

Temple Terrace Riverfront Park

General Description

Size: 118 acres. This site consists of two parcels located on the east shoreline of the Hillsborough River between Bullard Parkway and Fowler Avenue, in Temple Terrace. Although the two parcels are not physically connected, the river shoreline habitat and close proximity allow them to function as a contiguous habitat unit. The upstream parcel was purchased in 1989, and the downstream parcel was purchased in 1995. Both tracts had been proposed for high density residential development by previous owners. Hillsborough County owns and manages the upstream parcel, while the downstream parcel was acquired with joint funding from Hillsborough County (ELAPP) and the Florida Communities Trust, and conveyed to Temple Terrace, with the City responsible for site management and the eventual development of park facilities for public access.

Location and Access

The downstream parcel is located on the north side of Bullard Parkway, and on the east shoreline of the river, directly across from the main campus of Florida College. Access is available from the river by small boat, or by parking nearby and taking the sidewalk that runs along Bullard Parkway. No trails have been developed, but old and overgrown woods roads provide some access to the interior of the site. The upstream parcel can be accessed from the right-of-way of Woodland Ridge Drive by parking on the north side of the road, just west of the overhead powerlines, and walking down the powerline easement. A trail leads to the left and ends at the river. When parking, please avoid blocking the powerline access gate and do not park on private property directly under or east of the powerlines.

Environmental Significance

Both parcels include significant amounts of forested habitat along the river corridor. In fact, this combined area represents the last sizeable block of natural habitat along the Hillsborough River corridor large enough to support a healthy and diverse wildlife population in an urbanized area. The protected habitat found in the two parcels includes cypress swamp, hardwood swamp, hardwood forest, mixed upland forest, and a small remnant of sandhill. There are no land links to other protected natural areas, but the river corridor provides some degree of connectivity for native species that utilize shoreline habitat. It is possible for such species to travel between this preservation area and other much larger areas to the north, upstream of the bridge at Fletcher Avenue. Habitat corridor connections are critical for maintaining viable populations of certain species on relatively small protected sites such as this preserve.

Recreational Opportunities

Nature study, birdwatching, canoeing/kayaking, and limited hiking are the only recreational activities available at this time. Future plans call for development of park facilities on the downstream parcel, including parking, picnic/playground area, trails and a boardwalk. The upstream parcel may be linked to a greenway trail system currently under development.

Volunteer Opportunities

Information about wildlife populations capable of surviving long term on partially isolated protected areas of this size is very valuable to land managers. Site visitors should report any confirmed sightings. Unauthorized and harmful activities are common in preserves surrounded by residential development, and should also be reported. Temple Terrace will schedule volunteer work days for site cleanup, exotic plant removal, and trail development.

Contact Information

Temple Terrace Parks and Recreation Department, 6610 Whiteway Drive, Temple Terrace, FL 33617.

Attn: Mr. Dana Carver (813) 989-7180 or (813) 989-7059.

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