



York River State Park
5526 Riverview Road
Williamsburg, VA 23188-6732

YORK RIVER STATE PARK

MASTER PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2015 UPDATE

Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
600 East Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219



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2015 UPDATE

Presented for review at a public meeting on July 7, 2015, then recommended for adoption by the Board of Conservation and Recreation on November 6, 2015, and then reviewed for 30 days by the Virginia General Assembly.

Adopted:

/S/

Clyde E. Cristman, Director
Department of Conservation and Recreation
December 29, 2015



YORK RIVER STATE PARK MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2015 Update

This York River State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is an update to the official unabridged master plan document adopted on January 10, 2006, by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director Joseph H. Maroon, then updated on December 20, 2011, by DCR Director David A. Johnson. It is the most recent ten-year review as described in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. This master plan update is intended to set forth a clear vision for the future (based on phased development), while fulfilling the narrative text requirements of Chapter IV of the Virginia Capital Outlay Manual and §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. It outlines the desired future condition for York River State Park when it is fully developed.

York River State Park is sited in the Hampton Roads Planning District in James City County, located not far from the heavily populated Cities of Williamsburg, Newport News, Poquoson, Hampton, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach, as well as York County.

Located on the banks of the York River, the park consists of 2,536 acres and has 3.5 miles of river frontage. Located within the park boundaries is the Taskinas Plantation Archaeological District which encompasses the historic 18th Century Taskinas Plantation and is proposed for state and federal historic register designation. The park also contains significant Native American archaeological sites, one of which, the Croaker Landing Site, is on the National Register of Historic Places. There are also two known 10,000-year old Paleo-Indian activity areas within the park's boundaries that may also eligible for National Register listing.

Included within the park is the Taskinas Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve that supports research and monitoring in a unique watershed containing upland marle forest, fresh water habitats, estuarine habitats, and meso-haline tidal habitats. The Taskinas Creek Estuarine Research Reserve is managed in cooperation with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) for research and educational purposes. VIMS scientists have established permanent monitoring stations within the reserve so that they can monitor changes in the Taskinas Creek watershed environment. While there are some trails within the Reserve, most other development would be inappropriate.

This 2015 update places value on connecting York River State Park to other resources in the community. The York River provides many opportunities to connect with other resources, including the York River Water Trail, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Historic Trail, as well as park facilities on both sides of the river. Views of Werowocomoco, the principal residence of Powhatan, can be seen across the river from the visitor center. Many other historic sites are located near the park, including Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown and the Colonial National Scenic Parkway that connects them. U.S. Bike Route 76 ends at Historic Yorktown's mile-long pedestrian Riverwalk. York County offers many miles of blueways, and New Quarter Park on Queen Creek has miles of hiking and biking trails. The Lower Peninsula Loop of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail begins at York River State Park. The park's Regional Connectivity Map is an attachment to the full Master Plan document.

Land for the park was purchased in 1969 and construction began in 1975. York River State Park received Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) in 1973, 1976, 1978 and 2003 to acquire land and construct facilities in the park. In compliance with the LWCF Act of 1965 and amendments thereto, the Commonwealth of Virginia is required to maintain this park for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

As a part of the 2015 master plan process, the 2006 park master plan and the 2010 update were reviewed. It was determined that significant changes occurred to warrant a full revision of the master plan. This Executive Summary and accompanying map have been updated. The phased development plan and costs have been revised to reflect projects that have been completed since 2010, and the park staffing and operations cost data have also been updated to reflect current conditions.

The adopted park purpose statement is stated below:

“The purpose of York River State Park, a Chesapeake Bay Gateway site, is to provide premiere outdoor recreational, research, and educational opportunities while protecting and interpreting, in perpetuity, the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources of the lower peninsula of Virginia”

Attendance: The table below depicts York River State Park attendance from 2005 to 2014:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
161,658	134,541	180,400	158,842	166,982	147,650	123,932	137,150	141,624	130,452

Economic Impact: In 2014 York River had 130,452 visitors to the park; all were day-use visitors. With this level of visitation, it is estimated that the park had an economic impact on the local economy of approximately \$2,087,232. Master Plan recommendations designed to increase visitors and improve the visitor experience, once implemented, should have a further positive impact on the community’s economic vitality.

To date the park has been managed primarily as a day-use park. The visitor center offers programming and interpretive displays. A comprehensive trail system is designed to meet the needs of a variety of user groups. There are single-track mountain bike trails, equestrian trails, hiking trails, and multi-use trails. The day-use area contains a picnic area with shelters, tables, and grills, outdoor play areas, and parking. Canoeing and kayaking in Taskinas Creek and boating in the York River are very popular activities. The boat launch at Croaker Landing is heavily used. A fishing pier is also located at Croaker Landing.

This 2015 master plan update describes both proposed facilities and improvements to existing facilities. New facilities are sited to minimize impact to the park, and in keeping with the prescriptive management areas as defined by the Park Resource Management Plan and the guidelines of the Park Visitor Experience Plan, when available. New facilities at this park should be designed and built with consideration to the original design and layout of facilities. These facilities will be carefully sited to minimize impacts to the views in the park and of the park from adjacent lands and water bodies to the greatest extent possible. Consideration will be given to

eliminate excessive, misdirected, or obtrusive artificial light in the park in order to maximize the dark sky effect and encourage astronomy and night-sky viewing. Virginia State Parks strives to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards. Building and site design will implement green energy standards using energy-efficient and sustainable materials and process to the greatest extent possible. Green design initiatives will be considered during the design process for park renovations and new construction. Development activities will comply with requirements set forth by the Department of Environmental Quality's best management practices for erosion, sediment control and stormwater management in order to protect water quality.

Additional land acquisition is recommended to enhance park offerings, buffer the park from inappropriate development and/or protect valued viewsheds. Future land acquisitions will only be negotiated with willing property owners. The placement of conservation easements on adjacent property to preserve the natural resources, cultural landscapes, and scenic resources in close proximity to the park will be encouraged. In working cooperatively with neighboring landowners, the park will be enhanced and protected over time.

The proposed developments for York River State Park are presented in priority order. Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan) and covers a 20-year timeframe. The phasing costs are based on 2015 estimates.

PHASE I

- Construct a new park office and welcome center
- Build new contact station at park entrance
- Enlarge Visitor Center and redesign interior to expand interpretive exhibits/meeting space.
- Upgrade boat ramp and bulkheads, resurface parking, and dredge launch area at Croaker Landing
- Implement road improvements on Croaker Road (VDOT Road)
- Construct YCC bunkhouse with full bath facilities
- Add vault toilet near Backbone Trail
- Restore/repair spillway at Woodstock Pond
- Stabilize shoreline at critical locations
- Place utilities underground (1.8 miles)
- Resurface Blue Bird Trail (.8 miles)
- Resurface parking areas

The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$18,837,194.

PHASE II

- Construct primitive/canoe-in campsites (4) with a vault toilet
- Construct an overnight educational facility
- Construct staff residence
- Upgrade and redesign equestrian parking lot
- Resurface parking areas
- Upgrade canoe launch and pave trails at Taskinas Creek access point

The total estimated cost for Phase II development is \$3,182,342.

PHASE III

Construct picnic area with large shelter

Construct 30-site campground with 3 camping cabins/yrurts with access road at Woodstock Pond

Construct group camp with small shelter/fire ring - shared bathhouse with campground

Upgrade Amphitheater

Resurface parking areas

Connect to county water and sewer

The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$4,632,580.

The total cost to bring York River State Park to its desired future condition is \$26,652,115.

All estimates were developed based on 2015 cost figures.

STAFFING AND OPERATIONS

Staffing and Operations

Staffing and operational costs at York River State Park are presently budgeted at \$507,000 annually, including salaries for five staff positions. Two additional staff positions are identified in Phase I, which would bring the current park staffing to standard base level and address staffing needs of the proposed facilities. At complete build out of the proposed three phases of development, six additional staff will be needed and an additional \$668,000 in operating funds. In order for the park to operate effectively and efficiently at full build out, the park must be provided with the projected staffing and operating costs for the three development phases. The total budget for York River at full build out is projected to be \$1,175,000 with 11 staff positions.

YORK RIVER STAFFING AND OPERATING COSTS

EXISTING (FY 16)	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	FULL BUILD OUT
STAFFING				STAFFING
Park Manager				Park Manager
		Asst. Park Manager		Asst. Park Manager
Chief Ranger				Chief Ranger
	Educ. Specialist*	Educ. Specialist		Educ. Specialist (2)
Park Ranger(2)	Park Ranger	Park Ranger	Park Ranger	Park Ranger (5)
Office Manager				Office Manager
SALARY TOTAL				SALARY TOTAL
\$320,000	\$115,000	\$184,000	\$52,000	\$671,000
WAGE TOTAL				WAGE TOTAL
\$109,000	\$46,000	\$54,000	\$26,000	\$235,000
OTPS TOTAL				OTPS TOTAL
\$78,000	\$139,000	\$37,000	\$15,000	\$269,000
TOTAL BUDGET (FY16 dollars)				TOTAL BUDGET (FY16 dollars)
\$507,000	\$300,000	\$275,000	\$93,000	\$1,175,000

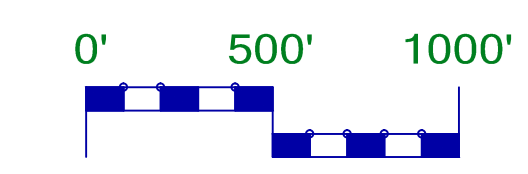
NOTE – All costs (salary, wage, OTPS (Other than Personnel Services)) are based on FY16 budget projections.

* Additional positions which are vacant and/or will bring park to standard base level staffing.

MASTER PLAN FOR YORK RIVER STATE PARK

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
DIVISION OF
PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES
PREPARED BY DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

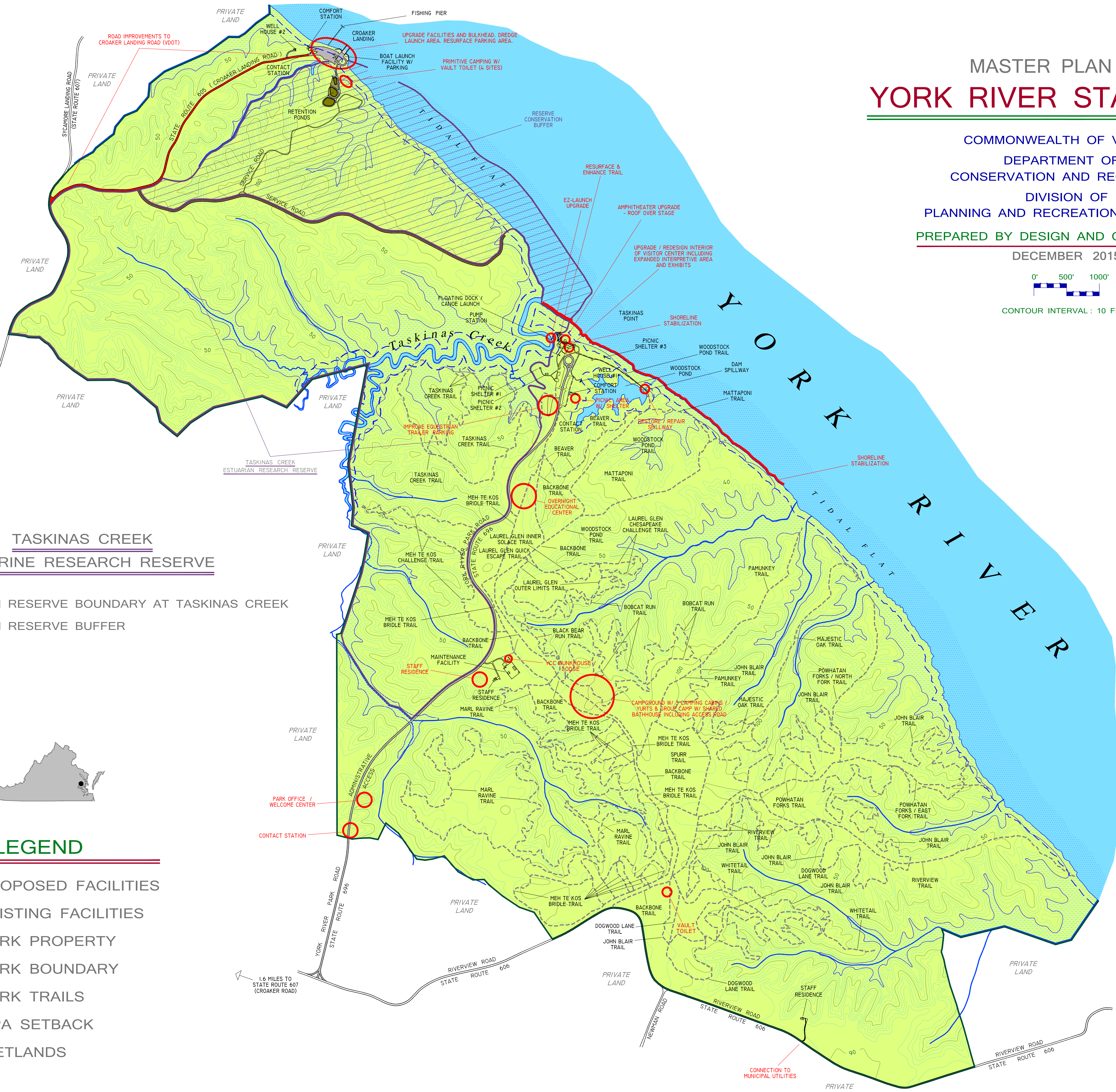
DECEMBER 2015



CONTOUR INTERVAL: 10 FEET

ADDITIONAL PROPOSED ITEMS:

- EXPLORE NEW TRAIL CONNECTIONS OUTSIDE PARK BOUNDARIES.
- ENHANCE ADA ACCESS THROUGHOUT THE PARK.
- RE-SURFACE PARKING AREAS.
- PLACE UTILITY LINES UNDERGROUND.
- CONNECT TO JAMES CITY COUNTY WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM.
- PARTNER WITH TASKINAS CREEK ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE IN DEVELOPMENT OF VISITOR CENTER DISPLAYS & ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.

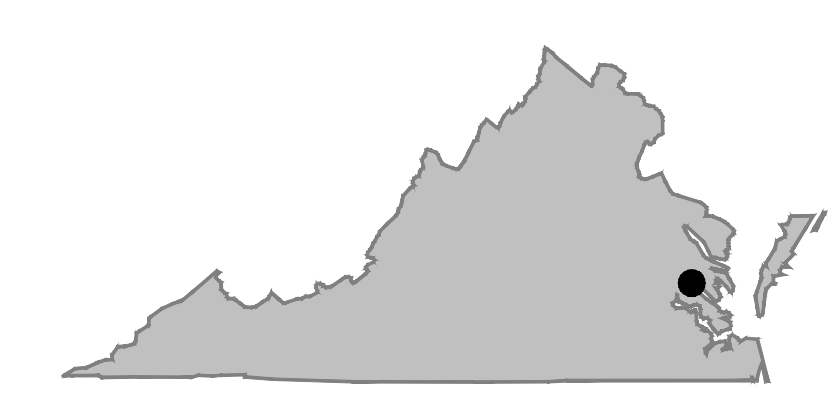


**TASKINAS CREEK
ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE**

- RESEARCH RESERVE BOUNDARY AT TASKINAS CREEK
- ⊗ RESEARCH RESERVE BUFFER

LEGEND

- PROPOSED FACILITIES
- EXISTING FACILITIES
- PARK PROPERTY
- PARK BOUNDARY
- - - PARK TRAILS
- - - RPA SETBACK
- ⊗ WETLANDS



2.5 MILES TO INTERSTATE 64

1.6 MILES TO STATE ROUTE 607 (CROAKER ROAD)

3 MILES TO PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

CONNECTION TO MUNICIPAL UTILITIES