

WALL SPRINGS COASTAL ADDITIONS I, II, & III

Wall Springs Coastal Additions I, II, & III, also colloquially known as the McMullen Property, add approximately 125 acres to the existing approximately 84-acre Wall Springs Park. Wall Springs Park is a coastal property located in northwestern Pinellas County in unincorporated Palm Harbor, and was purchased by Pinellas County's Board of County Commissioners in 1989 to preserve its cultural and ecological resources. The combined property now exceeds 200 acres.

Wall Springs formerly was the site of a historically popular bathing/swimming attraction. A system of underground caves associated with this natural spring harbor unique natural and cultural resources. Evidence of occupation of this site by indigenous peoples is widespread and long term. Because of its location on the Gulf of Mexico and its varied topography, the Park encompasses a wide variety of native habitats and associated plant and animal life. Efforts were made in developing the site plan for the Park to put development in the already disturbed areas and to preserve the best natural areas. This methodology will continue with the passive development of the Coastal Additions. The primary purpose for acquiring the Coastal Additions was to preserve these ecologically significant and sensitive areas and to provide passive public access while also protecting the natural resources.

The Coastal Additions collectively contain beautiful natural ecosystems. These include sandhill, xeric scrub, mangrove forest, freshwater wetlands, pine flatwoods and salt marsh. To date 27 Federally and/or State protected species, floral and faunal, have been documented on the property. A total of 320 native plants have been identified on the Coastal Additions properties. The Coastal Additions have already undergone invasive plant control and habitat restoration as a part of the goal of natural communities restoration and protection. An archeological assessment was also completed, with no major findings.

In order to protect the exceptional and environmentally sensitive natural resources, a minimum of structural projects are planned for the Coastal Additions. Conceptual plans include hiking trails, canoe/kayak access and trails, road and parking access, restrooms, picnic shelters and an observation platform. A stakeholders meeting in January 2008 will again provide the opportunity for public input as the conceptual plan is finalized. Then the formal process of design/engineering and permitting will begin with an estimated late 2009 timeframe for commencement of construction.

WALL SPRINGS PARK SUMMARY:

- 1989 Approximately 84 acres acquired and named Wall Springs Park after the spring on the property.
- 2000 Construction of Wall Springs Park begun.
- 2001 Part of Wall Springs Park opened to the public.
- 2001 Coastal Addition I acquired in October with grant funding assistance from Florida Communities Trust (FCT) under the Florida Forever (FF) program.
- 2002 Coastal Addition II acquired in July with grant funding assistance from FF.
- 2003 Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart, Inc. developed Parks System Master Planning Project that included Wall Springs Park.
- 2004 Public Information Meeting held to provide public opportunity for input into park conceptual plan.
- 2005 Archeological assessment completed and approved by the Florida Division of Historic Resources.
- 2005 Remaining part of original Wall Springs Park property opened to the public.
- 2005 Coastal Addition III acquired in December with grant funding assistance from FF.
- 2006 Management Plan inclusive of most recent acquisition approved by FCT.
- 2007 Consultant TBE Group, Inc. selected for Coastal Additions design.
- 2008 Stakeholders meeting to provide public opportunity for input into park plan.
- 2009 Estimated construction commencement for Coastal Additions.