



Lake Park

General Description

Size: 589 acres. This site is owned by the City of St. Petersburg, and is operated as a park by Hillsborough County through a lease agreement. It has qualified for purchase under the County's ELAP Program, but acquisition efforts have not been successful to date. The site contains five freshwater lakes which, until recently, were suffering from low water levels, but are now being maintained at historic levels with groundwater augmentation. The site has been extensively developed with both active and passive recreational facilities. As a result, opportunities for nature study and wildlife observation in a natural setting are somewhat limited. However, some visitors may prefer the combination of natural resources and modern conveniences.

Location and Access

The site is located on the west side of Dale Mabry Highway, three miles south of the Pasco County line. The park entrance is on Dale Mabry, 1/2 mile south of Van Dyke Road.

Environmental Significance

Even though much of the site has been developed with water supply wells, roads, trails, picnic areas, a rodeo arena, bicycle BMX track and more, the majority of the property is still undeveloped. Natural features include five freshwater lakes, cypress swamps, pine flatwoods and hardwood hammock. Since the site was acquired by the City of St. Petersburg years ago, and developed as a wellfield, its lakes and wetlands suffered from impacts to the water table, and surface water levels dropped far below historic levels. Fortunately, water managers have recently taken measures to address these impacts, with reductions in wellfield pumping and by actually pumping water into the lakes to maintain normal water levels, when necessary. As a result, the site now provides a combination of forested upland, shoreline and swamp wetland, and open water habitat that is extremely rare in a region where residential and commercial development have replaced natural open space lands. Wildlife utilization and overall species diversity can be expected to increase significantly in the near future.

Recreational Opportunities

Many active and passive recreational facilities are available, including picnic areas with shelters, a boat ramp, archery range, multi-use trails (horses, bicycles and hikers), BMX bicycle track, R/C car racing track, playgrounds, jogging trail, and rodeo arena. Fishing in the lakes is catch and release only for bass. For nature enthusiasts, the site offers canoeing, birdwatching and nature study.

Volunteer Opportunities

Although this site is a public park, it does not enjoy permanent protection as a conservation area. Public awareness and advocacy are needed to help ensure that the City of St. Petersburg does not convey ownership to the private sector. On site opportunities include general park maintenance, exotic removal, documenting native plants and recording wildlife observations.

Contact Information

Lake Park, 17302 N. Dale Mabry Highway, Lutz, FL 33549. (813) 264-3806.
Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department, 1101 E. Rivercove Drive, Tampa, FL 33604. (813) 975-2160.