

Terra Ceia

AQUATIC PRESERVE

“Driving across the Skyway from Pinellas County to Terra Ceia is like taking a step back in time. In sharp contrast to Tampa Bay’s urban areas, the natural, historical and cultural resources of Terra Ceia give us a glimpse of Florida’s past that many are working to restore and preserve.”

Randy Runnels, Aquatic Preserve Manager

Key Accomplishments

- Partnered with United States Geological Survey (USGS), local colleges and other institutions to continue a 5-year, interdisciplinary research program. This program integrates studies of historical geology, hydrology, wildlife use and a number of other areas of scientific inquiry.
- Working with Southwest Florida Water Management District and USGS has established a baseline monitoring and hydrological program that will give valuable information on the likely effects of proposed habitat restoration on existing habitats.
- Established two new automated water quality monitoring stations, with web-accessible, nearly real-time data, that may serve as a prototype for similar future stations around the state.



Red and black mangroves on Mariposa Key

Project Spotlight

Water Quality Monitoring

In a pilot project to improve access to water quality data, one of the dataloggers used to monitor water in the preserve has been



Water quality monitoring and telemetry station

fitted with telemetry equipment. This allows resource managers and citizens to look at water quality measurements on the internet almost as soon as they are made. By linking to a website through Terra Ceia’s webpage, anyone can see changes in oxygen, salinity, acidity, tide level, turbidity, and other water

properties at fifteen minute intervals. In the future, similar stations may form a larger coastal monitoring network across Florida and the nation. Because of modern technology, instruments that used to fill a laboratory now fit in a small cylinder.

Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve



Location:

Manatee County

Acreage:

22,000 acres of sovereign submerged lands



Local Contact:

Randy Runnels
Aquatic Preserve Manager
130 Terra Ceia Road
Terra Ceia, FL 34250
(941)721-2068
www.aquaticpreserves.org



Sponges play a valuable role in filtering particles out of the bay.



Newer technologies allow researchers to identify bats without handling them and causing stress



A coral head surrounded by algae attest to the preserve's biological productivity and diversity.

Aquatic Preserve Facts:

- The preserve shoreline is dominated by mangroves and numerous mangrove islands.
- Submerged habitats include oyster bars and seagrass beds. Areas of hardbottom habitat are colonized by hard and soft coral species.
- Tidal creeks, sinkholes and other geological features have added to the complexity of the Terra Ceia shoreline.
- At least five species of bats forage for insects over the waters in Terra Ceia. A single bat can eat thousands of insects in one evening.
- White pelicans and other migratory birds species arrive from thousands of miles away during their southward winter migrations.
- Over 70% of commercially important fish and shellfish species rely on estuaries at some stage of their lives.



Kayakers among the many mangrove channels

