



Thornton Key preserve

Charlotte County's Thornton Key Preserve contains 31+ acres in the central portion of Thornton Key - an island in Lemon Bay located south of Stump Pass and east of Palm Island, within the Lemon Bay Watershed. The Preserve contains valuable habitat in relatively good condition, such as tropical coastal hammock that includes several rare plant species. The remaining habitats: mangrove swamps, salt barrens, and herbaceous marsh, are all of high quality.

The primary importance of this site is to preserve increasingly rare coastal upland habitats. The preserve is one of the few examples of tropical hardwood hammock habitat remaining in southwest Florida that is now protected. In addition, the marshy areas were once a far more common habitat type throughout southwest Florida than it is today. The construction of the Intra-Coastal Waterway, development and sea level rise have eliminated most of this habitat type. Tropical hardwood hammocks often contain numerous species of rare plants and are an important habitat for migratory birds.

