

# Edward Medard County Park

## General Description

Size: 1,284 acres. This park's main feature is a 700 acre man-made lake, the Pleasant Grove Reservoir, also known as Lake Medard. The park was created as a land reclamation project involving the American Cyanamid Company, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and Hillsborough County. The park was dedicated in 1972, and is one of Hillsborough County's most popular, with approximately 500,000 visitors each year.

## Location and Access

The park is located one mile south of State Road 60, on Turkey Creek Road, about 15 miles east of Tampa and five miles south of Plant City.

## Environmental Significance

The majority of the park consists of lands reclaimed after phosphate mining. At the north end of the property, Turkey Creek flows into the reservoir, and this area contains hardwood swamp forest and freshwater marsh habitat. The reservoir contains many islands of varying sizes, some of which support nesting colonies of wading birds and other waterfowl. Southern bald eagles are frequently seen here. A wide variety of fish and other aquatic life can be found in the park, especially American alligators, some of which reach impressive sizes.

## Recreational Opportunities

The man-made lake is extremely popular with fishermen, and is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. In addition to the usual largemouth bass, catfish and panfish, the lake is stocked with sunshine bass. A large boat launch facility is ADA accessible, and the entire reservoir is an idle speed only area, so canoes and kayaks share the waters with bass boats, in the absence of the water skiers and jet skis that may create user group conflicts in other areas. Multiple picnic areas with shelters and restroom buildings, overnight camping and horseback riding trails are available. A boardwalk across the upper reservoir is useful for both fishing and wildlife observation. A swimming beach has remained closed recently due to water quality concerns.

## Volunteer Opportunities

On site opportunities include general park maintenance, exotic removal, documenting native plants and recording wildlife observations.

## Contact Information

Edward Medard Park and Reservoir, 5726 Panther Loop, Plant City, FL 33567. (813) 757-3802. Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department, 1101 East Rivercove Drive, Tampa, FL 33604. (813) 975-2160.

