

Cockroach Bay

AQUATIC PRESERVE

“Because of its pristine condition, Cockroach Bay has become established as Tampa Bay’s premier estuarine outdoor classroom for generations of students of all ages.”
Randy Runnels, Aquatic Preserve Manager

Key Accomplishments

- Works with other agencies to identify sensitive coastal lands and to encourage their acquisition for conservation
- Worked with Hillsborough County and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to reduce illegal gill netting and other inappropriate activities
- Have worked with a variety of partners to remove invasive exotic plants from native plant communities



Aerial view of Cockroach Bay

Project Spotlight

Reclaiming Land as Habitat

Over the past century, much of the land adjacent to the Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve was either farmed or quarried for shell. In recent years, the Southwest Florida Water Management District has led a variety of agencies, organizations and individuals in the



Recently-planted marsh grasses take hold in a wetland restoration site

conversion of fallow farm fields and shell pits into a mosaic of coastal habitats. The wetlands and other habitats that result will be instrumental in “polishing” runoff from inland agricultural and industrial operations.

Because projects like this require major site alterations, and because they are often near sensitive natural habitat, resource protection becomes an especially important aspect of planning and construction. The Tampa Bay Aquatic Preserves Program draws upon knowledge of site conditions and ecosystem function to help ensure that the maximum net benefit to the environment is achieved.

Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve

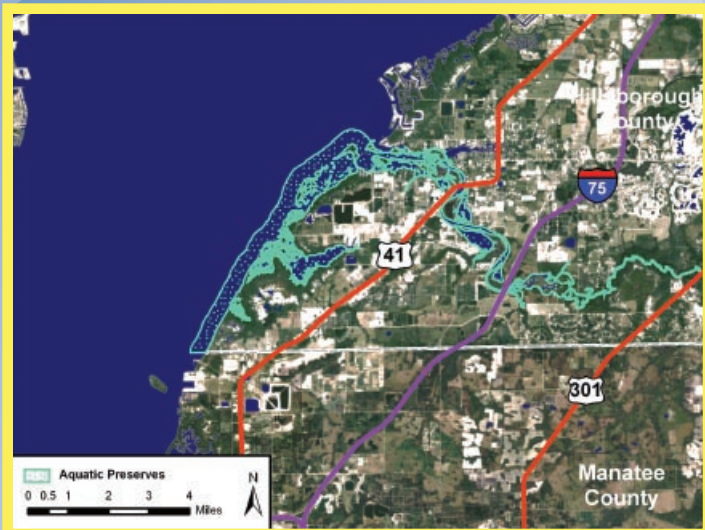


Location:

Hillsborough County

Acreege:

4,500 acres of submerged lands



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Mangrove forests, oyster reefs and seagrass beds support abundant wildlife



A "sand collar" of eggs produced by a moon snail will yield a new generation of marine life



Kayaks are a popular means of navigating shallow waters in search of big gamefish

Aquatic Preserve Facts:

- The name "Cockroach Bay" may have originated with early explorers who observed numerous horseshoe crabs in the area.
- This is the only aquatic preserve in Florida in which the submerged land of the preserve is not state-owned. The submerged lands are owned by Hillsborough Port Authority.
- The preserve includes two paddling trails that wind through mangrove labyrinths.
- Numerous mangrove islands provide nursery areas for snook, red drum, and other game fish.
- Submerged habitats include seagrass beds, hardbottom, and oyster reefs.
- Archaeological sites indicate the importance of this area to pre-Columbian Native Americans.



Sunset doesn't end the enjoyment of this exceptional area



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