



Eco-Kayak Tours with Beach Bums & Captain Scott or Guide Brian!

INTRODUCTION

Join Captain Scott or Guide Brian for a Kayak tour in Anna Maria's own Bimini Bay or Manatee County's newest park: Robison Preserve.

Captain Scott, Beach Bum's resident kayaking expert and a fully fledged Sea Captain and retired marine biology teacher makes special tours Bimini Bay or the preserve.

He or Brian will take you out for 2-3 hours at a time to see Anna Maria from the water view perspective or the reed and mangrove swamps, sea grasses and sand reefs of Robins Preserve. Tours must match the right tide and weather conditions for you to make the most of your trip, but aside from this are designed to suit you. Minimum of 4 guest kayakers.

BIMINI BAY TOUR

We begin the tour with a discussion of the mangrove ecosystem and its role in Florida ecology. Kayak safety and technique is then discussed. The tour begins along a fringe of red mangroves, and you will see the juvenile fish that grow up in the protective roots. This opens up into Anna Maria Sound where dolphins are usually herding fish into the shallow waters. The tour then goes under the Key Royale Bridge into Bimini Bay which was dredged in the early 1900's. We go by the Key Royale Golf Course and then view the Sunshine Skyway Bridge and Tropicana Field in the distance. The highlight of the trip is the bird rookery found on a spoil island including the Roseate Spoonbill. The halfway point of the trip is a mangrove island where we get out and view fish eggs, hermit crabs, and mullet jumping in the sea grass. The trip then heads back to Anna Maria Sound where we again look for dolphins munching on mullet.

The trip length is two to three hours depending upon the season and skill level of the paddlers.

ROBINSON PRESERVE TOUR

You will have the opportunity to explore the narrow waterways, coves and shady mangrove enclosed streams that take you from the preserve to the Manatee River. The preserve is well laid out with the potential to see eagles, osprey, herons, pelicans, many types of gull and tern, and a number of fish and underwater creatures in the clear waters of the bay. You will have the opportunity to climb to the top of the 53ft. tall observation tower to view the park and surrounding water ways.



Robinson Preserve is a 487 acres peninsula that wraps around Tampa Bay's southern tip into the Prico Bayou, the preserve was converted from farmland over a two year period, after being rescued from development by Manatee County. It opened in July 2008.

It is the largest habitat restoration in the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program, and features many native habitat communities, including rare high marsh salterns. Restoration included the removal of most exotic vegetation, and the restoration of a mosaic of native wetland and upland communities, alongside hiking trails, boardwalks, and primitive campsites. There are 2.5 miles of blueway trail running from the Manatee River south to Perico Bayou.

There are bridges, picnic spots, mangrove forests and a 53 foot tall tower with a wide open view of the Tampa Bay area. The 120-year old Valentine House, moved to the preserve by boat, is near the entrance to the property, scheduled for a renovation to become Robinson's information centre.



TREE GUIDE

Did you know that Florida has a greater number of native trees than any other US state? At the Robinson Preserve you get a chance to see many of them!

List of local trees that may be seen with pics of unusual ones.

* Local farmers once planted rows of the fast-growing Australian pine tree along the edge of their fields to protect their crops from windstorms. Only decades later did the farmer's miracle fall from favor when biologists recognised the threat to native habitat from the imported trees, which spread quickly and drop needles that contaminate the soil, killing plants beneath them.

