

Our Natural Places

Pinellas County

Management Brief

Lake Seminole Management Area

At A Glance...

- 31 acres in size
- Located near Largo, FL
- Supports wetlands and oak hammock natural communities



Background

The Lake Seminole Management Area is located near the city of Largo in unincorporated Pinellas County between Lake Seminole and the Lake Seminole Bypass Canal. This part of the county has experienced dramatic changes over the years, largely due to hydrologic alterations and surrounding urbanization. Lake Seminole was created in the 1940's when Park Boulevard was constructed and the upper reaches of Long Bayou were isolated.

The Lake Seminole Bypass Canal was created in the late 1970's to alleviate flooding and improve water flow in the region. Aerial photographs suggest the area once supported extensive estuarine wetlands. Residential development expanded over the years resulting in the highly urbanized setting of today. 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 within the Long Bayou Drainage Basin, this management area is dominated hydrologically by the adjacent Lake Seminole and the Lake Seminole Bypass Canal. Tides play no role in the hydrology of this formerly estuarine system, which is now regulated as a freshwater system. Low-lying areas within the region flood frequently, and some inland parts of the management area are functionally part of the lake's littoral zone. Elevation ranges up to 10 feet above sea level. The soils are predominantly classified as poorly drained sands. Natural communities include flatwoods dominated by longleaf pine, slash pine, and saw palmetto, as well as bottomland forests dominated by sugarberry, red maple, wax myrtle, buttonbush, and various ferns.



Dominant natural communities of the Lake Seminole Management Area.

Lake Seminole Management Area

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Ruderal areas have resulted from human disturbances associated with canal maintenance and neighboring residences. These disturbances have encouraged the extensive spread of invasive exotic species, including Brazilian pepper, roadside lantana, wild taro, water-hyacinth, and Peruvian primrosewillow. The spread of other exotics, such as carrotwood, camphortree, and Chinese tallowtree, likely has been promoted by the surrounding landscaping of nearby residences. Rare plant species include the erect pricklypear, cinnamon fern, and royal fern.



View within the Lake Seminole Management Area.

Management



Mechanical thinning of overgrown upland areas..

Since assuming management of this area, the county has focused its efforts on controlling exotic species through the use of chemical treatment and mechanical clearing. As with all small natural areas surrounded by development, the control of exotic species will be an on-going challenge. A stormwater treatment facility is being constructed in the northern part of this management area. The southern boundary of the Lake Seminole Management Area is being secured with a fence and posted signs. Maintained areas along the canal are periodically mowed. Though natural communities within the region would have burned historically, reintroduction of fire is not currently a viable management strategy at the Lake Seminole Management Area due to its small size and proximity to residential areas. Additional efforts to restore this management area may include improving the hydrology and planting native vegetation.

Value

The Lake Seminole Management Area has 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 variety of wading birds, small mammals, and turtles utilize this area. This management area also makes important contributions to the region's hydrology by improving the quality of surface water and promoting the recharge of groundwater.



The Lake Seminole Management Area provides habitat to many native species.

For additional information:

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