



Weedon Island Preserve

General Description

Size: 3,164 acres. Originally part of the State Park System, Weedon Island Preserve was transferred to Pinellas County for management and development. The site contains coastal wetlands and uplands on the shore of Old Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, south of the point where the Gandy Bridge crosses the bay from Tampa. The site has tremendous archaeological as well as environmental significance, having been home to at least four separate prehistoric cultures, including the extensively studied Weedon Island Culture, known for their distinctive ornate pottery. These native Americans were attracted to the area by the abundant fish, shellfish, plants and animals that thrived in the estuarine environment. Pinellas County has recently opened the Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center, a beautifully designed building that houses educational displays interpreting the natural, cultural and archaeological history of the preserve.

Location and Access

From I-275 take exit 28 and head east on Gandy Boulevard (694). Turn south on San Martin Boulevard (823) and then east on Weedon Drive N.E., which follows the shoreline of Riviera Bay to the preserve. From south Tampa, cross the Gandy Bridge and turn south on San Martin Boulevard, then east on Weedon Drive N.E. The Cultural and Natural History Center is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 am–4 pm.

Environmental Significance

The preserve contains a rich mosaic of mangrove forests, mangrove islands, seagrass beds, salt barrens, pine flatwoods, and oak hammock. The coastal wetlands provide valuable habitat for many kinds of marine life including dozens of different species of fish, crabs, shrimp, oysters, stingrays and mollusks. A variety of wading birds depend on the area for roosting and feeding, including the endangered wood stork. Roseate spoonbills, reddish egrets, bald eagles and even an occasional West Indian manatee may be encountered. Upland habitat within the preserve is equally important due to its scarcity in the region. A diverse array of native plant species supports a healthy population of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Site management includes exotic plant control and prescribed fire to maintain the quality and diversity of the habitat at the highest possible level.

Recreational Opportunities

A fishing pier, 6,600 feet of boardwalk, a 45 foot observation tower, observation platforms, canoe and kayak trails, hiking trails and the educational center offer visitors many choices. Programs, guided tours, and special events are scheduled on a regular basis.

Volunteer Opportunities

The volunteer opportunities at Weedon Island are almost endless. With the new educational center now operational, volunteers can provide valuable assistance with clerical duties or interacting with the public as an educational assistant. Cultural resource assistants with the relevant experience are sought for ongoing research assistance at the center or in the field. Guides are needed to help lead hikes and canoe trips. Those interested in physically demanding work outdoors can help blaze trails or eliminate exotics. Training is provided for all activities.

Contact Information

Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center, 1800 Weedon Drive NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33702. (727) 453-6506.

To volunteer at the Center, call (727) 453-6500

To volunteer as a research assistant, call (727) 453-6503

To volunteer as a guide, call (727) 453-6504

To volunteer for land management, call (727) 453-6522

Friends of Weedon Island, Inc., 1800 Weedon Drive NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33702 (www.fowi.org)