



Boy Scout Preserve

General Description

Size: County owned = 296 acres, conservation easement area = 480 acres, total area = 776 acres. The County-owned portion of the property consists of five separate parcels of land acquired through the ELAP Program from 1991 through 1999. In 2004, the owner of the largest, 480 acre central parcel, the Gulf Ridge Council of the Boy Scouts of America, is to convey a conservation easement to the County, as part of a larger transaction. The conservation easement will ensure that the land will be preserved in its natural state in perpetuity, and also allow public access for hiking only. The site includes heavily forested lands along the Alafia River consisting of floodplain forest, pine flatwoods, and sand pine forest. Contact the County (see below) to obtain an update on the status of the easement.

Location and Access

The portion south of the river can be accessed from Lithia Pinecrest Road, directly across from the County's Lithia Pumping Station, and just northwest of the Fish Hawk Blvd. intersection. Look for a metal gate on a pipeline easement that provides access to the roads and trails shown on the map. The smaller portion of the preserve on the north side of the river can be accessed at the dead end of Blount Road, south of Durant Road. Once past the metal gate, proceed directly south across a TECO right-of-way and follow the woods road that leads, eventually, to the river. The perimeter road following the north boundary is private property of Tampa Electric. To the west of the trail lies private property within the community of Riverhills.

Environmental Significance

This site forms a portion of the extensive natural habitat corridor along the Alafia River and its tributaries, and includes the lower portion of Turkey Creek, where it meets the river. The extensive expanse of heavily forested habitat supports a diverse assemblage of native species including bobcat, white-tailed deer, coyote, river otter, red-shouldered hawk, gopher tortoise, and many other plants and animals. The vast majority of the site consists of low-lying floodplain forest, but soil maps indicate that the site also contains significant amounts of flatwoods, sandhill, and sand pine forest. Very little information has been collected about the natural resources of the site, providing an excellent opportunity for knowledgeable volunteers to contribute to site management.

Recreational Opportunities

Prior to 2004, the site offered limited opportunities for outdoor recreation, since the preserve consisted of two widely separated parcels on opposite sides of the river. With the addition of the Boy Scout property, there will be an extensive network of trails and woods roads on the south side of the river available for hiking during daylight hours. The quality of the experience is high due to the heavily wooded character of the site. Visitors are advised to respect the privacy of any scout groups that may be encountered while on the preserve.

Volunteer Opportunities

Site information is needed and visitors are asked to provide documentation of plant and animal species encountered on the preserve. Development of a marked trail system is proposed in the near future. Exotic plant control will be an ongoing effort.

Contact Information

Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department, Conservation Services Office, 10940 McMullen Road, Riverview, FL 33569. (813) 672-7876.