

Tidal and Submerged Environments

The South Paddling Trail offers access to the tidal and submerged environments that dominate Weedon Island Preserve.

Three species of mangroves common to Florida can be found along this trail. The trees growing along the shore are red mangroves, which are often referred to as "walking trees" because their prop roots give the appearance of walking. Growing behind them on slightly higher ground are black mangroves, which are identifiable by their numerous finger-like projections called pneumatophores.



Pneumatophores protrude from the soil and help bring oxygen to the tree's roots. A closer look into dense stands of mangroves reveals the third type of mangrove, the white mangrove. Its light yellow-green leaves are oval with two small glands at the base of the leaf blade.

Portions of the paddling trail take you into more open areas away from the mangroves. These shallow waters around Weedon Island Preserve contain lush seagrass beds where schools of fish, crabs and shrimp thrive. Mudflats, areas that are often exposed by tides and are devoid of vegetation, contain marine benthic organisms within the mud substrate.

The mangrove swamps, seagrass beds, and mudflats provide valuable environments for many kinds of animals including oysters, stingrays and even small sharks. These important habitats also provide roosting and feeding areas for a variety of wading and shorebirds including the wood stork, a species listed as endangered in the State of Florida. Other State-listed species that rely on the Preserve include the osprey (species of special concern) and the West Indian manatee (endangered).

Hours

Paddlers should return to the launch site and parking area at least 30 minutes before closing. No overnight parking is allowed. Hours for the Preserve and Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center vary. Call (727) 453-6500 or visit our website for more information.



Weedon Island Preserve

For additional information, please contact
General Information: (727) 453-6500

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



www.weedonislandpreserve.org

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WEEEDON ISLAND P R E S E R V E

South Paddling Trail



Situated along the shore of Old Tampa Bay, Weedon Island Preserve is approximately 3,700 acres of natural lands including mangrove swamps, intertidal flats and pine flatwood uplands. The South Paddling Trail takes you through lush mangroves and over open shallow waters with productive seagrass beds. Come experience "A Place To Remember."



A Pinellas County Government Program

South Paddling Guide

- The parking area and launch site for the South Paddling Trail are located on the end of Weedon Drive NE about 1.5 miles from the Preserve's entrance.
- The South Paddling Trail is approximately 4 miles long and takes about 3 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 best paddled with a mid to high tide.
- Fishing is allowed - State and Federal fishing regulations apply.
- Alcohol is not permitted within the Preserve.
- Please take your trash with you.
- Under Pinellas County Preserve Ordinance 08-29, all plants and animals are protected.

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 Parks and Conservation Resources. The Preserve, which offers various resource-based 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 boardwalks and observation tower, and various hiking trails. Public restrooms are located at both the Center and pier. Kayak/canoe rentals are also available. Call **(727) 453-6500** for more information.

