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Pinellas County Parks and Recreation Facilities

The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners has historically focused on providing resource-based regional parks and open space throughout the County. Today, the County continues to provide resource-based parkland to all county residents, but also plans countywide for providing multi-use trails, beach access parks, boat ramp facilities, and a number of smaller, neighborhood ‘pocket’ parks. A more detailed discussion about each category of these lands and facilities follows below.

RESOURCE-BASED REGIONAL PARKS

The following discussion describes each of the County’s resource-based regional parks. **Table 1** identifies and sums the acreages and latest attendance figures of the parks; **Figure 1** depicts the location of each park, and **Table A-1** in **Appendix A** inventories the amenities and facilities available at each park.

TABLE 1
PINELLAS COUNTY RESOURCE-BASED REGIONAL PARKS

Resource-Based Regional Park	Acreage	Attendance (FY 05-06)
A.L. Anderson Park	136	694,062
Boca Ciega Millennium Park	187	369,573
John Chesnut., Sr. Park	255	926,840
Fort DeSoto Park	1,136	3,179,540
Fred Howard Park	155	2,132,469
Lake Seminole Park	259	1,028,572
Philippe Park	122	936,047
Ridgecrest Park	23	211,081
Sand Key Park ¹	95	1,145,312
Sawgrass Lake Park ²	390	382,827
John S. Taylor Park	157	681,273
Wall Springs Park	200	359,408
Walsingham Park	354	986,594
War Veterans’ Memorial Park	122	624,008
Total	3,591	13,657,606

Sources: Pinellas County Planning Department and Pinellas County Department of Culture, Education and Leisure, 2006.

¹ Includes 5 acres owned by the City of Clearwater

² Land Owned by SWFWMD

FIGURE 1
PINELLAS COUNTY RESOURCE-BASED REGIONAL PARKS

A. L. Anderson Park - 39699 U.S. Highway 19, Tarpon Springs

The first land for this park was acquired in 1964, with the park opening and dedication held on May 21, 1966. Subsequent acquisitions to the north and south along Lake Tarpon have enlarged the park to 136 acres. The most recently improved area is a 30-acre parcel acquired in 1973 on the south side of the park. Access to this area is gained by means of a road leading from the main park road to an overpass that bridges Tookes Road. It was formally opened to the public on June 3, 1982.

This park serves the north county area and offers individual and group picnicking facilities, play equipment, and a boat launching facility. The park is characterized by hilly terrain, wooded areas, and beautiful vistas overlooking Salmon Bay and Lake Tarpon. A distinctive arrangement of picnic pads, elevated boardwalk, and a nature trail that is 478 linear feet long has been developed among the cypress trees along the Salmon Bay shoreline.

Boca Ciega Millennium Park - 6999 125th St. N, Seminole

Boca Ciega Millennium Park was dedicated April 7, 2001. At the entrance to the 184.6-acre park is the Pinellas County Millennium Time Capsule with more than 100 items secured for future generations to find. For now, there is plenty of natural beauty for residents and visitors to discover. Park features include fishing access to the Bay, a canoe launch, a 1.5-acre Paw Playground, a 35-foot observation tower, a 0.25-mile nature trail, boardwalks, a playground, restrooms, picnic shelters and bicycle/pedestrian paths. Five ponds were added to treat stormwater runoff and hydrate the wetland areas before the runoff reaches Boca Ciega Bay.



The park has been recognized by the Florida Native Plant Society for its use of natives in landscaping. Boca Ciega's natural communities include pine flatwoods, coastal oak hammock, mangrove swamp, salt marsh, bay head and wetlands. A wide variety of Florida vegetation and wildlife highlights Boca Ciega Millennium Park's delightful environs. The park is a stop on the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's "Great Florida Birding Trail". You can view shore birds, wading birds, birds of prey, upland birds & waterfowl.

John Chesnut, Sr. Park - 2200 East Lake Road, Palm Harbor

John Chesnut Sr. Park was picture built in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It covers approximately 255 acres and is conveniently located near the communities of Palm Harbor and Tarpon Springs, serving north Pinellas County. It is situated immediately adjacent to Lake Tarpon. The park has 13 picnic shelters that may be reserved 365 days per year, up to one year in advance. There is a boat ramp with six lanes and parking spaces for vehicles with trailers. A fishing pier is available, however a freshwater license may be required (inquire with the Tax collector's office.) The park has grills and picnic tables throughout the grounds, two playgrounds, horseshoe pits, a beach volleyball court, a softball field, water fountains, and restrooms. A Paw Playground was added in 2003, an important addition for over 900,000 visitors.



This park is home to various wildlife species. Raccoons, alligators, various waterfowl, hawks, vultures, tortoises/turtles, snakes, etc. reside in this park, and provide many pleasant hours for nature enthusiasts and families. Lake Tarpon, immediately adjacent to the park, is five miles long and one mile wide, and is generally 8-12 feet deep. This park is a popular launching site for several fishing tournaments each year. Lake Tarpon can accommodate boats with combustion engines, and provides great fun for water skiers and jet skiers. Additionally, a canoe trail is available as a landlocked waterway connected to an interior lake, but can only accommodate non-combustion engines. For those who prefer sports, a softball field and a beach volleyball court are available first come, first served – bring your own equipment. There are three nature trails, each approximately 3,000 feet in length. The North Trail begins at Shelter #10, running through a cypress swamp to the canoe trail – it does not loop back. The Peggy Park Trail features a self-guided walk with brochure. The elevated boardwalk runs along the boat ramp, leading to an elevated lookout tower for a scenic overview of Lake Tarpon. Swimming is prohibited inside the park.

Eagle Lake Park (under development) – Keene Road and Belleair Road, Largo

Eagle Lake Park will soon become the County's newest resource-based regional park. Centrally located in north Largo along Keene Road, it encompasses 156 acres of wooded parkland, open fields and freshwater ponds. It is also the site of a historic orange grove. An interpretive farmstead will help demonstrate how life was once like in the area, bringing a unique historical aspect to the park. Eagle Lake Park is scheduled to open by 2010.

Fort De Soto Park - 3500 Pinellas Bayway S, Tierra Verde

As the largest park in the Pinellas County park system, Fort De Soto is comprised of five islands or keys. Madelaine Key, St. Jean Key, St. Christopher Key, Bonne Fortune Key, and the main island, Mullet Key, are connected by State Highway 679. Together the keys total over 1,000 acres with more than seven miles of beach frontage and several miles of waterfront along Mullet Key Bayou. The park has two designated swimming beaches, East Beach on Tampa Bay and North Beach on the Gulf of Mexico. In 2005, North Beach was named the #1 rated beach in the nation! St. Jean and St. Christopher Keys are designed to accommodate the overnight camper, while Madelaine Key contains the boat launching facility.



The park first opened on December 21, 1962, when the State toll road named the Pinellas Bayway was completed. It was dedicated May 11, 1963, in perpetuity as a public park. Recent annual park attendance numbers surpass three million visitors.

The battery of 12-inch mortars, located at the fort for which the park was named, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on February 7, 1978. Adding to the historical interest at Fort De Soto, two British breech-loading, rapid-fire cannons from 1890 vintage were installed in March 1982.

Complementing the park's natural and historic features are: an 800 foot long boat launching facility with five floating docks; a 235-acre site family camping area including picnic tables, grills, water, electricity, washing machines, dryers, sanitary disposal stations, modern restrooms, showers, play areas and a camp store; two large swim centers and a food

concession area located at the North Beach Swim Center; two fishing piers – one that is 500-foot long on Tampa Bay and one that is 1,000-foot long on the Gulf of Mexico. Each pier has a food and bait concession. Additionally, there are 14 large group picnic shelters incorporating award-winning aesthetic and functional design features, 20 storm-resistant public restroom buildings featured in several national publications, a snack bar/souvenir shop offering views of the Gulf of Mexico, and over seven miles of waterfront including three miles of white sand. A 4.2-mile recreational trail was completed in April 1994. The 12-foot wide asphalt trail connects the campground with the North and East Beach Swim Center and the historic fort.

From early-March through mid-May, thousands of birds migrate across the Gulf of Mexico. During this time, birds pass through the area, with the heaviest migration usually around the second week of April. Fort De Soto Park represents a significant migratory bird stop, and ranks with such places as Dauphin Island, Alabama, and High Island, Texas, for birding quality.

The waters surrounding Fort De Soto Park have been recognized for their environmental significance. The Fort De Soto Park Wetlands and Aquatic Habitat Management Section of the Pinellas County Code provides for the preservation, recovery, and expansion of associated marine habitats by restricting internal combustion engines within the designated Fort De Soto Management area. The Code also established slow speed/minimum wake zones, provides for posting and monitoring of the management area, and creates a public education program. No internal combustion engines are allowed within the boating restriction zones except in specifically marked “navigation channels.” In order to avoid damage to aquatic habitats, seagrass caution zones have also been established. The public education program provides information to boaters on the protection of aquatic habitats and the value of wetlands as natural resources.



Fred Howard Park - 1700 Sunset Drive, Tarpon Springs



Fred Howard Park consists of 155 acres and is located on the Gulf of Mexico. Since the park's dedication on April 16, 1966, its popularity has continued to increase. Over two million visitors enjoy the park and its facilities annually. Howard Park's location provides access to the Gulf of Mexico by a one-mile long causeway. The white sandy beach is a very popular north county swim area and provides a perfect location for visitors to enjoy many spectacular sunsets. Nesting ospreys and eagles may be viewed by park visitors as they fish for food in the surrounding waters. Dolphins, and occasionally manatees, are seen in the area. The causeway is used for sunbathing, fishing and exercising.

Lake Seminole Park - 10015 Park Boulevard, Seminole

Lake Seminole Park covers more than 250 acres and is centrally located to several communities, including St. Petersburg, Seminole, Largo, and Pinellas Park. It is located immediately adjacent to Lake Seminole. The park has 13 picnic shelters, a boat ramp with spaces for vehicles/trailers, grills, picnic tables, playground, water fountains, and restrooms. This park provides pleasant amenities for over one million visitors each year.

Lake Seminole Park is a designated wildlife habitat and sanctuary. Raccoons, alligators, various waterfowl, hawks, bald eagles, black vultures, tortoises/turtles, snakes, etc. reside in this park, and provide many pleasant hours for nature enthusiasts and families. The park has a two-mile multi-use trail (jogging, hiking, bicycling/rollerblading) that winds through a pine flatwoods. A one-mile cut-off is available for those who are less vigorous. Lake Seminole affords hours of pleasure for boaters, jet skiers, water-skiing, fishing, etc. A softball field and volleyball courts are available on a first come, first served basis. Benches and swings are strategically situated for relaxing views of the several ponds and the lake. Weddings are popular at this park, especially in two locations that provide beautiful photo-ops for the wedding album--a wooden bridge near Shelter #2 at the front of the park, and at Shelter #5, which is built over a small pond.

Philippe Park - 2525 Philippe Parkway, Safety Harbor

Philippe Park was acquired in 1948, making it the oldest park in the county. This historically rich park bears the name of Count Odet Philippe who introduced citrus culture to Florida. The existing park property was part of the original Philippe plantation from which several citrus trees remain. An Indian mound listed in the National Register of Historic Landmarks as the Safety Harbor Site is also within the park. Much of the 122-acre park is shaded by large oaks and other hardwood trees, as shown in the accompanying photograph. The park offers picnicking, a view of Old Tampa Bay along one mile of shoreline, a boat launching facility, fishing, and play areas.



Ridgecrest Park - 12000 Ulmerton Road, Largo

As one of the facilities along the McKay Creek Greenway, this 23-acre park was first acquired and developed in 1958. Officially opened to the public in 1962, it is located in the City of Largo on Ulmerton Road. The park includes a five-acre freshwater lake where fishing is permitted. In addition to picnic facilities, the park offers two play areas with a variety of playground equipment, restrooms and a softball field.

Sand Key Park - 1060 Gulf Boulevard, Clearwater

Sand Key Park opened to the public in August of 1984. Ninety-five acres are located on Sand Key, a barrier island between the Gulf of Mexico and the Florida mainland. Clearwater Pass, leading from the Gulf to the Intracoastal Waterway, separates the park from the popular resort area of Clearwater Beach. The park welcomes more than one million each year.

This facility has two distinct areas – a beach and a more traditional park. In the park proper are two picnic shelters with grills, a playground, and a restroom. A dog park was added in 2003. Grills, picnic tables, and water fountains are but a few amenities. The beach area boasts

cabana rentals, two beach wheel chairs, nine outdoor shower towers to rinse beach sand off, and two bathhouses with separate changing stalls and restrooms. A lifeguard is on duty 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM daily on a seasonal basis from March through September for swimmers enjoying the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

Sand Key Park houses the base of operations for the artificial reef program, an interdepartmental cooperation program to build a reef in the Gulf (for more information, see the *Solid Waste and Resource Recovery Element*). Sand Key Park's natural communities include a beach where sea turtles annually deposit eggs. The nearby Clearwater Aquarium takes responsibility for these nests and keeps statistics. In July 2002, the media chronicled 84 hatchlings from a rare Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle making their way to the Gulf of Mexico. A salt marsh with viewing benches further enhances the park, where heron, roseate spoonbill, great horned owl, anhinga, and common moorhen nest and feed. The park has nine boardwalks leading to the beach, also perfect for the stunning beach sunset weddings performed each year.



Sawgrass Lake Park - 7400 25th Street N., St. Petersburg

Sawgrass Lake Park, almost 400 acres in size, allows people to walk through one of the largest maple swamps on the Gulf Coast of Florida. The park's mile-long boardwalk and half-mile dirt trail provide opportunities to see birds, butterflies, plants and animals in their natural settings within the most densely populated county in Florida. Herons, egrets, ibis, wood storks, alligators and turtles can be seen along the canals and lakes. Thousands of birds migrate through the park during the fall and spring, attracting birders and eco-tourists from all over the country. Sawgrass Lake Park is mentioned by the Great Florida Birding Trail and the National Audubon Society as one of the premier birding sites in Florida.

Sawgrass Lake Park is the result of a unique cooperative agreement between the Pinellas County Parks & Recreation Department, the Pinellas County School District and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Two Park Naturalists and a dedicated Environmental Education Resource Teacher offer nature tours and outdoor field trips for thousands of visitors and school students annually.

John S. Taylor Park - 1100 Eighth Avenue S.W., Largo

Located in Largo, Taylor Park consists of 157 acres, including a 53-acre freshwater lake with excellent fishing. Small boats can be launched from a concrete boat ramp. Development of this park began in 1958. Its facilities include group picnic shelters, playground equipment, and restrooms. It also offers a softball diamond and a large, open playing field, which are very popular with the local residents and children. A 1.8-mile running/exercise trail was added in May 1982. In late 1990, access to the nearby Pinellas Trail was completed.

Wall Springs Park – 3725 DeSoto Boulevard, Palm Harbor

Wall Springs Park's 200 acres include a historic spring once used as a spa and bathing area from the turn of the 20th century until the mid-1960s. The park includes boardwalks, nature trails, playground, a 35-foot observation tower, bike racks, drinking fountains, restrooms, parking lot, and access to the Fred E. Marquis Pinellas Trail. The area surrounding the spring has been improved, and a decorative sundial honoring the memory of former Pinellas County employee Karen Anne Edwards is a landmark at the park's north gate.

Pinellas County began acquiring the Wall Springs property in 1988, with the initial purchase of approximately 63 acres that included the spring and surrounding area. The County has continued to acquire additional property since their initial purchase with the most recent acquisitions having been made in October of 2001 and July of 2002. The park has restroom facilities, memorial sundial, park benches, bike racks, drinking fountains, grills, picnic tables, picnic shelters, a playground area, boardwalks, nature trails, an observation tower and observation piers. The spring and adjoining pond include a viewing and observation area, boardwalks, park benches, educational and informational displays. Swimming is not allowed.



Walsingham Park - 12620 102nd Avenue, Largo

Walsingham Park is situated on 354 acres, divided by 100-acre Walsingham Lake, one-quarter mile west of the Pinellas Trail. There are entrances on Walsingham Road and on 102nd Avenue North. Facilities at the park include eight picnic shelters, grills, picnic tables, water fountains, restrooms, playground, paw playground, and a boat launch area. The park provides pleasant, relaxing amenities for its almost one million annual visitors.

Five habitat areas have been delineated within the boundaries of Walsingham Park: a) botanical gardens, b) pine flatwoods, c) oak scrub, d) Walsingham Reservoir with detention ponds, swales and wetlands; and e) cleared areas. Visitors picnic and enjoy recreation such as hiking, jogging, cycling, a 1.3 mile trail, a 10-station fitness area, bird-watching, observing many plant species, fishing an/or boating. [Boating is restricted to rowing, sailing, or electric engines--combustion engines not permitted.] Wildlife includes snakes, tortoises, turtles, hawks, mottled ducks, herons, wrens, thrashers, warblers; as well as butterflies comprised of swallowtails, sulphurs, gulf fritillary, Carolina satyr, white peacock. Pets and service dogs are welcome, but must be on 6'-foot leash and owners are required to clean up after them. An abundance of wildlife roam throughout the park; however, they are protected and may not be hunted, harassed, or fed. Additionally, it is illegal to remove, damage, or destroy plants. Intoxicants, firearms, and swimming are prohibited.

War Veterans' Memorial Park - 9600 Bay Pines Boulevard, St. Petersburg

War Veterans' Park consists of 122 acres, located on Boca Ciega Bay. The park was donated to the county as surplus federal property in 1963. It is built adjacent to Bay Pines Veterans' Hospital grounds and its official dedication was held in April of 1974. Five picnic shelters, a 6-lane boat ramp lighted for 24-hour use with 112 parking spaces, two playgrounds, grills, picnic tables, water fountains, a one-mile unpaved trail, and restrooms provide pleasant, relaxing amenities for over 600,000 visitors each year.



A focal point of the park is the landscaped Memorial Center featuring five plaques with official armed forces flags that commemorate each of the military branches of the United States. Also featured at the Memorial Center is an equatorial sundial, engineered exactly for the latitude

and longitude of this site. The dial is made of granite and the gnomon (pronounced NO-mun) is made of stainless steel. The sundial is actually a miniature earth.

PINELLAS COUNTY MULTI-USE TRAILS

The following discussion describes each of the County's multi-use trails. Multi-use trails serve a variety of purposes. Aside from exercise and recreation, they can provide safe and convenient commuting routes to school and work for bicyclists and pedestrians. Motorized vehicles and horses are generally prohibited. Pinellas County's multi-use trails are identified in **Table 2** and their locations depicted in **Figure 2**.

TABLE 2
PINELLAS COUNTY MULTI-USE TRAILS

Multi-Use Trail	Acreage	Attendance (FY 05-06)
Friendship Trail Bridge ¹	8	500,230
Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail	342	687,677
Total	350	1,187,907

Sources: Pinellas County Planning Department and Department of Culture, Education and Leisure, 2006.

¹ Includes both the Hillsborough County and Pinellas County sections of the bridge, all of which is maintained by the Pinellas County Parks Department

The Friendship Trail Bridge

The Old Gandy Bridge crossing Tampa Bay was saved from demolition, and ownership transferred from the Florida Department of Transportation to Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties, through the combined efforts of both citizens and the Pinellas and Hillsborough Boards of County Commissioners. Now called the Friendship Trail Bridge, it provides a linear multi-use corridor, and is planned to be a centerpiece of a regional multi-use trail system connecting the recreational areas of the Gandy Causeway and Weedon Island Preserve in Pinellas County and Picnic Island Park in Hillsborough County.



The Friendship Trail Bridge is also an important component of Pinellas County's overall Greenway network as connections are planned to the Weedon Island Trail, the Rio Vista Trail, the Gateway Nature Trail, the future Progress Energy Trail, and ultimately the overall system of existing and planned Pinellas bikeway trails and recreational facilities. A multi-use trail such as the Friendship Trail Bridge provides benefits to many types of users, from both Counties, with uses including walking, cycling, running, in-line skating and fishing.

FIGURE 2
PINELLA COUNTY MULTI-USE TRAILS

The Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail

The Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail is a paved asphalt trail that extends 34 miles from Tarpon Springs in the north, to St. Petersburg in the south. Most of the Trail is within one mile of the coastal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. It was built along the abandoned CSX railroad right-of-way, purchased in the 1980s by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Pinellas County leased the property from FDOT and improvements began soon thereafter. An important boost for the Trail came in 1989, when the citizens of Pinellas County passed the “Penny for Pinellas,” a local option sales tax. Approximately \$9 million from the Penny for Pinellas has been used in the construction of the Trail. The additional revenue helped speed up the construction schedule, fund additional off-site parking and finance a twelve-mile northeast extension from U.S. Highway 19 along East Lake Road to John Chesnut, Sr. Park. Additionally, several municipalities that were in the process of making improvements to their downtown areas were able to time their redevelopment efforts to coincide with the construction of the Trail.



The Trail not only connects the different communities, it also connects several of the County’s parks and green spaces. Because of all its amenities and benefits, the Pinellas Trail was one of 150 greenways in the State officially recognized by the Florida Greenways Commission, as a part of the State’s Sesquicentennial Celebration in 1995. The Trail will be 47 miles long when completed. It runs through the cities of Tarpon Springs, Dunedin, Clearwater, Belleair, Largo, Seminole, Gulfport and St. Petersburg, and through several unincorporated communities.

Pinellas Trail – Planned Progress Energy Extension

On November 23, 1999, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners approved a historic lease agreement with the Progress Energy Corporation, allowing for the development of a north-south off-road bicycle and pedestrian trail facility in eastern Pinellas County. Pinellas County assumed a 99-year lease of the trail easement, with Progress Energy responsible for constructing the facility. The project will be funded with Penny for Pinellas infrastructure sales tax revenue and Federal funding, as it becomes available.

The 20.6-mile Progress Energy Trail Extension will complement the existing Pinellas Trail, which follows the former CSX rail line in western Pinellas County. The Extension will connect John Chesnut Park at the southern terminus of the East Lake/Tarpon Springs section of the Pinellas Trail to the Weedon Island Preserve (see **Figure 2**), providing unlimited opportunities for non-motorized travel with many trip destinations. It will be constructed of an asphalt surface designed to accommodate inline skaters and joggers, as well as bicyclists and pedestrians. Four intersections, where the easement crosses US-19 at two locations, Ulmerton Road and Interstate 275, will require overpass construction. A master plan to guide the Trail Extension development is being prepared by Pinellas County. The Extension will also connect to the Friendship Trail crossing Tampa Bay.

The first section of the Progress Energy Trail, a 2.4-mile segment in central Pinellas County connecting Belleair Road to Drew Street near Bright House Networks Field in Clearwater, is currently under construction.

Other Planned Trail Facilities

The Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has developed the Pinellas Trailways Plan as part of its Long-Range Transportation Plan. The Trailways Plan incorporates existing trails and envisions a linked network of community trails, as well as important future/proposed extensions of the Pinellas Trail, including the Progress Energy Trail and links to downtown St. Petersburg and Fort DeSoto Park, among others. Please see **Figure 3** for a map of the Pinellas Trailways Plan and the *Transportation Element* of this Comprehensive Plan for more specific information.

In addition to the Trailways Plan, the MPO has been involved in the development of a regional multi-use trails system, with a primary focus of regional trail connectivity. Important Pinellas County connections include the Friendship Trail, the Courtney-Campbell Trail, and future/conceptual trails linking north Pinellas County to trails in Hillsborough and Pasco Counties. Please see the *Transportation Element* for more information on the regional trail system.



Friendship Trail Bridge Opening Ceremony

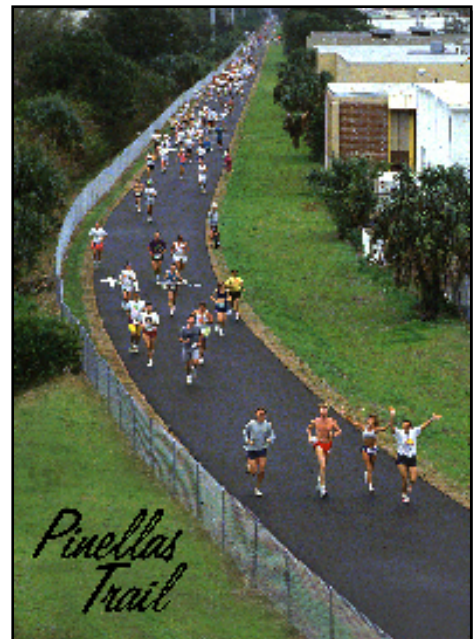


FIGURE 3
PINELLAS TRAILWAYS PLAN

PINELLAS COUNTY BEACH ACCESS PARKS

In addition to Pinellas County's Multi-use Trails and Regional Resource-based Parks, the County also provides its residents and visitors with beach access parks. These parks help ensure a certain level of public parking and access along the County's highly developed beaches. **Table 3** identifies each beach access park, while **Figure 4** depicts their locations. A discussion of each access park follows. Please refer to **Table A-2** in **Appendix A** for an inventory of the facilities available at each of these parks. Please see the 'Public Access to the Water' section of this Element for additional information regarding countywide beach and shoreline access.

TABLE 3
PINELLAS COUNTY BEACH ACCESS PARKS

Beach Access Parks	Acreage	Attendance (FY 05-06)
Indian Rocks Beach Access	2	340,662
Madeira Beach Access	2	245,396
Redington Shores Beach Access	4	374,833
St. Pete Beach Access	6	494,554
Tiki Gardens/Indian Shores Beach Access	10	180,412
Treasure Island Beach Access	1	316,449
Total	22	1,952,306

Sources: Pinellas County Planning Department and Department of Culture, Education and Leisure, 2006.

Indian Rocks Beach – Beach Access Park – 1700 Gulf Blvd, Indian Rocks Beach

This two-acre beach site was purchased in 1989 at a cost of \$1.9 million. Development was completed and dedicated to the public on September 29, 1995. The park features 80 parking spaces for vehicles, a restroom, outdoor showers, and landscaping.

Madeira Beach – Beach Access Park – 14400 Gulf Blvd, Madeira Beach

Acquired on October 4, 1978, its two acres offer 450 feet of beach on the Gulf of Mexico. This park was officially opened to the public on May 26, 1983. It is the first park developed by the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners that is being operated and maintained by a municipality. This was made possible by an intergovernmental agreement signed January 25, 1983. The facilities offered by this beach access park include parking for 104 vehicles, a restroom and two showers located on the beach.

Redington Shores Beach Access Park – 18200 Gulf Blvd, Redington Shores

This four-acre gulf site was acquired in 1973 at a cost of \$909,500 and developed through the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program. The beach opened to the public on August 9, 1975, and offers 170 parking spaces, restroom facilities, beach showers and a 400-foot wide beach. To compliment this outstanding facility and help preserve the beach, a dune establishment program was started in 1990. Sea oats, plants and two boardwalks were added to help protect this delicate area that attracts over 600,000 visitors each year.

FIGURE 4
COUNTY-OWNED BEACH ACCESS PARKS,
BOAT RAMPS AND MARINAS

St. Pete Beach – Beach Access Park – 4700 Gulf Blvd, St. Pete Beach

This six-acre park represents a major commitment (\$5,890,500 for land acquisition and \$403,831 in park construction and landscaping) by Pinellas County and its citizens to preserve critical open space and provide beach access along the densely populated Gulf Coast of Pinellas County. The St. Pete Beach Access construction was completed in late 1988, and opened to the public on December 24, 1988. The official dedication took place on January 31, 1989. This facility offers a landscaped 235-meter parking lot, restrooms, showers, water fountain, and three boardwalks to carry visitors over natural sand dunes and sea oats to a white sandy swim area and a spectacular view of the Gulf of Mexico. Swimming is permissible; however, there is no lifeguard on duty.

Tiki Gardens/Indian Shores Beach Access Park – 19601 Gulf Blvd, Indian Shores

This 10-acre site was purchased in 1990 at a cost of \$3 million, and dedicated on June 9, 1995. Facilities include Phase 1 with a 120 space parking area for vehicles, restroom facilities, benches, a water fountain, beach showers, landscaping and a pedestrian crossing light at Gulf Boulevard. Phase II, also opened in 1995, provides another landscaped parking lot containing 50 additional parking spaces.

Treasure Island Beach Access Park – 10400 Gulf Blvd, Treasure Island

Pinellas County purchased a plot of beachfront property on Treasure Island in 1985 for \$1.75 million. A long-term intergovernmental lease between Pinellas County and the City of Treasure Island added another parcel to the existing property. Construction began in May 1991, and the new facility was officially dedicated on January 22, 1992. This one-acre beach access provides 67 public parking spaces, restroom facilities, a drinking water fountain, beach showers, a bicycle rack and landscaping.



Redington Shores Beach Access Park



Tiki Gardens Beach Access Park

PINELLAS COUNTY BOAT RAMP AND MARINA FACILITIES

Pinellas County provides a number of boat ramps facilities for the public, and has recently purchased its first marina. **Table 4** identifies these facilities. A brief discussion of each facility follows. Their amenities are included in the inventory on **Table A-2** in **Appendix A**. Please refer back to **Figure 4** for a location of County-managed boat ramp and marina facilities. For additional information regarding water and shoreline access, please see the 'Public Access to the Water' section of this Element.

TABLE 4
PINELLAS COUNTY MANAGED BOAT RAMPS AND MARINA FACILITIES

Boat Ramp and Marina Facilities	Acreage	Attendance (FY 05-06)
Belleair Boat Ramp	5	797,132
Park Boulevard Boat Ramp	7	260,451
Sutherland Bayou Boat Ramp	5	*
Belle Harbor Marina	3	*
Total	20	1,057,583

Sources: Pinellas County Planning Department and Department of Culture, Education and Leisure, 2006.

*Attendance figures not available

Belleair Boat Ramp – 3900 West Bay Drive, Belleair Bluffs

Dedicated on April 14, 1966, this special purpose park was designed for intense utilization. The eight lanes of boat ramps and seven docks provide ready access to the Intracoastal Waterway and the Gulf of Mexico for a variety of outdoor recreational activities. This five-acre park also provides parking spaces for 151 vehicles, including 107 spaces for vehicles with boat trailers attached. Public restrooms are located in a bathhouse/concession building at the water's edge. This facility is normally open 24 hours; however, it will be closed until mid to late 2009 due to the construction of the new Belleair Causeway Bridge.



Park Boulevard Boat Ramp – 18651 Gulf Blvd, Indian Shores

This seven-acre boating facility is located on the Intracoastal Waterway. Construction of the boat ramp was funded entirely by the Florida Boating Improvement Program as part of a continuing program to enhance recreational boating activities in Florida. The boat ramp was officially opened to the public on June 29, 1989. The facility is open 24 hours a day and features 73 vehicle and trailer parking spaces, six boat lanes, three floating docks, restrooms and night lighting.

Sutherland Bayou Boat Ramp – 2119 Alternate Hwy 19 N, Palm Harbor

This five-acre (more or less) boating facility is the former Palm Harbor Resort campground. The property was acquired in September of 2006 by the County for public boating purposes. The facility currently has one concrete boat ramp lane, connecting to Sutherland Bayou and the Gulf of Mexico. Public restroom facilities are provided. Parking for vehicles and boat trailers is open 24 hours a day. The site also rents approximately 48 storage spaces for boat trailers

as well as 18 wet slips for boat storage. Future improvements to the boat launch and parking areas are currently in the planning phase.

Belle Harbor Marina – 307 Anclote Road, Tarpon Springs

The County acquired this three-acre marina in September of 2006. The marina provides its customers with access to the Anclote River and the Gulf of Mexico. The County Parks and Recreation Department began operating the marina in April 2007. Belle Harbor Marina offers boat storage in the dry stack storage racks for approximately 110 boats, and it rents 16 wet slips located on the water. Other services and facilities offered for sale to marina customers include marine grade fuel and oil products, ice, snacks, and marine sanitary holding tank pump-out service. There is not a public boat ramp at this location.

Other Boat Ramp Facilities

In addition to the stand-alone boat ramp facilities listed above, the County operates other saltwater ramps at various regional parks throughout its park system. Examples include Fort DeSoto Park, Philippe Park and War Veterans’ Memorial Park. Please see **Figure 12** in the ‘Public Access to the Water’ section of this Element for a graphical depiction of countywide boat ramp locations.

Fresh Water Access Parks

Five regional parks in Pinellas County have freshwater access by boat ramp - A. L. Anderson Park, John Chesnut Sr. Park, Lake Seminole Park, John Taylor Park, and Walsingham Park.



Park Boulevard Boat Ramp



Philippe Park

PINELLAS COUNTY POCKET PARKS

Pocket Parks are neighborhood-scale parks largely designed to serve the surrounding community. They are much smaller than regional parks and generally only have a few specific amenities. Nevertheless, they provide an important recreational resource to the communities they serve and are important components of the County’s overall park and recreation system. **Table 5** identifies Pinellas County Pocket Parks and **Figure 5** depicts their locations. **Table A-3** in **Appendix A** lists Pocket Park amenities.

TABLE 5

PINELLAS COUNTY POCKET PARKS

Pocket Parks	Acreage
Chester Ochs 4-H Educational Center	10
Joe’s Creek Greenway Park	35
Lealman Park	2
Live Oak Park	2
Pop Stansell Park	10
Total	59

Source: Pinellas County Planning Department, 2006.

Chester Ochs 4-H Education Center

Chester Ochs is located off Hamlin Boulevard in Unincorporated Pinellas County just south of the City of Largo. The property was once an orange grove. It was donated to the County to be used for recreational and greenspace purposes. It is managed by Extension Services as a community garden and for educational programming purposes. A short walking trail is also on the premises.



Joe’s Creek Greenway Park – 4301 46th Avenue N, St. Petersburg

Joe’s Creek Greenway Park is a 35-acre park located in the unincorporated Lealman Community just north of the City of St. Petersburg. Prior to 2005, the area was under the management of the Pinellas County Highway Department as a stormwater management area. In late 2004, a collaborated effort between the Highway Department, Community Development and Parks and Recreation began to enhance this waterway for public participation and wildlife habitat. The development has been divided into four different development phases with phase III and IV still in design.

Phase I development includes a paved walking pathway of approximately one-mile along the western portion of the area; invasive plant removal and native plant installation, fencing and a parking area were installed. In 2007, educational kiosks were built and benches periodically placed along the route to allow walkers to sit, rest and commune with nature. Phase II construction is due to begin in late 2007. This phase will extend the pathway to the eastern portion of the creek. An equipment room will be converted into a restroom. Fencing and green open areas with benches will line the area as well.

FIGURE 5
PINELLAS COUNTY POCKET PARKS AND SPECIAL USE LANDS

Lealman Park – 3890 55th Avenue N, St. Petersburg

Lealman Park is a 2.4-acre park located in the unincorporated Lealman community. Prior to 2002, the park had a few benches, run down shuffleboard and basketball court and was under the management of Community Development and Lease Management. In 2002, the Parks and Recreation Department took ownership of the park area and, with Penny of Pinellas dollars, installed a new playground unit. This was the beginning of taking a desolate, under appreciated green space and making it a thriving and active neighborhood meeting place. The park now contains a County Connection Center, an accessible play unit with two shade structures and poured-in-place foundation, a new basketball court with lights, a walking path inside the fenced area, public art in the form of a large mosaic-tiled “L”, a restroom, a picnic shelter, and a small open area for tossing balls and flying kites. This neighborhood park is under the management of the staff at Sawgrass Lake Park.

Live Oak Park – 600 Crystal Beach Avenue, Crystal Beach

Located in Crystal Beach, this small two-acre pocket park has a beautiful view of the Gulf of Mexico. Live Oak Park was historically maintained by the local community association in Crystal Beach for a number of years, and they continue to have a local art show in the park each year. The park was enlarged when the adjoining Faith Mission property was acquired by the County. The park has a number of large old oak trees, but a limited number of park amenities, which include a few seating areas and walkways. Parking is available on the roadside surrounding the park.



Pop Stansell Park – 757 Florida Avenue, Palm Harbor

This 10-acre pocket park is located at the intersection of 8th Street and Florida Avenue in Palm Harbor. The park has numerous large pine trees and a mangrove fringe along the coastal shoreline. Local community organizations joined with Pinellas County Community Development and raised funds to construct most of the original park amenities. This park offers the visitors a fishing pier, playground, several covered picnic tables and a band shell with public restrooms. Each year, the Palm Harbor Parks and Recreation Department holds several recreation events at the park and are responsible for the daily operation and maintenance of the facilities. An unimproved boat launch area provides many local boaters access to Sutherland Bayou and the Gulf of Mexico, but vehicle and boat trailer parking is very limited.

Future Pocket Parks

Dansville Pond

Dansville Pond is located off Wilcox Road in the unincorporated Danville community just outside the City of Largo. The property is approximately 11 acres in size, seven of which are covered by the pond. Future plans call for fishing access, a small playground area, sidewalks, and limited picnic facilities.

Leach Property

The Leach Property is located near Boca Ciega Millennium Park in the unincorporated Oakhurst community. It consists of approximately 22 acres. Public access is not provided and there are no immediate plans for future development.



Joe's Creek Greenway Park



Lealman Park



Pop Stansell Park

PINELLAS COUNTY SPECIAL USE LANDS

In order to provide its residents with more meaningful recreational experiences, Pinellas County is continuing to explore the possibilities of connecting several existing and planned facilities that would be of regional significance. The following discussion describes examples of the County's special use lands. The Walsingham Equestrian and Lake Seminole Equestrian Trails, Heritage Village and the Florida Botanical Gardens are examples of these region-wide recreational facilities not typically found in either a park or preserve. These facilities are identified in **Table 6** and depicted on **Figure 5**.

TABLE 6
PINELLAS COUNTY SPECIAL USE LANDS

Special Use Lands	Acreage
Pinewood Cultural Park ¹	192
Walsingham Equestrian	49
Lake Seminole Equestrian	39
Total	280

Source: Pinellas County Planning Department, 2006.

¹ Botanical Gardens, 135.4 acres; Cooperative Extension, 9.1 acres; Gulf Coast Museum of Art, 12.6 acres; and Heritage Village, 17.4 acres; Emergency Medical Services, 9.3 acres; and Animal Services, 7.8 acres.

Pinewood Cultural Park

Covering 192 acres and comprised of the Florida Botanical Gardens, the Gulf Coast Museum of Art and Heritage Village, Pinewood Cultural Park educates, inspires and showcases the arts, history and the environment. The surroundings are designed to motivate visitors to practice sustainable living techniques. Each component of the Park is described separately below.

Florida Botanical Gardens – 12175 125th Street N, Largo

The Florida Botanical Gardens is a 150-acre public garden featuring Florida native and tropical plants that demonstrates landscaping techniques for central Florida. People of all ages and from all walks of life are seeking a new connection with nature, whether it comes from gardening, learning about the role of plants in our environment, or simply finding a space where natural beauty and clean air refresh the body and mind. The Gardens provide “an oasis of green” and a showcase of nature’s beauty that are accessible to everyone. The facility displays various themed gardens, provides habitat for wildlife and is the home of Pinellas County Extension Services, which offers classes and hands-on workshops to the public throughout the year. For more information, please visit www.flbg.org.

Gulf Coast Museum of Art – 12211 Walsingham Road, Largo

The Gulf Coast Museum of Art is a 45,000 square foot contemporary art museum campus featuring Florida artists and southeastern crafts with sculpture gardens, studio classrooms, a museum store, and nine permanent collection and changing exhibition galleries. For more information, please visit www.gulfcoastmuseum.org.

Heritage Village – 11909 125th Street N, Largo

Pinellas County's Heritage Village is a 21-acre, open-air historical village and museum located in the heart of Pinellas County. The natural pine and palmetto landscape is home to some of Pinellas County's most historic buildings. First opened to the public in 1976, Heritage Village is funded in its operations by the Board of County Commissioners and supported in its activities by the Pinellas County Historical Society and other community groups.

There are 28 structures, some dating back to the mid-to-late 19th century. The Village includes a school, church, railroad depot, and store as well as a variety of historic homes. The homes range from the McMullen-Coachman Log Cabin, the oldest existing structure in the County, to the magnificent Victorian-era House of Seven Gables. Also on the grounds of Heritage Village is the Pinellas County Historical Museum. The Museum's exhibits trace the history of Pinellas County from the Indian-Spanish period to contemporary times. The Museum also has a 3,500-volume library and archives containing historic photographs, maps, special collections and other materials relating to the history of Pinellas County. Heritage Village is also the site of the Daniel McMullen Home for the Fiber Arts. Weaving, quilting, and other crafts are demonstrated at Heritage Village as part of its "hands-on" approach to history. A Country Jubilee is held annually in October; other events are scheduled throughout the year.

Please visit www.pinewoodculturalpark.org to download a brochure and detailed map of all the facilities and amenities that the Pinewood Cultural Park has to offer.

Walsingham Equestrian and Lake Seminole Equestrian Trails

Pinellas County currently provides approximately 87 acres of horse trails for equestrians at the Walsingham Equestrian Trail and Lake Seminole Equestrian Trail (also see the discussion on Brooker Creek Preserve, which offers 12 miles of horse trails).



Florida Botanical Gardens



Heritage Village

Photography provided courtesy of Pinellas County Communications Dept.

SPECIAL RECREATIONAL TAXING DISTRICTS

Another means of providing recreation to unincorporated residents is through the creation of a special recreational taxing district such as a municipal service taxing unit (MSTU). In several portions of the unincorporated County, residents have voted to tax themselves to create an MSTU so that recreational activities, services and facilities can be provided to local unincorporated residents.

Unincorporated areas of the County, although benefiting from the County's many resource-based regional parks, may not always have easy access to community and neighborhood parks. Facilities such as ball fields, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc., may not be readily available unless a resident chooses to pay a neighboring city's user fees. In addition, if the demand for municipal recreational programs exceeds the capacity of available facilities, a city is apt to give preference to their residents and limit participation for those residing in unincorporated areas. In response to these conditions, the Board of County Commissioners has supported the creation of special taxing districts, referred to as Municipal Service Taxing Units, in large contiguous unincorporated areas for the provision of community and neighborhood recreational opportunities.

A Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) is a financial mechanism whereby ad valorem taxes may be levied by the local government, in accordance with an approved referendum, for providing specific services and improvements in a defined geographical area. Three areas within unincorporated Pinellas County – Palm Harbor, Greater Seminole and Feather Sound - have successfully created MSTUs (see **Figure 6** for locations). Conversely, three referenda to create a MSTU district in the East Lake Tarpon area (the most recent in 1996) have failed to pass.

In November of 1985, residents within the unincorporated area of Palm Harbor passed a referendum to tax themselves 1/4 of a mill for the purpose of providing community recreational facilities. Funds obtained from the Palm Harbor Recreation District have been used to fund several recreation projects, the Palm Harbor Recreation Center, the Palm Harbor Library and other related recreational land purchases. Putnam Park has a softball/baseball field, batting cages, two tennis courts, a soccer/football field, playground, multi-purpose room and restrooms. Palm Field is a complex with one field that can be used for soccer, football, softball and baseball. There is a batting cage available on the site. The Sunderman Baseball Complex has six baseball fields, two sand volleyball courts, a children's play area, driving range, batting cages, a multi-purpose room and a roller hockey court. Pop Stansell Park has a playground, picnic shelters, grills, a covered bandshell, a boat ramp and a fishing pier (also see section on Pocket Parks).



Putnam Park in Palm Harbor

FIGURE 6
SPECIAL RECREATIONAL TAXING DISTRICTS

The Greater Seminole Area Special Recreation District has a 19.37 acre facility that includes eight multi-purpose fields used for little league, soccer and football, and softball and baseball. Complex I also has six picnic tables and a concession stand.

In 1990, the Feather Sound Community Services District was established in the unincorporated Feather Sound area. An ad valorem tax of up to one mil can be levied on properties within the District for the acquisition, development and maintenance of recreational areas and greenspace. In 1993, the Feather Sound Community Services District purchased 10 acres of land for the development of a community park. Phase I of the park sponsored by the Feather Sound MSTU was completed in October 1997. It has a basketball court, a multi-purpose field, boardwalk and four picnic tables. Additionally, a new playground opened on April 22, 2007.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

In addition to the provision of recreation through the process of land acquisition and management, and the ability to provide for recreation through special taxing districts, the County may also, on a case-by-case basis, choose to facilitate the provision of more neighborhood based recreation by, for example, helping in the assemblage of needed land for a service or facility. This may be undertaken in partnership with a neighborhood association or in collaboration with a traditional recreational service provider, and in coordination with such activities as neighborhood redevelopment, or simply local opportunity and need. For example, in the Highpoint area, the County constructed the recreational facility while the YMCA provides the recreational services and activities. In the Ridgecrest area, the Omni-Center recreational facility, located south of Taylor Park, was built on County-owned property but is operated in a partnership with the YMCA and funded in part through grants associated with the Pinellas County Community Development Department.



The Greater Ridgecrest YMCA



Sunderman Complex, Palm Harbor