



PASCO COUNTY, FLORIDA

"Bringing Opportunities Home"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Pasco County Environmental Lands
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Pasco Cypress Tree receives Champion Tree designation

~Tree recognized as one of the largest cypress trees in the region ~

PASCO COUNTY, FL- After careful measuring and data confirmation with the Florida Forest Service, the Pasco County Environmental Lands Division has discovered that the first preserve purchased with Penny for Pasco funds is home to the 8th-largest bald-cypress tree in Florida.

The tree is located in the Upper Pithlachascotee River Preserve in north central Pasco County. The bald-cypress stands 128 feet tall, it is 26 feet or 313 inches around, and spreads its branches 25 feet, on average.

"Foresters who harvested much of Florida's old-growth cypress probably skipped over this tree because of a large scar, presumably from a lightning strike, on its western side," said Cristina Esposito, Program Coordinator and Land Manager for Pasco County Environmental Lands Division. "It is the largest recorded bald-cypress in Pasco County and now ranks as a Challenger to Florida's two Co-Champion bald-cypresses, both near Jasper, FL. Florida now has the most national Champion Trees of any state."

The Champion Tree Program was created by the American Forests organization to recognize the largest known tree of each species in the United States.

The tree can be reached by taking a shady boardwalk at the Upper Pithlachascotee River Preserve. The main entrance to the Preserve is located at 17135 Minneola Dr., Spring Hill 34610. To view the tree follow the signs for the boardwalk.

(The Upper Pithlachascotee River Preserve's main access is a privately maintained road that may be difficult to maneuver during times of heavy rainfall.)

For more information about Pasco County's Environmental Lands Division go to the following link: <http://www.pascocountyfl.net/Index.aspx?NID=374>

For more information about the Florida Forest Service Champion Trees go to the following link: <http://tlhfor013.doacs.state.fl.us/championtrees.public/home.mvc/Index>

2-2-2 CHAMPION CYPRESS TREE

Photos of the 8th-largest bald-cypress tree in Florida:

<http://fl-pascocounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/16615>

<http://fl-pascocounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/16614>