



Cockroach Creek Greenway

General Description

Size: 550 acres. This preserve was purchased by the Hillsborough County ELAP Program in 2001, and contains a portion of the headwaters of Cockroach Creek, a small Tampa Bay tributary that runs into Cockroach Bay approximately 2-1/2 miles northwest of the site. The section of the creek corridor between the preserve and US 41 to the northwest has also been nominated for preservation, but is still privately owned. West of US 41, the creek corridor flows across lands recently acquired by Hillsborough County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District, before reaching the bay.

Location and Access

The Cockroach Creek Greenway preserve is located on the south side of Valroy Road, 1-1/2 miles east of US 41. Access for foot traffic is available at three gates along the road shoulder. There are no marked trails, but visitors may explore the site on foot during daylight hours by following old woods roads and firelanes.

Environmental Significance

The publicly owned portion of the greenway consists of high quality pine flatwoods with many scattered isolated wetlands and forested wetlands along the Cockroach Creek corridor. In the past, private land managers conducted prescribed burns to maintain the site for cattle grazing, and the preserve's habitat is in unusually good condition as a result. The isolated wetlands are mostly freshwater marshes and vary from less than an acre to many acres in size. Some of the larger and deeper marshes are used as nesting sites for Florida sandhill cranes. Many of these isolated wetlands dry out completely during the dry season, and during wet periods, provide crucial breeding habitat for some native species, especially amphibians, that cannot survive in more permanent water bodies due to competition and predation. The creek corridor provides a connection and a potential travel corridor for wildlife between the uplands of the preserve and the coastal habitat along Cockroach Bay. The fresh water of the creek is also very important for the health of the Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve, providing the low-salinity conditions so vital to many marine species during a portion of their life cycles.

Recreational Opportunities

Hiking on existing woods roads, birdwatching, plant identification and general nature study are the only opportunities available at this site. Visitors are asked to avoid blocking the gates when parking.

Volunteer Opportunities

County land managers need observers to record and report plant and wildlife populations, as well as any problems or signs of unauthorized activities in the preserve. Ongoing management efforts include exotic plant control and prescribed burning to maintain the habitat quality and diversity of this preserve.

Contact Information

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