

# A Greenprint Plan for St. Simons Island



## Executive Summary



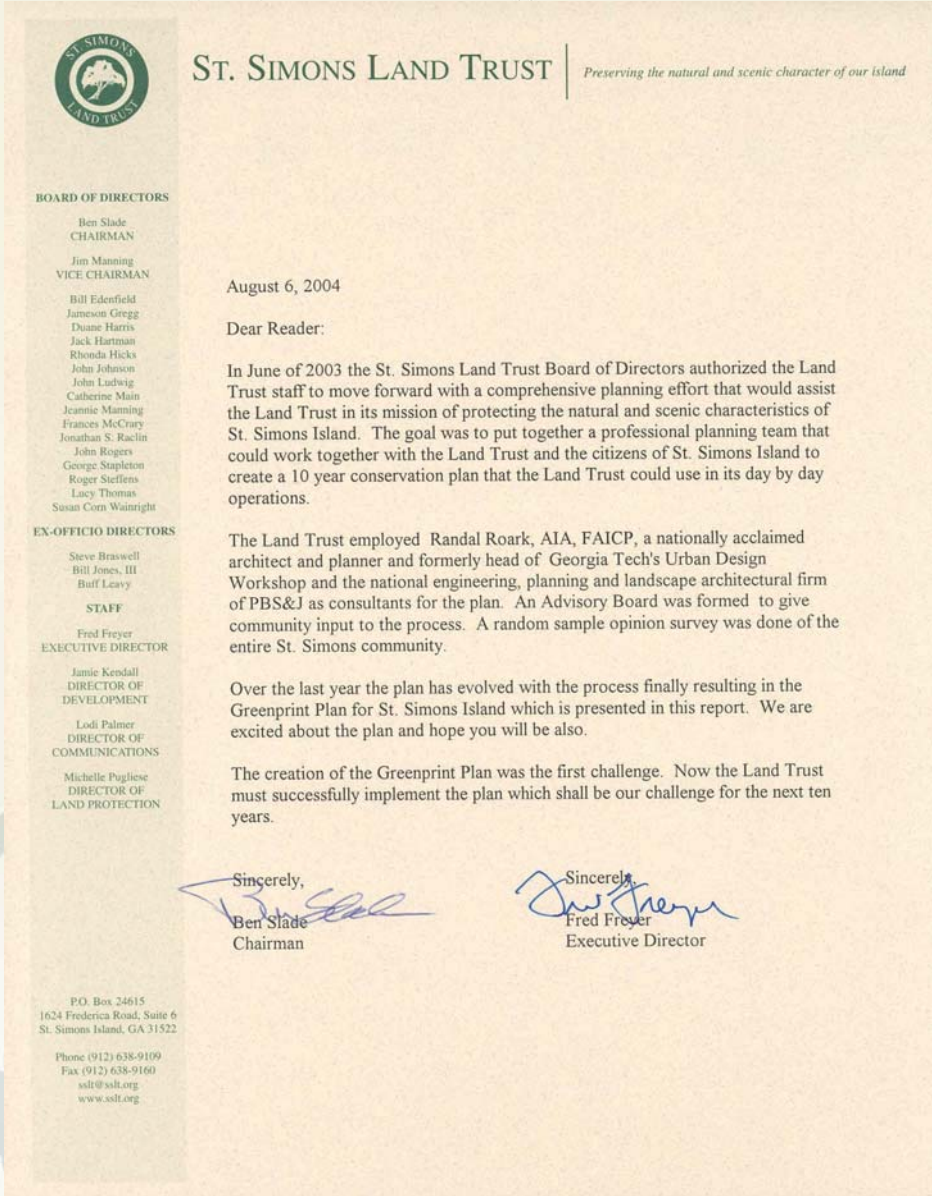
St. Simons Land Trust, St. Simons Island, Georgia



H. Randal Roark  
AIA, FAICP



August 2004



St. Simons Land Trust Mission ..... 1

Summary and Conclusions .....2

What is the Greenprint Plan? ..... 3

The Greenprint Planning Process ..... 4

Conservation Issues and Objectives ..... 5

Greenprint Strategies ..... 9

Target Areas ..... 10

Greenprint Priorities..... 11

Further Studies Needed .....15

Five-Year Action Plan.....16

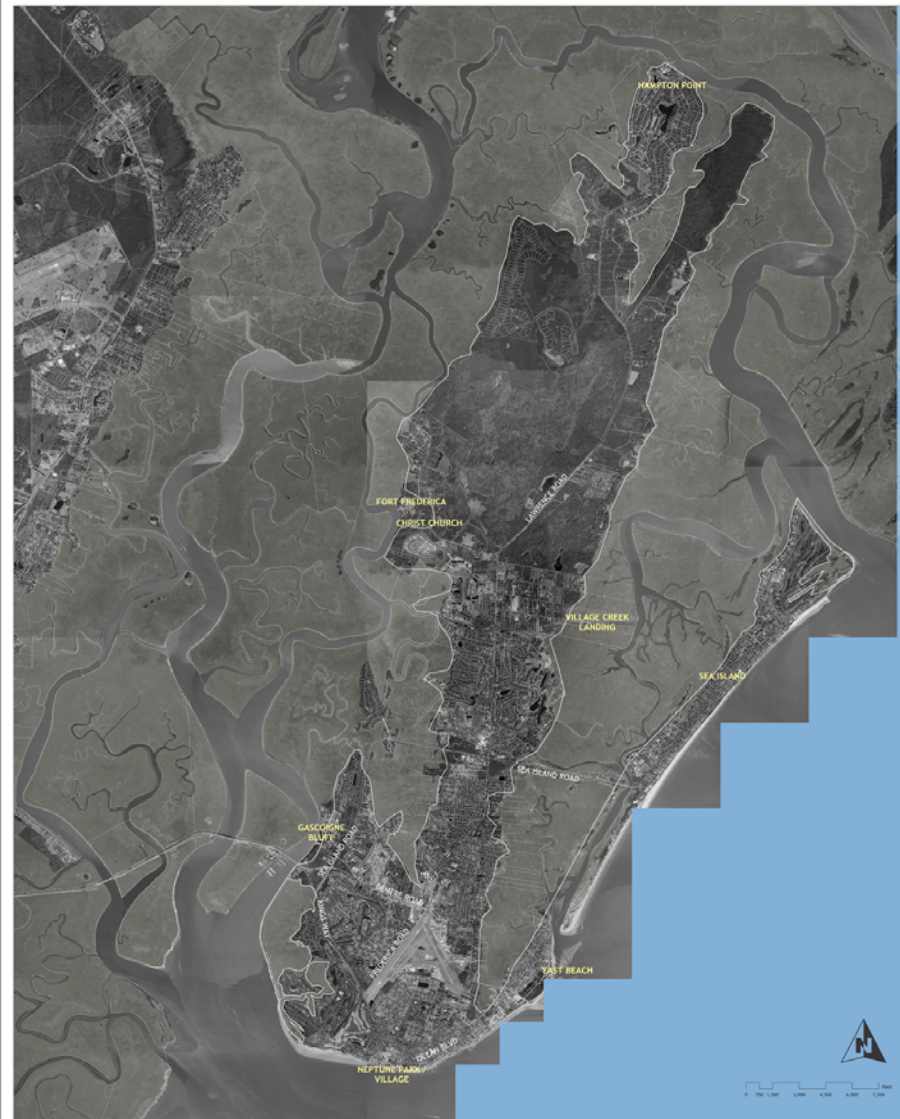
Land Trust Successes .....17

Acknowledgements ..... 18





***The mission of the St. Simons Land Trust is to promote the preservation of the natural and scenic character of the island community for present and future generations. We will accomplish this by holding in trust, land and land rights acquired through gift or purchase.***



AERIAL BASEMAP



The St. Simons Land Trust has prepared this “Greenprint Plan” for St. Simons Island to assist the Land Trust in carrying out its vision to “provide a ten year conservation strategy for St. Simons Island.” The Greenprint Plan is prepared expressly for the Land Trust: its board, its staff, and its members to follow to “help protect the Island’s natural and scenic character.” The plan addresses the following questions:

- *What are the properties and natural resources on the Island that need to be protected?*
- *Which of these properties and resources can and should be protected by the Land Trust, and in what order of priority?*
- *What methods are appropriate for the Land Trust to use to achieve this vision?*

The planning process for the Greenprint Plan included an island-wide survey of attitudes about greenspace issues as well as several workshops with an Advisory Committee assembled by the Land Trust that represented a broad cross-section of the Island’s residents and property owners. This process identified **twenty conservation issues and objectives** for the Island from which a series of actions for the Land Trust have been proposed. These actions have been grouped into four broad **areas of priority**:

#### Priority 1 - Create a Continuous Greenway/Parkway System

*Provide multiple recreation opportunities, protect historic tree canopies, and create opportunities for alternate transportation modes.*

#### Priority 2 - Protect the Mid-Island History Corridor

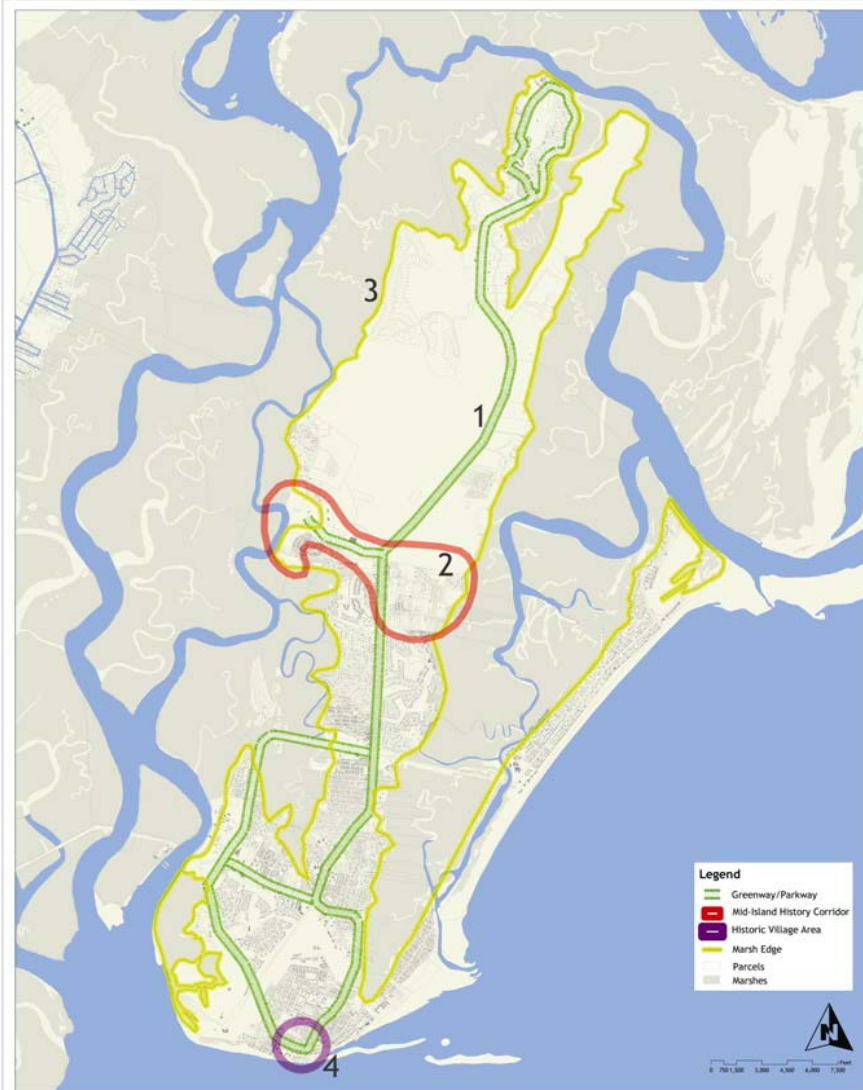
*Protect and make more visible and accessible the corridor from Ft. Frederica on the west to Harrington Village Creek Landing on the east.*

#### Priority 3 - Protect the Marsh Edge

*Protect the marsh edge and marsh views throughout the Island through a variety means.*

#### Priority 4 - Protect the Historic Village Area

*Initiate and help lead a comprehensive process to determine land use, public improvements, and greenspace objectives for this area.*



GREENPRINT PRIORITIES



## A Ten Year Strategic Greenspace Plan

### Purpose

*A strategic plan for the Land Trust to achieve its mission:*

- ☐ Identify resources throughout island to preserve
- ☐ Prioritize and group the resources
- ☐ Reflect public input (survey, Advisory Committee, public workshop)

### Conservation Issues

- ☐ What properties and natural resources should be protected?
- ☐ Which of these should be protected by the Land Trust, and in what priority?
- ☐ What protection methods will be required?

### Participatory Process

- ☐ Evaluate conservation issues
- ☐ Determine Land Trust strategies and tools
- ☐ Create actions to implement Greenprint Plan

### Results

- ☐ Conservation Issues and Objectives
- ☐ Land Trust Strategies
- ☐ Target Areas for Protection
- ☐ Greenprint Priorities



## Definitions

### Phase I: Data Collection

**Household Survey:** Growth, open space, and conservation issues.

**Community Profiles:** Assessment of issues through workshops and existing plans.

**Conservation Issues:** Twenty (20) key issues derived from the assessment.

**Conservation Objectives:** Broad, prioritized objectives addressing each issue.

### Phase II: Greenprint Tools

**Greenprint Strategies:** Three (3) ways in which the Land Trust can organize its involvement to achieve Conservation Objectives.

**Land Trust Actions:** Sixteen (16) specific actions to achieve the Objectives.

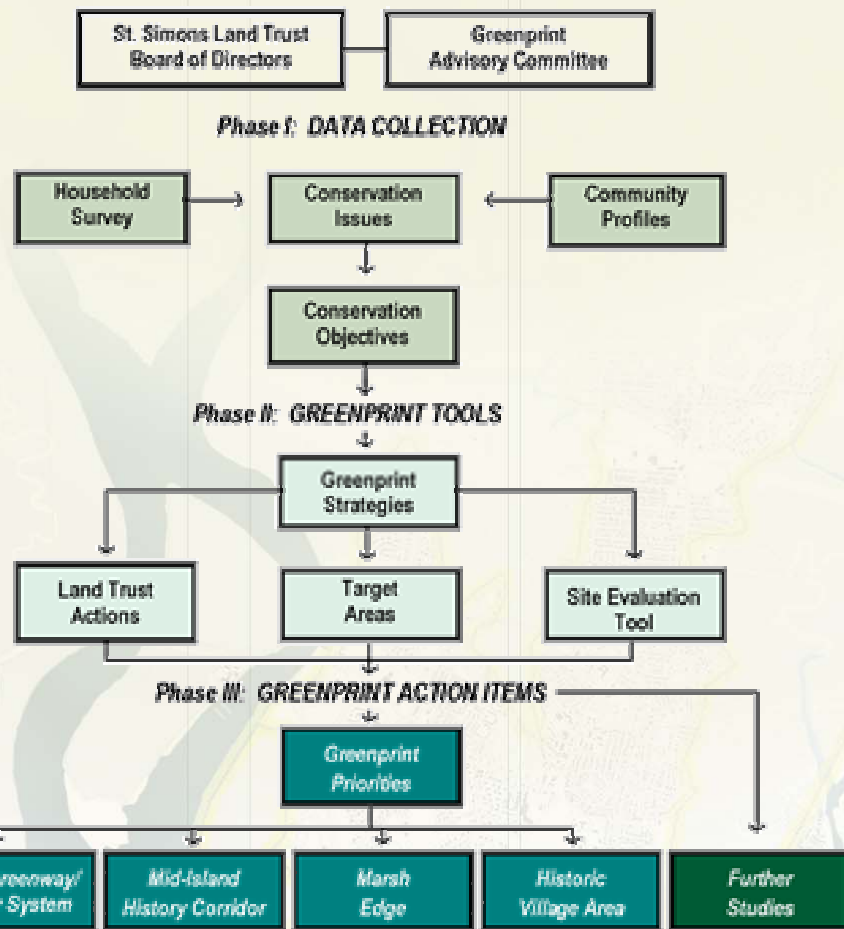
**Target Areas:** Four (4) site concepts that organize Objectives into continuous systems of green spaces and natural areas.

**Site Evaluation Tool:** An “in-house” process to evaluate specific site actions based on the Conservation Objectives and the Target Areas.

### Phase III: Greenprint Actions

**Greenprint Priorities:** Four (4) priorities that organize Actions into a Greenprint Plan.

**Further Studies:** Six (6) additional conservation studies recommended to be undertaken in conjunction with the Greenprint Priorities.





## Parks, Recreation, Cultural & Historic Resources

**New Public Parks:** *Increase new public parkland and greenspace.*

**Privately Owned Greenspace:** *Increase privately owned protected green sites with purchase, transfer of development rights or voluntary protection easements.*

**Improved Recreation:** *Improve new and existing recreation sites and facilities.*

**Historic and Cultural Sites:** *Protect and/or purchase key historic and cultural properties.*

**Scenic Views:** *Protect and enhance major scenic views through purchase and/or regulation.*

**Water Access:** *Increase adequate, protected and well maintained water access points.*



PARKS, RECREATION,  
CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

## Coastal Ecology and Natural Areas

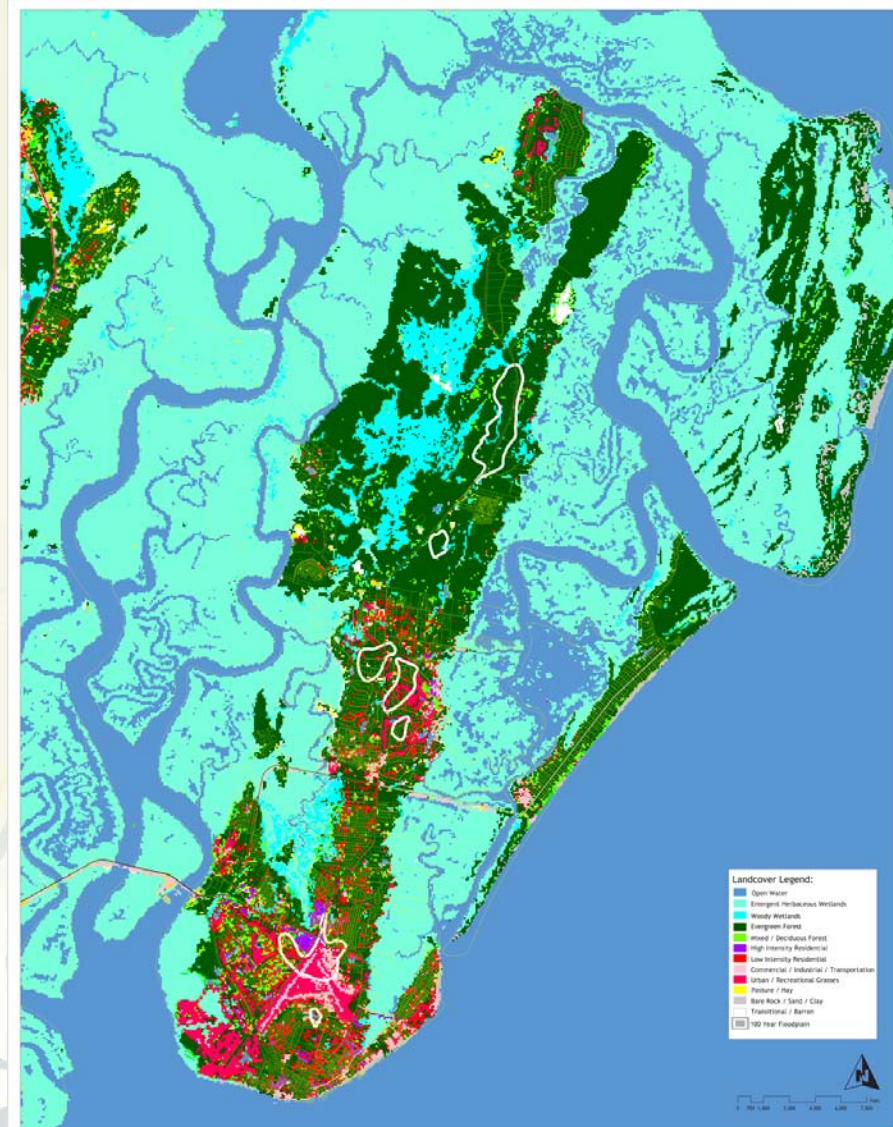
**Habitat:** *Increase and repair connective greenspace, forests and habitats.*

**Maritime Forest and Tree Cover:** *Protect historic tree canopy and linear green connections through both purchase and regulation.*

**Water Quality:** *Improve water quality by runoff and pollutant reduction and by protection of salt and freshwater marshes and the Floridan aquifer.*

**Marsh Hammocks:** *Protect marsh hammocks from development through purchase and/or regulation.*

**Environmental Education and Interpretation:** *Create opportunities for environmental awareness through a variety of sites and programs.*



COASTAL ECOLOGY &  
NATURAL AREAS



## Land Use, Zoning, and Economic Development

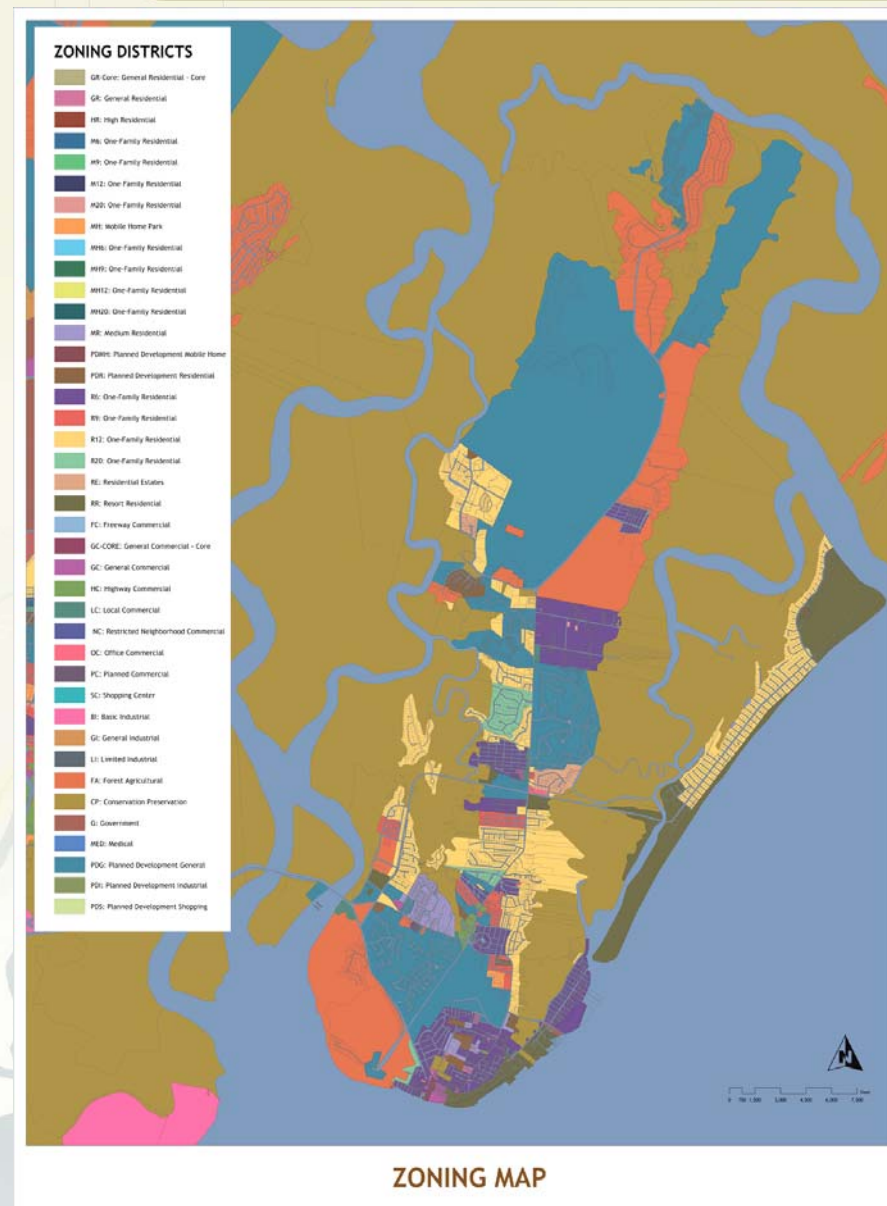
**Existing Residential Development:** *Protect tree cover and habitat through better development standards and regulatory controls, such as conservation, subdivision and tree ordinances.*

**New Residential Development:** *Promote green-friendly new development and redevelopment through improved development standards and conditional and/or overlay zoning.*

**Existing Non-Residential Sites:** *Support improved commercial development standards to save trees, and preserve historic road corridors with better parking and curb cut design.*

**New Non-Residential Development:** *Support mixed-use development in compact accessible sites with strict design standards to accommodate new non-residential demand.*

**Growth Management:** *Support a study to determine the limits of growth on the Island and a plan for growth management.*



## Transportation and Infrastructure

**Traffic Improvements:** *Support necessary road and intersection improvements without roadway widening or loss of tree canopy.*

**Roadway Amenities and Alternate Modes of Transportation:** *Support bikeway, linear parkland and pedestrian amenities in roadway rights-of-way wherever possible.*

**Island Causeways and Entries:** *Support greenway development of causeways and entry corridors for both visual and accessible greenspaces.*

**Water and Sewer Services:** *Support needed infrastructure improvements with adequate design standards to protect against negative environmental impacts.*





### 3 Key Strategies

*Ways in which the Land Trust can organize its involvement to achieve conservation objectives.*

#### 1. Property Ownership and Management

Pursue **full purchase and/or donation** of high priority sites to be owned, managed, and/or improved by Land Trust.

Pursue **purchase and/or donation of easements** and/or partnerships to protect all or part of high priority Island properties.

#### 2. Pro-active Advocacy of Compatible Green Standards and Regulations

Seek better standards, regulations and/or ordinances that meet Greenprint objectives for **conservation and development of private property**.

Seek public-private partnerships and conservation practices and standards for **better public investments** on the Island (transportation, infrastructure, and community and recreation facilities).

#### 3. Support of Conservation Initiatives and Practices

Provide support for **planning and conservation initiatives and practices** by others that meet SSLT Greenprint Objectives.



# Target Areas

Four site concepts that organize objectives into the following continuous systems of green spaces and natural areas:



## Continuous Linked Greenway/Parkway System:

Create multiple recreation opportunities, protect historic tree canopies, and create opportunities for alternative transportation modes.



## Protected Marsh Edge:

Protect high priority scenic views and critical marsh ecology, including maritime forest and wildlife habitat.



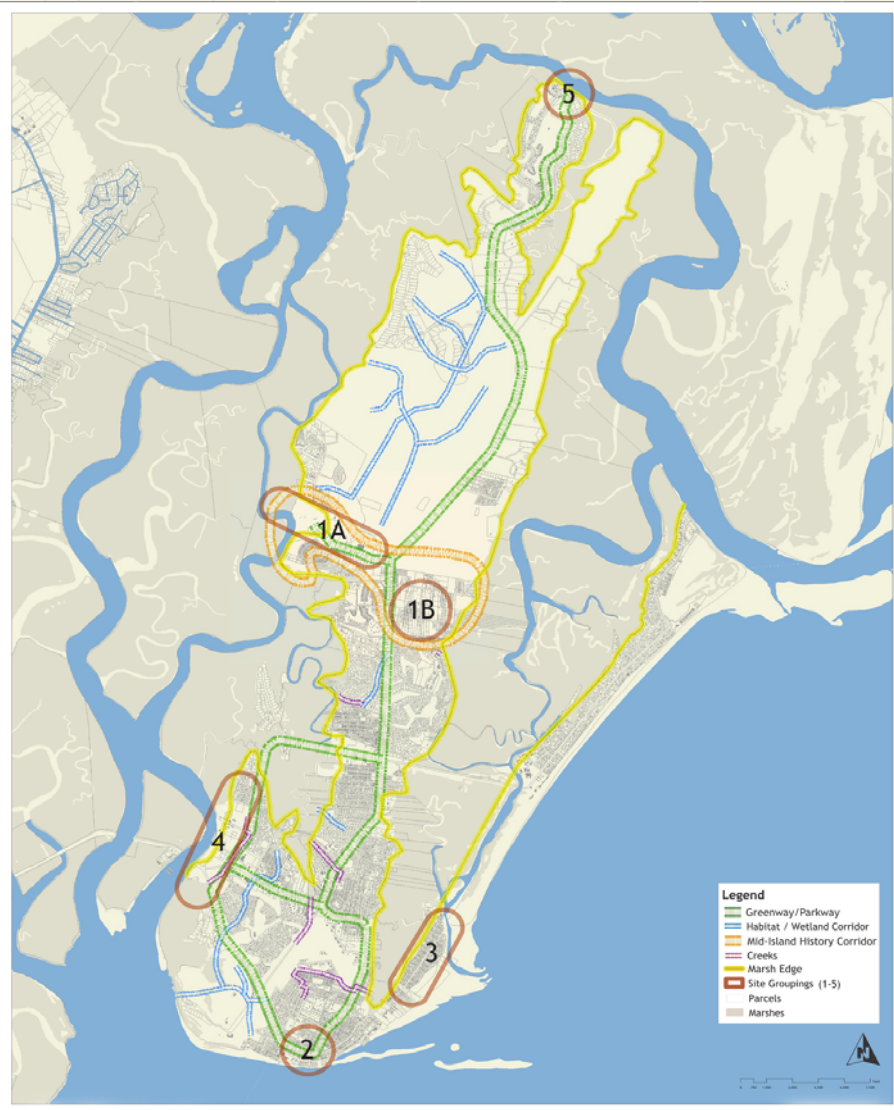
## Protected Wetland / Wildlife Habitat Corridors Across the Island.



## Site Groupings with Greenspace Value:

Natural areas, passive or active parks, water access points, and historic sites and structures:

- 1. Mid-Island History Corridor
  - A. Ft. Frederica Corridor
  - B. Harrington Historic District
- 2. Historic Village Area
- 3. East Beach
- 4. Causeway/Island Entry
- 5. Hampton Point



TARGET AREAS



## Priority 1 – Actions for Continuous Scenic

**Greenway/Parkway:** *Create a continuous greenway/parkway to provide multiple recreation opportunities, alternate transportation modes, and to protect historic tree canopies.*

### Ownership:

- Continue **property acquisitions at major corridors and intersections** to provide for both beautification and intersection improvements.
- Establish and pursue **Historic Road Corridor Zone Easement Donation Program**.

### Advocacy:

- Draft and pursue passage of a **Commercial District Site Ordinance** to foster good site development practices.
- Support passage of improved **County Tree Ordinance** to protect trees along historic road corridors.
- Support a **public park** on the north end of the Island.
- Seek funds and prepare design for **improvements of selected road rights-of-way**, particularly for bike/pedestrian amenities, new trees and lighting.



SCENIC GREENWAY/PARKWAY SYSTEM

## Priority 2 – Actions for Mid-Island History

**Corridor:** *Protect and make more visible and accessible the corridor from Ft. Frederica on the west to Harrington Village Creek Landing on the east.*

### Ownership:

- Pursue additional **marsh front purchases** of land in the area of Fort Frederica.
- Identify and pursue **specific parcel purchases** in the historic Harrington area and the Frederica Road and Lawrence Road intersection.

### Support:

- Work with **historic preservation groups** to pursue further protection of eligible historic sites, particularly those identified as compatible with Greenprint objectives and strategies.



MID-ISLAND HISTORY CORRIDOR



**Priority 3 – Actions for a Protected Marsh Edge:**  
*Protect the marsh edge throughout the Island.*

**Ownership:**

- a. Identify and pursue high priority marsh front parcels for purchase and easement based on environmental and visual vulnerability.
- b. Establish and pursue Historic Marsh Front Easement Donation Program.



## Priority 4 – Actions for Historic Village Area:

*Initiate, help fund and lead a comprehensive planning process to determine land use, public improvements and Greenspace objectives for the area.*

### Ownership:

- a. Pursue conservation developments.

### Advocacy:

- b. Support Master Plan of Historic Village.

#### Public Space and Facilities

- Casino property
- Design and programming of Neptune Park as a viable 'VillageGreen'

#### Land Use and Economic Development

- Demand for non-residential space
- Development standards for construction
- Limitations on the non-residential zone
- Potential infill and re-use of abandoned upper story space

#### Parking and Traffic

- Alternative solutions for meeting projected demands
- Adequate roadway/intersection reconfiguration, signage and signalization

#### Pedestrian Circulation and Amenities

- Vehicle/pedestrian conflicts
- Sidewalk and streetscape improvements (signage, lighting, and landscaping)





## Real Estate Transfer Fee

Initiate a feasibility study to create a fund for the purchase and protection of designated conservation properties.

## Conservation Roadway Improvements Plan

Initiate a planning partnership to prepare a traffic plan for the Island that takes conservation objectives into account.

## Causeway/Demere Road Corridor

Establish partnership and prepare a plan to ensure appropriate use, treatment, and conservation of the corridor.

## North End

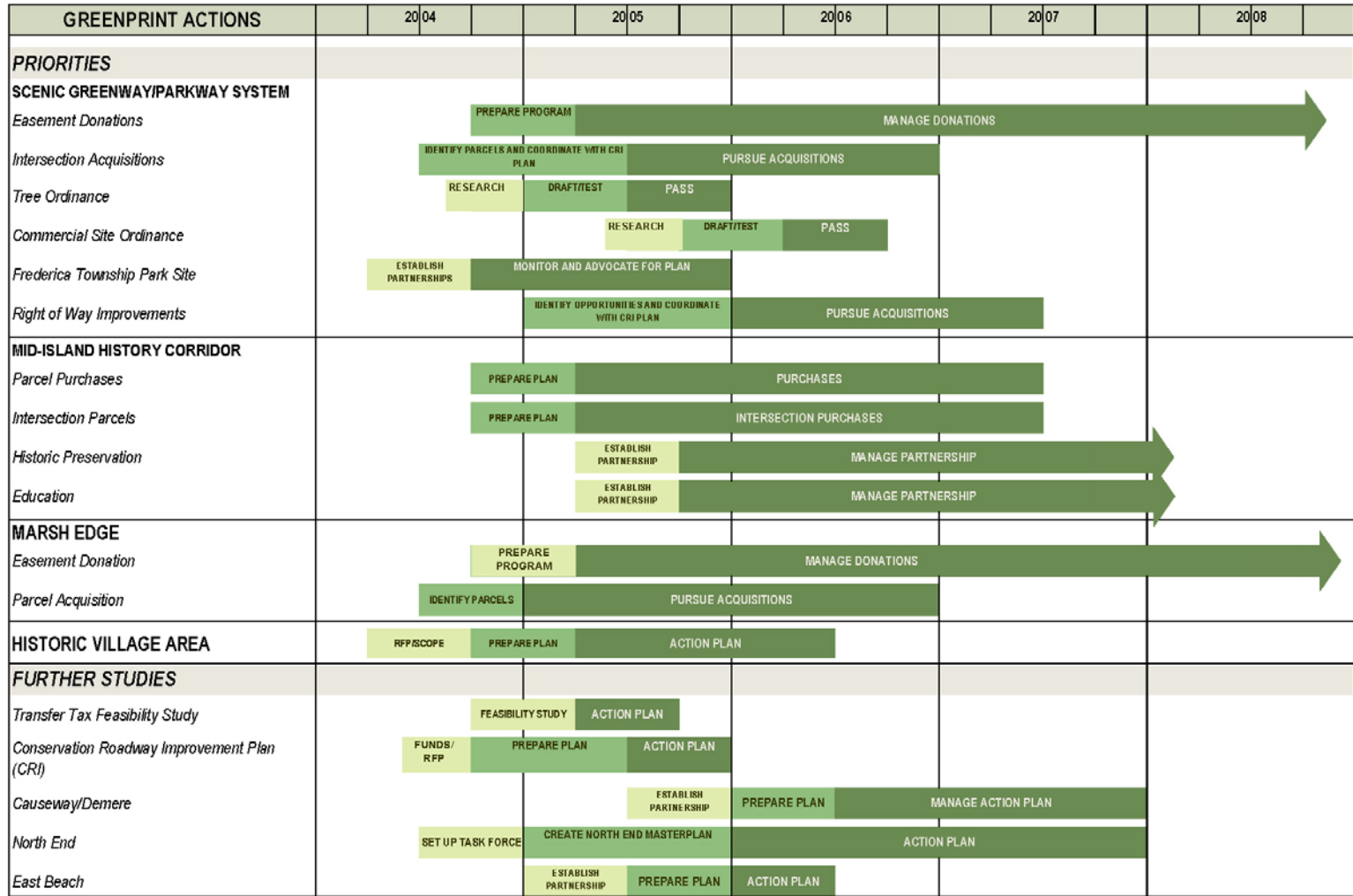
Establish partnership and prepare plan to ensure appropriate use, treatment, and conservation of the north end of the Island from Lawrence Road to Hampton Point.

## East Beach

Establish partnership and prepare plan to ensure appropriate use, treatment, and conservation of the East Beach area.

## Civic/Cultural Needs Assessment





This timeline is suggested as a point of departure to show how the undertaking of an ambitious agenda can be pursued by a relatively small organization in a reasonable amount of time.

**LEGEND**

PRE-PLANNING + RESEARCH

PLANNING + APPROACH

ACTION PLAN





## Land Trust Successes To Date:

### ☐ Mid-Island History Corridor

Harrington Preserves (3 properties)

### ☐ Greenway/Parkway

Stollaway Property

Devonwood Property

Gruber Conservation Easement

### ☐ Historic Village Area

The Grove Conservation Subdivision

### ☐ Marsh Edge

Stillwater Hammocks

Frederica Marsh

Braswell Conservation Easement

Montrose Subdivision Open Space

### ☐ East Beach

Hamby Tract



## ❑ Greenprint Advisory Committee:

- Jim Bruce
- Austin Catts
- Orion Douglass
- Bill Edenfield
- Steve Fentriss
- Denese Gentile
- Don Gentile
- Jim Gould
- Jameson Gregg
- Stacia Hendricks
- Jaxon Hice
- Rusty Jensen
- John Johnson
- Catherine Main
- Leslie Mattingly
- Frances McCrary
- John Peterson
- Carolyn Plyler
- Bruce Rado
- John Rogers
- Susan Shipman
- Ben Slade
- Roger Steffens
- Jack Sullivan
- Mike Tennant
- Joel Willis

## ❑ Land Trust Board of Directors:

- Ben Slade
- Jim Manning
- Bill Edenfield
- Jameson Gregg
- Duane Harris
- Jack Hartman
- Rhonda Hicks
- John Johnson
- John Ludwig
- Catherine Main
- Jeannie Manning
- Frances McCrary
- Jonathan S. Raclin
- John Rogers
- George Stapleton
- Roger Steffens
- Lucy Thomas
- Susan Corn Wainright

## ❑ Survey Respondents





# A Greenprint Plan for St. Simons Island



## Executive Summary



St. Simons Land Trust, St. Simons Island, Georgia



H. Randal Roark  
AIA, FAICP



August 2004