

South and East of Naples Along the Tamiami Trail

Presentation by Paul Pacter

www.PaulVisits.com

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Tamiami Trail (US-41) Naples to Dade Line = 65 miles.

We will look at interesting places to visit along the road, including:

- A National Park.
- National Preserve.
- National Wildlife Refuge.
- State Parks.
- Wildlife. History. The Everglades.



I took virtually all the pics in this presentation.

South and East of Naples Along the Tamiami Trail (US-41)



Current News

Both Collier and Lee counties currently in worst drought in 25 years. **Record-dry January.**

Collier: **82% area is in Severe Drought. 18% Extreme Drought. Major wildfire now burning.**

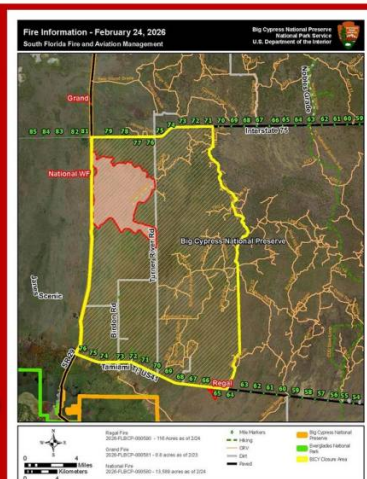
Lee: **97% in Severe Drought. Rest Extreme Drought.**

Water Shortage Warning: Both counties. Due to critically low levels in freshwater aquifers and surface water supplies.

This is already affecting some of the sites I will talk about along the Tamiami Trail.

Map of Big Cypress Preserve closure areas as of Feb 24, 2026.

Smoke is currently affecting I-75, SR-29, and US-41. Roads are open but visibility may be restricted. May be some road closures. Ongoing firefighting efforts in RED areas on map.

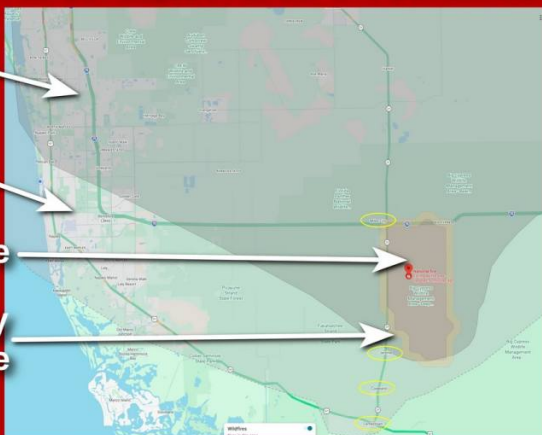


Fire Map superimposed on my sightseeing map.



7am Thurs Feb 26: 25,000 Acres. 0% Contained.

Heavy Smoke
Medium Smoke
Active Fire
Potentially Active Fire



Building the Tamiami Trail Naples to Dade Line 1913-1928

Tampa to MIAMI 284 miles.

AKA US-41



Tampa to Naples is North-South 163 miles.

Naples to Miami East-West 121 miles.



Tamiami Trail

- Initially proposed and agreed to by the various counties on the route in 1915. **Aim: economic development.**
- Much of the road from Tampa to Fort Myers was already in place, but needed improvement.
- Ft Myers to Miami would be new.

- Dade County started work on their end immediately. Made good progress.
- Lee County (which included what's now Collier) did some work on road from Ft Myers to Naples. **But ran out of money. State had no funds to help.**

Early road from Fort Myers to Naples still required an all-day trip!
1914



1923: Land developer Barron Collier offered to fund completion of the Tamiami Trail Naples to Dade line. In return, the State legislature would establish a new county and name it after him.

- State agreed.
- Population of Collier County in 1925: just 1,258.



Construction started 1923. Completed 1928. Opened April 26, 1928.

Basic process: Use dynamite to create an east-west canal. Use the resulting dirt to build the roadbed in the swamp above flood level. Called a "borrow canal" because the soil was borrowed to build the road.



2.6 million sticks of dynamite were used.

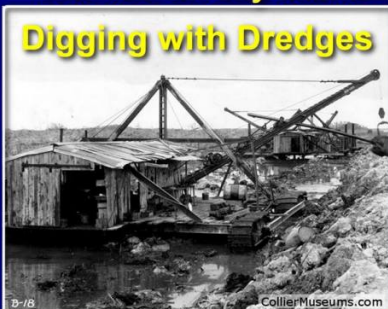
Brought in by log tram or by oxen. →

This machine bored the dynamite holes. →



Mobile worker bunks, kitchens, toilets moved in the canal as the road progressed. Workers paid \$60/month. Worked all day standing in swamps, bitten by mosquitos.

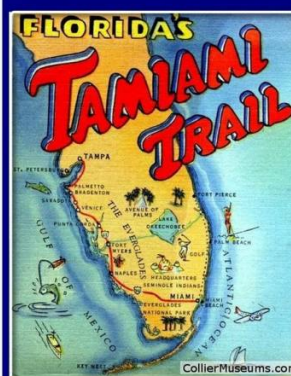
Digging with Dredges



Mobile Bunks



Tamiami Trail
Opened Apr 25, 1928



Festivities in Everglades

N-S was US41
E-W was US94



Marco Island



Marco Island Historical Museum One of Five Collier County Museums

Website: www.colliermuseums.com

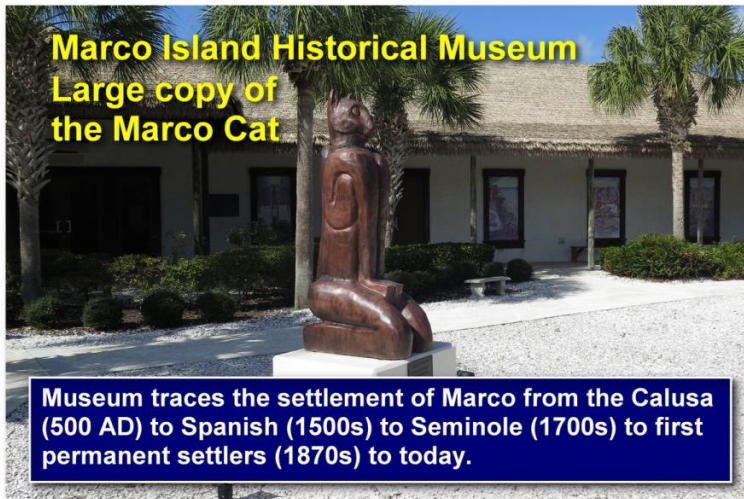
Where: 180 South Heathwood Drive,
Marco Island.

When: Tues
to Sat.
9am to 4pm.

Admission:
Free.



Marco Island Historical Museum Large copy of the Marco Cat



Museum traces the settlement of Marco from the Calusa (500 AD) to Spanish (1500s) to Seminole (1700s) to first permanent settlers (1870s) to today.

Museum has extensive history of the Calusa
and other early native Marco Island people
including 200 pre-Columbian artifacts.



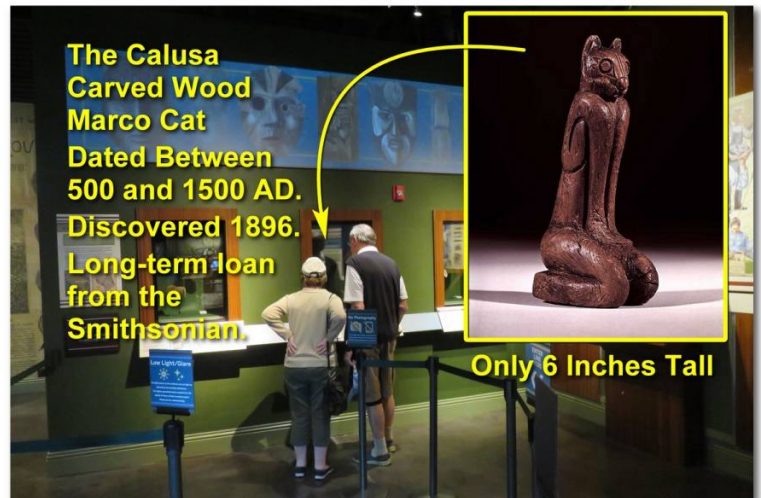
Calusa Tools – 13th-16th centuries



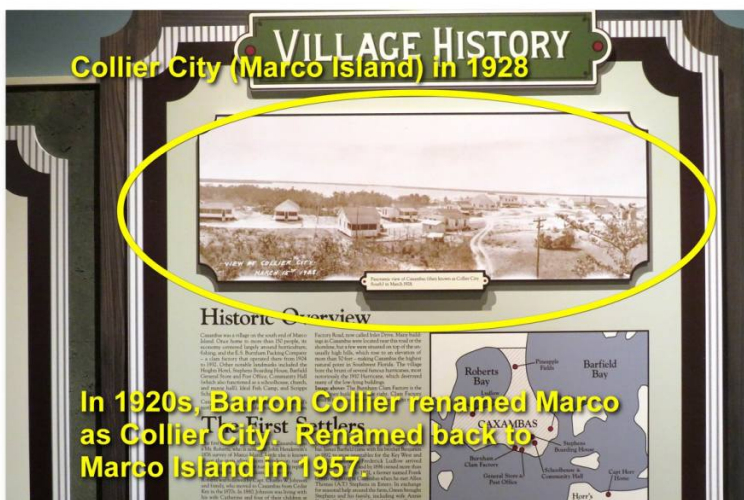
The Calusa
Carved Wood
Marco Cat
Dated Between
500 and 1500 AD.
Discovered 1896.
Long-term loan
from the
Smithsonian.



Only 6 Inches Tall

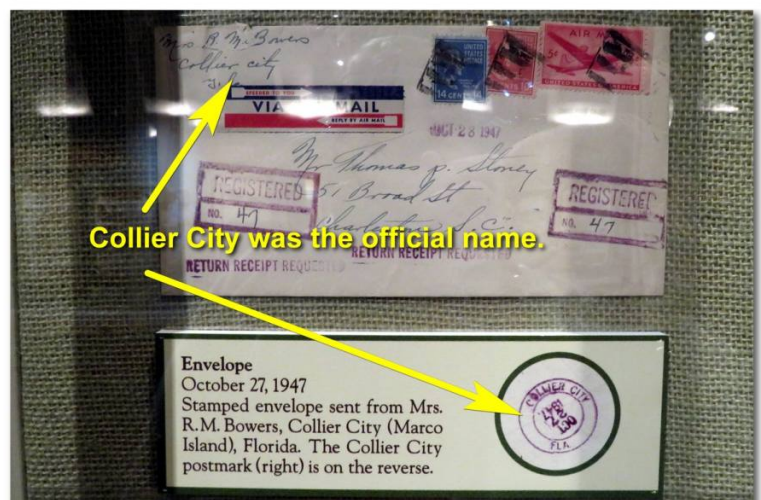


VILLAGE HISTORY Collier City (Marco Island) in 1928

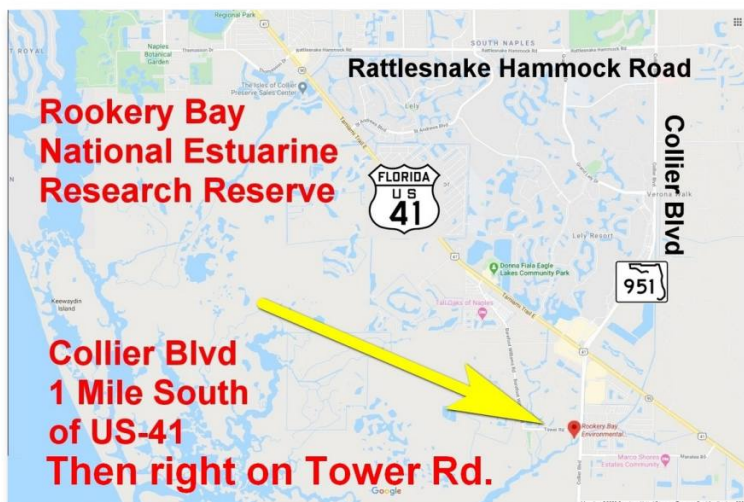
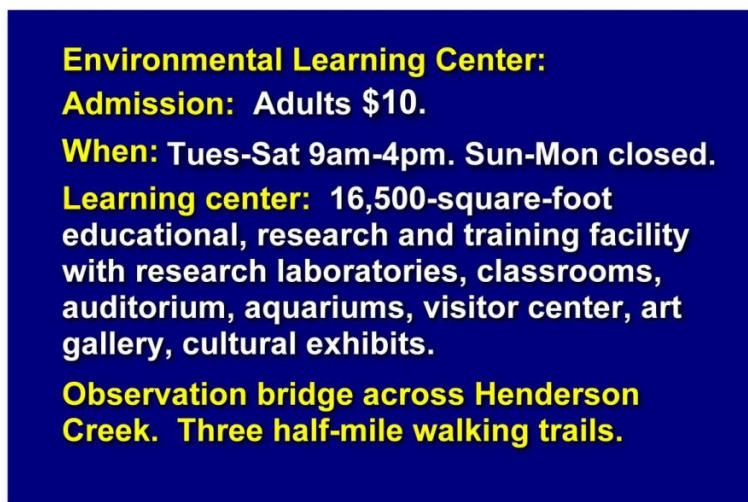
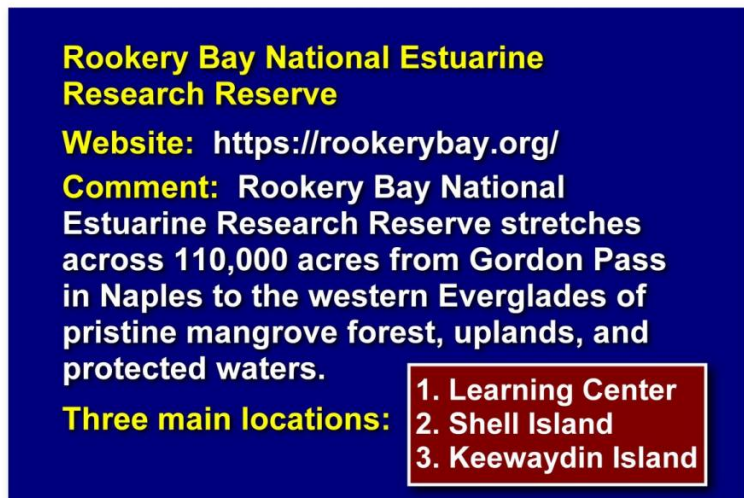


In 1920s, Barron Collier renamed Marco
as Collier City. Renamed back to
Marco Island in 1957.

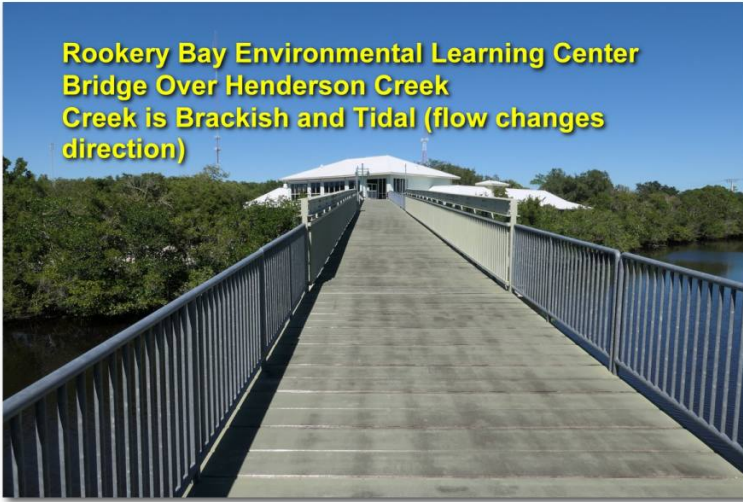
Collier City was the official name.



Envelope
October 27, 1947
Stamped envelope sent from Mrs.
R.M. Bowers, Collier City (Marco
Island), Florida. The Collier City
postmark (right) is on the reverse.



**Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
Bridge Over Henderson Creek**
Creek is Brackish and Tidal (flow changes direction)



**Rookery Bay Reserve
View of Henderson Creek from the Bridge**
Creek is Tidal



Three trails, each ½ mile long
Snail Trail has viewing platform on the Creek
Slash Pine and Catbird loops are primitive and wet in rainy seasons.



**Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center
Viewing Platform on Henderson Creek**



Shell Island Road

Briggs Boardwalk: Half-mile boardwalk. Small nature center. Self-guided tours dawn to dusk. Guided tours Jan-March

Monument Point Trail: 1,000 feet from boat launch area to Henderson Creek. Can fish at Monument Point.

Boat tours: 3 hours. \$109.

Guided kayak tours: 2 hours. \$65 to \$75.

Rookery Bay - Shell Island Hiking, Boardwalk, Nature Cruises



Rookery Bay Shell Island Briggs Boardwalk - ½ Mile Loop

Important: ⚠️
Briggs Boardwalk
is closed until
further notice
for repairs.



Rookery Bay - Briggs Boardwalk



Sabal Palm – Florida State Tree (South Carolina too)
Can Grow to 65 Ft Height.
aka Cabbage Palm, Palmetto,
Swamp Cabbage.

*Our State Tree is technically NOT a tree!
It is a GRASS.*

Gopher Tortoise - Rookery Bay

Cannot Swim - Lives in Burrows

Calusa Shell Mound
1700s or earlier

**Bits of History
on Shell Island**

1887 Water Tank

**1901 & 1908
Gravestones**

George Washington Kirkland
1832 to 1901

Jesse James Jones
1900-1908

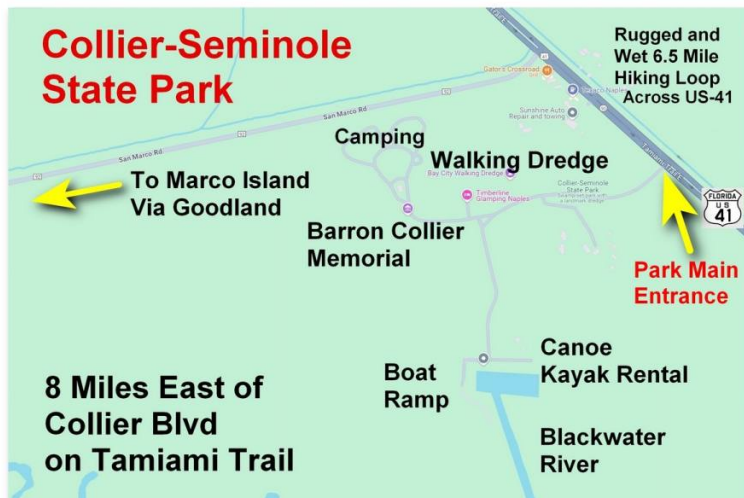
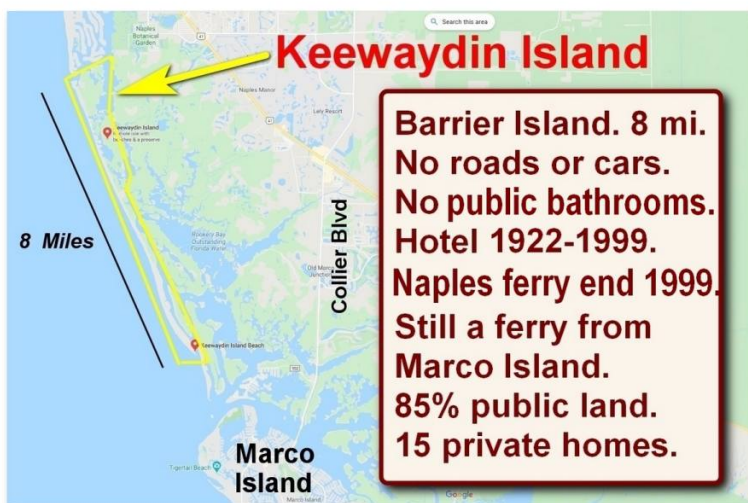
Rookery Bay Nature Cruises

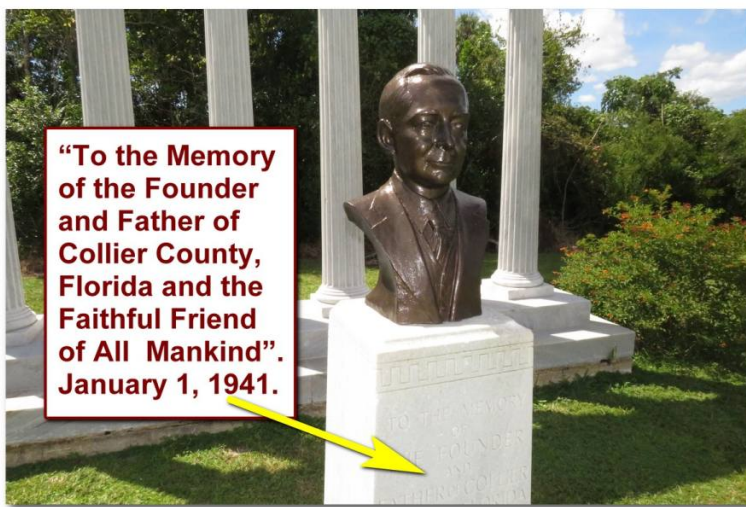
**Rookery Bay - Shell Island
Trail to Monument Point
aka Rena Point**

**Trail to Monument Point aka Rena Point
NOT Accessible at High Tide**

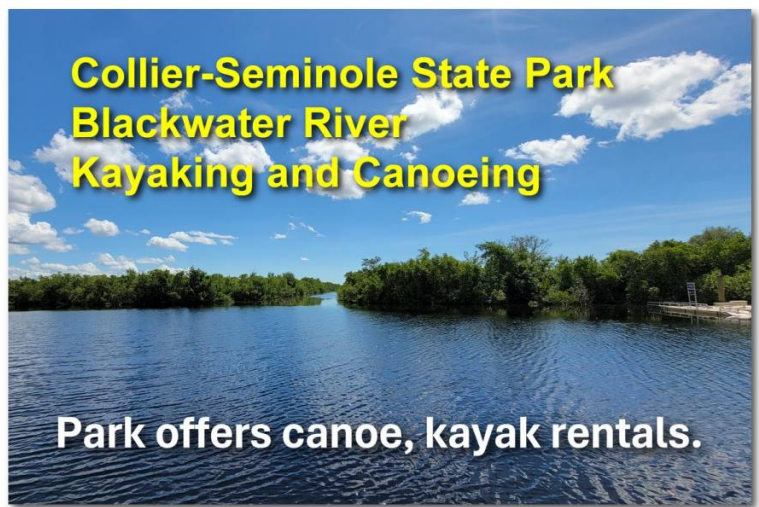
Parking

Monument Point (Rena Point)
Good fishing.
Occasional dolphins.





**"To the Memory
of the Founder
and Father of
Collier County,
Florida and the
Faithful Friend
of All Mankind".
January 1, 1941.**



Collier-Seminole State Park Blackwater River Kayaking and Canoeing

Park offers canoe, kayak rentals.

**"Not for the inexperienced hiker."
"Wilderness savvy is in order, as
you'll be wading the better part of 6
miles to experience a watery
forest like none
other – the Big
Cypress Swamp."
"A real workout!"**

[https://floridahikes.com/
collier-seminole-hiking-
trail](https://floridahikes.com/collier-seminole-hiking-trail)



Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge

Where: Visit by boat trip is best.
By car: US-41, 11 mi E of Collier Blvd.
Daily: Free.
What: 35,000 acres.
Mangrove islands.
Countless plants, wildlife.
1-mile hiking trail, observation tower.



**Ten Thousand Islands
National Wildlife Refuge
Start of Marsh Trail 1.2 miles.
First 1,000' paved. Then gravel.**

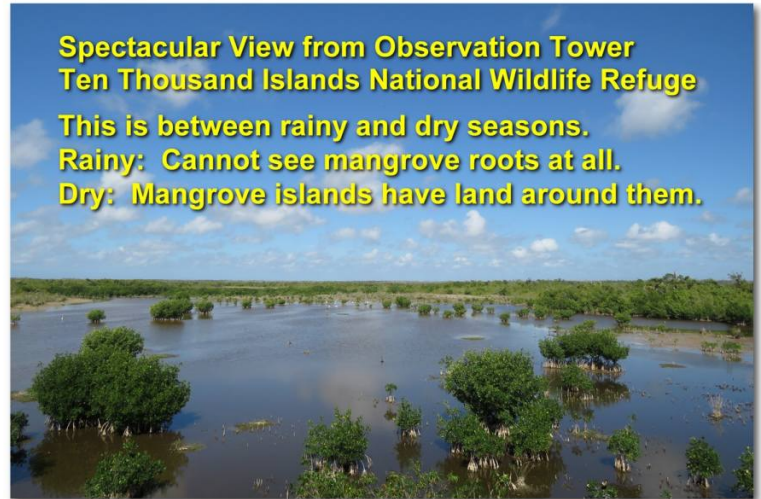
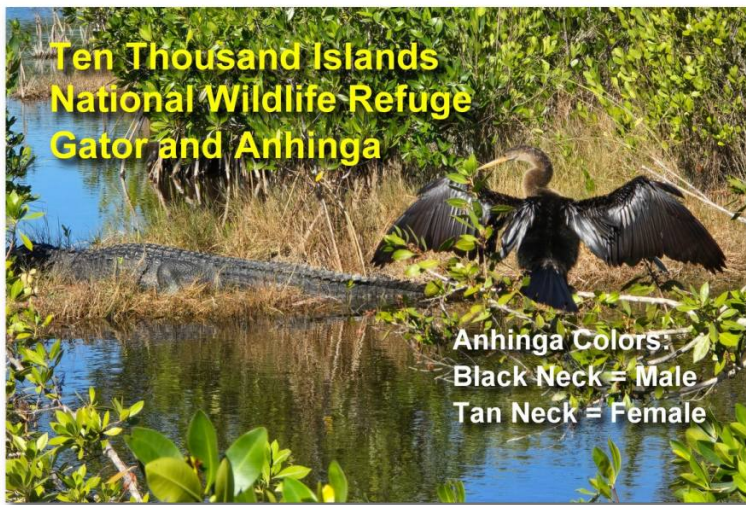


**Do Not
Forget!**



**Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge
Great Everglades Views
Great Bird Watching Year Round**





Gallinules (also called Moorhens) Ten-Thousand Islands



Limpkin

Their diet is dominated by apple snails. This one is at Collier-Seminole State Park next to Ten Thousand Islands.



Teals, Coots, and Others Dec 7, 2022 - Marsh Trail



Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk



Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park Largest State Park in Florida (175 parks). Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk is one feature of the Park.

- Currently, the Boardwalk is 2.3-mile round trip walk from parking at US-41.
- An additional 1.6 mile Boardwalk is planned.
- Eventually will be a 2.7 mile loop.

Map on next slide...

Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk

When the planned boardwalk is completed, will be a 2.7-mile loop.

Part of the yellow is planned as a canopy walk.



Big Cypress Bend – More Info

Website:

<https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park>

Where: US-41, Copeland, FL.

Get There: US-41 East 17 miles from Collier Blvd. 7 miles West of SR-29.

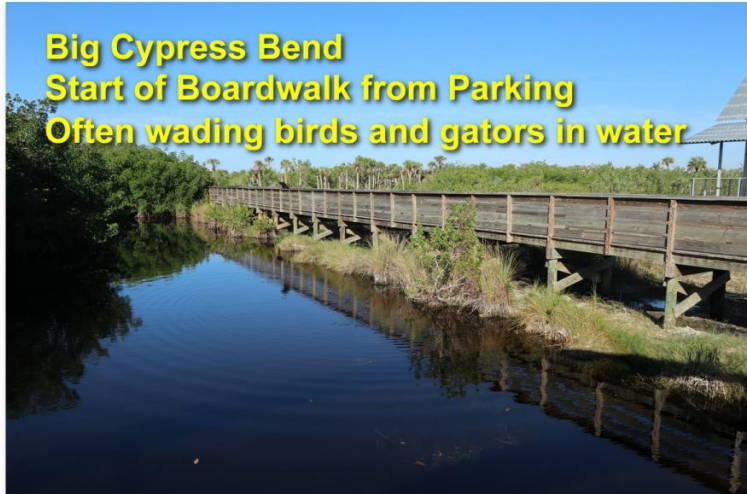
When: 8am to sunset.

Admission: \$3.

Big Cypress Bend Bridge from Parking to Visitor Center



Big Cypress Bend
Start of Boardwalk from Parking
Often wading birds and gators in water



Big Cypress Bend



Florida Spotted Gar (Fish)



Sunning Under the Boardwalk



Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk



After first Boardwalk is a gravel path around part of Green Heron Lake.



Green Heron Lake
Big Cypress Bend



Snowy Egret at Green Heron Lake



Mama and 2 baby gators



I got much too close taking this photo. Didn't see babies.

Pond at end of new (2025) boardwalk.
Lots of wildlife: Alligators, birds, etc.



Tricolored Heron

Blue Heron

Two Gators

New boardwalk opened November 2025.
Replaces part destroyed by Ian, which
was closed for 3 years.



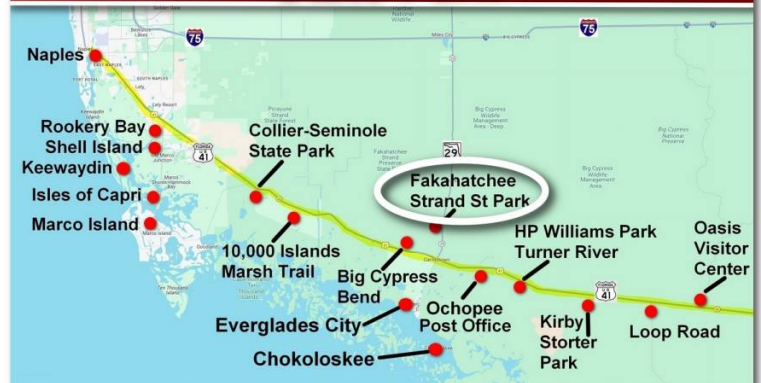
Big Cypress Bend Pond



Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park



Barred Owl Looking
Down on the Pond



Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park

Florida's largest State Park.

Where: SR-29 just north of US-41.

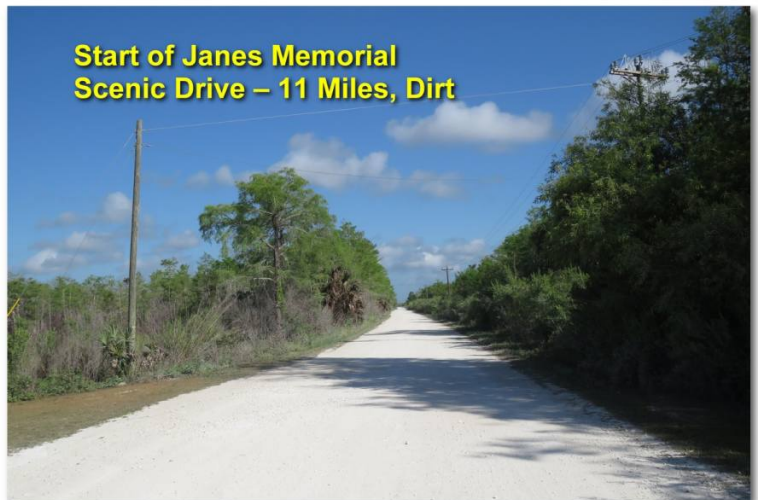
What: Florida's Amazon.

– **Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk.**

– **Janes Memorial Scenic Drive.**

11-mile dirt road with hiking, wading,
alligators (on road), wild orchids.

Start of Janes Memorial Scenic Drive – 11 Miles, Dirt



Janes Scenic Drive

11 mile dirt road.

Ruts and potholes.

Goes through subtropical wilderness, swamp, prairie.

Along the road, basking alligators and snakes.

Hiking trails. Bring bug repellent.

Not for your pampered BMW or Mercedes!



Big Cypress Bend

Janes Memorial Scenic Drive

Along the road (from car window)



Everglades City



Today both are small, isolated towns of about 400 people. Populations:

Everglades City

1930	172
1940	518
1950	625
1960	552
1970	462
1980	524
1990	321
2000	479
2010	400
2020	352

Chokoloskee

2000	404
2010	359
2020	346

Collier County total population 2020: 375,752

Until 1962 Everglades City was the Collier County Seat.

1868: An army deserter (John Weeks) was hiding in what is now EC. Began some farming.

1870: First real settler William Smith Allen. Allen remained until 1889. Farmed along river front.

1870-1881: A few settlers arrived. Built rough homes. Fishing and farming.



1881: First visionary settler George Storter Sr arrived. Invested in property and developed agriculture.

By 1890: Storter bought out Allen and Weeks and other settlers. Planted vegetables and sugar cane (and made syrup). Started trading post and inn. Church. Railroad 14 miles north to Deep Lake.

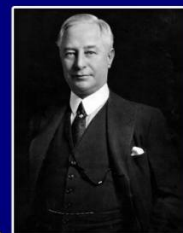


1825-1919

Storter's home, store, farm.

Barron Gift Collier

- Born Memphis 1873. Died 1939.
- Made \$1 million in street lighting by age 26. Then printing and streetcar advertising.
- Visited SW Florida 1906. Loved it.
- By 1916 had bought 1 million acres of land.
 - He became the largest landowner and developer in Florida.
 - He also owned a chain of hotels, bus lines, banks, newspapers, telephone company, steamship line.



Collier's 1 million acres cost him between 12 cents and 30 cents an acre.

In 1922, Barron Collier bought out George Storter and virtually the whole Everglade village.

- Renamed the Allen River the Barron River.
- Added an s to the town's name (Everglades).

At that time only one dozen resident families. Plus a few fishing and hunting cabins owned by non-residents.



Everglades area prospered under Collier's leadership in the 1920s.

- Planned community including shops, hotels, school, bank, churches, public utilities, courthouse, hospital, newspaper.
- Created Collier County separate from Lee.
- He brought a passenger and freight railroad into Everglades.
- He built the Tamiami Trail.
- He built County and State Road 29 north Everglades to Immokalee.

Everglades, Florida – April 26, 1928



Amid all the development in Everglades, there were major hurricanes in 1926 and 1928:



1929-1939 Great Depression. 1939 Collier died. His vision for EC was never realized!

Museum of the Everglades



Websites: www.colliermuseums.com
<https://evergladesmuseum.org/>

One of five Collier County Museums.

Where: 105 West Broadway, Everglades City.

Get There: South on US-41, right on US-29. 35 miles from central Naples.

Admission: Free.

When: Tues-Sat 9am to 4pm.

What: History of Everglades City including:

- **People of the Everglades:** Calusa and Seminoles.
- **Founding and History of Everglades City.**
- **Building the Tamiami Trail.**
- **Illegal Trades:** Moonshine.
- **Opening Everglades National Park.**
- **Fishing.**
- **The Python Problem.**
- **Several excellent videos.**

Museum of the Everglades Old Collier Laundry Building - 1928



One of five Collier County Museums.

**First Baptist Church – Built 1923
Moved to Everglades from Jerome
when Jerome sawmill closed 1956.**



Everglades City School
Collier County Public Schools
~~196~~ **144** Students in Grades Pre-K to 12.



Rod & Gun Club
200 W Broadway on Barron R.
1871: Site of settler William Allan's cabin.
1889: George Storter bought site, built store and inn.
1922: Barron Collier bought inn. Private club.
1972: Bowen family (Michigan) bought. Still own.



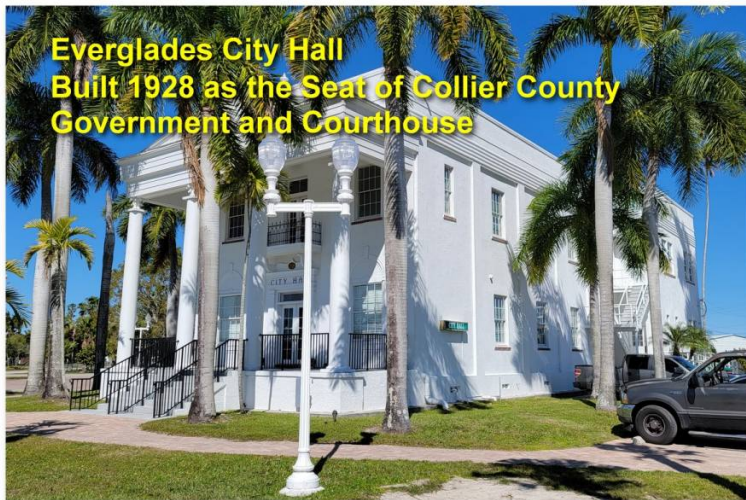
Rod & Gun Club Today



Bank of Everglades – 1926
Founded by Barron G Collier
Only bank in Collier County until 1949



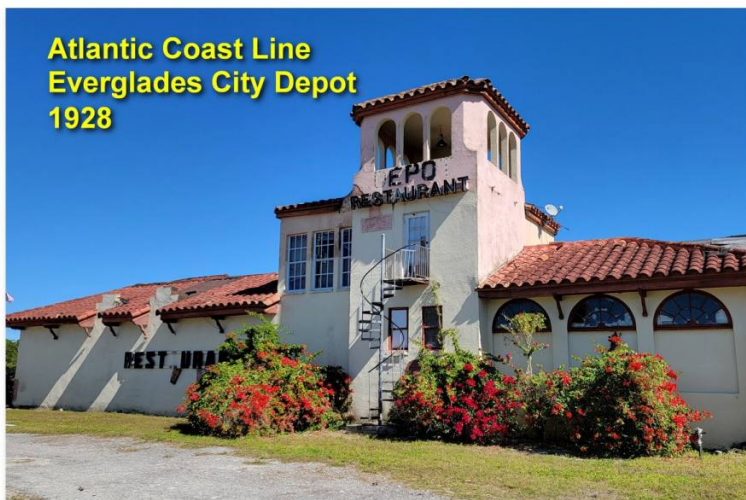
Everglades City Hall
Built 1928 as the Seat of Collier County
Government and Courthouse



Everglades Community Church
1940

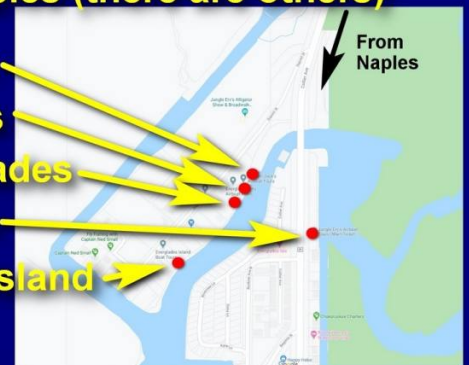


Atlantic Coast Line
Everglades City Depot
1928



Airboat Tours from Everglades City
Some Examples (there are others)

Capt. Jack's
Capt. Doug's
Orig. Everglades
Jungle Erv's
Everglades Island
Also others along US-41



Chokoloskee



Settlement of Chokoloskee Island

Chokoloskee means Old House in Indian language. But nobody knows the legend of the name.

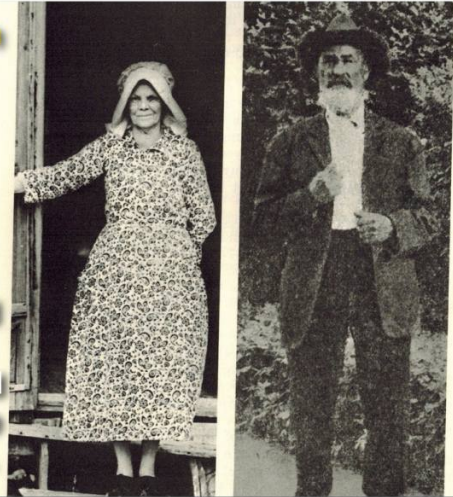


First settlers on Chokoloskee.

Mrs C G (Susan) McKinney.

C G McKinney.

In 1886 age 39 he abandoned a wife and 5 kids and moved to Chokoloskee with the nanny.



In 1896 Ted Smallwood settled on Chokoloskee. Started as a farmer.

He said there were 5 families there at the time.

In 1897 Ted married Mamie.

Today the two main roads on Chokoloskee are Mamie Street and Smallwood Drive.



Ted Smallwood's Store
Started 1906
This building 1917



Ted Smallwood Store
National Register of Historic Places
360 Mamie Street, Chokoloskee
Daily 11am to 5pm, \$5
www.smallwoodstore.com



Chokoloskee Church of God
Original wood structures destroyed by hurricanes 1928 and 1960.
This one built 1961



Havanna Cafe
Chokoloskee
October thru May



Ochopee Post Office



Smallest Post Office in USA
Ochopee, FL 34141
Open Monday-Saturday



On US-41 4 Miles East of SR-29

1953



CollierMuseums.com

H P Williams Park Turner River Road



HP Williams Park – Turner River Rd

Where: US-41 Tamiami Trail 30 mi E of Collier Blvd (6 mi E of SR-29).

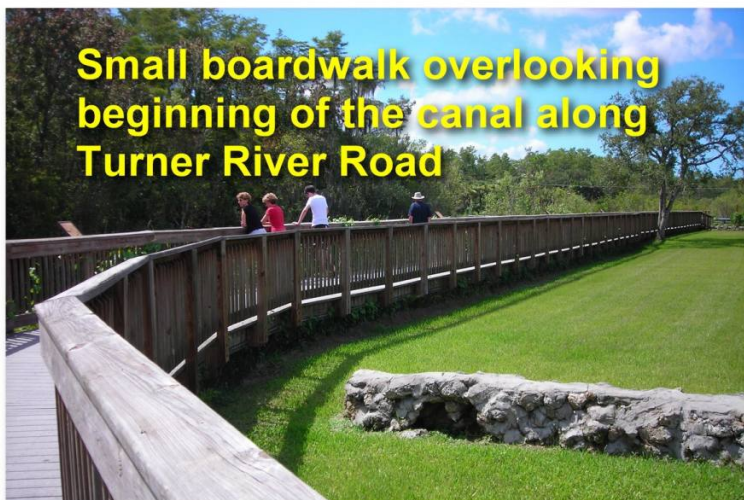
What: Small park with boardwalk and alligators. *H P Williams Park*

Plus 21-mile dirt road along a canal, also with gators and other wildlife.

- Do not feed gators.
- Be cautious getting out of your car.



Small boardwalk overlooking beginning of the canal along Turner River Road

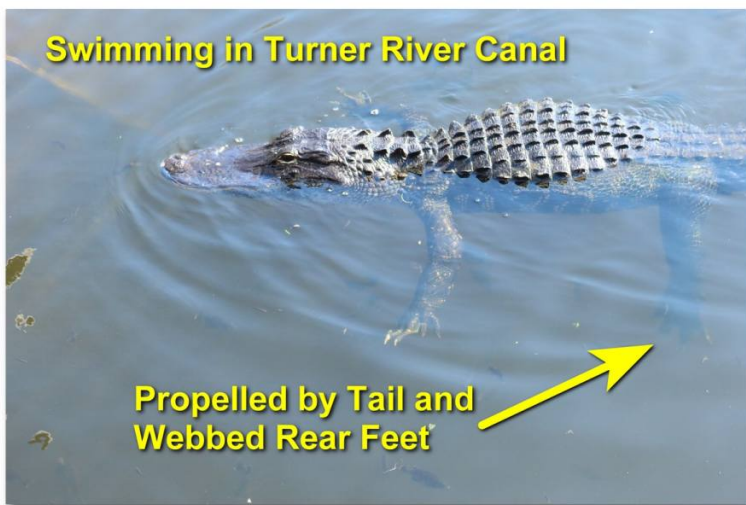


Turner River Canal Near the Boardwalk

Upward-facing nostrils for breathing while under water.



Swimming in Turner River Canal



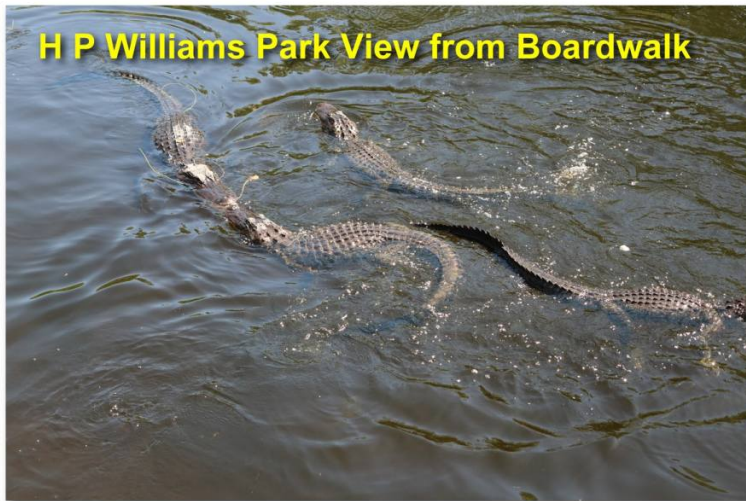
Propelled by Tail and Webbed Rear Feet



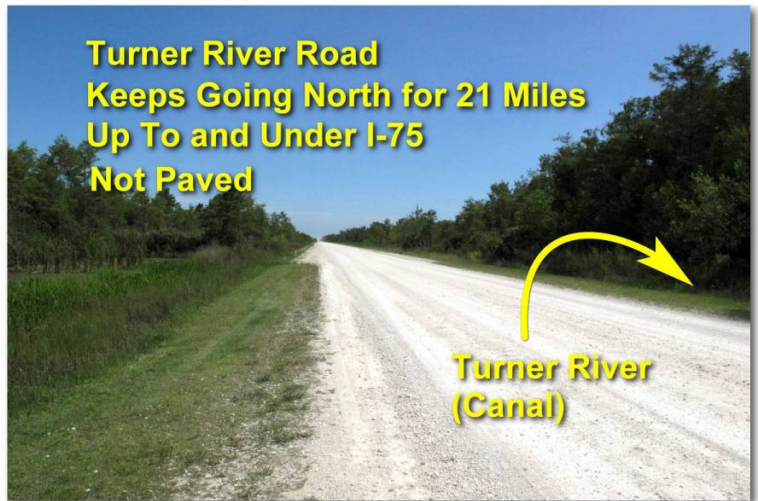
Behind the Bathrooms Next to the Boardwalk



H P Williams Park View from Boardwalk



Turner River Road Keeps Going North for 21 Miles Up To and Under I-75 Not Paved



Turner River (Canal)



If you do decide to drive up Turner River Road to see wildlife, some tips:

- It's a dirt and gravel road. Dusty.
- River & wildlife on the right driving north.
- 2 or 3 miles is usually all you need.
- Be very careful if you get out of your car.
- Best to take photos from the car window.
- Good photo ops where you see these signs →
- **Obey the sign!**



Turner River



Taken from the Window of My Car



In the Canal Along Turner River Road



Kirby Storter Park



Kirby Storter Park

Part of Big Cypress National Preserve.
On Us-41: 37 miles East of Collier Blvd.

Admission: Free, dawn to dusk.

Half-mile boardwalk through sawgrass prairie, cypress swamp, alligator hole.

– Gators dig hole for deep water in dry season.

– **Most of boardwalk temporarily closed!**

Wildlife: Includes birds, snakes, fish, turtles, and alligators.

Map of Big Cypress National Preserve



Kirby Storter Park Beginning of Boardwalk

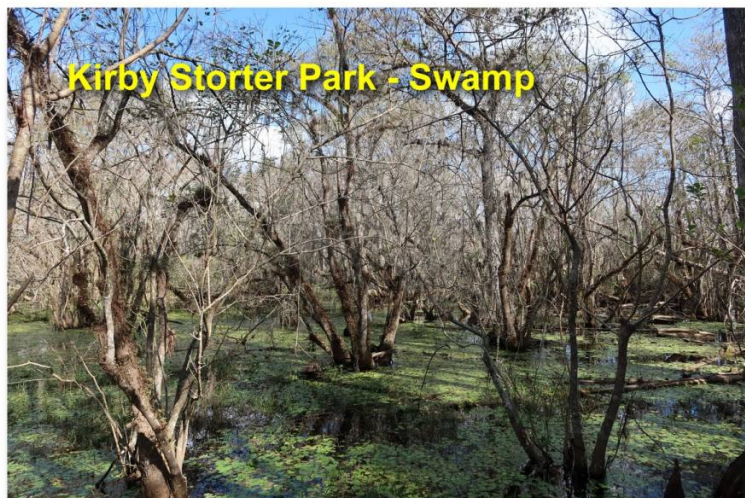


Kirby Storter Park

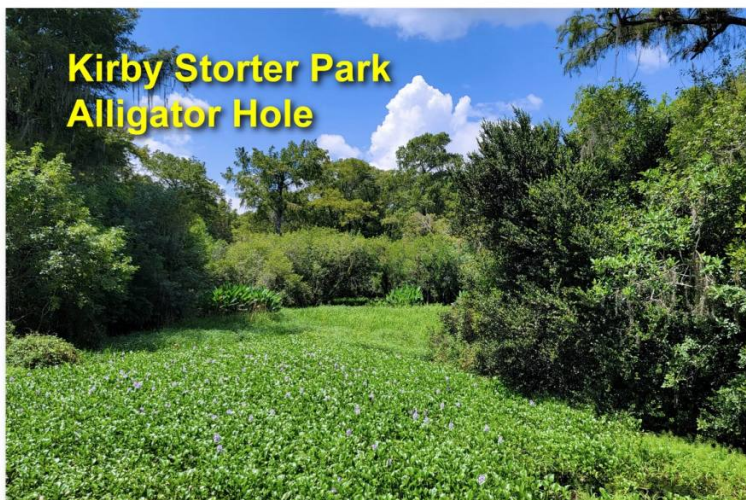
In October 2024, fire destroyed part of the Kirby Storter boardwalk. Part has now reopened, but the damaged part is not yet rebuilt.



Kirby Storter Park - Swamp



Kirby Storter Park Alligator Hole



Juvenile Alligator
By age 5, they lose their camouflage stripes.



Loop Road



Side story about Collier's Tamiami Trail:

- State decided to build Tamiami Trail in 1915.
- Miami developer James Jaudon agreed to build section from Miami to 24 miles west of Dade County line.
- Along this road, Jaudon planned to build "the Next Miami" called "Pinecrest".

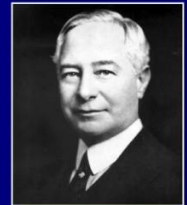


James Jaudon

Map of Jaudon's Loop Road. Now a gravel wilderness road.



- Jaudon's company built a few rustic homes 1921-1923. And dirt Loop Road.
- But by 1923 he ran out of money. Could not find any outside investors.
- 1923 state awarded Tamiami Trail contract to Barron Collier.
- Including Jaudon's 24-mile section.

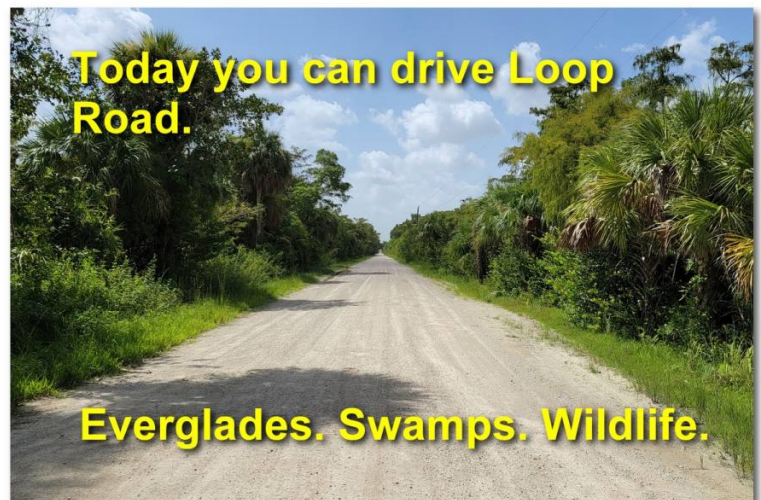


Barron Collier

Collier did not agree with Jaudon's loop.

- He built a straight road to the Dade line.
- Loop Road dirt road survived.
- But not as part of Tamiami Trail.
- By early 1930s, 200 people lived along Loop Road. Pinecrest had a saw mill, school, store, gas station, bunk house.
- In 1937 Jaudon's company filed for bankruptcy. Land sold to Government.
- Today a few pioneer types live along Loop Road.

Today you can drive Loop Road.



Everglades. Swamps. Wildlife.

And you can see the ruins of (supposedly) Al Capone's home in the ruins of Pinecrest.



Oasis Visitor Center Big Cypress National Preserve



Big Cypress National Preserve

Oasis Visitor Center

33100 Tamiami Trail East

Ochopee, FL 34141

Info and exhibits, plus...

Great boardwalk to see
lots of alligators
swimming in a canal.

On US-41

45 mi East of Collier Blvd.



Big Cypress
National Preserve
Boardwalk
Open Daily



Big Cypress Preserve Oasis Visitor Center



Views from the Boardwalk



Rear legs
4 toes



Front legs
5 toes



Oasis Visitor Center

May 14, 2025

Lunch?



Just East of Oasis Visitor Center on US-41

Clyde Butcher
**BIG CYPRESS
GALLERY**

SWAMP WALK TOURS • LODGING
NATURE TRAIL • GIFT SHOP



Everglades National Park



Everglades National Park

- Legislation passed 1934.
- 1.5 million acres of land acquired 1934-1947.
- Dade, Monroe, Collier Counties.
- Largest subtropical wilderness in US.
- Elevation 0 to 8 feet.



Everglades National Park opened in 1947.

- Dedication ceremony in Everglades City.
- Attended by President Harry Truman.

UNESCO World Heritage Site 1979



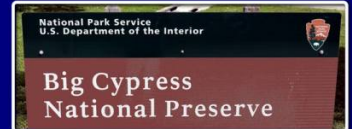
1947

Big Cypress National Preserve Abuts Everglades National Park.

Established 1974. Adds 729,000 acres. Very similar topography.

Classification as Preserve is political.

Preserve allows more commercial and recreational activity than Park.



Everglades National Park Gulf Coast Visitor Center destroyed by Hurricane Irma in 2017. A temporary replacement visitor center was destroyed by Hurricane Ian in 2022.

New visitor center is under construction.



It's The End of Our Trip Along the Tamiami Trail

