



Cypress Creek Conservation Area

At A Glance...

- 255 acres
- Purchased 2010
- Located in Wesley Chapel, FL
- Supports Cypress Creek, cypress swamp, freshwater marsh, and mixed hardwood-conifer

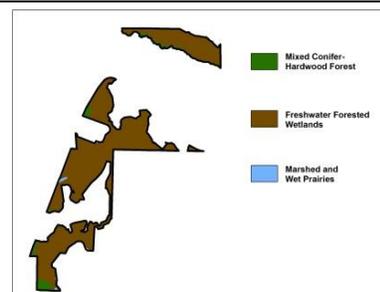


Background

Cypress Creek Conservation Area lies near the intersection of County Line Road and I-75 in Wesley Chapel. The property was acquired by the County from a group of families who had long used these swampy woods as hunting grounds. It frequently gets confused with the much larger Cypress Creek Preserve to the north, which is a Southwest Florida Water Management District property in neighboring Land O' Lakes, or with Hillsborough County's Cypress Creek Preserve to the south, just across County Line Road. By contrast, Pasco County's smaller property protects 1.3 miles of the creek and its floodplain swamp. Cypress Creek Conservation Area is managed by Pasco County Natural Resources Division.

Characteristics

Both historical and current natural communities consist of cypress swamp, freshwater marshes, mixed hardwood-conifer forest, and small areas of xeric hammock and wet prairie. Cypress Creek contains stretches of some of the only channelized blackwater stream in Pasco County.



Dominant natural communities of Cypress Creek Conservation Area

Cypress Creek Conservation Area

Shade dominates Cypress Creek Conservation Area. The creek is the color of strong tea, stained by the tannins found in oak leaves and cypress needles. High water quality comes from rich organic soils and fine sands which help filter out and bind chemicals, disease, sediments and pollution. The streambanks and broad floodplain support royal fern, red maple, laurel oaks, sabal palms, buttonbush, bald cypress and golden polypody fern. Secretive bird species such as ovenbirds, hermit thrushes, forest warblers, the American woodcock and Chuck-will's-widows abound, as well as leopard frogs, snapping turtles, white-tailed deer, brown water snakes and the Florida fern moth.



Management

Land management at Cypress Creek Conservation Area focuses on maintaining natural hydrology and hydrologic connectivity with state-managed lands to the north and neighboring county lands to the south. Conservation efforts by these different agencies have jointly protected almost twelve miles of the creek, helping to sustain safe drinking water and healthy discharge into Tampa Bay.

Value

Although wetlands were once thought of as "wastelands," we now recognize the tremendous ecological services they provide. In addition to filtering water, swamps such as Cypress Creek Conservation Area prevent erosion, produce oxygen, reduce overloaded nutrients, remove tons of carbon dioxide and air pollutants, blunt the force of strong winds and rain, and hold stormwater during heavy rainfall and release it again slowly, thereby helping to prevent flooding.

For more information:

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