

4 *Natural Reservations*

Natural reservations are defined by Rule 9J-5, F.A.C., as “areas designated for conservation purposes, and operated by contractual agreement with or managed by a federal, state, regional or local government or non-profit agency such as national parks, state parks, lands purchased under the Save Our Coast, Conservation and Recreation Lands or Save Our Rivers programs, sanctuaries, preserves, monuments, archaeological sites, historic sites, wildlife management areas, national seashores, and Outstanding Florida Waters. This definition does not include privately owned land managed by a state agency on either a voluntary or a short-term contractual basis.

For purposes of the *Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Element*, natural reservations are important in that they inherently designate areas of open space. At over 3,300 people per square mile, Pinellas County is Florida’s most densely populated county. An earnest, viable system of open space areas is imperative toward the continued success and well-being of the County and those living and visiting here. Open space lends character and a sense of attractiveness to the community and provides residents with respite from the rigors and clamor of the urban environment. In addition, open space areas are often associated with recreational lands and/or areas of environmental sensitivity or importance. See the *Natural Resources Conservation and Management Element* for a more detailed discussion on environmentally protected areas.

Currently, there are approximately 48,186 acres of natural reservations in Pinellas County, including the submerged land under the Outstanding Florida Waters of the Pinellas and Boca Ciega Aquatic Preserves. Protected submerged land is important in the open space context because it provides uninterrupted views and sweeping open vistas. Subtracting submerged lands, there are still over 17,700 acres of natural reservations in the County. This equates to over ten percent of the County’s overall gross acreage. When municipal and private recreation sites are considered, there are over 30,000 acres, or 17 percent, of the County which is being utilized in some form of recreational or open space context. This does not include additional acreage that has been removed from potential development due to its designation as Preservation, Preservation-Resource Management, or Recreation/Open Space on the Future Land Use Map. Please refer to **Table 8** on the following page for a listing of the existing natural reservations in Pinellas County.

At over 8,000 acres, the Brooker Creek Preserve is Pinellas County’s largest natural reservation



**TABLE 8
EXISTING NATURAL RESERVATIONS IN PINELLAS COUNTY**

NATURAL RESERVATION	ACREAGE
FEDERAL (Pinellas National Wildlife Refuge)	
Little Bird Key	1
Mule Key	3
Listen Key	4
Whale Key	5
Jackass Key	6
Indian Key	70
Tarpon Key	91
Total	180
STATE OF FLORIDA	
Anclote Key State Preserve*	5,301
Caladesi Island State Park*	2,470
Honeymoon Island State Recreation Area*	2,810
Pinellas County & Boca Ciega Aquatic Preserve*	22,000
Total	32,581
PINELLAS COUNTY	
Brooker Creek Preserve	8,285
Pinellas County	6,500
Progress Energy	173
SWFWMD	1,612
Weedon Island Preserve	3,678
Pinellas County	115
State of Florida	3,230
Progress Energy	333
Other Environmental Lands	2,577
Total	14,540
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT	
Alligator Creek	43
Clam Bayou	68
Jerry Lake	80
Joe's Creek	16
Lake Tarpon Outfall Canal	89
Lake Tarpon Sink Enclosure	6
Sawgrass Lake	390
Total	692
OTHER MANAGED	
Mobbly Bayou (City of Oldsmar)	189
Cooper's Point (City of Clearwater)	1
Total	190
TOTAL FOR ALL	48,184

*Includes submerged land.

Source: Pinellas County Planning Dept. and Dept. of Environmental Management, 2006