



Violet Cury Preserve

General Description

Size: 161 acres. This preserve was purchased by Hillsborough County (ELAPP) in 1995. The site is named after the mother of the previous owner, whose family once used the property as a country retreat when the surrounding area was still far from the city. Today the preserve is surrounded by residential development in the community of Lutz. Its location in a developed area made it a likely target for yet another housing development, and the residents in the surrounding neighborhoods were very supportive of the site's preservation.

Location and Access

The preserve is located at the northeast corner of Sinclair Hills Road and 15th Street, in Lutz. From Bearss Avenue, approximately 1.5 miles east of I-275, turn north on Livingston Avenue, then west on Sinclair Hills Road, and look for a metal gate on the north side of the road, approximately 1 mile west of Livingston. Plenty of room for parking can be found on the grassy roadside next to the gate. Two other walk through entrances are located at the northeast and northwest corners of the preserve, but these are provided for the convenience of local residents, and there is no space available for parking. The preserve is open to foot traffic during daylight hours only.

Environmental Significance

This preserve is a remarkable "island" refuge surrounded by development. Hidden in the heart of the site is Lake Flynn, a rare example of a relatively unaltered freshwater lake in a region where waterfront development is the usual rule. Surrounding the lake are a variety of natural plant communities including pine flatwoods, oak hammock, freshwater marsh and sandhill. This wide range of habitat supports a diverse array of wildlife including gopher tortoise, Sherman's fox squirrel, Florida sandhill crane, American alligator, pinewoods treefrog, and unusual plants such as marsh pink, white violet and blazing star. Maintaining the quality and variety of the natural habitat requires periodic prescribed burning and exotic plant control. Managing a preserve surrounded by residential development presents many challenges, and requires the support of local residents.

Recreational Opportunities

The preserve features a hiking trail developed with the assistance of a local Boy Scout Troop, and is very popular with local residents. Fishing is allowed in the lake, and a small picnic area is located under the shade of large live oaks within view of the water, at the site of the former owner's weekend home.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are needed to help maintain the trail, conduct site cleanups, report wildlife and native plant observations, and to deter unauthorized activities by reporting them to the County. When residential development borders preservation lands, problems occur that impact the resource, including illegal disposal of yard waste, planting of exotic vegetation, digging up native plants for landscaping of yards, unauthorized trail construction, and so forth. County land managers need to know about such activities in order to take steps to prevent them.

Contact Information

Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department, Conservation Services Office, 10940 McMullen Road, Riverview, FL 33569. (813) 672-7876.