

Our Natural Places

Pinellas County

Management Brief

Travatine Island Management Area

At A Glance...

- 47 acres in size
- Located near Seminole, FL
- Supports tidal swamps, salterns, and other natural communities



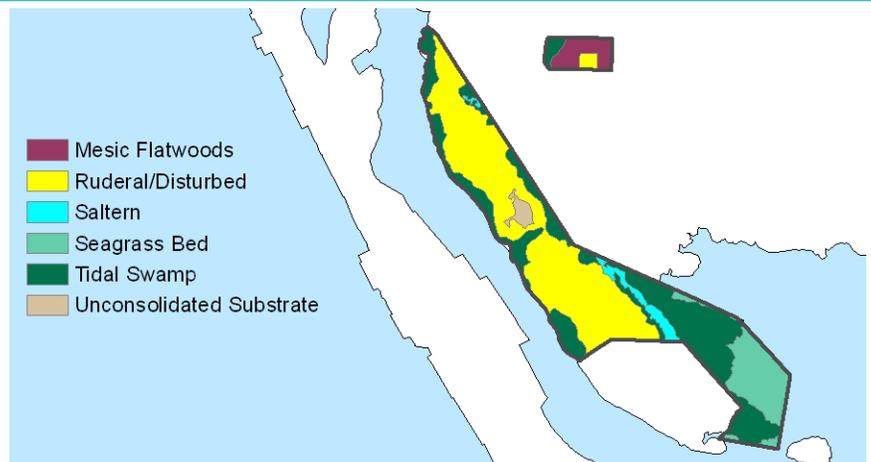
Background

The Travatine Island Management Area is located near the city of Seminole, adjacent to the Intracoastal Waterway and Boca Ciega Bay. This part of the county has experienced dramatic changes over the years due to urbanization. Though the western edge of the island has expanded over the years due to the deposition of spoil material associated with channel maintenance, historic aerial photographs indicate that the salterns

and tidal swamps to the south were present prior to these disturbances. Similar to surrounding areas, this property was slated for development but was protected when attempts to construct a causeway to the island failed. The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners acquired the property in 1989. This natural area is managed by the Department of Parks & Conservation Resources.

Characteristics

Located within the Pinellas-Anclote River Basin, this management area is dominated hydrologically by the Intracoastal Waterway and surrounding waters. Much of the site is influenced by tides, and lower-lying areas are permanently inundated. Dredged canals for mosquito control are extensive throughout the tidal swamp in the northern half of the island, but not in the southeastern portion. Elevation ranges up to 25 feet above sea level, though higher elevations are due primarily to the deposition of dredged material. The soils represent a complex mix of poorly-drained spoils. The main island is heavily disturbed and is dominated by exotic species such as Brazilian pepper, Australian-pine, punktree, lantana, and Washington fan



Dominant natural communities of the Travatine Island Management Area.

Travatine Island Management Area

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palm. However, the area also supports a healthy saltern, a hypersaline community type associated with evaporated seawater. This unique 3-acre area contains such plants as saltwort, whisk-fern, perennial glasswort, slender seapurslane, and seaside goldenrod.



View within the Travatine Island Management Area.

Management



Overgrown areas will be mechanically thinned.

Since assuming management of this area, the county has focused its efforts on controlling exotic species and conducting biological assessments. To date, exotic control has consisted of small-scale efforts, but eventually more extensive clearing could be conducted along the heavily disturbed ridges of the island. As with all small natural areas surrounded by development, exotics will be an on-going challenge. Reintroduction of fire to the naturally pyrogenic communities of this area is not currently a viable management strategy, though as exotic vegetation is removed this option will be explored. Additional efforts may include hydrologic improvements, such as the creation of tidal ponds to support fisheries, and planting native vegetation.

Value

The Travatine Island 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 wide variety of wading birds feed and loaf in the estuaries and salterns. This management area also makes important contributions to the coastal environment by protecting areas of relatively undisturbed mangrove swamp and seagrass beds, habitats essential to many marine organisms.



The Travatine Island Management Area supports many native species.

For additional information:

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