

# Our Natural Places

Pinellas County

Management Brief

## King Islands Management Area

### At A Glance...

- 25 acres in size
- Located near Dunedin, FL
- Supports seagrass beds and tidal swamps



### Background

The King Islands Management Area is located in Dunedin and is situated in the Saint Joseph Sound. The two islands supported by this management area were created from spoil associated with dredging operations. This part of the county has experienced dramatic changes over the years, largely due to urbanization. In association with residential and commercial development, roads were improved, the natural coastline was

altered, and mangrove-dominated tidal swamps were filled. The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners acquired the property in 1994. This natural area is managed by the Department of Parks & Conservation Resources.

### Characteristics

Located in the Gulf of Mexico, this management area is dominated hydrologically by tidal action. Large storms regularly overwash parts of the islands and redistribute unconsolidated substrate. Elevation ranges up to several feet above sea level. The soils represent a complex mix of poorly-drained dredge material. Ruderal areas are extensive on both islands and result from human disturbance associated with the deposition of spoil material. Disturbance has encouraged the extensive spread of invasive exotic species, especially Brazilian pepper. The spread of other exotics, such as carrotwood and camphortree, has been promoted by the surrounding landscaping of nearby residential areas. The islands are known to support a wide diversity of birds

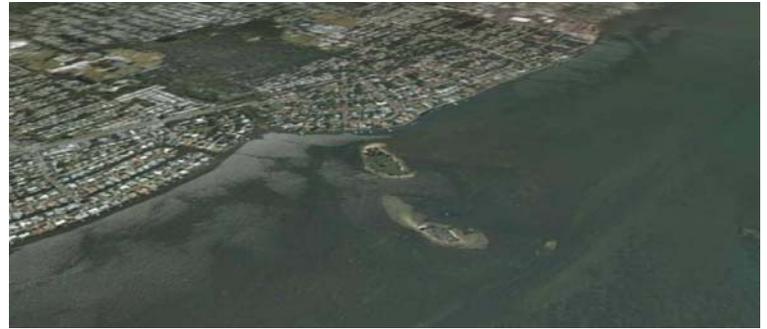


*Dominant natural communities of the King Islands Management Area.*

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including herons, egrets, and shorebirds. The management area also encompasses the surrounding waters with extensive seagrass beds and associated marine life.



*View of the King Islands Management Area.*

## Management



*Exotic species are periodically removed to maintain healthy mangroves.*

Since assuming management of this area, the county has focused its efforts on controlling exotic species and conducting biological assessments. To date, exotic control has involved only small-scale efforts, but eventually could include more extensive clearing of the heavily-disturbed parts of the islands. As with all small natural areas surrounded by development, exotics will be an on-going challenge. Periodic assessments of the biodiversity of this area, especially nesting and resting birds, are planned. Additional efforts to enhance the King Islands Management Area may include hydrologic improvements, such as creating small tidal ponds, and planting native vegetation.

## Value

The King Islands Management Area has special significance to local residents and provides economic and environmental benefits to its neighbors. However, this natural space, similar to others within Pinellas County, provides valuable services to all residents and visitors to the region. By enhancing native biodiversity, it supports countless organisms ranging from microbes to mammals. For example, a wide variety of birds feed and loaf in the area. This management area also makes important contributions to the coastal environment by protecting areas of relatively undisturbed seagrass beds that provide essential habitat to many marine organisms.



*The King Islands Management Area provides habitat to many native species.*

## For additional information:

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