

Big Cypress

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Big Cypress
National Preserve



Photo by G. Pellerin-NPS/VIP

Ranger-Led Activities — Winter 2010 through Spring 2011

Join a Big Cypress Ranger or Volunteer for programs that explore the wonders of the Big Cypress Swamp. For details on activities and to make reservations call: (239) 695-1201. Reservations are accepted up to 14 days in advance of the activity date. Scheduled activities are free. Programs begin November 27, 2010, and extend through April 18, 2011. For more information about Big Cypress National Preserve visit www.nps.gov/bicy.

Big Cypress Activities	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
"Who's Home?" — Three times daily. 12:00, 1:00, and 2:00 p.m., 15 minute talks. Join a ranger or volunteer at H. P. Williams wildlife viewing platform to discover who's home. Sightings often include alligators, turtles, fishes and colorful wading birds.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
"Scales, Teeth and a Big Tail!" or "Wings of Wonder!" – Twice daily, excluding Tuesday. 1:00 and 2:00 p.m., 15 minute talks. Join a ranger or volunteer on the Oasis boardwalk to learn about our largest native freshwater reptile, the alligator, or take a stroll through the Oasis native plant and butterfly garden. Discoveries abound!	X	X		X	X	X	X
"Mangroves and Manatees!" – Twice daily, excluding Tuesday. 1:00 and 2:00 p.m., 15 minute talks. Join a ranger or volunteer at the Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center wildlife viewing platform to learn about one of our largest native marine mammals, the manatee and its primary habitat.	X	X		X	X	X	X
Cypress Sights and Sounds - Kirby Storter Boardwalk Stroll – Sat., Sun., Mon., - 1:00 p.m., Thu., Fri. - 10:00 a.m. (1 hour). Explore a cypress forest while venturing into the heart of a cypress strand on this one mile round-trip leisurely stroll. Carry water. Binoculars and insect repellent optional. Meet at the boardwalk trailhead along US 41.	X 1:00 p.m.	X 1:00 p.m.			X 10:00 a.m.	X 10:00 a.m.	X 1:00 p.m.
Wet and Wild Swamp Walks – Sat., 1:00 p.m.. Mon., 10:00 a.m. (2 hours). Dwarf to giant. This is a great way to explore the swamp and discover what's beyond the road! Cypress knees and sawgrass make long pants necessary. Wear sturdy shoes that you can get wet and muddy. Bring a change of clothes and shoes. (Not offered: Dec. 4th or Mar. 26th). Reservations required.		X 10:00 a.m.					X 1:00 p.m.
Heart of the Swamp Canoe Trips – Sat., Sun., and Wed. starting November 27th, 2010, 10:00 am. (4 – 5 hours). We'll provide canoes and equipment or bring your own. Come prepared with water, lunch, binoculars, sun protection, insect repellent and a sense of adventure. Trips vary by weather, water level, tide and ranger's choice of location and duration. Knowing canoeing basics is helpful. Limit of 10 canoes or kayaks. (Not offered Dec. 4th or Mar. 26th.) Reservations required.	X			X			X
Walk on the Wild Side - Deep Lake or Gator Hook Hikes – Sun., 1:00 p.m. Location changes alternate weeks. Both introduce swamp history. Deep Lake is a rare natural sinkhole lake; the hike runs through an oasis of green in bear country (2 hours). Gator Hook Strand is a more rugged wet trail with a diversity of plants (3 hours). On either hike be prepared to get wet. Long pants necessary. Wear sturdy shoes that you can get wet and muddy. Bring a change of clothes and shoes. Come prepared with water, food, binoculars, sun protection and insect repellent. Hikes begin Dec.12, with the Deep Lake hike. Reservations required.	X						
Campfire Programs - Fridays and Saturdays - December 10th through March 19th. 7:30 p.m. (1 hour). Friday campfire programs are at Midway Campground. Saturday campfire programs are at Monument Lake Campground. Learn more about the natural and cultural history of this region. Ranger choice for talk topics. Some seating available or bring your own folding chair. Insect repellent optional.						X	X

Due to unforeseen circumstances this schedule is subject to change.



Photos left to right: G. Pellerin, R. Arwood, J. Shirey - NPS/VIPs



Ranger Specials	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<p>Hike to the Big Trees - Old Growth Cypress – First Saturday of each month starting December 4th. Additionally presented on Jan. 8th, Feb. 5th, and Mar. 5th. 9:00 a.m. (6 - 7 hours.) Rugged eight mile round trip hike on the FL Trail from Oasis VC to Robert’s Lake Strand where tall ferns, epiphytes, and old growth trees that escaped the loggers’ saws, still stand. Be prepared to get wet. Long pants necessary. Wear sturdy shoes that you can get wet and muddy. Bring a change of clothes, including shoes, for your ride home. Reservations required.</p>							X
<p>The Right Route - Off-Road Vehicle Tour - Second Saturday of each month starting December 11th. Additionally presented on Jan. 8th, Feb. 12th, Mar. 12th, and Apr. 9th. 10:00 am. (4 - 5 hours.) Join a ranger to learn more about Big Cypress, Tread Lightly and Leave No Trace philosophies while operating your own off-road vehicle, a traditional way to explore this area. Learn about native wildlife, plants, and the land, along the Bear Island backcountry trails. Meet at the Bear Island Campground. Proper permits and reservations required.</p>							X
<p>Cypress Sawyers History Hike - Third Saturday of each month beginning Dec. 18. Additionally presented Jan. 15, Feb. 19, Mar. 19 and Apr. 16. 10:00 am. (2 hours.) Discover the story of the Tamiami Trail and how it opened the Big Cypress Swamp to logging and development. Join a ranger to explore the ruins of the Reynolds Sawmill. Be prepared to get wet, long pants recommended, bring water and wear sturdy shoes that can get wet and muddy. Bring a change of clothes for the ride home. Reservations required.</p>							X
<p>Bear Island Bike Ride – Fourth Saturday of each month starting Jan. 22nd. Also, Feb. 26th, and Mar. 26th. 10:00 a.m. (4 - 5 hours). Eight mile round trip ride on a mixed limestone and gravel roadbed over rough terrain. Bring your own bike, water, food, and sun protection. Meet the Ranger at the Bear Island Access Point along Hwy 29, four miles north of I-75. Vistas of cypress, pines and sawgrass abound. Reservations required.</p>							X
<p>Night Sounds - Kirby Storter Evening Boardwalk Stroll - Second and Fourth Friday of each month beginning December 17th. Additionally presented Jan. 14th and 28th, Feb. 11th and 25th, Mar. 11th and 25th, and Apr. 8th. 7:30 – 9:00 pm. (1 1/2 hours). Explore night sounds and the night sky in a cypress forest habitat. Bring a flashlight and water. Insect repellent optional. Meet at the Kirby Storter boardwalk trailhead along US 41. Reservations suggested. 📍</p>						X	

Activities On Your Own

- Safety First** When traveling in Big Cypress National Preserve always let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return. Remember to fill out a backcountry permit if you are entering at one of the backcountry access points. To enjoy your visit come prepared by bringing water, food, sturdy shoes, sun protection, and insect repellent, Always be aware of your surroundings and be respectful of the wildlife.
- Wildlife Viewing** While visiting you may see a multitude of bird life, or alligators and the fish they prey on. Observe wildlife respectfully and never attempt to feed or approach wild animals! Wildlife observation platforms are located at the Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center - Seagrape Drive and U.S. 41, H. P. Williams Picnic Area - Turner River Road and U.S. 41, and at the Oasis Visitor Center on U.S. 41.
- Driving** Excellent wildlife viewing by car may be found along the Turner River/Birdon Road loop, 17 miles in length. This gravel road offers a view of Preserve’s animal life and subtropical habitats. Help protect wildlife by observing the speed limit. Stop by the Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center or the Oasis Visitor Center for more information.
- Hiking** The Florida National Scenic Trail runs through the heart of Big Cypress, presenting excellent backpacking opportunities. Fire Prairie Trail is five miles round trip and is found off of the northern end of Turner River Road, providing superb views of several of South Florida’s natural habitats.
- Canoeing** Wander the waters of Big Cypress by bringing your own canoe or kayak, or renting them in nearby communities. The access for Turner River Canoe Trail is located along U.S. 41. Halfway Creek Canoe Trail offers a saltwater option with the ramp located off of U.S. 41 at the end of Seagrape Drive, 3 miles east of State Road 29. Typical canoe trips in the area will take a minimum of two to three hours.
- Biking** Within the Preserve, many of the gravel roads off of Tamiami Trail, and several of the off-road vehicle trails, provide opportunities for exploration by bicycle. The Bear Island Grade, accessible from State Road 29, is a popular route. While biking in the preserve please be aware of traffic. While on backcountry trails yield to hikers and ORVs. For more details on bike riding speak to a Ranger.