



You are invited!

Come join us for a Virtual Public Meeting.

Cumberland Island National Seashore (the Seashore) is a unit of the national park system that serves as an important historic and community asset in St. Marys, Georgia. The National Park Service (NPS) is seeking public feedback on four proposed land exchanges during a 30-day civic engagement period. We encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas about the information

presented in this newsletter, during the virtual public meeting, and online at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website: https://parkplanning.nps.gov/cuis_land_exchange



Virtual Meeting

The NPS will host one virtual public meeting during the civic engagement period. The meeting will be held on **Thursday, September 19, 2024, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST)**. NPS staff will give a brief presentation and will then be available to answer questions from the public.

To attend the virtual meeting, please use this link and join the meeting 5 to 10 minutes early to test your connection.

- Meeting link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88022533773?pwd=xlexTBgTS5UH6aJqRL3ehXdW1rDy2b.1>
- Or telephone: If you would like to call in on listen-only mode and not view the presentation, please call:
 - US: (309) 205-3325
 - Webinar ID: 759293#
- All meeting information is also available on the project PEPC page: https://parkplanning.nps.gov/cuis_land_exchange



Scan the QR
code to join
the virtual
meeting.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the proposed action is to acquire, through land exchanges with conservation easements, parcels of privately owned land within the authorized boundary of Cumberland Island National Seashore, Georgia.

Need for the Project

The proposed action is to acquire a relatively contiguous corridor of privately owned land within core areas of the Seashore to improve manageability of these areas, preserve important resources, and prevent further development on these inholdings. By exchanging property with these landowners, the NPS would seek to relocate private interests to other areas where it is more appropriate and less impactful on visitors.

The properties under consideration for NPS acquisition intersect the Seashore's main road and key visitor use trails. The properties contain important natural and cultural resources that the Seashore seeks to protect and conserve, including live oak maritime forests, pristine beaches, potential historic and archeological resources, an intact barrier island ecosystem, nesting for shorebirds and threatened sea turtles, and lands with a primitive and undeveloped character.

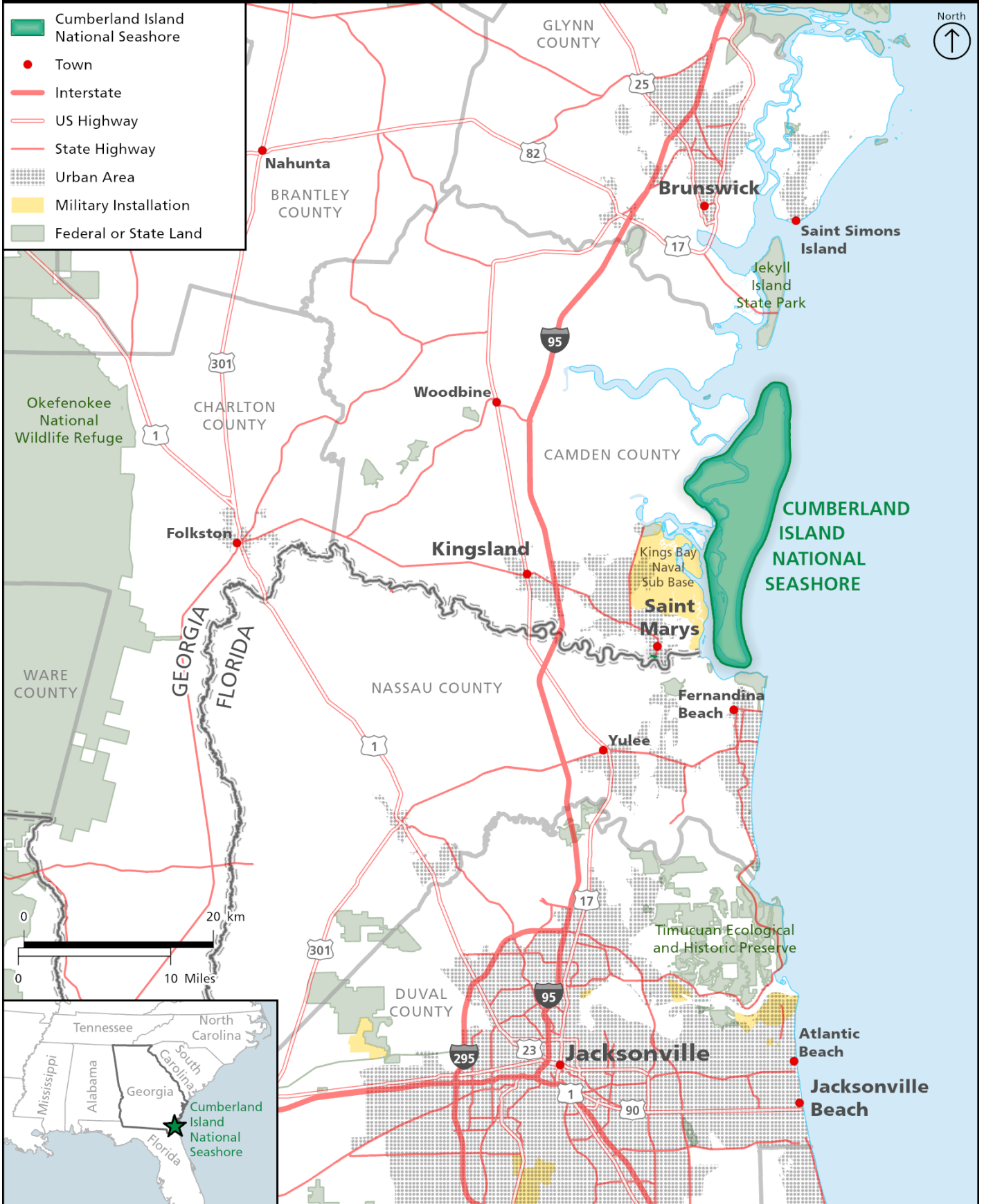


Cumberland Island National Seashore Georgia

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



- Cumberland Island National Seashore
- Town
- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- Urban Area
- Military Installation
- Federal or State Land



Seashore Background

Cumberland Island is the largest and southernmost of Georgia's barrier islands, located 1.0 to 3.0 miles off the mainland. The island is 17.5 miles long, ranging from approximately 0.5 mile to 3.0 miles wide, and totals 36,415 acres of which 16,850 are marsh, mud flats, and tidal creeks. The northern portion of the island includes 9,907 acres of designated wilderness, and an additional 10,710 acres are classified as potential wilderness (Public Law [PL] 108-447, sec 145). Most of the island's uplands are federally owned and managed by the NPS. The remaining portions of the island are state owned, privately owned, or owned by other federal entities, including the Department of Defense. The Seashore includes the island and a small parcel on the mainland in St. Marys, Georgia.

Primary transportation to Cumberland Island is by boat. Island visitation is serviced by a ferry that runs from the St. Marys mainland visitor center to docks on the island at Dungeness and Sea Camp. The Seashore's General Management Plan directs the Seashore staff to manage visitation for approximately 300 people per day. Recreational opportunities at the Seashore include walking and hiking, camping, beachcombing, swimming, wildlife viewing, seeking solitude, and visiting the Seashore's historic sites.

Objectives & Desired Conditions

The four proposed land exchanges would support key objectives and desired conditions of the NPS, such as:

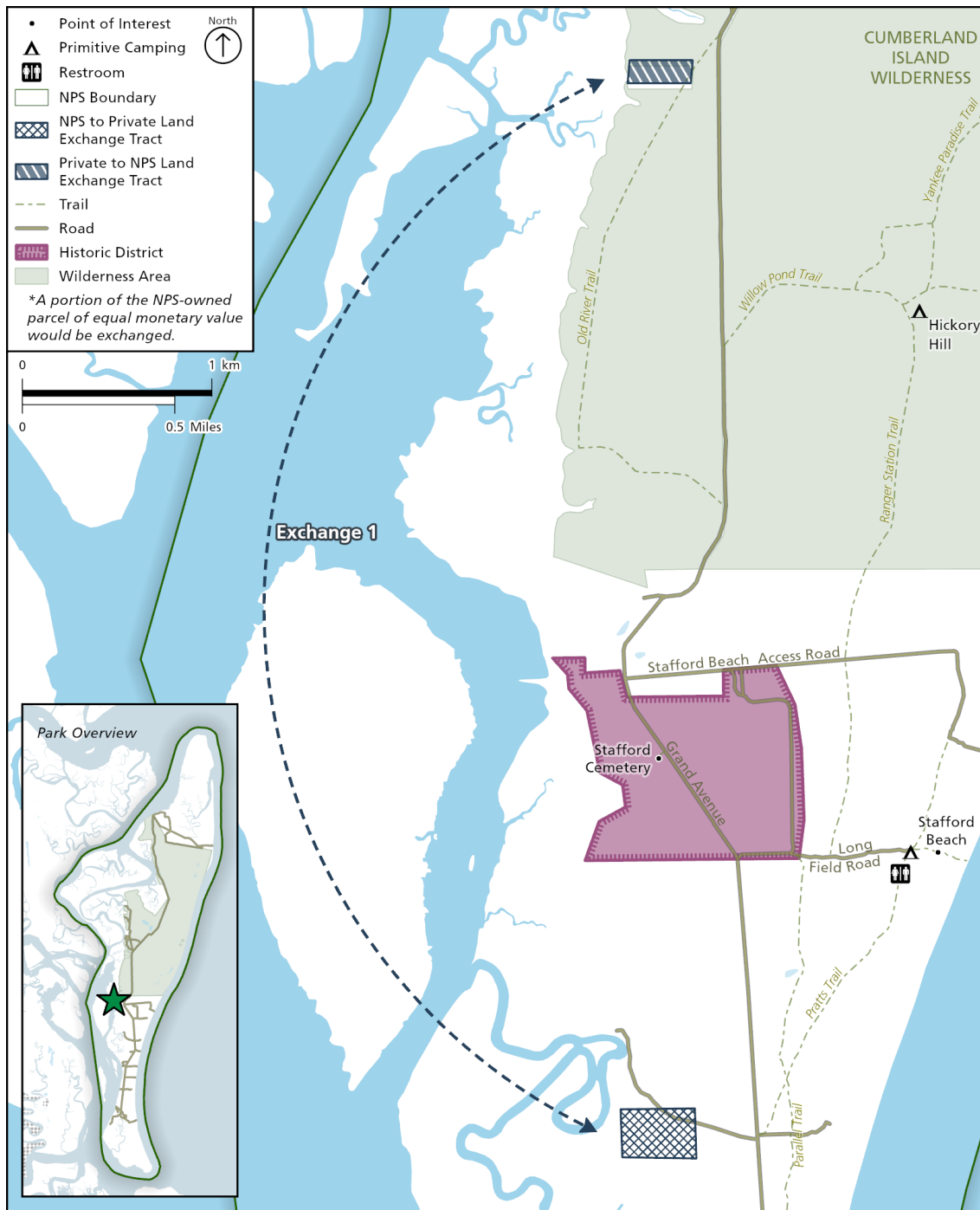
- Establishing continuity and connectivity of Park land to expand wildlife corridors and increase resource management efficiency.
- Safeguarding critical habitat for federally protected species such as sea turtles and nesting shorebirds.
- Facilitating additional designation of wilderness.
- Preventing or limiting private development on or near significant cultural and natural resources.

Land Exchanges

Four parcels of land are being considered for acquisition through land exchange agreements. Once acquired, these parcels would be part of the Seashore and no longer be subject to private development, eliminating that potential source of impacts to natural resources, cultural resources, and visitor uses in those areas. For each potential land acquisition, an NPS-owned property of equal monetary value would be conveyed to private ownership through an exchange agreement. Generally, these agreements would include a conservation easement to protect important resource values on these exchanged private lands. However, the exact acreages, locations, and terms of the conservation easements are part of a negotiation with the private landowners through the land exchange agreement process.



Exchange 1



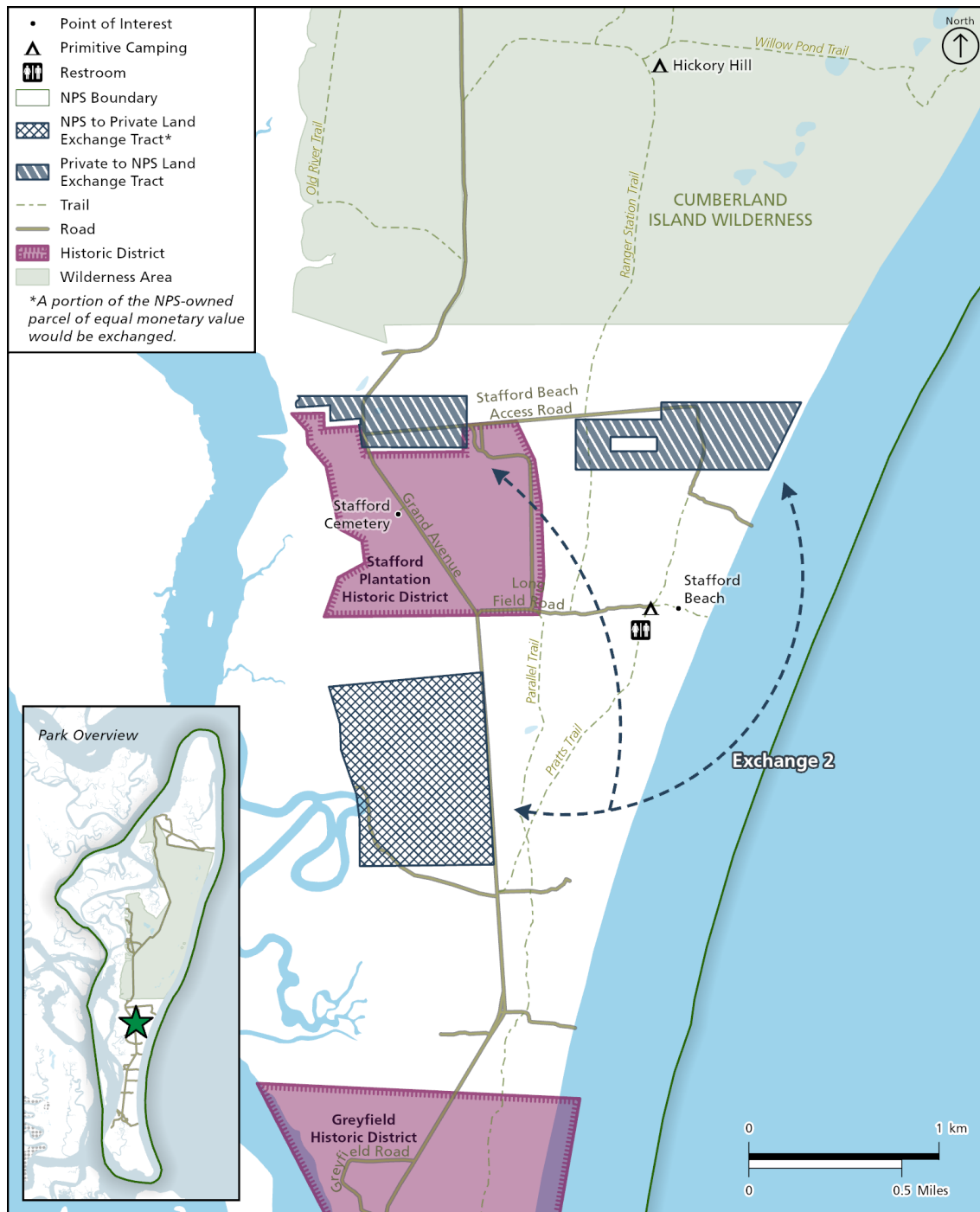
NPS Acquisition:

This property consists of approximately 10 acres of unimproved forest located on the marsh side of the island adjacent to the Old River Trail, which is a route for hikers to and from Plum Orchard and an alternative to the main road. The property is also currently designated as potential wilderness and would convert to designated wilderness after NPS acquisition.

Private Acquisition:

This property has existing access to water, an existing dock, utility lines, and access roads. Archeological surveys have been conducted on most of this NPS-owned property. A conservation easement would identify areas of concern for cultural and natural resources to limit development to areas outside of sensitive locations. This property is not in an area with high visitor use.

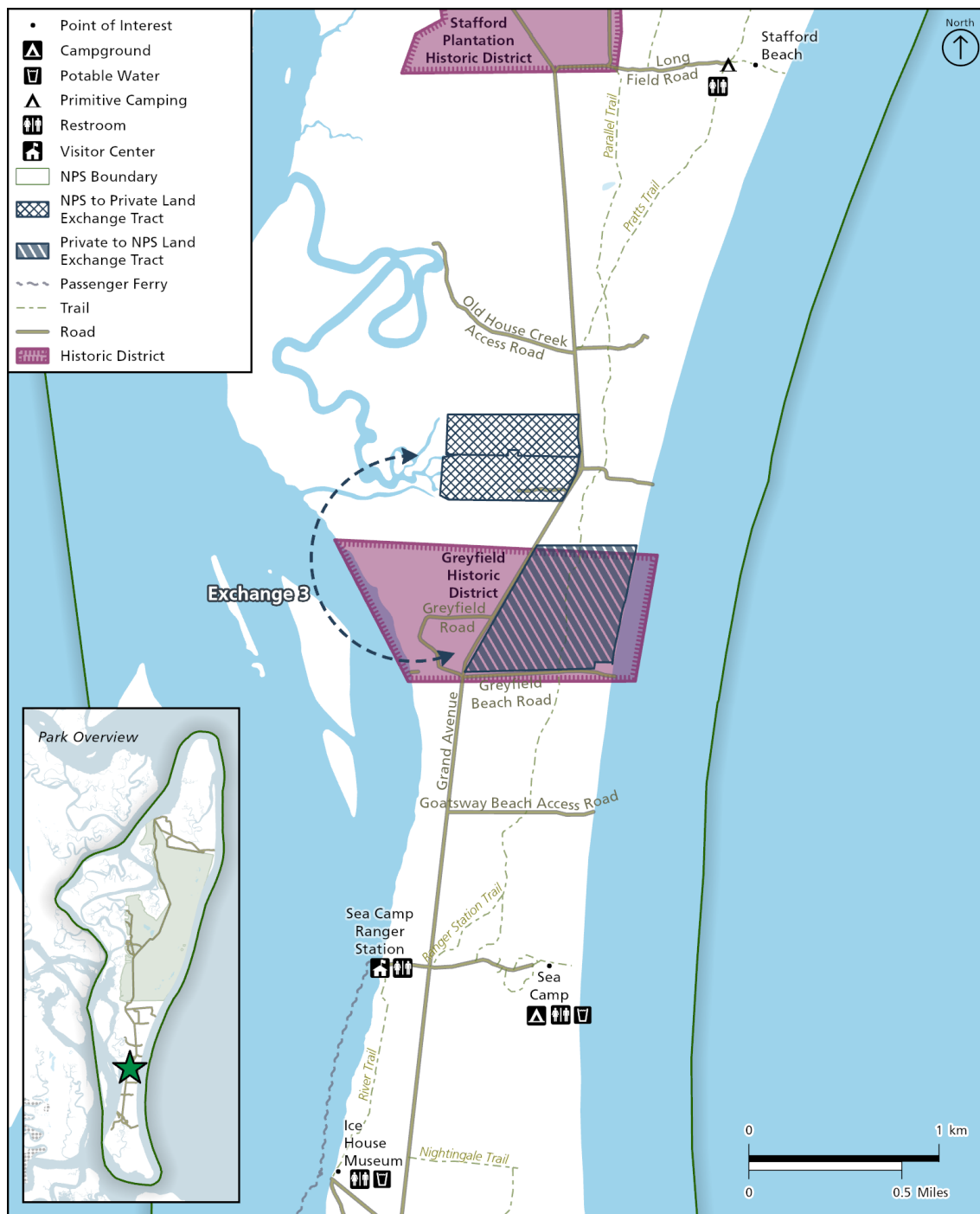
Exchange 2



NPS Acquisition: The proposed property to be acquired consists of approximately 132 acres of upland forest, salt marsh, and ocean frontage east and west of the main road, which supports important habitat for shorebirds and federally threatened sea turtles. The property also has potential for interpretation and educational outreach in support of the mission of the Seashore. Acquisition of this property would maintain a green corridor east of the main road to the beach that would guarantee continuity of the Parallel Trail, the primary north–south artery for hikers.

Private Acquisition: This property has existing access to water, an existing dock, utility lines, and access roads. Archeological surveys have been conducted on most of this NPS-owned property involved in this exchange. A conservation easement would identify areas of concern for cultural and natural resources to limit development to areas outside of sensitive locations. This property is not in an area with high visitor use.

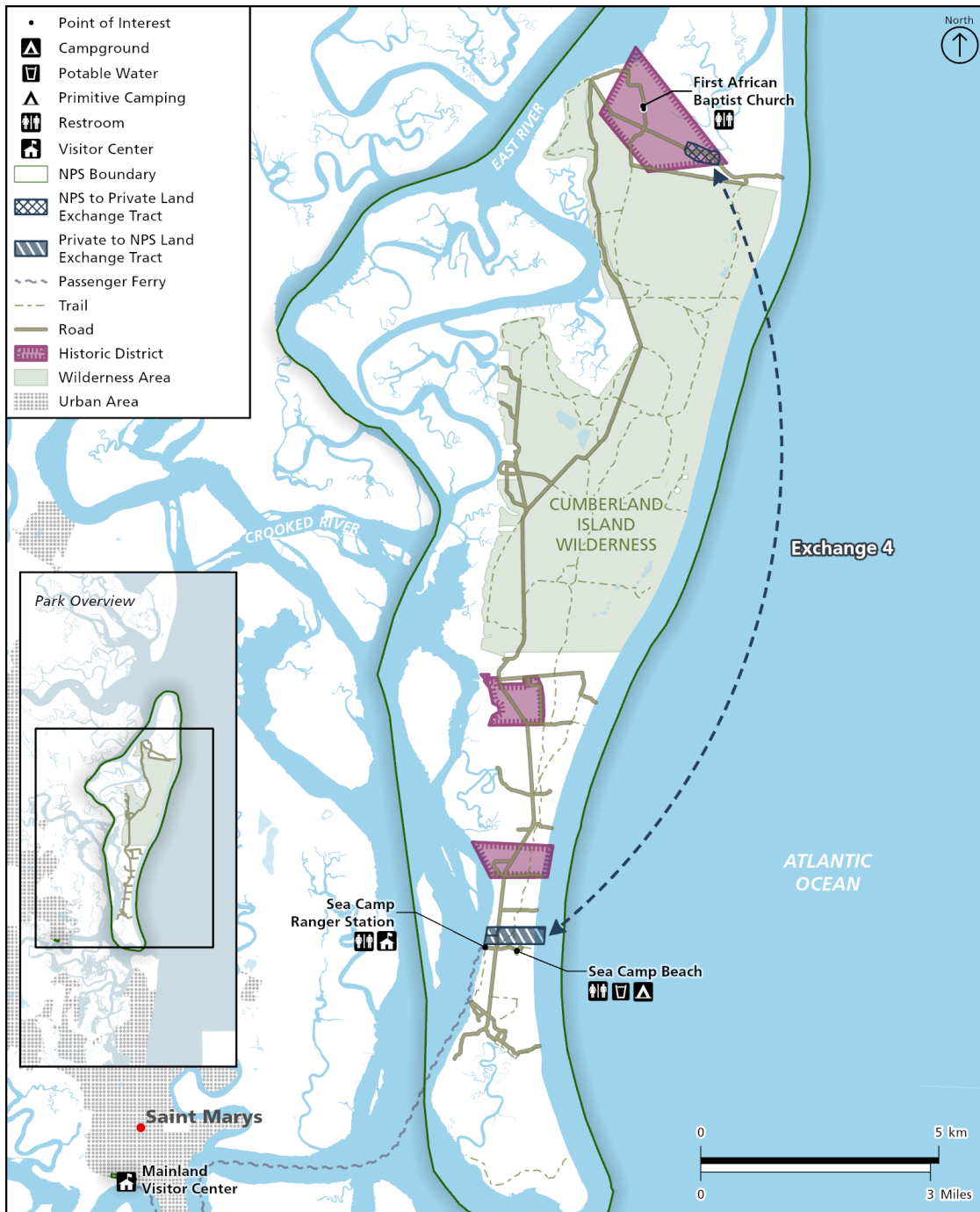
Exchange 3



NPS Acquisition: The proposed property to be acquired consists of approximately 136 acres of upland forest, salt marsh, and ocean frontage east of the main road within the Greyfield Historic District. The property contributes to a greenway and habitat corridor that extends the entire length of the island's east side, which supports important habitat for shorebirds and federally threatened sea turtles. Acquisition of this property would maintain a green corridor east of the main road to the beach that would also maintain continuity of the Parallel Trail.

Private Acquisition: These tracts are located on the marsh side of the island. Several structures of varying condition are located on the property, collectively referred to as Davisville. Archeological surveys have been conducted on most of this NPS-owned property involved in this exchange. A conservation easement would identify areas of concern for cultural and natural resources to limit development to areas outside of sensitive locations. These tracts are not in an area with high visitor use.

Exchange 4



NPS Acquisition: The proposed property to be acquired consists of approximately 95 acres of unimproved forest land located along the Georgia coast, with approximately 85 acres located east of the main road and 10 acres located west of the main road. This property is adjacent to the seashore's main ranger station / visitor center on the island and is 100 yards north of the Sea Camp, the largest and busiest campground. Additionally, the Seashore's main north-south hiking trail, the Parallel Trail, crosses the property. This acquisition would protect the Sea Camp campground from potential adverse impacts from nearby construction and guarantee continuity of the Parallel Trail, which intersects this property.

Private Acquisition: This property is located near the far north end of the Seashore within the High Point – Half Moon Bluff Historic District. Archeological and historic structure surveys and analyses are currently underway. A conservation easement would identify areas of concern for cultural and natural resources in order to limit development in those areas.

How to Comment

The NPS is asking for your input on this planning process. We encourage you to get involved and add your voice to the visitor use planning for the Seashore. The NPS will host a listening session and provide information on the PEPC website about this important effort. This is the beginning of the input process, and there will be future opportunities to provide additional input. To find out more about meeting times, locations, and opportunities to comment, please go to: https://parkplanning.nps.gov/cuis_land_exchange. The Seashore will be using the PEPC website to share project information and request public feedback. The civic engagement period is a 30-day comment period beginning September 5, 2024, and ending October 6, 2024.

Please submit all comments no later than **October 6, 2024**.

The most useful types of public comments consider the following:

- Alternative approaches and ideas for addressing the purpose and need for the project.
- The range of environmental issues that need to be considered.
- Other potential projects or actions that might affect or be affected by this project.
- Likes and dislikes about the concept of these proposed land exchanges.
- Information on how you use the Seashore and how a land exchange might affect that use.



Submit comments electronically at:

https://parkplanning.nps.gov/cuis_land_exchange



Mail or hand deliver written comments to:

Cumberland Island National Seashore
101 Wheeler Street
St. Marys, GA 31558

Comments will not be accepted in any other way than those specified above. Bulk comments in any format (hard copy or electronic) submitted on behalf of others will not be accepted. Please note that your entire comment, including your personal information, may be made publicly available at any time. You can request that we withhold your personal identifying information from public view, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Next Steps

Currently, the Seashore is in the planning phase of these proposed land exchanges and is developing preliminary exchange agreements with private landowners. When it is time to move forward with the formal environmental compliance process, the proposed exchanges will be analyzed as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires federal agencies to evaluate the environmental impacts of their proposed actions. Input from the public during this and future public comment periods will be used to identify and analyze resource concerns during a future NEPA process.