Welcome to Hillsborough County Nature Preserves

Hillsborough County Conservation & Environmental Lands Management oversees 63,000 acres of preserved land that protects wildlife habitat and offers nature-based recreation. Additionally, these lands provide flood protection, improve air quality, and naturally filter water.

Nature preserves are open daily from sunrise to sunset, unless posted otherwise.

The Nature Preserve Experience
Be Prepared. Be Safe.

Hillsborough County Nature Preserves provide a primitive wilderness experience. On a preserve, development is kept to a minimum to protect natural areas and wildlife. Most nature preserve access points have small, unpaved parking lots for a trailhead and no amenities other than a small kiosk to provide trail information. In most cases, they do not have restrooms or running water available. Trails are unpaved, may be underwater and/or muddy, contain limited trail markers, may consist of rough terrain, and may expose trail users to extreme environmental conditions. When visiting a nature preserve always bring:
1. The correct trail map for your destination
2. A compass or GPS
3. Plenty of drinking water
4. Appropriate shoes
5. Sun protection

Using Blazes to Guide Your Way

A trail blaze is colored paint--usually red, blue, or yellow--marked on posts or trees that help to guide you in the proper direction while hiking or horseback riding. Whenever you come to an intersection, look ahead in each direction for the colored blaze of the trail you are on and continue in that direction. Even though a trail may be marked with blazes, you should still always carry a map.

Explore Hillsborough County’s Wild Side

ELAPP Nature Preserves

The Jan K. Platt Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program (ELAPP) is a voluntary program established for the purpose of identifying, acquiring, preserving and protecting environmentally-sensitive lands within Hillsborough County. It is a citizen-based program with volunteer committees involved in every key aspect of the process. Through 2019, the program had acquired more than 63,000 acres of conservation land. Hillsborough County residents and visitors can access much of this protected land for passive recreation, such as hiking, wildlife viewing, birdwatching, fishing, paddling, and horseback riding.
NATURE PRESERVES

1a. Alafia River Corridor Nature Preserve – North Entrance
9256 South County Road 39, Plant City
Acreage: 4,986, Miles of trail: 8

1b. Alafia River Corridor Nature Preserve – South Entrance
931 Old Welcome Road, Lithia
Miles of trail: 9

2. Alafia Scrub Nature Preserve
10243 Elbow Bend Road, Riverview
Acreage: 4,986, Miles of trail: 8

3. Alderman’s Ford Nature Preserve
8951 Turkey Creek Road, Plant City
Acreage: 983, Miles of trail: 2.5

4. Apollo Beach Nature Preserve
6767 Surfside Blvd., Apollo Beach
Acreage: 58, Miles of trail: 0.02

5. Bahia Beach Nature Preserve
2513 W. Shell Point Road, Ruskin
Miles of trail: 1

6. Balm Boyette Scrub Nature Preserve
15102 County Road 672, Wimauma
Acreage: 4,871, Miles of trail: 31

7. Bell Creek Nature Preserve
10560 McNallen Road, Riverview
Acreage: 477, Miles of trail: 5

8. Blackwater Creek Nature Preserve
2469 Patroviso Road, Plant City
Acreage: 2,161, Miles of trail: 6

9a. Brooker Creek Headwaters Nature Preserve*
18102 Ramblewood Road, Odessa
Acreage: 1,120, Miles of trail: 5

9b. Brooker Creek Headwaters Nature Preserve*
7020 Lutz Lake Fern Road, Odessa
Miles of trail: 5

10. Camp Bayou Nature Preserve
4140 24th St. S.E., Ruskin
Acreage: 160, Miles of trail: 2

11. Cockroach Bay Nature Preserve
3839 Gulf City Road, Ruskin
Acreage: 995, Miles of trail: 7

12. Cockroach Creek Nature Preserve
4110 Valroy Road, Ruskin
Acreage: 550, Miles of trail: 3

13. Cypress Creek Nature Preserve
18000 Lizard’s Tail Road, Tampa
Acreage: 2,685, Miles of trail: 3

14. Diamondback Nature Preserve
5602 W. Gray St., Tampa
Acreage: 500, Miles of trail: 0.12

15. Eiker Nature Preserve
11002 Eiker Road, Gibsonton
Acreage: 87, Miles of trail: 1

16a. Fish Hawk Creek Nature Preserve – North Entrance**
3931 Lithia Springs Road, Lithia
Acreage: 2,549, Miles of trail: 2

16b. Fish Hawk Creek Nature Preserve – South Entrance
16640 Boyette Road, Riverview
Miles of trail: 2

17. Fred P Idah Schulz Nature Preserve
5906 Kracker Ave., Gibsonton
Acreage: 154, Miles of trail: 2

18. Golden Aster Scrub Nature Preserve
12181 East Bay Road, Gibsonton
Acreage: 1,181, Miles of trail: 3

19. Lake Dan Nature Preserve**
19116 Huckavalle Road, Odessa
Acreage: 1,170, Miles of trail: 6

20. Lake Frances Nature Preserve***
3540 East Knights Griffin Road, Plant City
Acreage: 1,664, Miles of trail: 6

21a. Little Manatee River Corridor Nature Preserve – West Entrance
2510 Leonard Lee Road, Wimauma
Acreage: 8,164, Miles of trail: 4

21b. Little Manatee River Corridor Nature Preserve – East Entrance
2608 S. County Road 579, Wimauma
Miles of trail: 3

22. Lower Green Swamp Nature Preserve
3540 East Knights Griffin Road, Plant City
Acreage: 12,837, Miles of trail: 20

23. Rhodine Scrub Nature Preserve****
12108 Rhodine Road, Riverview
Acreage: 500, Miles of trail: 3

24. Rocky Creek Trails Nature Preserve****
7415 Manhattan Drive, Tampa
Acreage: 16, Miles of trail: 0.45

25. Town ‘N Country Nature Preserve******
8304 Montague St., Tampa
Acreage: 126, Miles of trail: 1

26. Triple Creek Nature Preserve
13305 Balm Boyette Road, Riverview
Acreage: 904, Miles of trail: 3

27. Violet Cury Nature Preserve
1892 Sinclair Hills Road, Lutz
Acreage: 161, Miles of trail: 2

28. Wolf Branch Nature Preserve
481 Villemaire Road, Apollo Beach
Acreage: 1,417, Miles of trail: 2

* The Brooker Creek Headwaters Nature Preserve Lutz Lake Fern access point shares a parking lot with the Upper Tampa Bay Trail. There is a $2 per vehicle parking fee.
** The parking lot for the Fish Hawk Creek Nature Preserve North is located inside Lithia Springs Conservation Park. There is a $2 per vehicle entry fee.
*** Horse trail parking to access the Lake Frances trail system is located at the Lake Frances entrance, 12100 Tarpon Springs Road. Hours for Lake Dan and Lake Frances vary by season. Please check the website for current preserve hours.
**** A $2 per vehicle parking fee applies.
***** Parking lot is located in Steven J. Wortham Park.
****** Parking lot is located along the Upper Tampa Bay Trail at 7409 Montague Street.

Trail distances are estimates. Please review the trail map to determine the distance of your planned trip.