepare an application for local landmark and landmark site designation of the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post pursuant to the criteria in Section 146-6 of the Pinellas County Code; and

WHEREAS, County staff from the Departments of Planning and Development Services, Parks and Conservation Resources, and Environment and Infrastructure, coordinated in preparing the boundary for the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post; and

WHEREAS, the proposed designation was reviewed and found to be consistent with, and further the implementation of, the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2014, the HPB conducted a public hearing and recommended approval of the landmark and landmark site designation for the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post; and

WHEREAS, the public hearing of the proposed designation has been duly noticed.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Pinellas County in a regular session duly assembled this 20th day of May, 2014, that the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post are hereby designated as a landmark and landmark site pursuant to Section 146-6 of the Pinellas County Code, and are legally described by the following:

See Attached Exhibit "A"

Commissioner _____ offered the foregoing resolution and moved its adoption, which was seconded by Commissioner _____ upon the roll call the vote was:

Ayes:

Nays:

Absent and not voting:

APPROVED AS TO FORM
OFFICE OF COUNTY ATTORNEY

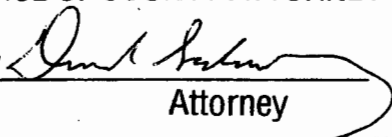
By 
Attorney

Exhibit “A”

PINELLAS COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
DIVISION OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT
SURVEY AND MAPPING SECTION
22211 U.S. HIGHWAY 19 N.
CLEARWATER, FLORIDA 33765-2328



SECTION(S) 18, TOWNSHIP 33 SOUTH, RANGE 16 EAST

DESCRIPTION

An irregular shaped parcel of land comprised of upland and submerged land, being a portion of that certain tract, as recorded in D.B. 1548, Page 463, public records of Pinellas County, Florida, in Section 18, Township 33 South, Range 16 East, Pinellas County, Florida, being described as follows:

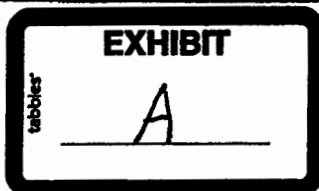
Commencing at a National Geodetic Survey monument stamped "DeSoto C", Northing = 1193478.00 and Easting = 417888.94, (coordinate values shown are based on the State Plane Coordinate System for the West Zone of Florida, North American Datum 1983, 1990 Adjustment); thence run N 01°48'43"E, for a distance of 425.88 feet for a POINT OF BEGINNING; thence S 06°34'46"E, for a distance of 520.21 feet to the east side of a brick sidewalk; thence along said brick sidewalk the following eight(8) courses: 1)N 80°07'57"E, for a distance of 53.18 feet to a Point of Curvature; 2)thence Southeasterly 96.77 feet along the arc of a curve, concave to the south, having a radius of 75.00 feet, through a central angle of 73°55'40", a chord bearing S 62°54'13"E, 90.20 feet to a Point of Tangency; 3)thence S 25°56'23"E, for a distance of 27.94 feet; 4)thence S 61°37'44"W, for a distance of 3.37 feet; 5)thence S 26°35'33"E, for a distance of 288.46 feet; 6)thence S 66°47'04"W, for a distance of 2.00 feet; 7)thence S 19°04'21"W, for a distance of 8.63 feet; 8)thence S 64°38'03"W, for a distance of 3.35 feet; thence continue S 64°38'03"W, for a distance of 22.18 feet to a Point on Curve, a radial line to said point being S 64°30'26"W, also being a point on the south edge of pavement of a parking lot access road; thence along said south edge of pavement the following four courses: 1)Southeasterly 205.93 feet along the arc of a curve, concave to the northeast, having a radius of 164.00 feet, through a central angle of 71° 56' 47", a chord bearing S 61°27'58"E, 192.67 feet to a Point of Tangency; 2)thence N 82°33'39"E, for a distance of 42.81 feet to a Point of Curvature; 3)thence Northeasterly 456.78 feet along the arc of a curve, concave to the north, having a radius of 1457.00 feet, through a central angle of 17°57'46", a chord bearing N 73°34'46"E, 454.91 feet to a Point of Tangency; 4)thence N 64°35'53"E, for a distance of 51.53 feet to a point of intersection with the southerly edge of a dirt trail, said point also being a Point on Curve, a radial line to said point being N 50°58'36"W; thence along the southerly edge of said dirt trail for the following four(4) courses: 1)Southwesterly 131.45 feet along the arc of a curve, concave to the southeast, having a radius of 178.00 feet, through a central angle of 42°18'44", a chord bearing S 17°52'02"W, 128.48 feet to a Point of Tangency; 2)thence S 03°17'20"E, for a distance of 43.44 feet to a Point of Curvature; 3)thence Southwesterly 100.78 along the arc of a curve, concave to the west, having a radius of 130.00 feet, through a central angle of 44°25'05", a chord bearing S 18°55'13"W, 98.28 feet to a Point of Tangency; 4)thence S 41°07'45"W, for a distance of 428.48 feet; thence S 31°40'21"E, for a distance of 281.35 feet; thence S 58°51'57"W, for a distance of 195.32 feet; thence N 23°39'23"W, for a distance of 140.74 feet; thence S 70°35'33"W, for a distance of 289.71 feet to a point on the southerly face of a seawall; thence along said southerly face of the seawall the following nine(9) courses: 1)thence S 00°22'44"E, for a distance of 62.18 feet; 2)thence S 86°46'58"W, for a distance of 49.76 feet; 3)thence N 82°38'34"W, for a distance of 48.38 feet; 4)thence N 73°53'59"W, for a distance of 42.33 feet; 5)thence N 64°25'29"W, for a distance of 42.25 feet; 6)thence N 60°07'10"W, for a distance of 458.04 feet; 7)thence N 56°04'35"W, for a distance of 83.91 feet; 8)thence N 47°42'13"W, for a distance of 70.81 feet; 9)thence N 00°46'22"E, for a distance of 237.17 feet; thence departing said seawall, N 32°14'00"W, for a distance of 440.61 feet; thence S 70°46'31"W, for a distance of 186.57 feet; thence N 27°10'32"E, for a distance of 777.76 feet; thence N 00°00'00"E, for a distance of 76.01 feet; thence N 81°24'21"E, for a distance of 455.29 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING.

CONTAINING: 1,509,016 square feet or 34.642 more or less

BASIS OF BEARINGS: Bearings and coordinate values shown are based on the State Plane Coordinate System for the West Zone of Florida, North American Datum 1983, 1990 Adjustment, on line from National Geodetic Survey monuments stamped "DeSoto C" (Northing = 1193478.00 and Easting = 417888.94) and "DeSoto" (Northing = 1198457.71 and Easting = 424918.71) being N 67°01'46"E.

Additions or deletions by other than the Professional Land Surveyor in responsible charge is prohibited.
Land Description is invalid without signature and/or embossed seal of the Professional Land Surveyor

EXHIBIT A



Parcel No.: P001

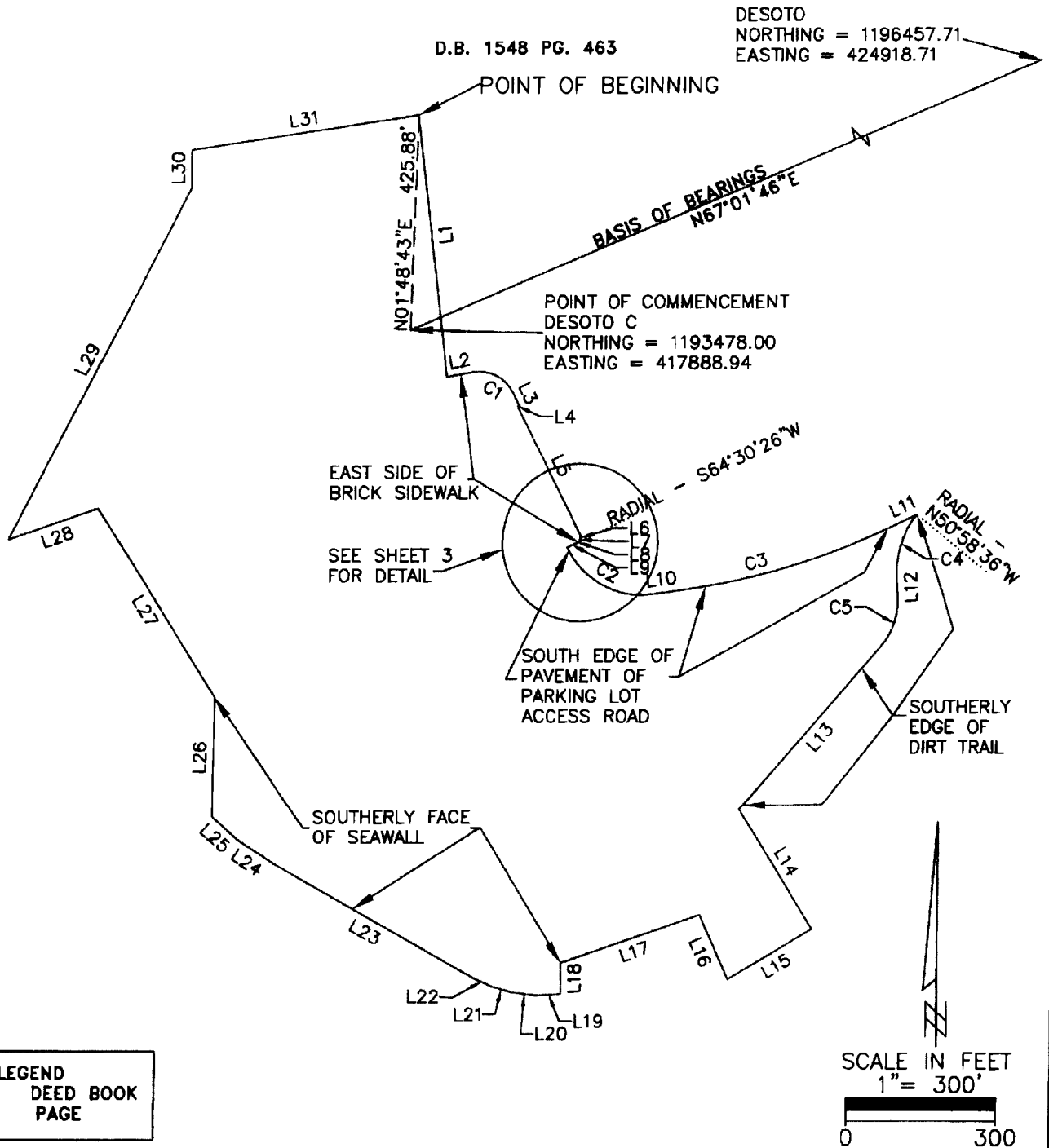
SHEET 1 OF 4

PINELLAS COUNTY
 DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
 DIVISION OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT
 SURVEY AND MAPPING SECTION
 22211 U.S. HIGHWAY 19 N.
 CLEARWATER, FLORIDA 33765-2328



SECTION(S) 18, TOWNSHIP 33 SOUTH, RANGE 16 EAST

SKETCH--NOT A SURVEY



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EXHIBIT **A**

Parcel No.: P001

SHEET 2 OF 4

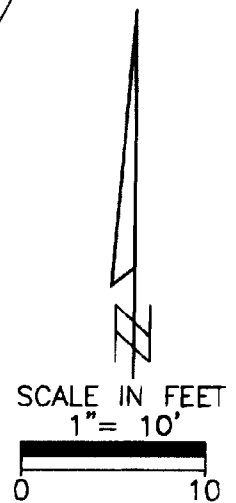
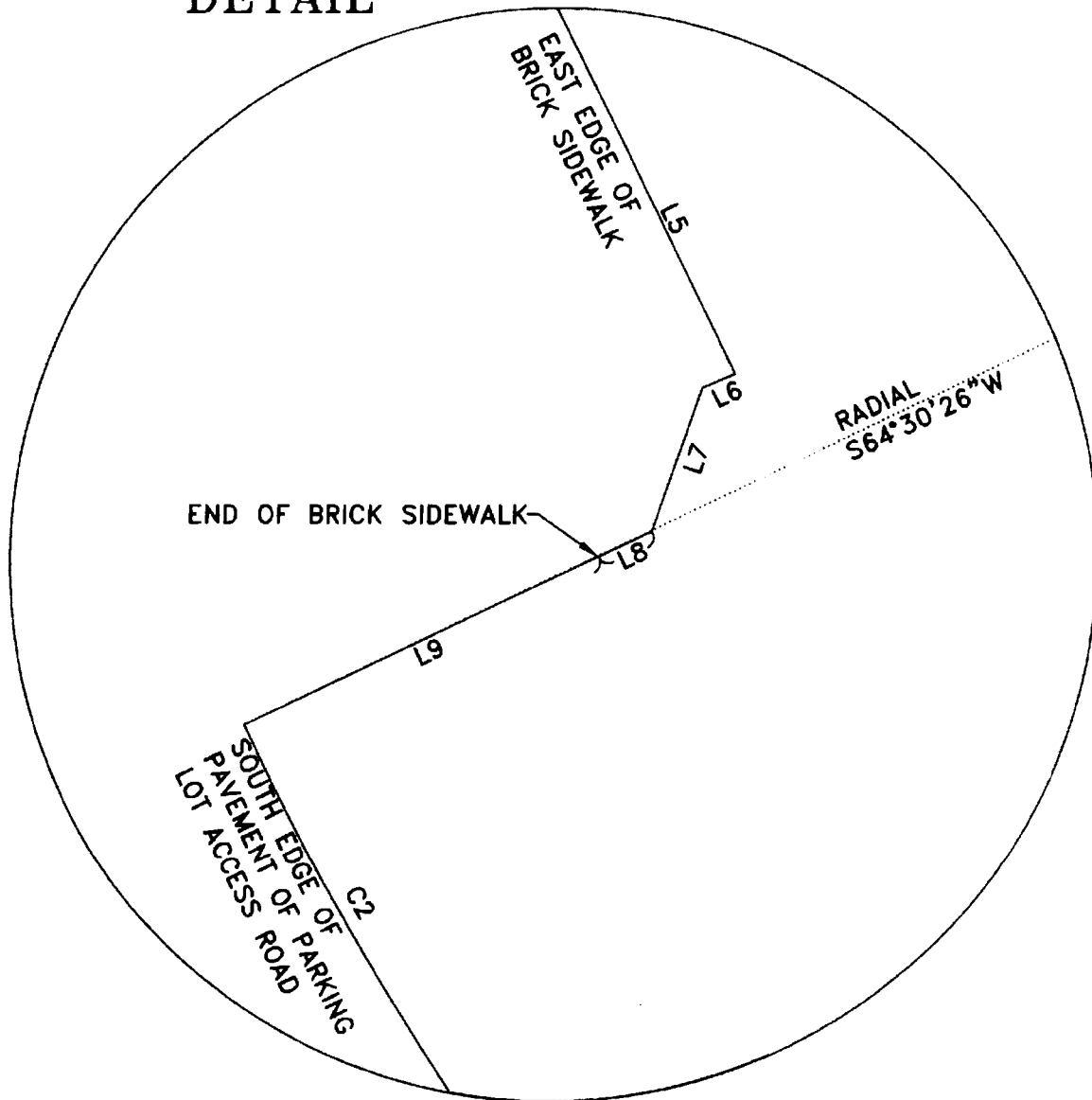
PINELLAS COUNTY
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SECTION(S) 18, TOWNSHIP 33 SOUTH, RANGE 16 EAST

SKETCH--NOT A SURVEY

DETAIL



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EXHIBIT **A**

Parcel No.: P001

SHEET 3 OF 4

PINELLAS COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
DIVISION OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT
SURVEY AND MAPPING SECTION
22211 U.S. HIGHWAY 19 N.
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SECTION(S) 18, TOWNSHIP 33 SOUTH, RANGE 16 EAST

LINE & CURVE TABLES

LINE TABLE		
LINE #	LENGTH	BEARING
L1	520.21'	S06°34'46"E
L2	53.18'	N80°07'57"E
L3	27.94'	S25°56'23"E
L4	3.37'	S61°37'44"W
L5	288.46'	S26°35'33"E
L6	2.00'	S66°47'04"W
L7	8.63'	S19°04'21"W
L8	3.35'	S64°38'03"W
L9	22.18'	S64°38'03"W
L10	42.81'	N82°33'39"E
L11	51.53'	N64°35'53"E
L12	43.44'	S03°17'20"E
L13	428.48'	S41°07'45"W
L14	281.35'	S31°40'21"E
L15	195.32'	S58°51'57"W
L16	140.74'	N23°39'23"W
L17	289.71'	S70°35'33"W
L18	62.18'	S00°22'44"E
L19	49.76'	S86°46'58"W
L20	48.38'	N82°38'34"W
L21	42.33'	N73°53'59"W
L22	42.25'	N64°25'29"W
L23	458.04'	N60°07'10"W

LINE TABLE		
LINE #	LENGTH	BEARING
L24	83.91'	N56°04'35"W
L25	70.81'	N47°42'13"W
L26	237.17'	N00°46'22"E
L27	440.61'	N32°14'00"W
L28	186.57'	S70°46'31"W
L29	777.76'	N27°10'32"E
L30	76.01'	N00°00'00"E
L31	455.29'	N81°24'21"E

CURVE TABLE					
CURVE #	RADIUS	ARC	CHORD	CHORD BEARING	DELTA
C1	75.00'	96.77'	90.20'	S62°54'13"E	73°55'40"
C2	164.00'	205.93'	192.67'	S61°27'58"E	71°56'47"
C3	1457.00'	456.78'	454.91'	N73°34'46"E	17°57'46"
C4	178.00'	131.45'	128.48'	S17°52'02"W	42°18'44"
C5	130.00'	100.78'	98.28'	S18°55'13"W	44°25'05"

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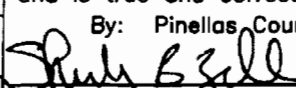
CALCULATED BY: ch	The above Sketch and/or Land description was prepared under my supervision and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.	
CHECKED BY: sz	By: Pinellas County Survey and Mapping Section	
S.F.N.: 1998	 DATE <u>2/26/2014</u> SHIRLEY B. ZELLER, PROFESSIONAL SURVEYOR AND MAPPER LICENSE NUMBER: 5877 STATE OF FLORIDA, PHONE # (727) 464-8904	SEAL

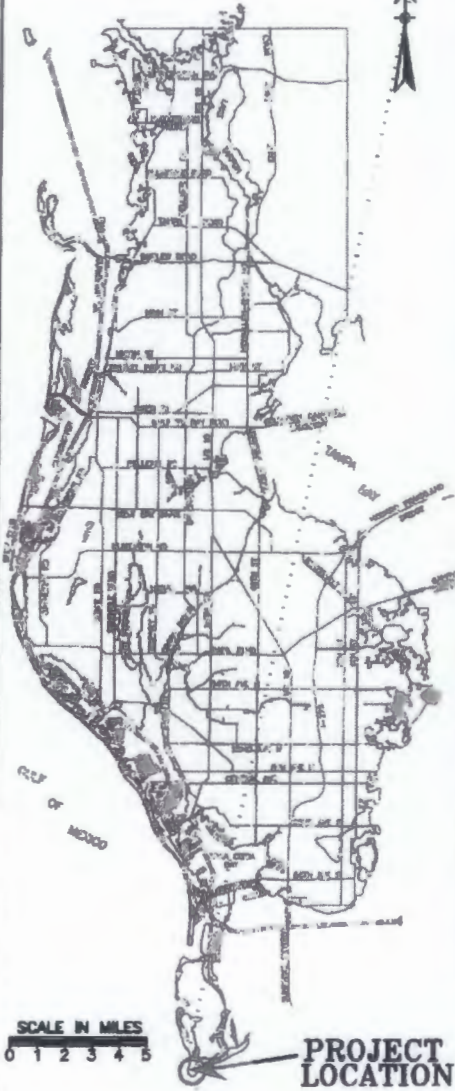
EXHIBIT **A**

Parcel No.: P001

SHEET 4 OF 4

SECTION(S) 18, TOWNSHIP 30 SOUTH, RANGE 16 EAST

PINELLAS COUNTY MAP



SCALE IN FEET 1" = 400'



FORT DESOTO
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
SITE

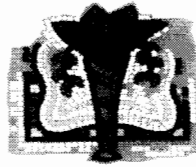
EXHIBIT **A**
NOT A SURVEY
PARCEL P001
P001_EXHIBIT.dwg

DATE: FEBRUARY 2014
PHOTOGRAPHY DATE: 12/10
SURVEY FILE NO.: 1998
SHEET 01 OF 01

ATTACHMENT 2

County Staff Report and HPB Recommendation

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD (HPB)
RECOMMENDATION
to the
Board of County Commissioners**



Regarding: Proposed Landmark and Landmark Site Designation of the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post Site

HPB Recommendation: The HPB finds that the proposed resolution designating the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post as a landmark and landmark site is consistent with designation criteria contained in Chapter 146 of the Pinellas County Code and with policies of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan and recommends that the proposed resolution be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. (The vote was in favor, 6-0)

HPB Report No. HPB 01-03-14

Public Hearing Date: March 19, 2014

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the HPB find the proposed landmark and landmark site designation to be consistent with the designation criteria contained in the Pinellas County Historic Preservation Code (Chapter 146 of the County Code) and consistent with the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan, based on the findings of this Report.

Staff further recommends that the HPB recommend to the Board of County Commissioners designation of the site as a Local Landmark and Landmark Site.

**Review of the Application to Designate the Fort De Soto Batteries and
Military Post as a Landmark and Landmark Site**

BACKGROUND

In 2012, Pinellas County amended Chapter 146, the Historic Preservation provisions of the Land Development Code, to include establishment of a Historic Preservation Board with final-decision making authority over certain actions (e.g., review and approval of certificates of appropriateness), as well as to provide criteria and local designation procedures to enable protection of significant historic features, structures, sites, etc. Among its duties, the Pinellas County Historic Preservation Board (HPB) has the power and duties to review and make recommendations on the designation of historic landmarks, landmark sites or historic districts to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). To designate a **Landmark and Landmark Site**, the HPB reviews an application against the designation

criteria contained in Chapter 146 and makes a subsequent recommendation to the BCC. With regard to the designation of a **Historic District**, the HPB reviews the application against the Chapter 146 criteria and makes a recommendation to the Pinellas County Local Planning Agency, who in turn makes a recommendation to the BCC.

According to Chapter 146, a **Landmark** is an archaeological or historical site or structure designated pursuant to the criteria in the Code, and may include the location of a significant archaeological feature or historical event. A **Landmark Site** is essentially the land area on which a landmark and its related structures, features or artifacts are located, providing the premises or setting for the landmark.

The purpose of this staff review and recommendation is to review the **Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post** for consideration as a locally-designated **Landmark and Landmark Site** under the new designation criteria adopted in 2012. Currently, Pinellas County has one historic district (the Downtown Palm Harbor Historic District established in 1994), and three other historic resources designated by the BCC. If approved, this will be the first **Landmark and Landmark Site** designation approved by the BCC using the procedure adopted in 2012.

REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE LANDMARK AND LANDMARK SITE DESIGNATION CRITERIA:

In 1977, the Fort De Soto Battery site was listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**. In 1991, Pinellas County conducted a historical and archaeological survey of the unincorporated area, and included the Fort De Soto Battery site in the County's historic resource database. With the new Code language in place, and the duties and powers of the HPB established, the Board identified the Fort De Soto Battery as an important historic resource to designate locally, in addition to its listing on the National Register. Staffs in Sustainable Planning and Development, Parks and Conservation Resources, and Environment and Infrastructure coordinated in preparing a boundary for the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post to the HPB in January 2014. Based on feedback from the HPB, the prepared boundaries were modified slightly and serve as the basis for the current application. **Attachment A** depicts the general boundary of the area proposed for designation within the context of the larger Fort De Soto Park, as well as relevant land use and zoning information.

Physical Description and Character-defining Features: The Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post comprise an area of approximately 35 acres (within the more than 1000-acre Fort De Soto County Park). The area includes 2 batteries: *Laidley* which has been partially restored, and *Bigelow*, which is partially submerged. These are the only two original intact structures onsite; however, scattered throughout the boundary area proposed for designation are remnant foundations and/or evidence of the original barracks, storehouses, the bakery, hospital, the quartermaster storehouse, the recreation area for the soldiers, the guardhouse, pathways and civilian quarters. A landing wharf that was used for shipping supplies (now demolished and eroded) was located on the south, southeastern tip of the proposed area. The area as a whole was utilized as a military post during the late 19th century and early part of the 20th century, following determination by the military that it provided a strategic coastal defense location near the entrance to Tampa Bay. The batteries and military post are significant as proto-typical examples of military construction during this timeframe. In particular, *Battery Laidley* is significant as it is one of very few such installations that retain a portion of its original mortars/armament in place. Photographs are included (**Last Part of Attachment B**) depicting the current physical condition of the site, and representing many of the characteristics that make this site significant.

Existing Condition/Adaptive Reuse of the Landmark and Landmark Site: as described above, the original buildings are largely gone; however, many of the original foundations remain. The *Laidley Battery* is partially restored, and provides a good depiction of how the site was used in its history. The *Bigelow Battery* is significantly deteriorated due to coastal erosion and storm effects, and is partially submerged at high tide. Various site improvements have been made over time (since the area functions as a part of the larger County park) and include a parking lot and gift shop, as well as a restored

quartermaster house serving as a small interpretive museum. **Please refer to the attachment A location map which includes the relevant land use and zoning information, as well as attachment B, landmark and landmark site application which has attached to it, the completed National Register Nomination for the site and completed Florida Master Sit File forms. Attachment B has more specifics information on the existing and past condition of the Batteries and associated resources.**

Consistency with Designation Criteria: In order to be eligible for designation as a **Landmark or Landmark Site**, the area proposed for designation must be significant to the County's history, archaeology, culture and/or for their integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, etc. Specifically, staff finds that the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post are significant to the County's history [as required pursuant to the Criteria contained in Sec. 146-6(e)1] for the following reasons:

- a. **Associated with distinctive elements of the cultural, social, political, economic, scientific, religious, prehistoric, or architectural history that have contributed to the pattern of history in the community, the county, southwestern Florida, the state or nation:** *As already described, the value of establishing batteries and a military post at this strategic location (Mullet Key and Egmont Key) at the entry to Tampa Bay was clearly recognized by the U.S. military in the 1800s. But the idea took greater hold as the Tampa Bay area began to prosper, and after the Spanish American War, when the idea of needing better methods of protecting this significant new channel of commerce, transportation and economic development became more pressing. Construction finally began in the 1890s and moved into the early 1900s, ultimately resulting in a complete coastal defense artillery complex with all the concomitant support housing and infrastructure. Today, this military complex is significant as an example of the type of military coastal defense construction typical of the time period. The Laidley Battery is particularly significant as portions of its original armament remain intact and in place. The fact that there are remnant foundations and paths still evidencing the daily military life at the turn of the century enhances and complements the significance of the armaments. The challenges of outdoor life in a low-lying coastal environment took its toll however, as did the impact of a major hurricane in 1921. The post was officially abandoned in 1923, although it was used as a bombing range during world War II. With the sale of the Fort De Soto property to Pinellas County in 1948, work could begin to finally stabilize some effects of coastal erosion, protect and restore certain historic resources, and begin to interpret this unique aspect of Pinellas County's history attributable to the strategic significance of Mullet and Egmont Keys to Tampa Bay, for area residents and visitors to Fort De Soto County Park.*
- b. **Are associated with the lives of persons significant in the County's past:** *the Batteries were named for U.S. military figures important during the 1800s and early 1900s (Colonel Theodore T.S. Laidley, and First Lieutenant Aaron Bigelow).*
- c. **Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, style or method of construction or are the work of a master; or that possess high artistic value; or that represent a distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction:** *the Batteries and the Military Post are characteristic of the type of coastal military installation typical in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Cumulatively, the remnants of daily military life and pace typical of the time period are still evident within the area proposed for designation.*

- d. **Have yielded, or are likely to yield, information on history or prehistory:** *As described in the attached application, the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post are representative of coastal military construction and artillery fortification associated with the late 19th century and early 20th centuries, and evidence the style of coastal defense system associated with that time. The remnant structures and site features are tangible contributors to the County's history (and U.S. military history), representing, with nearby Egmont Key, a strategically-planned tactical defense fortification system for the Tampa Bay area.*
- e. **Are listed or have been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:** *The Fort De Soto Batteries have already been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Including the Military Post in the local designation complements and provides the appropriate context for the Batteries. It ensures, for example, that any onsite activities that might be undertaken in the future (e.g., rehabilitation of the parking lot, gift shop, etc., or other activities within the boundary area) must be done in a manner that complements the overall historic purpose and value.*

Please refer to the attached **Application (Attachment B) for Landmark and Landmark Site Designation** for more detailed information, as well as the surveyed boundary map, master site file background materials, etc.

IN SUMMARY, staff finds that the **Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post** represents a significant part of Pinellas County's history, and upon review finds that they meet the criteria for designation as a Pinellas County Landmark and Landmark Site, as outlined in Chapter 146 of the County Code. Therefore, staff recommends designation of the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post as a Pinellas County Landmark and Landmark Site.

SUMMARY OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A is a map of the Fort De Soto Park, its land use and zoning as well as the boundary of the proposed site.

Attachment B is the Pinellas County application for the designation of landmark and landmark site which has attached to it:

The National Register of Historic Places Nomination form (providing detail history of Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post), the Florida Master Site File, official sketch (survey) of the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post site, and a selection of photographs of the Batteries, remnants of the Military Post buildings and the historic brick pathways.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PINELLAS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Staff finds that the proposed designation of the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post as a Landmark and Landmark Site is consistent with the following goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan:

Recreation, Open Space Element:

- 5.3. OBJECTIVE: The County shall continue to identify, protect and preserve historic and archaeological resources in Pinellas County, including coastal areas. Particular emphasis will be given to increasing the interpretation and appreciation of such resources.
- 5.3.5. Policy: Pinellas County shall continue to provide for the protection, preservation, and appropriate use of historically significant housing, structures, and archaeological resources through implementation of the historic preservation and comprehensive zoning chapters of the Pinellas County Land Development Code.
- 5.3.7. Policy: When appropriate, and as resources allow, Pinellas County shall continue to support citizen-initiated efforts to preserve and protect historic and archaeological resources.
- 5.3.10. Policy: Pinellas County shall promote the protection, preservation, or sensitive adaptive reuse of historic and archaeological resources located in coastal areas and provide public access where appropriate and possible.
- 5.3.12. Policy: Pinellas County shall continue to recognize, preserve, protect, and interpret archaeological and historic sites and buildings that are listed on the official National Register, or are of local historical significance within County parks and environmental lands.
- 5.3.20 Policy: Pinellas County shall cooperate with the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources (DHR) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to provide them with additional local information on the evaluation of nominated National Register eligible sites.
- 5.3.22 Policy: Pinellas County shall develop strategies for documenting under-recorded historical and archaeological resources by emphasizing the documentation of linear resources (e.g. canals, railroads, historic road segments), by coordinating with local genealogical and historical societies to conduct surveys of historic cemeteries and unmarked graves in future cultural resource surveys, and by developing contexts for these resources to accurately assess their historic significance.
- 5.4 OBJECTIVE: Pinellas County shall develop cooperative ventures with State and local municipalities and shall develop a collaborative countywide educational system to promote historic preservation programs in Pinellas County.
- 5.4.2 Policy: Pinellas County shall consider developing strategies for updating documentation for existing National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) sites.
- 5.4.4 Policy: Pinellas County shall assist National Register nominations of eligible historic resources as evaluated by State Historic Preservation Office.
- 5.4.12 Policy: Pinellas County shall coordinate with historical societies and museums to develop exhibits for schools and libraries highlighting cultural resources of the county.
- 5.4.13 Policy: Pinellas County shall support the activities, policies and programs of the Pinellas County Historic Preservation Advisory Board.

Attachment A

Map of the Fort De Soto Park

Land Use, Zoning and Proposed Site

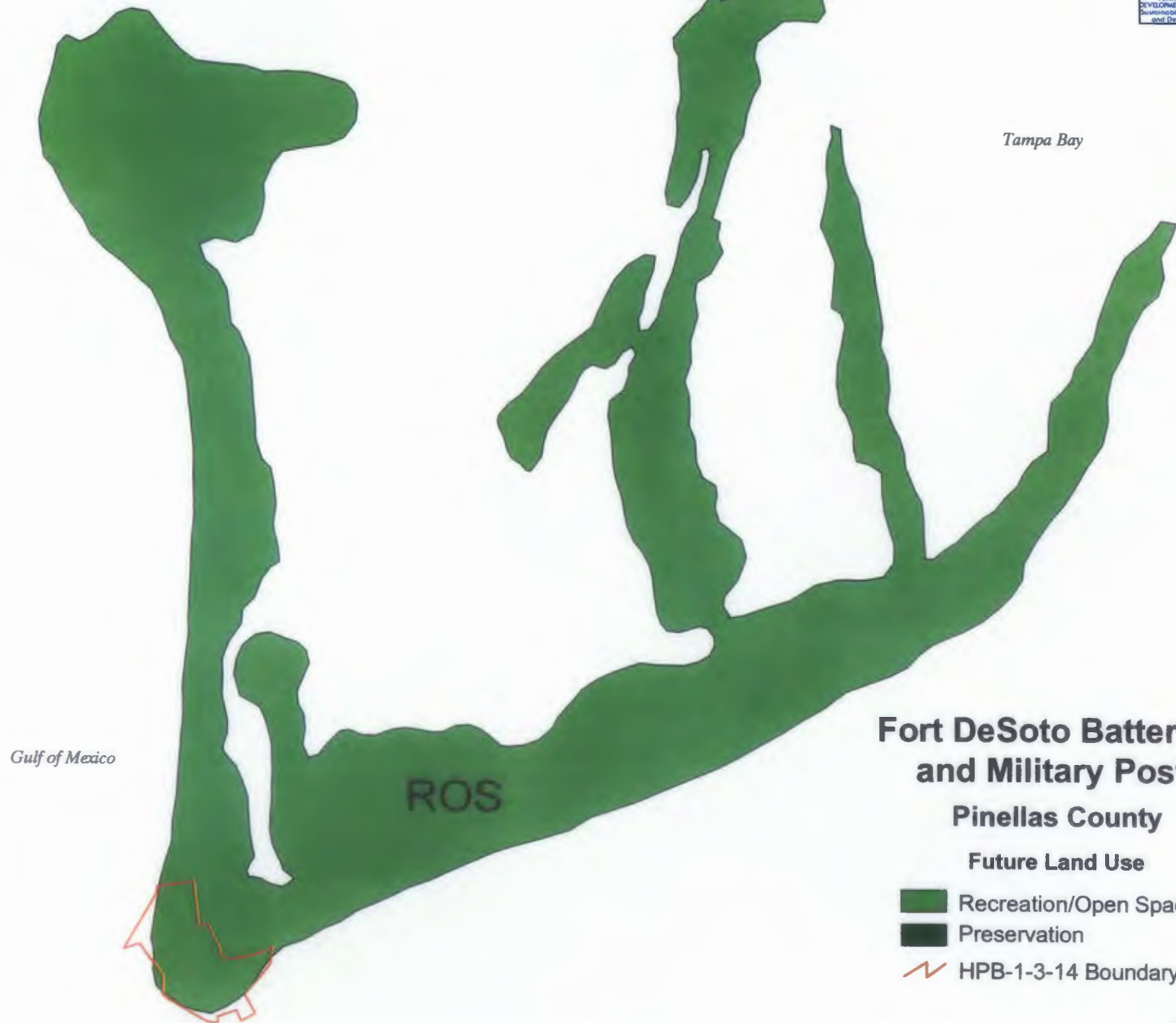
Gulf of Mexico

Fort DeSoto Batteries and Military Post

March 2014

HPB-3-7-14 Boundary

N



Fort DeSoto Batteries and Military Post

Pinellas County

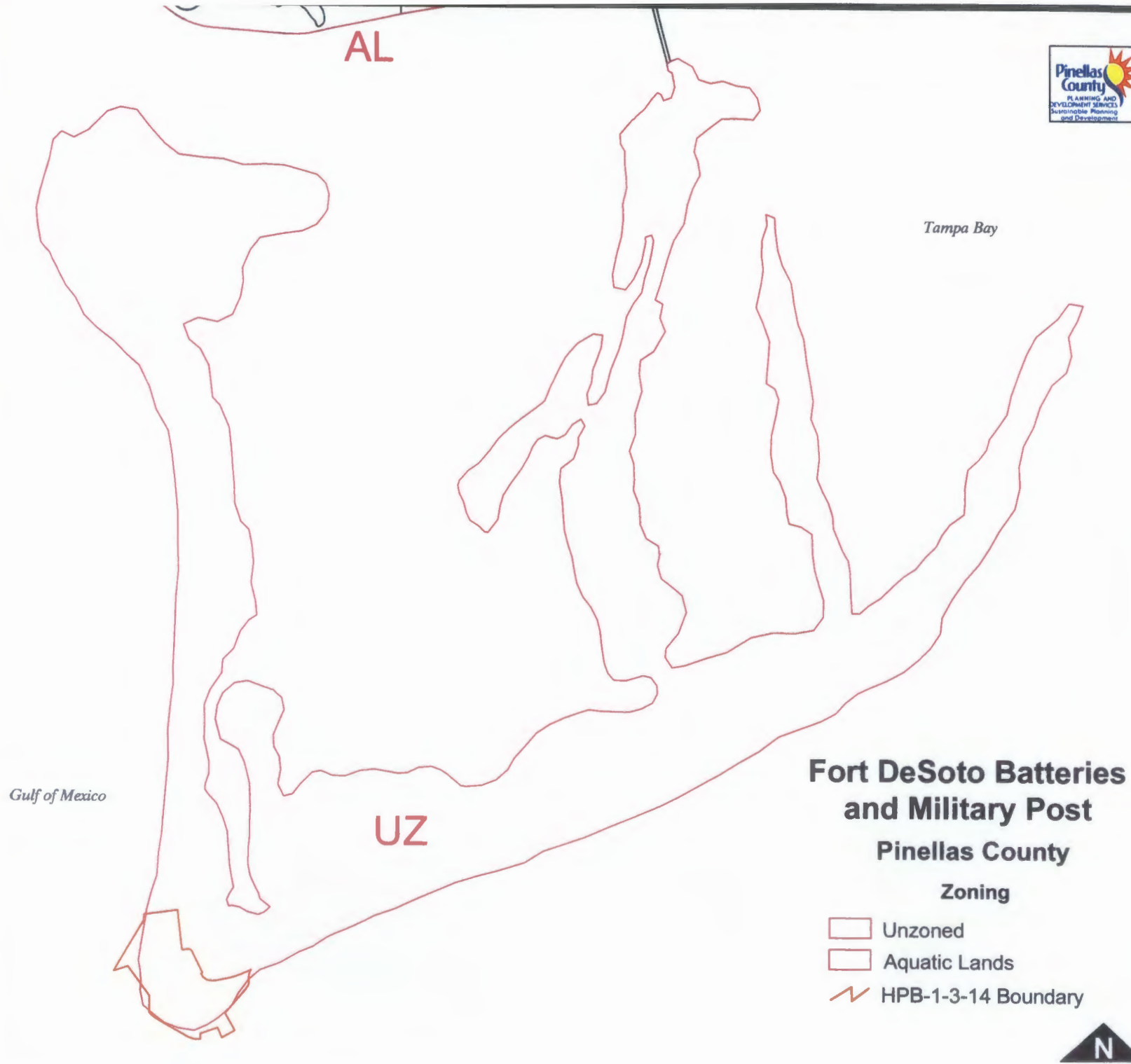
Future Land Use

Recreation/Open Space

Preservation

HPB-1-3-14 Boundary

N



SECTION(S) 18, TOWNSHIP 30 SOUTH, RANGE 16 EAST

PINELLAS COUNTY MAP



SCALE IN FEET 1" = 400'



FORT DESOTO
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
SITE

EXHIBIT **A**
NOT A SURVEY
PARCEL P001

P001_EXHIBIT.dwg

DATE: FEBRUARY 2014

PHOTOGRAPHY DATE: 12/10

SURVEY FILE NO.: 1998

SHEET 01 OF 01

Attachment B

Pinellas County Local Landmark and Historic District Application

National Register of Historic Places- Fort De Soto

Florida Master Site File- Fort De Soto

Official Survey of the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post

Present and Past Photos



Landmark, Landmark Site & Historic District Designation Application

Pinellas County
Historic Preservation

Type of property nominated (for staff use only)

☐ building ☐ structure ☒ site ☐ object ☐ historic district ☒ multiple resource

1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Historic name: Fort De Soto Batteries & Military Post

Other names/site number: 8Pi0048

Address: Pinellas County Fort. De Soto Park

Historic address: Pinellas County Fort. De Soto Park

2. PROPERTY OWNER(S) NAME AND ADDRESS

Name: Pinellas County

Street and number: 315 Court Street

City or town: Clearwater State: Florida Zip code: 33756

Phone number (home): 727-464-8200 (work) Click here to enter text. e-mail Click here to enter text.

3. NOMINATION PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Gordon Beardslee, Director

Organization: Pinellas County Planning and Development Services

Street and number: 310 Court Street

City or Town: Clearwater, State: Florida Zip Code: Click here to enter text.

Phone Number (home): (work): 727-464-4800 e-mail:

Date prepared: March 12, 2014 Signature:

4. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

Describe boundary line encompassing all man-made and natural resources to be included in designation (general legal description or survey). Attach map delimiting proposed boundary. (Use additional sheet if necessary): The proposed landmark site is within the Pinellas County Fort De Soto Park which is more than 1000 acres. The proposed Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post site however is within a much smaller area (35 acres) of the entire Fort De Soto Park. Therefore, a survey of the proposed landmark site was initiated and conducted by the Department of Environment and Infrastructure Department with assistance from the Pinellas County Planning and development Services, Parks & Conservation and the members of the County Historic Preservation Board. This survey includes and expands on the area previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1977).

5. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of property: About 35 acres

Property identification: See attached survey

Name of property: Fort De Soto Batteries

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Functions/Use: Military

Current Functions/Use: County Park

Property/ Parcel Land Use: Recreation/Open Space
Property/Parcel Zoning Designation: Aquatic Lands

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Military

Materials: 12' Guns, Battery, Brick Pathways

Narrative Description:

On one or more additional sheets describe the historic and existing condition of the property: include original location and setting; natural features; pre-historic man-made features; subdivision design; description of surrounding buildings; major alterations and present appearance; interior appearance.

The Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post proposed landmark and landmark site area is significant as examples of military coast defense construction of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Fort De Soto is one of the coastal defenses built during the quarter-century after 1890. Its story is representative, symbolizing the life cycle of one particular concept of our national defense.

Battery Laidley and Battery Bigelow are located in an area of approximately ten acres of the original site of the Fort De Soto Military reservation. Today, they are the only structures remaining of the original Fort De Soto installation, which, with Fort Dade on Egmont Key, comprised a major coast artillery fortification for the defense of Tampa Bay in the early 20th century.

There are several compounds, buildings, structures within the proposed landmark and landmark site boundary of the Ft. De Soto Batteries and Military Post site. A restored remnants of Battery Laidley and portion of mostly submerged Battery Bigelow, a gift shop, a historic brick pathway connecting several of the dismantled U.S. Army structures to the two Batteries, a paved parking lot, an open space remnants of a historic playground/picnic area for soldiers, foundation remnants of all Army built structures (quartermaster storehouse, bakery, hospital, guard house, civilian quarters, etc) and finally a replica of the Quartermasters Storehouse that houses a museum on the history of the area.

The proposed Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post landmark and landmark site meets several designation criteria contained in the Pinellas County Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 146 of Pinellas County Code). It is felt that the proposal meets Pinellas County designation criteria A through F, H through L and criteria N stated and checked below, in section nine (9) of this application.

For additional history of the Fort De Soto, please see attached National Register of Historic Places Nomination, the Completed Florida Master Site File form and several selected pictures depicting the present and past of the Fort De Soto Batteries and Military Post. These three documents provide details the Old Fort History and History of Military Use of Fort De Soto.

Also attached to this application is the sketch (survey) of the proposed landmark area.

8. NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY

Resource Type	Contributing	Noncontributing	Contributing resources previously listed on the National Register or Local Register
Buildings	_____	_____	<u>Battery Laidley</u>
Sites	<u>1</u>	_____	_____
Structures	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	_____
Objects	_____	_____	Number of multiple property listings
TOTAL	_____	_____	_____

9. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria for Significance (Mark one or more boxes for the appropriate criteria)

- A. ☒ It is associated with distinctive elements of the cultural, social, political, economic, scientific, religious, prehistoric, or architectural history that has contributed to the pattern of history in the community, the county, southwestern Florida, the state or nation; or
- B. ☒ It is associated with the lives of persons significant in the county's past; or
- C. ☒ It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, style or method of construction or are the work of a master; or that possess high artistic value; or that represent a distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. ☒ It has yielded, or are likely to yield, information on history or prehistory; or
- E. ☒ It is listed or have been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or
- F. ☒ It is associated with the life or activities of a person of importance in local, state, or national history; or
- G. ☐ Is the site of a historic event with a significant effect upon the county, state or nation; or
- H. ☒ Is associated in a significant way with a major historic event; or
- I. ☒ It is exemplary of the historical, political, cultural, economic, or social trends of the community in history; or
- J. ☒ It is associated in a significant way with a past or continuing institution which has contributed substantially to the life of the community; or
- K. ☒ It portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one or more distinctive design element or architectural styles; or
- L. ☒ It embodies the characteristics of an architectural style, period or method of construction; or
- M. ☐ It is a historic or outstanding work of a prominent architect, designer, or landscape architect; or
- N. ☒ It contains elements of design, detail, material, or craftsmanship which are of outstanding quality or which represented, in its time, a significant innovation, adaptation or response to the southwest Florida environment.

Areas of Significance

Significant Dates: (date constructed & altered): 1890-1945

Significant Person(s): Colonel Theodore T.S. Laidley & Lieutenant Aeron Bigelow

Cultural Affiliation/Historic Period: 1890-1945

Builder _____

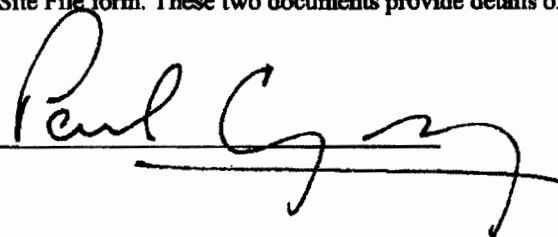
Architect _____

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property as it relates to the above criteria and information on one or more continuation sheets. Include biographical data on significant person(s), builder and architect, if known. Please use parenthetical notations, footnotes or endnotes for citations of work used.)

For additional history of the Fort De Soto, please see attachment A, the National Register of Historic Places Nomination and the completed Florida Master Site File form. These two documents provide details of the Old Fort History and History of Military Use of Ft. De Soto.

Signature of Applicant: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul C. [unclear]", written over a horizontal line.

Fort De Soto Site
National Register of Historic
Places Nomination Form

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Fort DeSoto Batteries

AND/OR COMMON

Battery Laidley & Battery Bigelow

SEE SITE FILE STAFF FOR
ORIGINAL PHOTO(S) OR MAP(S)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Fort DeSoto Park

CITY, TOWN

Mullet Key

STATE

Florida

VICINITY OF

CODE

12

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th

COUNTY

Pinellas

CODE

103

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT

☐ BUILDING(S)

☒ STRUCTURE

☐ SITE

☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC

☐ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

☐ UNOCCUPIED

☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED

☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE

☐ COMMERCIAL

☐ EDUCATIONAL

☐ ENTERTAINMENT

☐ GOVERNMENT

☐ INDUSTRIAL

☐ MILITARY

☐ MUSEUM

☒ PARK

☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ RELIGIOUS

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☐ TRANSPORTATION

☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Pinellas County Parks Department

STREET & NUMBER

407 South Garden Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Clearwater

VICINITY OF

STATE

Florida 33516

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Pinellas County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Clearwater

STATE

Florida

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE

1960

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS Pinellas County Parks Department

CITY, TOWN

Clearwater

STATE

Florida

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Battery Laidley and Battery Bigelow were located in an area of approximately ten acres of the original site of the Fort DeSoto Military reservation, on the west shore of Mullet Key. Today, they are the only structures remaining of the Fort DeSoto installation, which, with Fort Dade on Egmont Key, comprised a major coast artillery fortification for the defense of Tampa Bay in the early 20th century.

The major feature of the site is the massive earth covered concrete structure of Battery Laidley. This structure consists of two mortar emplacement pits separated and flanked by magazines, machinery spaces, and fire control rooms, in linear arrangement on a roughly north-south axis. A paved walkway along the rear or east side gives access to the various spaces. Beyond this, in back of each of the mortar pits, is a small brick booth from which fire control data boards were displayed.

The mortar pits are entirely open above and in the rear (see photograph). The magazines, machinery spaces, and fire control plotting rooms are windowless. The original steel doors have been removed, and only the rooms now currently being used for storage have been supplied with doors. All equipment, accessories, and fixtures for ammunition handling and fire control have been removed. However, new lighting fixtures and wiring similar to the original have recently been installed, and a general clean-up and repair program has put the basic structure in good condition.

Four of the original eight twelve-inch mortars are still in place in the pits. The breech mechanisms, parts of the aiming mechanisms, and other accessories have been removed. In each pit, one gun is displayed in the elevated or firing position, and one in the depressed or loading position. The guns and carriages are painted and well maintained.

The earth fill above the magazines and working spaces, and covering the seaward or west face of Battery Laidley, is covered with dense vegetation. For visitor access, concrete stairways at each end of the earth fill lead to a paved walkway and observation area at the top. From this vantage point the visitor can view the entrance channel to Tampa Bay, and Egmont Key, site of the main coast defense installation of which Fort DeSoto was an adjunct.

The ruins of Battery Bigelow are located approximately seven hundred feet in front, and just to the south of Battery Laidley. They consist of the tumbled remnants of concrete emplacements for two three-inch guns protecting the inshore approaches to Mullet Key and Egmont Key. Originally, the shoreline was some two hundred feet from Battery Bigelow. Beach erosion has resulted in the undermining and collapse of the structure, and the ruins are now awash at high tide.

(2)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES +1898-1945

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fort DeSoto Batteries are significant as examples of military coast defense construction of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Battery Laidley is of unusual significance as it is one of very few such installations in which a portion of the original armament has been retained in place.

Mullet Key is the largest and southernmost of a chain of offshore islands extending southward from the Pinellas peninsula. It is a low, narrow, vee-shaped sand spit, one arm of which extends northward approximately two miles from the apex, and the other a slightly greater distance toward the east-northeast. It forms the northern limit of the entrance to Tampa Bay. The main channel from the Gulf of Mexico enters Tampa Bay between Mullet Key and Egmont Key, two miles to the southwest. A secondary channel lies between Egmont and Passage Key further south.

The potential military value of Mullet and Egmont Keys for the defense of Tampa Bay was recognized by Army Engineers in a survey of the Florida coast in 1849. As a result of their recommendations, these and several other islands in Tampa Bay were reserved for military use. The interest of the War Department in the Mullet and Egmont sites was reaffirmed in the post-Civil War period (Sarles pp. 9-11).

No immediate efforts were made to establish defensive fortifications, probably because the limited commerce of the Tampa Bay area did not warrant the expenditures required. By the 1890s, however, after rail-road connections with the interior had been established, Tampa became a major outlet for the booming phosphate industry. Products of the surrounding forest and agricultural areas, and of its own growing industries added to Tampa's commerce (Long, passim). This general economic development, and the events of the Spanish-American War in 1898, resulted in the decision to establish a major coast defense facility to protect the Tampa Bay area.

The plan adopted was to utilize both Mullet and Egmont Keys in the development of a complete coast defense artillery complex, with the main battery of long range heavy coastal guns on Egmont Key, supported by the battery of mortars on Mullet Key. In addition, a battery of light artillery at each location would cover the entrance channels between the islands (Lewis pp. 75-79 for coast defense technology and tactics).

Continued

3

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Fort DeSoto Batteries

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Construction of the mortar battery at Mullet Key began in November, 1898, with the clearing of the site and the establishment of a construction plant. This included a 275 foot wharf, a narrow gauge railway and an overhead cableway for landing and handling materials, a concrete mixing plant, quarters and messhall for the workmen, stables, storage spaces, and a construction office. Stone and cement were brought from New York and New Jersey by sailing vessels. Sand and shell were available on the site. Construction proceeded rapidly, and the basic structure was completed by the end of 1899. Installation of the electrical equipment, gun carriages, and miscellaneous hardware, and completion of the earth fill required another five months. In May of 1900, the battery was reported complete and ready for installation of the armament (Sarles pp. 13-15).

Construction of the secondary battery was carried out during 1901 and completed early in 1902. Installation of the armament, eight twelve-inch mortars in the primary battery and two fifteen pounder rapid fire guns in the secondary battery, was completed in 1903, and firing tests were conducted in November of that year. By General Order No. 78 of May 25, 1903, the main battery was named in honor of Colonel Theodore T.S. Laidley for his "conspicuous service in the war with Mexico and the Civil War," and the secondary battery for First Lieutenant Aaron Bigelow, killed at the battle of Lundy's Lane, Ontario, on July 25, 1814 (Sarles pp. 16-17).

In the meantime, construction of the post buildings had begun. By 1906, when this work was complete, a total of 29 buildings had been erected. These included officers' and noncommissioned officers' quarters, barracks, kitchen, bakehouse, messhall, hospital, and administration buildings, workshops, stables, and storage sheds. Water and sewerage systems, brick roads, and outlying fire control installations completed the facilities of the base, which occupied an area of 613 acres (Sarles pp. 17-20).

Fort DeSoto was garrisoned by a company of regular Army artillerymen from 1904-1910. Isolation, lack of recreational facilities, and the incessant assaults of swarms of mosquitos made the post all but unendurable. The monotony of garrison duty was broken on three occasions when joint maneuvers were held with the militia units designated to man the post in event of mobilization. In June, 1910, the garrison company was withdrawn. A caretaker detachment was left in charge, but it was never large enough to cope with the maintenance requirements. With the outbreak of World War I, the detachment was increased--not to activate the fort, but to dismount four of the mortars and prepare them for

4

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Fort DeSoto Batteries
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

shipment to France. Despite subsequent efforts to maintain the facility after the war, deterioration continued. Beach erosion was a serious problem, threatening to undermine several buildings, and approaching the foundations of Battery Bigelow. Finally, in October, 1921, a major hurricane swept the area, causing extensive damage (Sarles pp. 20-28).

The post was officially abandoned in 1923. Within ten years, destruction of the facility by the elements was nearly complete. Only three of the original 29 buildings were still standing, and Battery Bigelow had collapsed, a victim of beach erosion. Battery Laidley was still structurally sound, but its mortar carriages and other metalwork were badly deteriorated, and its further usefulness was considered "extremely doubtful" (Sarles pp. 29-39).

Attempts by the War Department to dispose of the property were not successful, and with the mobilization planning begun in 1940 it was decided to utilize the area as a bombing range (Sarles p. 34). Fortunately, this use throughout the World War II period did not result in further damage to either Battery Laidley or the ruins of Battery Bigelow.

In 1948, Mullet Key was sold to Pinellas County as surplus government property, for subsequent development as a recreation area. By 1964, partial restoration of Battery Laidley and its remaining mortar armament was completed, and action had been taken to arrest the beach erosion threatening the ruins of Battery Bigelow. A system of bridges and causeways provides easy access to the site, and Fort DeSoto Park has become a major recreational attraction in the Pinellas County area.

5

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lewis, Emanuel Raymond. Seacoast Fortifications of the United States: An Introductory History. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1970).

Continued

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 328700 3055670
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C 17 328450 3055440

B 17 328715 3055530
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D 17 328560 3055650

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at point A, proceed approximately 180 meters in a SSE direction to point B, thence approximately 280 meters in a WSW direction to point C, thence approximately 240 meters in a NNE direction to point D, thence approximately 160 meters in an ENE direction to beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

William N. Thurston, Chief Preservation Planner

ORGANIZATION

Division of Archives, History & Records Management

DATE

1/10/77

STREET & NUMBER

Department of State, The Capitol

TELEPHONE

(904) 487-2333

CITY OR TOWN

Tallahassee

STATE

Florida

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE _____

LOCAL _____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Fort DeSoto Batteries

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Long, Durward. "Making of Modern Tampa: A City of the New South,
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pp. 333-345.

Sarles, Frank B., Jr. "Fort DeSoto, Florida." Historic Site Report
prepared in 1960 for U.S. Department of the Interior, National
Park Service. Copy on file in Pinellas County Parks Department,
Clearwater, Florida.

(7)

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE FLORIDA

Date Entered DEC 2 1977

Name

Fort DeSoto Batteries

Location

St. Petersburg vicinity
Pinellas County

Also Notified

Hon. Lawton Chiles, Jr.
Hon. Richard (Dick) Stone
Hon. C. W. Bill Young

COPY OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

The Director of the National Park Service

William J. Whalen

is pleased to inform you that the historic property listed on the enclosed sheet has been nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer responsible for your State's implementation of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, P.L. 89-665 (80 Stat. 915), as amended. It has accordingly been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed for your information and convenience.

Enclosures

RECEIVED
DEC 19 1977
DIVISION OF ARCHIVES
History & Records
Management

104

December 22, 1977

Pinellas County Parks Department
407 South Garden Avenue
Clearwater, Florida 33516

Ref: Fort DeSoto Batteries

Dear Sirs:

It is a pleasure to advise you that the referenced property has been officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A certificate of formal notification of the recognition given to this site is now being prepared and will be forwarded to you at a later date.

With every good wish and warm regards.

Sincerely,

L. Ross Morrell
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer



cc: City Planning
David Morgan
Ray C. Robinson

LRM:jb



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISIONS: Administrative Services – Archives, History & Records Management
Corporations – Cultural Affairs – Elections
Licensing – State Library Services

INFORMATION

CONTACT: Tom Llewellyn 488-8142

December 28, 1977

(Tallahassee) - - - Secretary of State Bruce Smathers has announced that the Fort DeSoto Batteries in Pinellas County have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. Battery Laidley and Battery Bigelow in Fort DeSoto Park in Mullet Key were part of the original site of the Fort DeSoto Military reservation. Today, they are the only structures remaining on that installation.

(Statement of significance, as submitted to the National Register of Historic Places, is attached.)

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Contact: Ross Morrell, Director, Division of Archives, History
and Records Management (904) 488-1480

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TALLAHASSEE, Florida -- May 12, 1980 -- Two 19th century cannons will be added to the armament on display at Fort DeSoto Park with the help of a \$2,500 historic preservation grant.

Secretary of State George Firestone announced that Pinellas County would receive the federal matching funds to move two 1898 cannons from Egmont Key to Fort DeSoto on Mullet Key.

Once relocated, the cannons will undergo preservation treatment before being placed on permanent exhibition at the fort.

Built at the turn of the century, Fort DeSoto served as part of the U.S. government's coastal defense for the Tampa Bay area until it was abandoned in the 1920s.

Pinellas County acquired the fort and began developing it as a park in 1956. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

The Department of State's Division of Archives, History and Records Management will administer the federal grant-in-aid, review the preservation project, and will provide consulting services.

The matching funds were received from the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, as part of a program established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The preservation project is expected to be completed by June, 1981.

Fort De Soto Site
Florida Master Site File

FLORIDA MASTER SITE FILE
HISTORIC SITE DATA SHEET

	FDAHRM	802==
Site No.	8Pi48	1009==
Site Name	Fort DeSoto Batteries	830==
Other Name(s) for Site	Battery Laidley & Battery Bigelow	930==
Other Nos. for Site	(for entire Ft. DeSoto Park see 8Pi121)	906==
NR Classification Category:	structure	916==
County	Pinellas	808==
Instruction for locating (or address)	On Mullet Key, Fort DeSoto Park, State Road 693	
		813==
Location:		868==
	subdivision name / block no. / lot no.	
Owner of Site: Name:	Pinellas County Parks Department	;
Address:	407 South Garden Avenue	902==
	Clearwater, Fl. 33516	902==
Occupant, Tenant, or Manager:		
Name:	Fort DeSoto Park	;
Address:	Tierra Verde Post Office	
	St. Petersburg, Fl. 33715	904==
Reporter (or local contact):		
Name:		;
Address:		
		816==
Recorder:		
Name & Title:	Thurston, William N., Chief Pres. Planner	;
Address:	FDAHRM	
		818==
Survey Date	7601	820==
Type of Ownership	public	848==
Inventory Status		914==
Previous Survey(s): (enter activity/title of survey/name/date/repository)		
	National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, U.S. Department of Interior, NPS, 1960 - report on Fort DeSoto Park by Frank B. Sarles, Jr. on file with Pinellas County Parks Department.	839==
Recording Station	HPS	804==
Specimens (Inventory Numbers)		870==
Date of Visit to Site	828==	Recording Date
		832==
Photographic Record Numbers	76-N-01-2	
		860==

Location of Site (Specific):

Map Reference (incl. scale & date) USGS Anna Maria 7.5' 1964

809==

Township	Range	Section	¼ Sec.	¼ ¼ Sec.	¼ ¼ ¼ Sec.
T33S	R16E	S18			

812==

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A POLYGON LOCATING THE PROPERTY							
LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			
Point	Degrees °	Minutes '	Seconds "	Degrees °	Minutes '	Seconds "	
	°	'	"	°	'	"	
	°	'	"	°	'	"	
	°	'	"	°	'	"	
	°	'	"	°	'	"	

OR

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES							
Degrees °	Minutes '	Seconds "	Degrees °	Minutes '	Seconds "		
°	'	"	°	'	"		

800==

UTM Coordinates: A 17/328700/3055670 B 17/328715/3055530 890==

Zone Easting Northing

Description of Site: C 17/328450/3055440 17/328560/3055650

Site Size (approx. acreage of property) 10 acres 833==

Condition of Site:

Check one

- ☐ Excellent 863==
 ☐ Deteriorated 863==
☒ Good 863==
 ☐ Ruins 863==
☐ Fair 863==
 ☐ Unexposed 863==
☐ Redeposited 863==

Integrity of Site:

Check one or more

- ☒ Altered 858==
 ☐ Restored () Date: () 858==
☐ Unaltered 858==
 ☐ Moved () Date: () 858==
☐ Destroyed 858==
 ☒ Original Site 858==

Condition of Site (Remarks): ()

() 863==

Threats to Site:

Check one or more

- ☐ Zoning () () 878==
 ☐ Transportation () () 878==
☐ Development () () 878==
 ☐ Fill () () 878==
☐ Deterioration () () 878==
 ☐ Dredge () () 878==
☐ Borrowing () () 878==
☐ Other (See Remarks below): 878==

Threats to Site (Remarks):

879==

HISTORIC SITE DATA SUPPLEMENT

Site No. _____

Site Name Fort DeSoto Batterie

Present Use (check one or more as appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural 850== | <input type="checkbox"/> Government 850== | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park 850== | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation 850== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial 850== | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial 850== | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence 850== | Other (Specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational 850== | <input type="checkbox"/> Military 850== | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious 850== | <input type="checkbox"/> 850== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment 850== | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum 850== | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific 850== | <input type="checkbox"/> 850== |

Original Use (check one or more as appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural 838== | <input type="checkbox"/> Government 838== | <input type="checkbox"/> Park 838== | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation 838== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial 838== | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial 838== | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence 838== | Other (Specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational 838== | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military 838== | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious 838== | <input type="checkbox"/> 838== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment 838== | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum 838== | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific 838== | <input type="checkbox"/> 838== |

Cultural Classification: Specific Dates: Beginning +1898-1945 844==

Culture/Phase American 840==

Developmental Stage 19th century 842==

Period (check one or more as appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian 845== | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century 845== | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century 845== | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century 845== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century 845== | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century 845== | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century 845== | |

Areas of Significance (check one or more as appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture 910== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology Prehistoric 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Law 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian 910== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology Historic 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Economics 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater 910== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Education 910== | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military 910== | Other (Specify): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Music 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> 910== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration & Settlement 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> 910== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics/Govt. 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> 910== |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> 910== |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Science 910== | <input type="checkbox"/> 910== |

Remarks & Recommendations:

835==

17

Statement of Significance (use continuation sheet if necessary)

The Fort DeSoto Batteries are significant as examples of military coast defense construction of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Battery Laidley is of unusual significance, as it is one of very few such installations in which a portion of the original armament has been retained in place.

Mullet Key is the largest and southernmost of a chain of offshore islands extending southward from the Pinellas peninsula. It is a low, narrow, vee-shaped sand spit, one arm of which extends northward approximately two miles from the apex, and the other a slightly greater distance toward the east-northeast. It forms the northern limit of the entrance to Tampa Bay. The main channel from the Gulf of Mexico enters Tampa Bay between Mullet Key and Egmont Key, two miles to the southwest. A secondary channel lies between Egmont and Passage Key further south.

The potential military value of Mullet and Egmont keys for the defense of Tampa Bay was recognized by Army Engineers in a survey of the Florida coast in 1849. As a result of their recommendations, these and several other islands in Tampa Bay were reserved for military use. The interest of the War Department in the Mullet and Egmont sites was reaffirmed in the post-Civil War period (Sarles, pp. 9-11).

No immediate efforts were made to establish defensive fortifications, probably because the limited commerce of the Tampa Bay area did not warrant the expenditures required. By the 1890s, however, after railroad connections with the interior had been established, Tampa became a major outlet for the booming phosphate industry. Products of the surrounding forest and agricultural areas, and of its own growing industries added to Tampa's commerce (Long, passim). This general economic development, and the events of the Spanish-American War in 1898, resulted in the decision to establish a major coast defense facility to protect the Tampa Bay area.

The plan adopted was to utilize both Mullet and Egmont keys in the development of a complete coast defense artillery complex, with the main battery of long range heavy coastal guns on Egmont Key, supported by the battery of mortars on Mullet Key. In addition, a battery of light artillery at each location would cover the entrance channel between the islands (Lewis, pp. 75-99 for coast defense technology and tactics).

Construction of the mortar battery at Mullet Key began in November, 1898 with the clearing of the site and the establishment of a construction plant. This included a 275 foot wharf, a narrow gauge railway and an overhead cableway for landing and handling materials, a concrete mixing plant, quarters and messhall for the workmen, stables, storage spaces, and a construction office.

911==

CONTINUATION SHEET

2

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Cont.)

911==

Stone and cement were brought from New York and New Jersey by sailing vessels. Sand and shell were available on the site. Construction proceeded rapidly, and the basic structure was completed by the end of 1899. Installation of the electrical equipment, gun carriages, and miscellaneous hardware, and completion of the earth fill required another five months. In May of 1900 the battery was reported complete and ready for installation of the armament (Sarles, pp. 13-15).

Construction of the secondary battery was carried out during 1901 and completed early in 1902. Installation of the armament, eight twelve inch mortars in the primary battery, and two fifteen pounder rapid fire guns in the secondary battery, was completed in 1903, and firing tests were conducted in November of that year. By General Order No. 78, of May 25, 1903, the main battery was named in honor of Colonel Theodore T.S. Laidley for his "conspicuous service in the war with Mexico and the Civil War," and the secondary battery for First Lieutenant Aaron Bigelow, killed at the battle of Lundy's Lane, Ontario, on July 25, 1814 (Sarles, pp. 16-17).

In the meantime, construction of the post buildings had begun. By 1906, when this work was complete, a total of twenty-nine buildings had been erected. These included officers' and non-commissioned officers' quarters, barracks, kitchen, bakehouse, messhall, hospital, and administration buildings, workshops, stables, and storage sheds. Water and sewerage systems, brick roads, and outlying fire control installations completed the facilities of the base, which occupied an area of 613 acres (Sarles, pp. 17-20).

Fort DeSoto was garrisoned by a company of regular Army artillerymen from 1904 to 1910. Isolation, lack of recreational facilities, and the incessant assaults of swarms of mosquitos made the post all but unendurable. The monotony of garrison duty was broken on three occasions when joint maneuvers were held with the militia units designated to man the post in event of mobilization. In June, 1910, the garrison company was withdrawn. A caretaker detachment was left in charge, but it was never large enough to cope with the maintenance requirements. With the outbreak of World War I, the detachment was increased--not to activate the fort, but to dismount four of the mortars and prepare them for shipment to France. Despite subsequent efforts to maintain the facility after the war, deterioration continued. Beach erosion was a serious problem, threatening to undermine several buildings, and approaching the foundations of Battery Bigelow. Finally, in October, 1921, a major hurricane swept the area, causing extensive damage (Sarles, pp. 20-28).

CONTINUATION SHEET

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Cont.)

911==

3

The post was officially abandoned in 1923. Within ten years, destruction of the facility by the elements was nearly complete. Only three of the original 29 buildings were still standing, and Battery Bigelow had collapsed, a victim of beach erosion. Battery Laidley was still structurally sound, but its mortar carriages and other metalwork were badly deteriorated, and its further usefulness was considered "extremely doubtful" (Sarles, pp. 29-30).

Attempts by the War Department to dispose of the property were not successful, and with the mobilization planning begun in 1940 it was decided to utilize the area as a bombing range (Sarles, p. 34). Fortunately, this use throughout the World War II period did not result in further damage to either Battery Laidley or the ruins of Battery Bigelow.

In 1948, Mullet Key was sold to Pinellas County as surplus government property, for subsequent development as a recreation area. By 1964, partial restoration of Battery Laidley and its remaining mortar armament was completed, and action had been taken to arrest the beach erosion threatening the ruins of Battery Bigelow. A system of bridges and causeways provides easy access to the site, and Fort DeSoto Park has since become a major recreational attraction in the Pinellas County area.

Present & Original Physical Appearance (use continuation sheet if necessary) (935==):

Battery Laidley and Battery Bigelow were located in an area of approximately ten acres of the original site of the Fort DeSoto military reservation, on the west shore of Mullet Key. Today, they are the only structures remaining of the Fort DeSoto installation, which, with Fort Dade and Egmont Key, comprised a major coast artillery fortification for the defense of Tampa Bay in the early 20th century.

The major feature of the site is the massive earth covered concrete structure of Battery Laidley. This structure consists of two mortar emplacement pits separated and flanked by magazines, machinery spaces, and fire control rooms, in linear arrangement on a roughly north-south axis. A paved walkway along the rear, or east side gives access to the various spaces. Beyond this, in back of each of the mortar pits, is a small brick booth from which fire control data boards were displayed.

The mortar pits are entirely open above and in the rear (see photograph). The magazines, machinery spaces, and fire control plotting rooms are windowless. The original steel doors have been removed, and only the rooms now currently being used for storage have been supplied with doors. All equipment, accessories, and fixtures for ammunition handling and fire control have been removed. However, new lighting fixtures and wiring similar to the original have recently been installed, and a general clean-up and repair program has put the basic structure in good condition.

Four of the original eight twelve inch mortars are still in place in the pits. The breech mechanisms, parts of the aiming mechanisms, and other accessories have been removed. In each pit, one gun is displayed in the elevated, or firing, position, and one in the depressed, or loading position. The guns and carriages are painted and well maintained.

The earth fill above the magazines and working spaces, and covering the seaward, or west, face of Battery Laidley, is covered with dense vegetation. For visitor access, concrete stairways at each end of the earth fill lead to a paved walkway and observation area at the top. From this vantage point the visitor can view the entrance channel to Tampa Bay, and Egmont Key, site of the main coast defense installation of which Fort DeSoto was an adjunct.

The ruins of Battery Bigelow are located approximately seven hundred feet in front, and just to the south of Battery Laidley. They consist of the tumbled remnants of concrete emplacements for two three inch guns protecting the inshore approaches to Mullet Key and Egmont Key. Originally, the shoreline was some two hundred feet from Battery Bigelow. Beach erosion has resulted in the undermining and collapse of the structure, and the ruins are now awash at high tide.

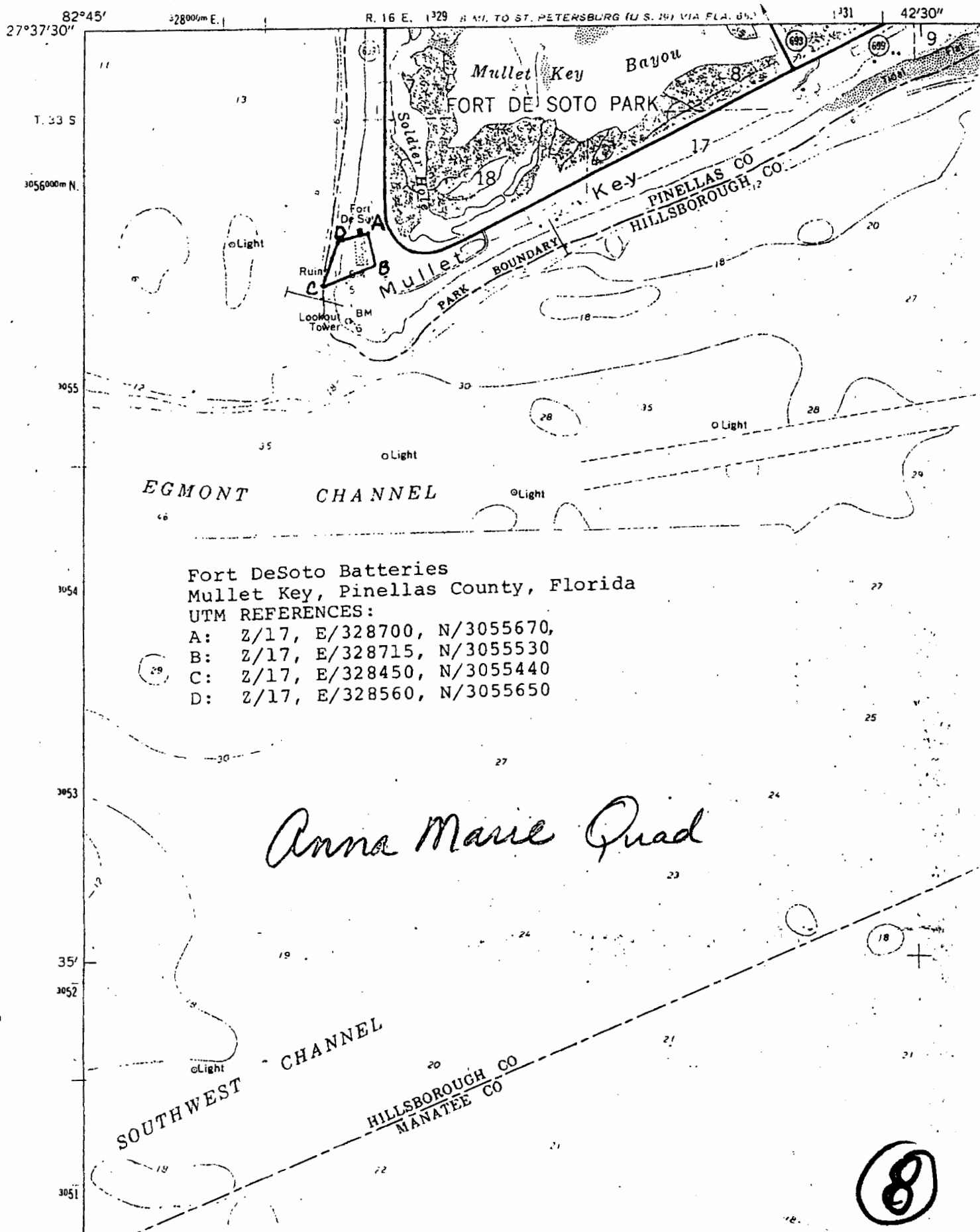
Major Bibliographic References:

Lewis, Emanuel Raymond. Seacoast Fortifications of the United States: An Introductory History (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1970).

Long, Durward. "Making of Modern Tampa: A City of the New South, 1885-1911," Florida Historical Quarterly XLIX (April, 1971), pp. 333-345.

Sarles, Frank B., Jr. "Fort DeSoto, Florida." Historic Site Report prepared in 1960 for U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Copy on file in Pinellas County Parks Department, Clearwater, Florida.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



Present and Past Photos

Battery Laidley



Battery Bigelow



Historic Brick Pathways



Looking West, Southside
of Laidley



Looking North, Eastside
of parking lot



Historical Bricks



Historical Sidewalk

Past Historic Buildings



Mine Store House



Wooden Pier Foundation of Mine Store House



The Hospital



The Foundation of Hospital



The Bake House



Historic Foundation of Bake House

Replica of Quartermaster Building



Replica of Quartermaster Building (Existing)



Replica of Quartermaster Building (Existing)

Past Historic Building/Structures



Officer's Quarters



Observation Tower



Water Tank



The Barracks