

Habitats along the North Paddling Trail

Paddlers leaving the launch site will follow a narrow tunnel through the mangroves, which is actually a mosquito ditch.

These man-made ditches were originally dug to create a constant flow of water in and out of the mangrove swamps with the rise and fall of the tides. This drainage flow

eliminated standing water within the mangrove swamps, thereby reducing favorable conditions for mosquito larvae to develop.

The trees enclosing this narrow tunnel are red mangroves. The large arching roots of the red mangrove are called prop roots.

They stabilize the shoreline and provide essential habitat to animals above and below the waterline. A close look at the roots will reveal schools of small fish swimming below and dozens of small mangrove crabs crawling above.

The trail continues, gradually opening into wider channels. Here you are paddling along the northern boundary of Weedon Island Preserve. This area provides a unique opportunity to observe local wildlife. The mangrove swamps and islands, along with the vast shallow sand flats, provide valuable habitat for a variety of animals. Wading birds, such as the white ibis and great blue heron, are commonly seen feeding along the flats. Schools of mullet and other fish, along with cow-nosed rays, patrol the shallow waters for food. Countless numbers of shrimp, crabs, and marine worms live in the sandy sediments.

As you get closer to the end of the trail at Gandy Beach, evidence of urban coastal development begins. Homes, docks and marinas can be seen along the northern shore of the trail. The interface of our natural environments with urban areas is inevitable and these areas are closely monitored to allow County residents to coexist with our natural surroundings with as little impact as possible.

Hours

Weedon Island Preserve is open seven days a week from dawn to dusk. Paddlers should return to the launch site and parking area before dusk. No overnight parking is allowed. The Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.

Weedon Island Preserve

For additional information, please contact us:

General Information: (727) 453-6500

Guided Outing Reservations: (727) 453-6506

Weedon Island Preserve
Cultural and Natural History Center
1800 Weedon Drive NE
St. Petersburg, FL 33702



www.pinellascounty.org/environment

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WEEDON ISLAND PRESERVE

North Paddling Trail

Situated in Old Tampa Bay, Weedon Island Preserve is approximately 3,100 acres of natural habitats including mangrove swamps, intertidal flats and pine flatwood uplands. The North Paddling Trail is just one of two paddling trails that will take you through lush mangroves and over open shallow waters and productive seagrass beds. Come experience "A Place To Remember."



North Paddling Trail

- The parking area and launch site for the North Paddling Trail are located on the east side of San Martin Boulevard approximately 1/2 mile north of the Preserve's entrance.
- The North Paddling Trail is approximately 2 miles long and takes about 1 1/2 hours to complete.
- Numbered markers are strategically located along the trail to help paddlers orient themselves.
- Please check a tide chart before venturing out. This trail is shallow and it is best paddled with a mid to high tide.
- Fishing is allowed - State and Federal fishing regulations apply.
- Please properly dispose of or take your trash with you.

Paddling Safety Tips...

- Always use an approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD).
- Bring plenty of water, even on cool days.
- Protect yourself from the sun using sunscreen and a hat, even on overcast days.
- Insects go with the territory! Insect repellent and lightweight long sleeved shirts help reduce their biting opportunities.
- Consult your compass often.

About the Preserve...

Weedon Island Preserve is managed by Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management's Environmental Lands Division. The Preserve, and its various public recreation opportunities, is possible through the continued support of the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners and the citizens of Pinellas County.

Other public use opportunities...

While you are here, please visit the Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center, an education facility located in the heart of the Preserve. Also, enjoy our fishing pier, elevated boardwalk with an observation tower and various hiking trails. Public restrooms are located at both the Center and the fishing pier.

