

## Designations

In January 1995, a portion of the upper Hillsborough River, upstream of Fletcher Avenue, and certain tributaries, were designated as 'Outstanding Florida Waters'. This designation requires there be a greater degree of stormwater treatment prior to its discharge into an OFW. Because of this extra treatment, OFW water quality is, at a minimum, maintained if not improved.

In July 1995, the Hillsborough River, between Crystal Springs in



Pasco County and Riverhills Park in the City of Temple Terrace, was designated part of the State Recreational Canoe Trail System. This designation was extended to Rowlett Park in the City of Tampa in 2000. The designation recognizes the river's ecological significance to the region and importance as a recreational asset. Users of the canoe trail benefit from the Slow Down/Minimum Wake restriction on motorized craft upstream of Riverhills Park. Information pertaining to the Hillsborough River Canoe Trail can be obtained on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's website <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/guide/index.htm>. This web page allows site visitors to access maps and pertinent information about the Hillsborough River and other canoe trails throughout the state.

## The River Board & Council Scope of Authority

*The Hillsborough River Interlocal Planning Board & Technical Advisory Council was established by the state legislature through special act 86-335. The Board and Council monitor activities and actions within the river corridor lying within Hillsborough County, Florida. Staffing for the Hillsborough River Interlocal Planning Board & Technical Advisory Council provided by the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission. ([www.theplanningcommission.org](http://www.theplanningcommission.org))*

## River Management Contacts:

Hillsborough River Interlocal Planning Board &  
Technical Advisory Council  
(813)-272-5940

Southwest Florida Water Management  
District  
Local: (813)-985-7481  
Brooksville: 1-800-423-1476

Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough  
County  
(813)-272-5960 or (813)-272-7104

The Tampa Port Authority  
(813)-905-7678

The Hillsborough County City-County  
Planning Commission  
(813)-272-5940

Florida Department of Environmental  
Protection  
(813)-744-6100

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council  
(727)-570-5151

Hillsborough County Aquatic Weed and Mosquito  
Control  
(813)-554-5025

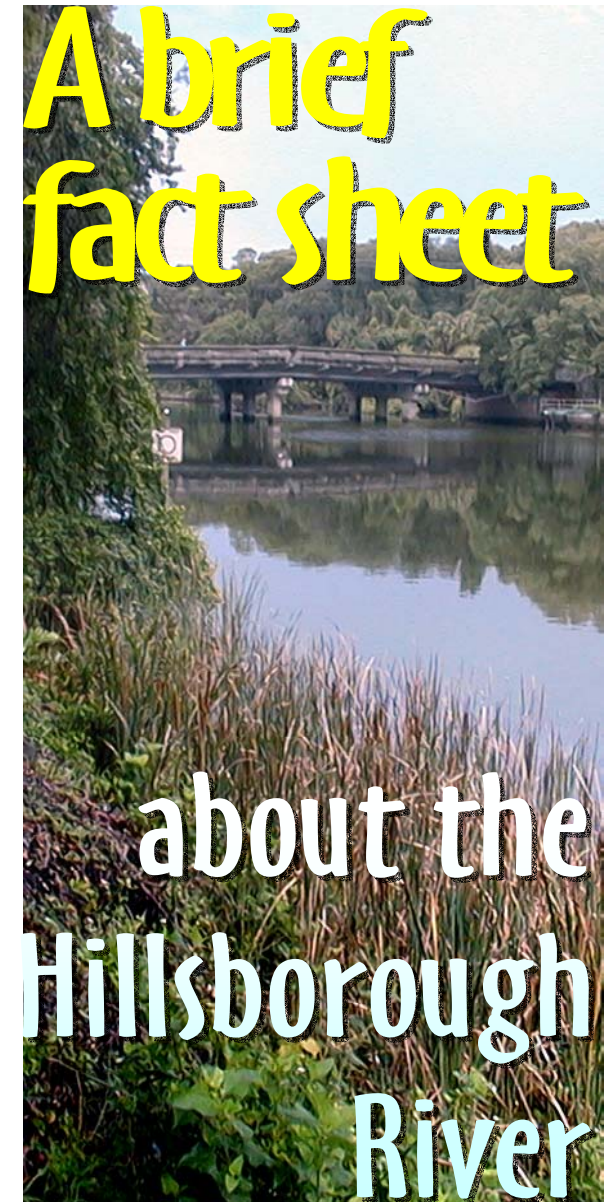
## Law Enforcement Contacts:

City of Temple Terrace Marine Unit  
(813)-989-7110

City of Tampa Marine Unit  
(813)-339-6571 or 339-6573

Hillsborough County Sheriff Department  
Marine Unit  
(813)-247-8995

**All Emergencies 911**



Hillsborough River  
Interlocal Planning Board &  
Technical Advisory Council

Created by Special Act 86-335

[www.hillsboroughriver.org](http://www.hillsboroughriver.org)

## The River's Description

The Hillsborough River begins in the Green Swamp area of Pasco and Polk Counties as do three other rivers; the Withlacoochee, Peace and Ocklawaha. At certain times of the year the Hillsborough River is actually an overflow of the Withlacoochee River. From its headwaters, the Hillsborough River flows in a southwesterly direction for approximately 54 miles and empties into Hillsborough Bay. During the dry season the river's flow is mainly sustained by flow from Crystal Springs, located in Pasco County. This river is an important natural resource that drains approximately 690 square miles. As the Hillsborough River runs its course, it bisects Hillsborough County. The river passes through various landscapes, ranging from natural (rural), to suburban, to urban settings, and through three jurisdictions; unincorporated Hillsborough County, the City of Temple Terrace and the City of Tampa.



## Classifications

There are five water body classifications in Florida. The most protection is provided to Class I water bodies. Water body classifications are based on intended use in relation to the kinds of activities and impacts that are allowed. The Hillsborough River has two classifications, Class I and Class III. The Class I designation covers upstream of the dam because it is a public potable water supply source. Regulations pertaining to water quality discharges for this portion of the river are more stringent because of the public supply use. Downstream of the dam, the river is Class III, which requires less stringent standards, but does provide some level of protection.



## Water Quantity & Monitoring

The overall water quality of the Hillsborough River is considered good. The water in the river is tested periodically by the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County. These agencies monitor a range of water quality



parameters by measuring substances in the water and its overall condition such as color, clarity and dissolved oxygen levels. In addition, the City of Tampa Water Department monitors the river's water quality on a stringent schedule. To assure the public's safety, the Water Department monitors a wide variety of compounds and chemicals that could affect the river. The Hillsborough River is Tampa's primary potable water supply.

## Water Uses

Water from the Hillsborough River is used to supply the City of Tampa Service Area, which includes portions of unincorporated Hillsborough County. On average, 70 million gallons of water are processed from the "raw" water withdrawn at the City of Tampa Water Treatment Plant. During the dry season, the water supply afforded by the river is supplemented from other sources, such as ground water and the Tampa By-Pass Canal. This water is used for various purposes: public consumption for drinking, irrigation of vegetation and household-related activities, such as cleaning and laundry. By reducing the amount of water each person consumes for everyday use, users can help to conserve the amount of water in the river. Irrigation restrictions are currently in place for all the local jurisdictions along the Hillsborough River, and should be followed. Commercial enterprises also use water from the river.



## Wildlife Resources

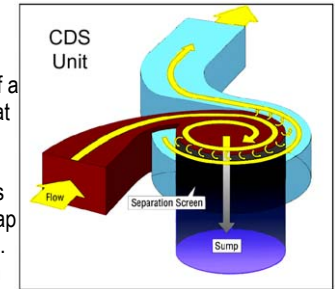
Wildlife remains prevalent in the Hillsborough River Corridor, both upstream of the dam and downstream in the lower river. A wide diversity of animals use the river. Freshwater species are predominately found upstream of the dam and saltwater species inhabit the river downstream of the dam. Important environmental features in the Hillsborough River corridor are wildlife habitats, especially those provided by natural shorelines. Natural shores provide the opportunity for nesting and also provide safe haven for juvenile aquatic animals. Preserving natural shorelines is important to keeping the river a functioning ecosystem. When necessary, shorelines hardened with structures such as seawalls, can be enhanced to benefit the environment by planting the proper aquatic plants waterward of the structure, at the base, when possible. Manatees visit the river below the dam and are probably the best known and loved animals that can be found in the river year



round. A number of other significant wildlife species inhabit the river corridor, especially upstream of Fletcher Avenue. The "upper" Hillsborough River is recognized world-wide as a significant wildlife refuge that is home to many species that cannot be found in any other place.

## Stormwater Impacts

Stormwater has the greatest impact on the Hillsborough River's water quality. When stormwater is directed to the river, it is important to clean it by the best means available. Vegetated storm water conduits, such as swales and holding ponds, help to cleanse the water of impurities. Solid materials such as styrofoam, plastics, wood and other materials can be removed by filtering systems. The City of Temple Terrace is installing a state-of-the-art stormwater cleaning device, called a Continuous Deflective Separation unit, as part of a redevelopment project that directs stormwater to the river. This device traps suspended solid materials and captures them in a trap for removal at a later time. Keeping stormwater drain ways clean and clear of natural debris, such as leaves, also helps to minimize detrimental effects caused by those kinds of 'natural pollutants'.



Unseen pollutants in the river, mainly chemicals, are a concern. Herbicides and insecticides must be carefully and sparingly applied or else stormwater can carry them into the river during rainfall events.

## Recreational Uses

The Hillsborough River is officially designated as a State Canoe Trail from Riverhills Park upstream to Crystal Springs, although the entire river is open for canoe use. Several canoe launch sites are available at public parks along the river.



Motorized craft are provided access to the river at several sites all along the river as well but are discouraged from traveling upstream of Fletcher Avenue. Water skiing is allowed downstream of the 56th Street

Bridge to the dam and other specified areas downstream. Fishing is another favorite recreational past-time enjoyed by those using the river. Bird-watching is another passive pastime. Numerous parks provide public access to the riverfront throughout the corridor.