

In and Around Naples

# Big Cypress Bend

Copyright © Paul Pacter

www.PaulVisits.com

## Big Cypress Bend

### Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve

**Website:** [www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park](http://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park)

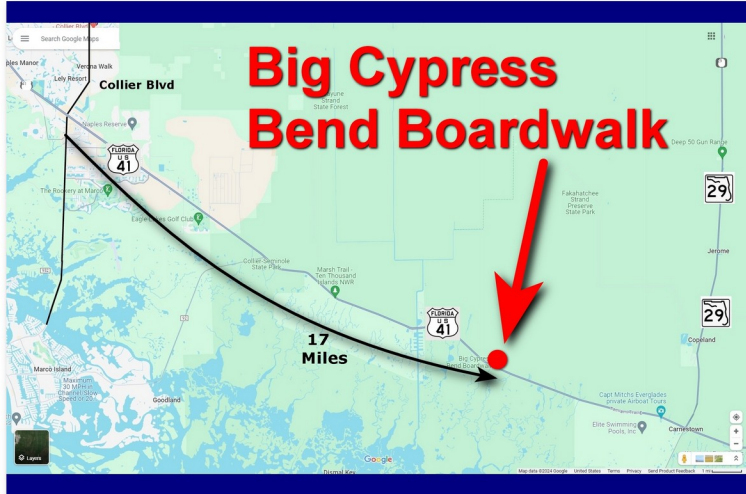
**Where:** US-41, Copeland FL 34137.

**Get There:** US-41 East 17 miles from Collier Blvd intersection.

**When:** 8am to sunset.

**Admission:** \$3.

## Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk



**What:** Fakahatchee Strand Preserve is the largest State Park in Florida (out of 175 parks).

Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk is one feature of the Preserve.

**At the moment, there are TWO Big Cypress Bend Boardwalks:** One closed and one partially open.

**Eventually the two will be connected to form a loop.**

## Why are there currently two Big Cypress Bend Boardwalks?

- There is an old 3,200' boardwalk plus 1,000' gravel path thru a swamp to an alligator pond. Lots of wildlife.
- The State had planned a major loop extension of the old boardwalk – and had started work on a small part of the extension plus new parking and visitors' center – when Hurricane Ian hit in Sept 2022.

## Ian made the old boardwalk unusable.

- The State had funding for only part of the new extension.
- Finally, in Feb 2024, about ½ mile of the new extension opened, along with a parking area and visitors' center.
- The State still needs funding for the rest of the new extension and also for repairs to the old boardwalk.

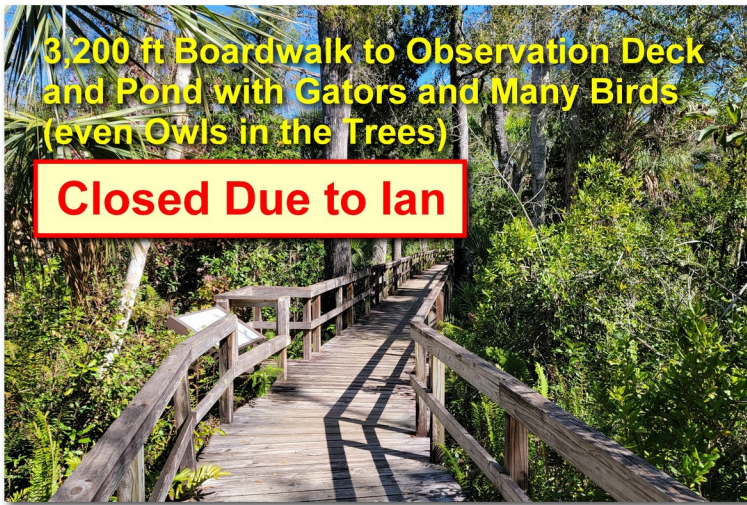
*The map on the next slide illustrates all of this.*



## The next 7 slides show the OLD boardwalk and alligator pond.

- These are not currently accessible due to Hurricane Ian damage.
- After the old boardwalk is repaired, it will become part of the expanded hiking loop (including boardwalk, canopy walk, and trails) shown in the previous map.





**3,200 ft Boardwalk to Observation Deck and Pond with Gators and Many Birds (even Owls in the Trees)**

**Closed Due to Ian**



**Lake at the End of the Boardwalk  
One of the most beautiful spots in or near Naples!**

**Not currently accessible due to Ian.**



**Big Cypress Bend Observation Deck  
Benches to Sit and Watch**

**Area not accessible due to Hurricane Ian.**



**Big Cypress Bend  
Gators Cuddling**

**Area not accessible due to Hurricane Ian.**



**Barred Owl Looking  
Down on the Pond**

**Area not accessible due to Hurricane Ian.**



**Sometimes Two Barred Owls**

**Area not accessible due to Hurricane Ian.**



**Large Alligator Sunning in the Pond**

**Area not accessible due to Hurricane Ian.**



**Area not accessible due to Hurricane Ian.**



**The rest of the slides illustrate the parts of Big Cypress Bend that are now open.**



**Visitors' Center and Start of Boardwalk**



**Visitors' Center Overlooks a Wet Prairie**



**Start of Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk**



**Alligator Sunning Near the Boardwalk**



**Alligator at Big Cypress Bend**



**Prairie - Big Cypress Bend**







Egret in a tree on the prairie



Boardwalk becomes a crushed shell path when you reach Green Heron Lake



You walk along a crushed shell path at Green Heron Lake



Green Heron Lake Big Cypress Bend

**Old Boardwalk – To Be Repaired. Closed.**  
**New Boardwalk and Trail – Already Opened.**  
**New Boardwalk, Canopy Walk, and Trail – To Be built.**



**Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk ● is only a very small part of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park (entire park 5 mi x 20 mi).**  
 – Janes Scenic Drive is a good gravel road.  
 – All the dotted red lines are hiking and wading trails.

