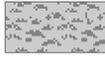


Tampa Bay Regional Reservoir

-  Reservoir
-  Wildlife Habitat & Corridors

Tampa Bay Regional Reservoir

General Description

Size: approximately 5,200 acres. This project is included because it involves a large amount of land purchased by the Southwest Florida Water Management District, intended to provide a natural buffer for the man-made reservoir. The 15 billion gallon above ground reservoir will have a surface water area of 930 acres, surrounded by an embankment varying in width between 220 and 440 feet. This will result in a combined foot print of approximately 1,200 acres. The remaining 4,000 acres of public land surrounding the reservoir will contain some additional areas occupied by roads and stormwater facilities, but the vast majority will be either preserved in a natural state, restored to natural plant communities, or used as wetland mitigation for the areas impacted by the reservoir.

Location and Access

The reservoir site is located in southeastern Hillsborough County, on the west side of HWY 39, south of Lithia-Pinecrest Road, and east of Balm-Boyette Road. The main access for construction and operation of the facility is from HWY 39, 3 miles south of Lithia-Pinecrest Road.

Environmental Significance

The site contains tributary headwaters of both Fish Hawk Creek and the South Prong of the Alafia River. Doe Branch and Long Flat Branch flow north and west, joining with Pringle Branch to form Fish Hawk Creek, while Chitto Branch flows northeast to the Alafia. All three tributaries contain forested riparian corridor habitat that plays an important role in linking together large tracts of public preserve lands. The Balm-Boyette Scrub Preserve lies immediately southwest of the reservoir project, and is connected to the site by habitat corridors along both Pringle Branch and Long Flat Branch. The Fish Hawk Creek corridor flows off the reservoir project to the northwest where it enters Fish Hawk Creek Preserve. Chitto Branch links the reservoir site to the Alafia River Corridor Preserve and the Alafia River State Park. Altogether, the project site is directly linked to over 17,000 acres of public land, falling into the center like the last piece of a giant puzzle. While the majority of the project site's uplands consisted of improved pasture at the time of acquisition, virtually every portion of the property not being occupied by the reservoir, or used for ancillary facilities, is being restored to natural habitat. Large areas are being used to create, restore or enhance wetlands to mitigate on-site impacts to existing wetlands, and the remaining portions are being restored to natural upland habitat, predominantly pine flatwoods.

Recreational Opportunities

No portion of the site is open to the public during construction of the reservoir. Once the project is completed, plans are to provide limited facilities for passive outdoor recreation, in the form of trails for hiking, horseback riding, and possibly mountain biking. Originally, consideration was given to allowing the public to use the reservoir itself for water-based recreation, but cost and safety factors have eliminated that plan.

Volunteer Opportunities

None at the present time, but volunteers will be necessary to implement proposed trail development in the future.

Contact Information

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