

Environmental coalition sues county over propose roundabout's Twitty Park encroachment

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A local environmental advocacy organization is taking Glynn County to court again concerning a park near the intersection of Sea Island and Frederica roads on St. Simons Island.

This time it is claiming roundabout plans will take away from the land's intended purpose.

The Glynn Environmental Coalition filed a lawsuit this week in Glynn County Superior Court claiming the county's plans to relocate utilities and to build the roundabout through Twitty Park violates Georgia's public trust doctrine.

Glynn County has been working on plans for years to alleviate traffic congestion at the intersection which is currently a four-way traffic light setup with turning lanes.

The roundabout plans call for a portion of the traffic circle to be built over part of Twitty Park, which is on the east side of the intersection.

The coalition says utility relocation for construction will impact around 40% of the park and many mature oak trees. That is inconsistent with the county's duty to preserve the property as a public park held in trust for future generations, the coalition said in a release announcing the lawsuit.

"Twitty Park and all publicly held lands like it (belong) to the public," said Rachael Thompson, executive director of the coalition. "This case has always been about more than a single project. It's about protecting assets for future generations and honoring both the letter and spirit of commitments made over a century ago."

The coalition, along with Sea Island resident Jane Fraser, sued the county in 2016 saying it violated the stipulations of the deed for the park in 1982 when it transferred the property to Sea Island. They argued that the property must remain a public park because it was given to the county in 1924 by

businessman T.L. Cain with restrictions that it must be used as a park and access to Sea Island, or ownership would revert back to his heirs.

The coalition and Fraser were victorious in that fight when Brunswick Judicial Circuit Judge Stephen Kelley issued an order that the swap was void and that the county was to maintain ownership of Twitty Park.

The coalition in 2019 then petitioned Glynn County Superior Court seeking to hold the county in contempt of the order by proposing to build the roundabout.

The court ruled this year that questions about public use of the park were not properly raised in a contempt hearing.

The new lawsuit is not to oppose transportation improvements in general, the coalition said, but seeks to ensure infrastructure projects respect legal protections for public lands.

“The public trust doctrine exists to ensure that governments act as trustees — not as owners free to dispose of public resources,” Thompson said.

Twitty Park has been a public green space since it was given to the county in 1924, she added.

“This lawsuit is about safeguarding a public promise that has endured for generations. Our community deserves growth that respects our history and our natural resources,” Thompson said.

“Public lands are part of our shared heritage, and once they are lost they cannot be restored.”

Glynn County received the lawsuit on Tuesday.

A county spokesperson said Wednesday county officials had no comment on the lawsuit.

County officials said in a statement in November 2025 that the county remains committed to managing and using the Twitty Park property in a manner consistent with the deed and the applicable law. They said then that they believe the traffic improvements are being planned within the scope of the property’s authorized public purposes.

“The county’s planning efforts continue to take into account both the history of the property and the need to provide safe, functional infrastructure for the community consistent with the intent of the original deed,” the county’s statement said at the time.

“Glynn County remains grateful for T.L. Cain’s contribution, which provided a lasting public asset that continues to benefit the community a century later.”

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