

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
PROPOSED PARKS NATIONAL PARK FLORIDA

FILE NO. 0-32

BEACH PARKS
FLORIDA

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ARNO B. CAMMERER,
Director.

Santa Rosa

REPORT ON POSSIBLE LOCATIONS FOR PROPOSED
NATIONAL BEACH PARK - FLORIDA.
J. H. GADSBY, DISTRICT INSPECTOR
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
State Park Emergency Conservation Work.

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with
8-26*

September 12, 1934.

GENERAL

In contemplating a survey of the many hundreds of miles of coast line around the state of Florida it was thought advisable to exclude those parts immediately which for some reason are not available or are known to be unsuited. This eliminated consideration of all of the territory within the proposed limits of the Everglades National Park and large sections further north on both east and west coast which are heavily used by resort visitors at Miami, Palm Beach, St. Petersburg, Sarasota and many smaller places. It also eliminates, after a short investigation, practically all of the west coast which lies between Tarpon Springs and Appalachicola Bay as this section provides little beach, being for the most part low and at times swampy ground. It will be noticed from the map that most of the drainage of North Florida comes down through here. The east coast is quite different having the St. Johns River running northward paralleling the coast until it can find an opening to the Ocean at Jacksonville. These facts explain the greater popularity of the east coast since such conditions are conducive to more and finer beaches altho the natural growth of the

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Beach Park
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By *EM* NAVA, Date *1-10*

lower lands on the west make west Florida far more attractive scenically.

The choice then, lay in the northwest coast of the "panhandle or somewhere above Palm Beach on the East Coast. Inspection showed some beautiful Beaches along the Gulf from Pensacola to Appalachicola Bay but scarcely any that has the back country of sufficient interest. These lovely white beaches result, it appears, from a type of sand that extends back inland a considerable distance and which supports only such growth as is commonly found in the pine flatwoods. There are a few exceptions to this, namely the islands around appalachicola Bay and some fine high hancock north of Chectawhatchee Bay. The latter has no beach, however unless one were to include the Bay and the penninsula beyond. The islands at appalachicola Bay would probably constitute too small an area and one (St. Vincent's Island) is a private preserve which might be difficult to obtain. It is well stocked with game and the growth on it has been carefully preserved, however.

So consideration was given more definitely to any possible locations along the east coast. There seem literally to be hundreds of miles of fine beaches along this coast most of which have been speculated in, in years past and are broken by spotted developement near each town on the mainland. It was necessary, of course, in making such a rapid survey to use automobile access which in most cases was sufficient but one feels that a more liesurely in-

spection by boat would be desirable. Various locations dwindled down to about three by reason of rocky beaches, low back country or prior development by resort interests. Of these three one is of more value probably as a wild life reservation as it is doubtful that sufficient suitable land for park purposes could be found. I refer to the north half of Merritt's Island east of Titusville which, it seems to me, should be taken over by some Federal Agency.

There remain two locations that seem to contain most of the qualities desired. These are designated henceforth in this report as Area No. 1 and Area No. 11. The first is a typical beach area with as many miles of ocean frontage as could be desired. The land in back is very interesting, being first some large dunes, back of these a heavy growth of trees and palms, then a wild tangle of scrub breaking off into marsh and lastly a gradual rise to pine. Most of this has no commercial value but might conceivably be of great value as park property. A large portion of the land near the beach should be classed as waste land.

Area No. 11 is more interesting in some ways but more difficult in others. It should probably be solely an island development with the ocean beach on one side and the so-called Indian River on the other. This would allow for surf and quiet bathing and would provide wonderful boating possibilities. There is a wild, sub-tropical growth over the whole island except close to the Beach where exposure is too severe, so an abundance of wild life could be accommodated. One feature in its favor is that bathing could

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be indulged in throughout the year while area no. 1 being considerably farther north has periods when out door bath^{ing} would be rather uncomfortable. The worst aspect of this area is that a large real estate development was started during the boom right across the middle from bridge to beach, so it might be that present owners would hold the rest of the land too high. The ideal thing, of course, would be to acquire all the real estate holdings and land north and south as far as needed; then present buildings could be converted to park uses.

In conclusion, in balancing one area against the other it might be said that Area No. 1 is closer to a typical beach section for north America while No. 11 is typical of the sub tropics. Area No. 1 has a wider beach, but the gentle slope would bring very high tides right back to the sand dunes. The sand is finer at No. 1 and provides good driving. Area No. 11 would provide a longer period of good bathing and better boating facilities; it also has a much heavier growth in general. It is probably that Area No. 1 would be much easier to acquire.