



Project: Hernando County Observation Tower
Client: Hernando County Parks & Recreation
Project No.: 25073

October 9, 2025

Hernando County Observation Tower

Hernando County has requested Coastal provide a preliminary siting review for potential relocation of the Linda Pederson Park Observation Tower. The existing observation tower is located at Linda Pederson Park on Shoal Line Boulevard in the Hernando Beach/Weeki Wachee area. The existing tower has met its useful life and needs replacement. The current tower will be demolished, and the County would like to explore construction of a new tower, potentially at another location within the County.

There are three potential locations identified that Coastal has been requested to assess and provide feedback for further study and project development.

Option 1 – Linda Pederson Park

6300 Shoal Line Boulevard
Spring Hill, FL 34607

This option proposes reconstructing the observation tower in a similar location to the existing tower. This option provides the most advantages and would be the recommended location based on community familiarity with the location and reduced permitting requirements for the site.

Estimated Schedule: 6 months design and permitting/6 months bidding/ 6 months construction

Advantages:

- County owned location which does not require permission from an outside landowner to construct and maintain.
- Adequate access for staging and construction.
- Location is consistent with Public's current tower viewing expectations since it would be replacing the existing tower.
- Views of the Gulf of America, Preserve and surrounding canals and springs can be expected.
- The location could be constructed with a simple building permit issued by Hernando County and would not require permitting with the SWFWMD.

Disadvantages:

- Medium threat from future storm surge due to location adjacent to salt marsh.



Option 2 – Historic Bayport Park

4140 Cortez Boulevard
Spring Hill, FL 34607

This option proposes the installation of the viewing tower at the location of the existing damaged aluminum viewing platform at the Historic Bayport Park. The major hurdle to this location will be obtaining approval from SWFWMD to allow for use of the site for the observation tower.

Advantages:

- Unobstructed views to the Gulf of America and surrounding saltwater marsh area.
- Close proximity to water may allow for reduction in tower height while maintaining waterfront view. Could potentially result in cost reduction.
- Provides replacement for damaged aluminum viewing structure currently located at park.

Disadvantages:

- Property leased from SWFWMD. Will require update to the Management Plan from SWFWMD and approval from the District for the additional use.
- Proposed location will require construction access through active park area. There are no direct roads to the proposed location. Limited construction staging area.
- Location will require additional structural analysis and potential increase in structural stability of tower due to location directly adjacent to Gulf of America storm surge.
- Will share limited parking with kayak launch area.

Estimated Schedule: 6-12 months SWFWMD Management Plan update and lease agreement modification/6 months design and permitting/6 months bidding/ 6 months construction



Option 3 – Weeki Wachee Preserve Park

4066 Shoal Line Boulevard
Hernando Beach, FL 34607

This option proposes the installation of the viewing tower at the location of the new Weeki Wachee Preserve Park entrance off of Shoal Line Boulevard located in the developed area of Hernando Beach. Parking would be provided by the proposed parking lot and pedestrian access bridge. The major hurdle to this location will be obtaining approval from SWFWMD to allow for use of the site for the observation tower.

Advantages:

- Will be integrated as part of new Preserve access and County maintained park. Provides amenity not currently available at the Preserve.

Disadvantages:

- Property leased from SWFWMD. Will require update to the Management Plan from SWFWMD and approval from the District for the additional use.
- Access to site will require traversing Preserve area and may result in additional restoration costs.
- District has communicated concern with access to the Preserve after sundown. The expected use of the tower would anticipate sunset viewing which may result in conflicts with the District's operating hours of the Preserve.
- Security patrolling of the tower will be a critical concern. Tower would need to be located adjacent to the canal area to provide visual security assessments from Shoal Line Boulevard during afterhours. Vehicle access to the Preserve is limited and may result in difficult policing of the structure, especially during hours of closure.
- Viewing location to the east would be of the Preserve area, viewing to the west would be of the developed Hernando Beach area and hinder sunset views.

Estimated Schedule: 6-12 months SWFWMD Management Plan update and lease agreement modification/6 months design and permitting/6 months bidding/ 6 months construction

