



Pam Callahan Nature Preserve

General Description

Size: 150 acres. A 97 acre portion of this preserve was purchased by the Hillsborough County ELAP Program in 1993, and the other 53 acres were deeded over to the County as a condition of approval for an apartment complex on part of the original nomination. The entire upland area of the preserve was targeted for development in the early 90's, and this led to a grass-roots effort by local residents in opposition to the re-zoning. The residents were concerned about the high density and the destruction of the natural habitat found on the property. One of the most outspoken defenders of the site, and leading opponent of the development, was a woman named Pam Callahan. Ultimately, the residents won a partial victory, with a portion of the property undergoing development, but the larger portion becoming a nature preserve. Unfortunately, Mrs. Callahan passed away before her dream was realized. After the County was successful in protecting the preserve, a group of citizens petitioned to have the site named in honor of her memory. A large stone monument with a brass memorial plaque has been placed at the end of the trail in the heart of the preserve.

Location and Access

The preserve is located on the southwest side of Memorial Highway, one mile south of Hillsborough Avenue. A metal gate marks the entrance to the preserve. A short trail through pine flatwoods leads to a stone monument at the edge of the wetlands.

Environmental Significance

This site contains a rare patch of upland habitat in a highly developed area of Town 'n Country. The majority of the site consists of coastal wetlands, including salt barrens, salt marsh, and mangrove forest. The surrounding area has been developed with waterfront residential canals, making this an isolated but important natural resource. The combination of heavily forested coastal uplands and high quality wetlands provides an area large enough to support a significant population of native plants and wildlife. The natural transition from water through wetlands to uplands makes this site an excellent environmental education resource for students, and several elementary and high schools in the area should be encouraged to use the site for field trips. Exotic control and prescribed burning will be necessary to maintain and enhance the natural plant communities on the preserve.

Recreational Opportunities

Nature study, and general nature appreciation along the short one-way trail, are the only opportunities at this time. There has been a proposal to extend the trail in a circle through the uplands of the preserve, but a group of volunteers needs to step forward and take charge of the project to make it happen.

Volunteer Opportunities

Shoreline cleanups have been held on several occasions at the site, and will probably continue in the future. Exotic plant control is also needed. Further trail development is proposed, provided volunteer support is available. Local residents interested in the natural resources of the preserve will need to support the County's site management efforts, including prescribed burning, a practice that is extremely important for maintaining the habitat and preventing dangerous wildfires, but which is often opposed by adjacent property owners because of a lack of understanding of the process and its benefits.

Contact Information

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