



## Cypress Point Park/Diamondback Tract

### General Description

Size: 52 acres. The Diamondback Tract, one of the smallest sites ever purchased under the Hillsborough County ELAP Program at only 10.4 acres, is named after a small turtle found in the brackish waters of Tampa Bay, the diamondback terrapin. The preserve was acquired in 1990 to protect a rare patch of coastal uplands along with wetlands consisting of mangrove forest, mud flats, oyster bars and a small tidal lagoon, all nestled into a corner of Tampa Bay formed by the junction of the I-275 causeway and the shoreline of Old Tampa Bay. The site was proposed for a waterfront restaurant under the previous ownership. Following acquisition, the County was able to secure a grant from the National Estuary Program to conduct habitat restoration in the uplands, removing exotic nuisance vegetation and replanting with native coastal plants. The adjacent parcel, known as Cypress Point Park, was purchased with joint funding from ELAPP and the Florida Communities Trust, and conveyed to the City of Tampa for habitat restoration and development of a waterfront park site.

### Location and Access

To reach the Diamondback Tract, go north on Westshore Blvd. from I-275, turn west on Cypress Street, then south on Reo Street, and west on Gray Street to the dead end. Enter the site through a gate in the chain link fence. To reach Cypress Point Park, continue west on Cypress Street to the end, turn south through the office park complex, and park near one of the trail access points along the south and west sides of the parking lot.

### Environmental Significance

The coastal habitat found in this preserve is one of the last surviving remnants on the east side of Old Tampa Bay between Gandy Blvd. and the Courtney Campbell Causeway. The coastline for 5 miles to the south of the site consists entirely of dredge and fill development for waterfront homes and port facilities. The preservation and restoration effort has provided critical habitat for marine life, shorebirds, wading birds and other native species. Birdwatchers can view rare and unusual species such as roseate spoonbills, black skimmers and clapper rails, especially during the winter and spring when northern species take refuge or pass through on their way back to summer breeding areas. In addition to the coastal uplands habitat restored on the Diamondback Tract, the Cypress Point Park is undergoing restoration of coastal hammock, coastal sand dune and tidal marsh habitat.

### Recreational Opportunities

Both sites are open to foot traffic during daylight hours only. A short trail runs through the Diamondback Tract along a sandy berm down into the mangroves, providing views of the tidal lagoon, mud flats and oyster bars. At the larger Cypress Point Park, paved and unpaved trails are available for walkers and joggers, and future plans call for picnicking facilities, a restroom building and a canoe/kayak launch.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Both sites need volunteers to help with shoreline cleanups, installing or maintaining restoration plantings and exotic plant removal.

### Contact Information

Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department, Conservation Services Office, 10940 McMullen Road, Riverview, FL 33569. (813) 672-7876.  
 City of Tampa Parks and Recreation Department, 7525 North Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33604, 813-274-8615.