

Our Natural Places

Pinellas County

Management Brief

Lake Tarpon West Management Area

At A Glance...

- 3 acres in size
- Located near Palm Harbor, FL
- Supports dome swamps and floodplain marshes



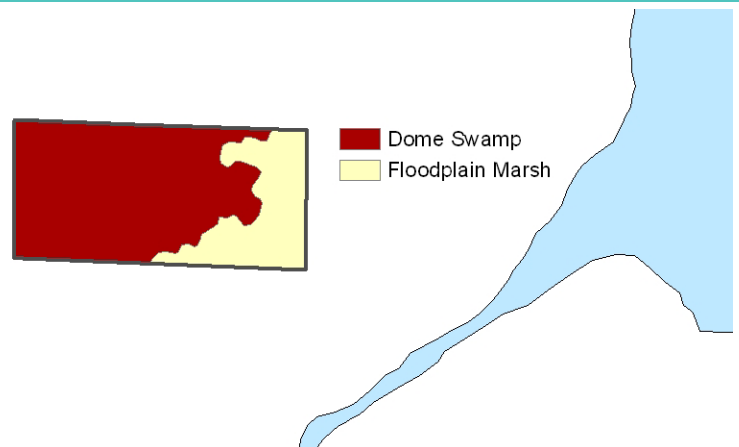
Background

The Lake Tarpon West Management Area is located in the Palm Harbor area of unincorporated Pinellas County just west of Lake Tarpon. Historic aerial photographs show that, while the surrounding area has experienced dramatic urbanization, this property has remained relatively undisturbed. While many wetlands in the region were drained and filled, the cypress dome swamp associated with this management area has

remained largely intact. The management area also protects floodplain marshes associated with Lake Tarpon. The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners acquired the property in 1992. This natural area is managed by the Department of Parks & Conservation Resources.

Characteristics

Located within the Lake Tarpon Drainage Basin, this management area is dominated hydrologically by surficial runoff and nearby Lake Tarpon. Elevation ranges up to 10 feet above sea level, with low-lying areas flooded frequently. The soils are predominantly classified as frequently-flooded mucks and fine sands. The dominant natural community supported is dome swamp with associated swamp tupelo, dahoon holly, pond cypress, swamp bay, and loblolly bay. The eastern side of the management area is comprised of floodplain marsh with associated sawgrass, buttonbush, and maidencane. These natural communities support a diverse array of native wildlife, including frogs, snakes, American alligators, raccoon, river otter, and

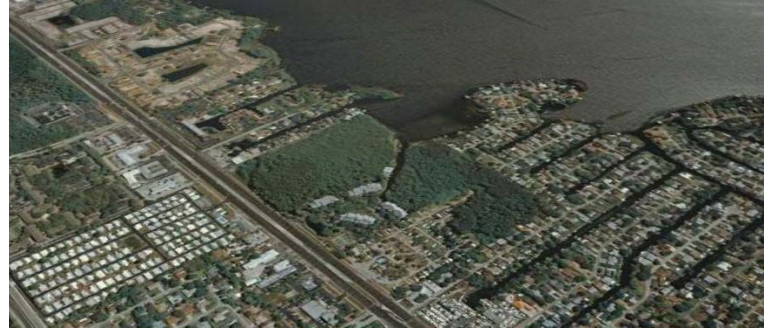


Dominant natural communities of the Lake Tarpon West Management Area.

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numerous species of birds. Some disturbance has resulted from neighboring residences, and this has encouraged the spread of invasive exotic species such as air-potato, skunkvine, Chinese tallotree, carrotwood, and guineagrass.



View of the Lake Tarpon West Management Area.

Management

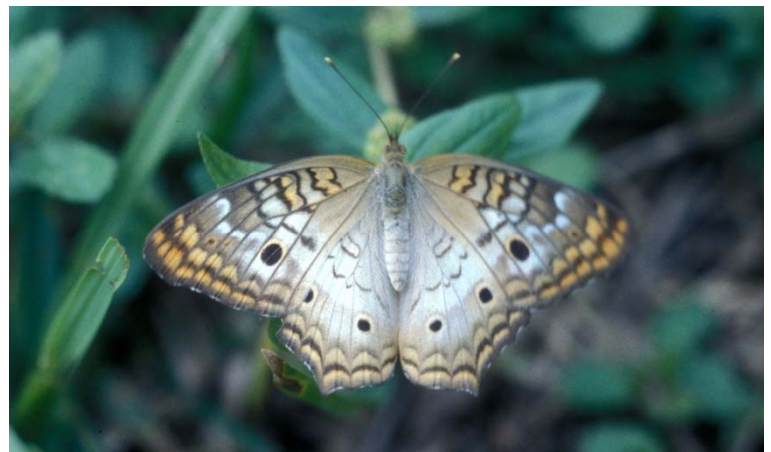


Exotic species are periodically removed from cypress dome swamps.

Since assuming management of this area, the county has focused its efforts on controlling exotic species and conducting biological assessments. To date, relatively small-scale efforts have been used to control exotics, but eventually more extensive clearing may be conducted along the heavily-invaded borders of the property. 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 wetland dependent species, are planned. Additional efforts to enhance the Lake Tarpon West Management Area may include conducting hydrologic improvements and planting native vegetation.

Value

The Lake Tarpon West 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 variety of birds, reptiles, and amphibians are known to utilize the area. This management area also makes important contributions to the region's hydrology by improving the quality of surface water, promoting the recharge of groundwater, and controlling floodwaters.



The Lake Tarpon West Management Area provides habitat to many native species.

For additional information:

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