



Brooker Creek Buffer Preserve

General Description

Size: 415 acres. The majority of this site was acquired by Hillsborough County (ELAPP) from the City of Clearwater in 1995. The city had originally purchased the property as a facility for the disposal of solid byproducts from its advanced wastewater treatment plant, but the site had been unused for many years. The County agreed to purchase the site to prevent its eventual development with the condition that Clearwater contribute \$200,000 to habitat restoration. The site was considered to be a priority for preservation and restoration because of its location on the boundary of Brooker Creek Preserve.

Location and Access

The preserve is located at the southwest corner of Tarpon Springs Road and Patterson Road, and lies on the border of Pinellas County. Access is restricted as explained under recreational opportunities below. Authorized groups and individuals may enter the site through two gates located on Patterson Road.

Environmental Significance

The site includes a short section of Brooker Creek between Tarpon Springs Road and the County line. Natural habitat includes forested wetlands along the creek corridor, cypress swamp, oak scrub, open fields and several small, isolated shrub wetlands. The open field areas are undergoing restoration to a longleaf pine, wiregrass, saw palmetto community. Old rim ditches that separate the uplands and wetlands are being eliminated to restore natural hydrology. The site, in conjunction with the adjacent preserve in Pinellas County, supports an abundant wildlife population, especially deer, turkey and gopher tortoise.

Recreational Opportunities

The site is not open to the general public at the present time due to the active habitat restoration effort, and several restoration related research projects that are being conducted. Site security is maintained in an effort to discourage the poaching that has been an ongoing problem on this preserve. Guided tours are available on a reservation basis, and groups are invited to participate in the restoration effort.

Volunteer Opportunities

Since the site is currently undergoing restoration, volunteer opportunities consist of planting events and other restoration related activities. Several groups have completed grant funded projects at the site.

Contact Information

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