

# South and East of Naples Along the Tamiami Trail

Presentation by Paul Pacter

[www.PaulVisits.com](http://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.**

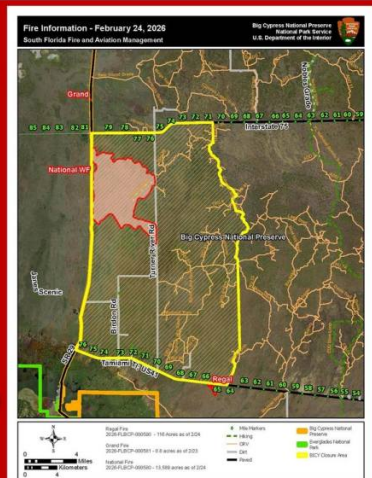
**Water Shortage Warning: Both counties. Due to critically low levels in freshwater aquifers and surface water supplies.**

**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.



## Building the Tamiami Trail Naples to Dade Line

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.



May 8, 1923  
1 Florida Gov. Cary A. Hardee  
2 Barron G Collier

**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.** →



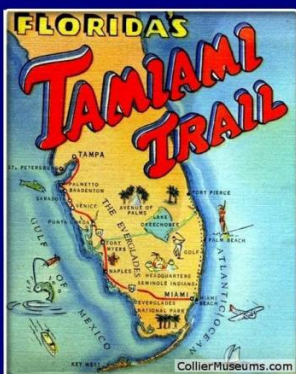
**Mobile worker bunks, kitchens, toilets moved in the canal as the road progressed. Workers paid \$60/month. Worked all day standing in swamps, bitten by mosquitos.**

**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**

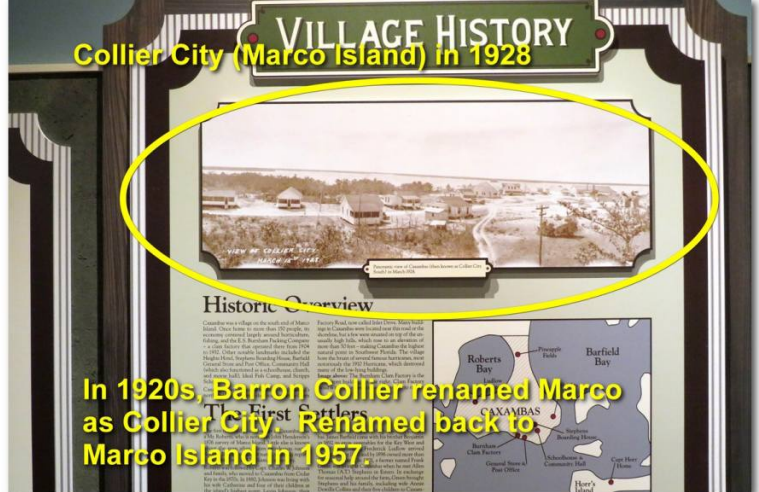


The Calusa Carved Wood Marco Cat Dated Between 500 and 1500 AD. Discovered 1896. Long-term loan from the Smithsonian.



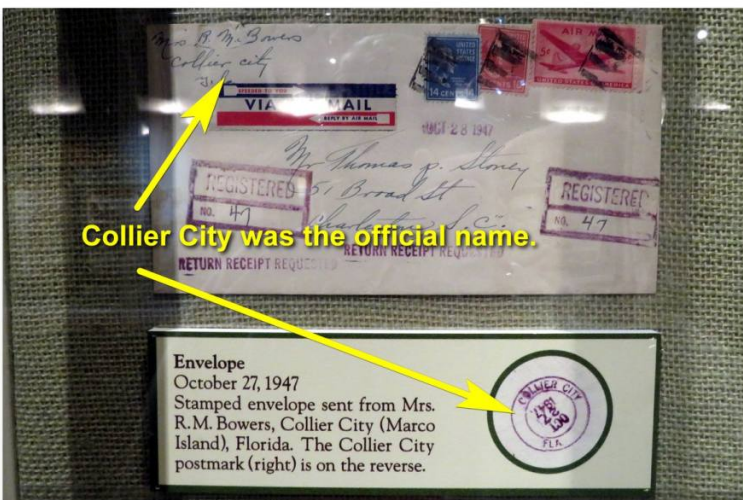
Only 6 Inches Tall

**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.

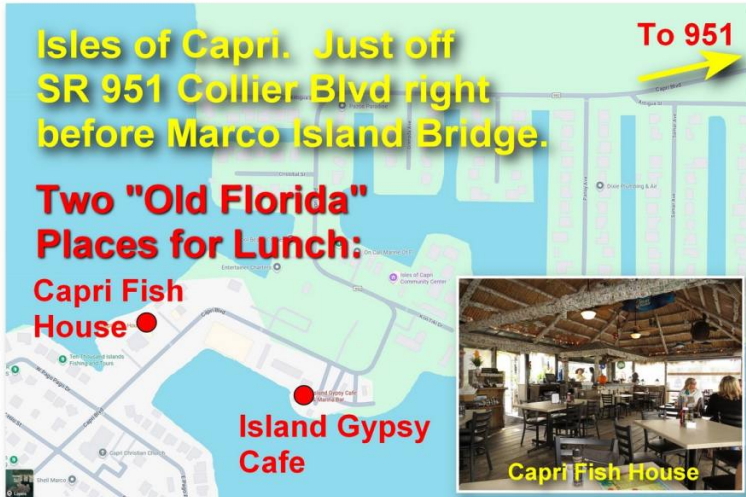


Envelope October 27, 1947 Stamped envelope sent from Mrs. R.M. Bowers, Collier City (Marco Island), Florida. The Collier City postmark (right) is on the reverse.

The Atlantic Coast Line completed its track into Collier City (now Marco Island) in 1927. ACL terminated all South Florida passenger service in 1971.



Ticket, Train Atlantic Coast Line Railroad December 31, 1930 An Atlantic Coast Line Railroad ticket like this one would have been used by passengers traveling to Collier City (Marco Island). Schedule, Train Atlantic Coast Line Railroad This Atlantic Coast Line Railroad schedule includes a stop in Collier City (Marco Island).



**Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve**

**Website:** <https://rookerybay.org/>

**Comment:** Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve stretches across 110,000 acres from Gordon Pass in Naples to the western Everglades of pristine mangrove forest, uplands, and protected waters.

**Three main locations:**

1. Learning Center
2. Shell Island
3. Keewaydin Island

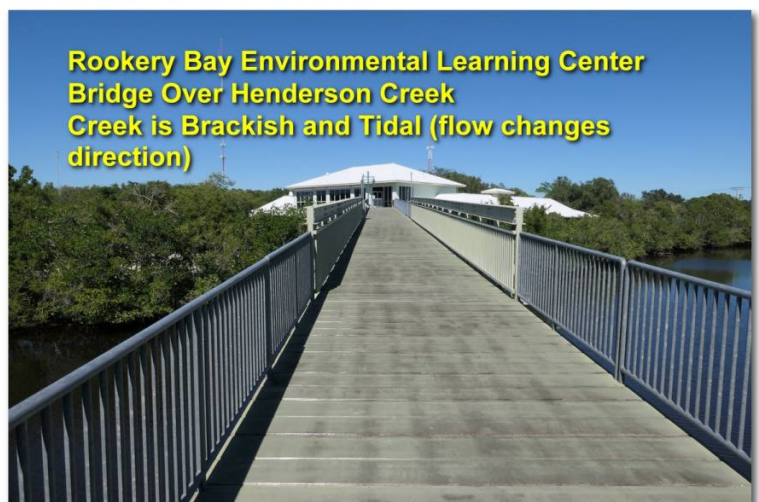
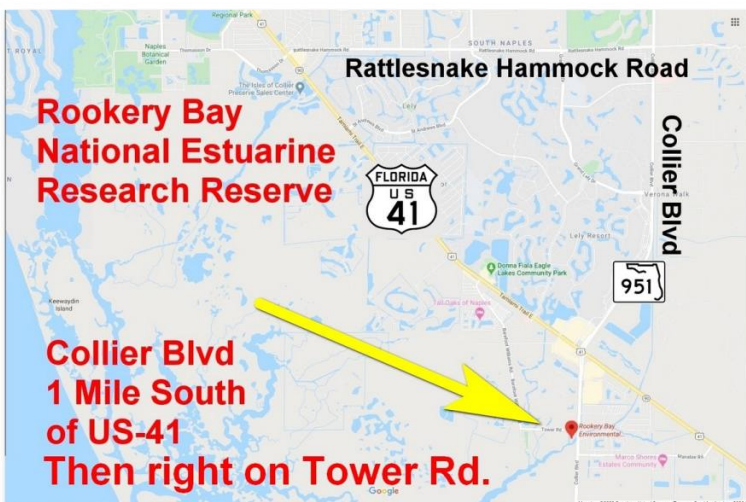
**Environmental Learning Center:**

**Admission:** Adults \$10.

**When:** Tues-Sat 9am-4pm. Sun-Mon closed.

**Learning center:** 16,500-square-foot educational, research and training facility with research laboratories, classrooms, auditorium, aquariums, visitor center, art gallery, cultural exhibits.

**Observation bridge across Henderson Creek. Three half-mile walking trails.**



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



**Three trails, each 1/2 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 - 1/2 Mile Loop**

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



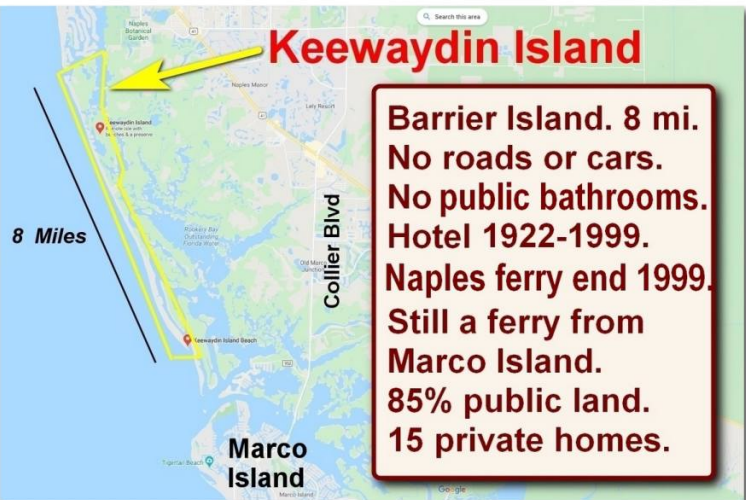
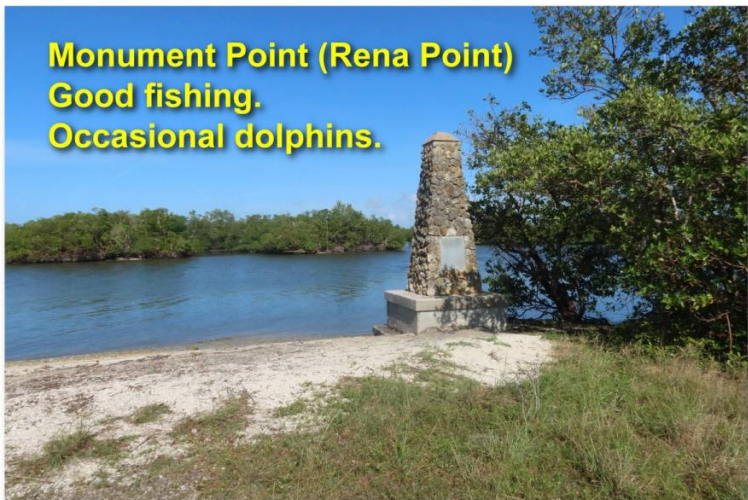
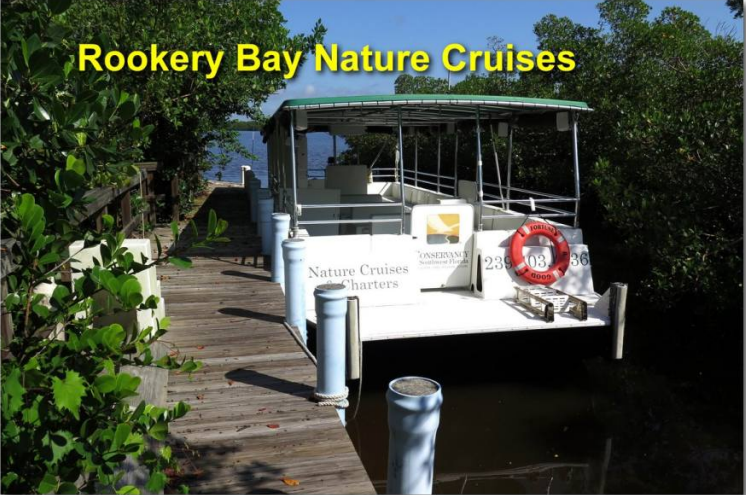
**Rookery Bay - Briggs Boardwalk**



**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.**







**Keewaydin Island**

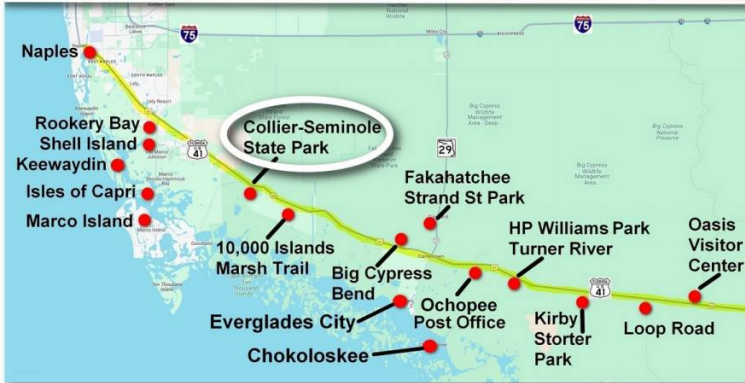
Internet Photo



**Keewaydin Ferry Boat - 1934**

**At Collier County Museum  
at Government Center, East Naples**

**Collier-Seminole State Park**



**Collier-Seminole State Park**  
**Where:** US-41 Tamiami Trail, 8 miles east of Collier Blvd.  
**Daily:** 5am to sunset.  
**\$5 or annual pass.**  
**What:** 7,271 acres. Mangrove swamp. Royal palms. Camping. Boat rentals. Hiking. History (Walking Dredge, Barron Collier).

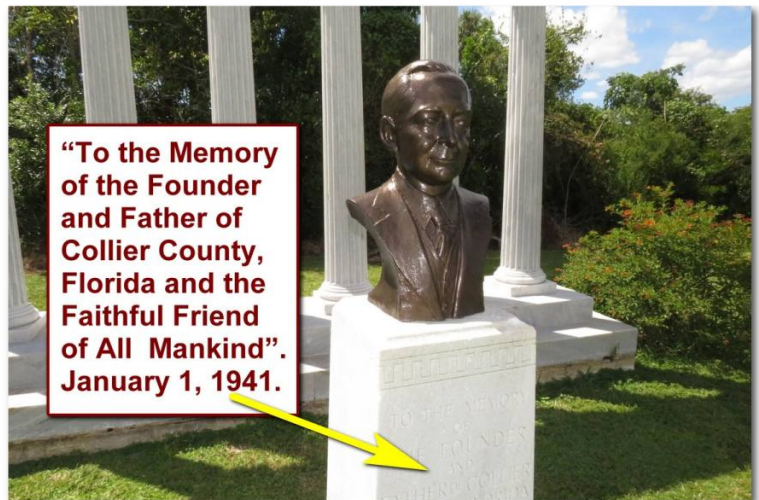


**Bay City Walking Dredge - 1924**  
**One mile per month**

Designated "National  
Historic Mechanical  
Engineering Landmark"



**Barron Collier Memorial  
Collier-Seminole State Park**



**"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>



## Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge



## 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.



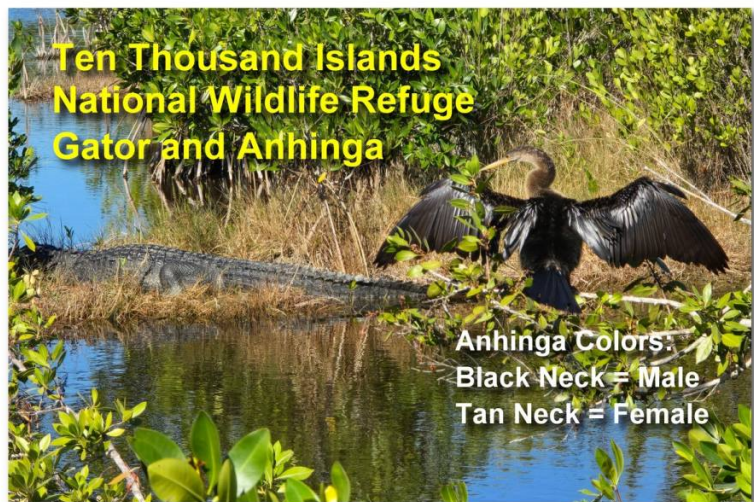
**Do Not  
Forget!**



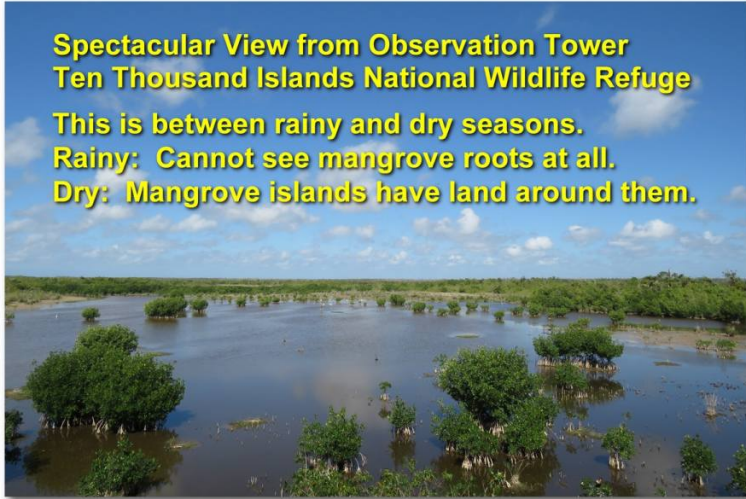
## Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge Great Everglades Views Great Bird Watching Year Round

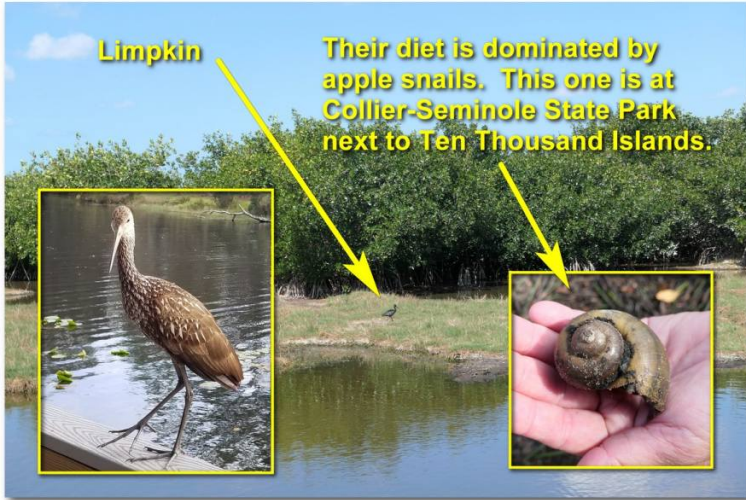


## Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge Gator and Anhinga

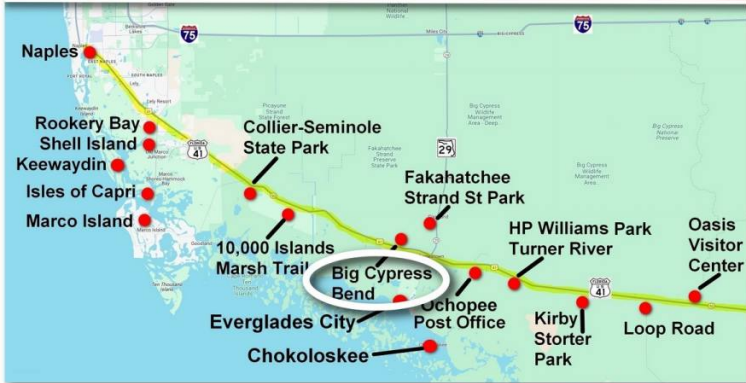


Anhinga Colors:  
Black Neck = Male  
Tan Neck = Female





## 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.

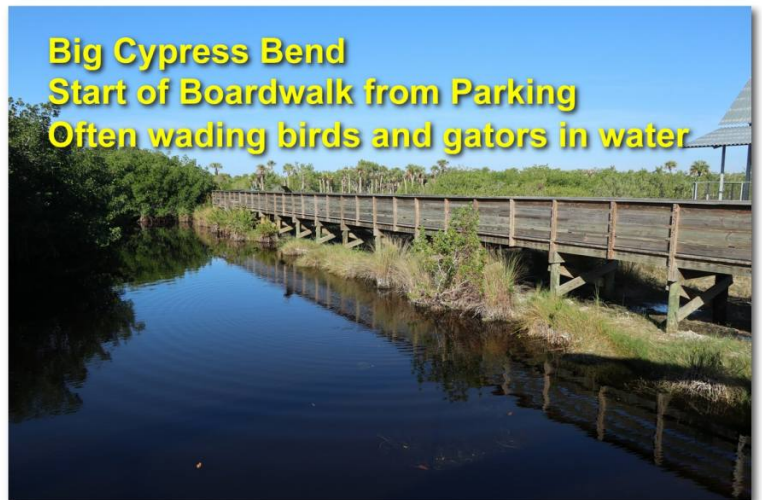
**Map on next slide...**

## 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**



**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.**



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



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

Tricolored Heron  
Blue Heron

Two Gators



**Big Cypress Bend Pond**

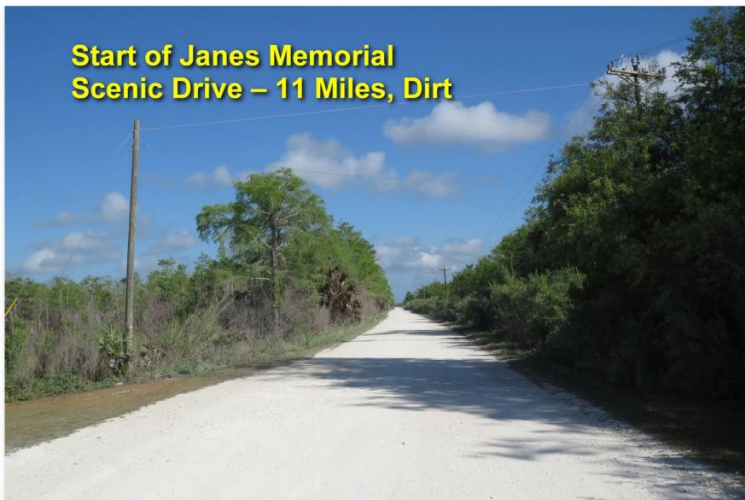


**Barred Owl Looking Down on the Pond**

## Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park



**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.

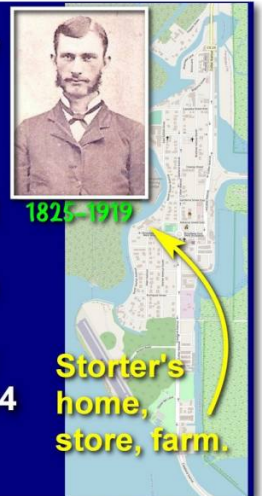
**1870:** First real settler William Smith Allen. Allen remained until 1889. Farmed along river front.

**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.



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



All of the development in Everglades we see here (plus more) was in the six years after Collier bought the town in 1922!

**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](http://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.**

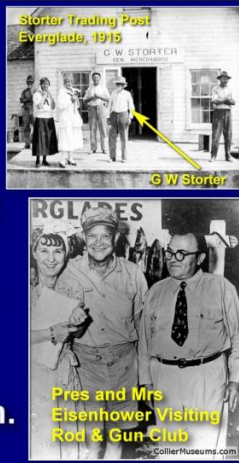
**First Baptist Church – Built 1923  
Moved to Everglades from Jerome  
when Jerome sawmill closed 1956.**



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



**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.

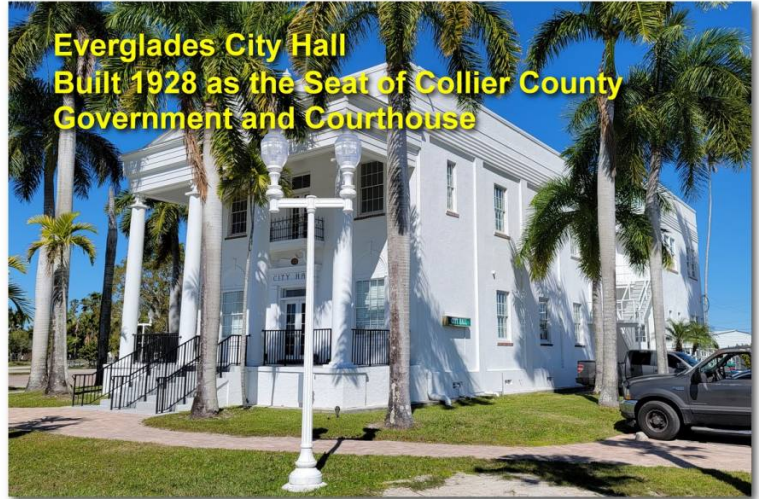


**Rod & Gun Club Today**

**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

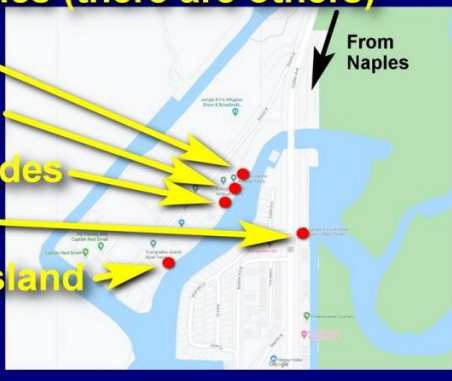


**Atlantic Coast Line**  
**Everglades City Depot**  
 1928



**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

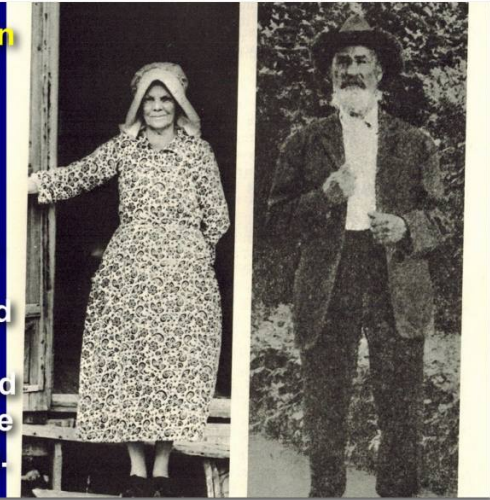
Chokoloskee means Old House in Indian language. But nobody knows the legend of the name.



# 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.



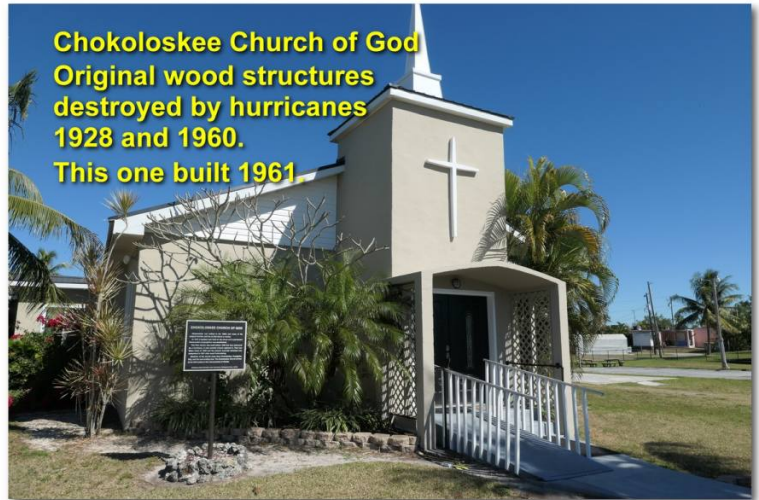
# Ted Smallwood's Store Started 1906 This building 1917



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



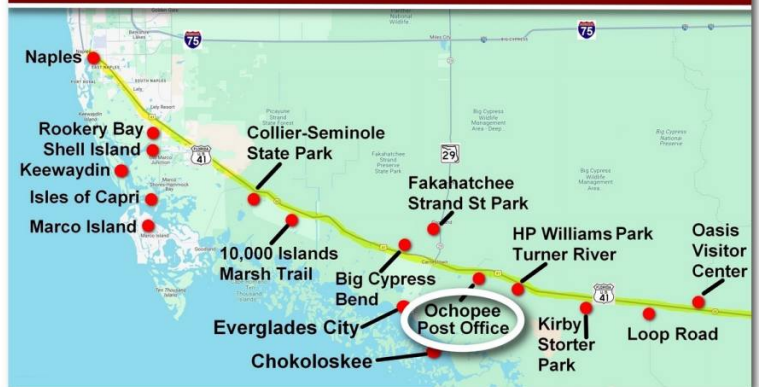
Chokoloskee Church of God Original wood structures destroyed by hurricanes 1928 and 1960. This one built 1961



Havana 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

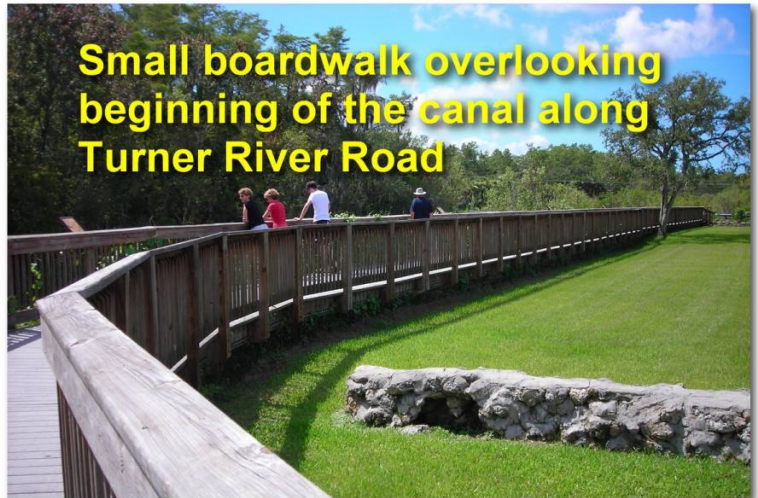
## H P Williams Park Turner River Road



**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. *HP 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.**

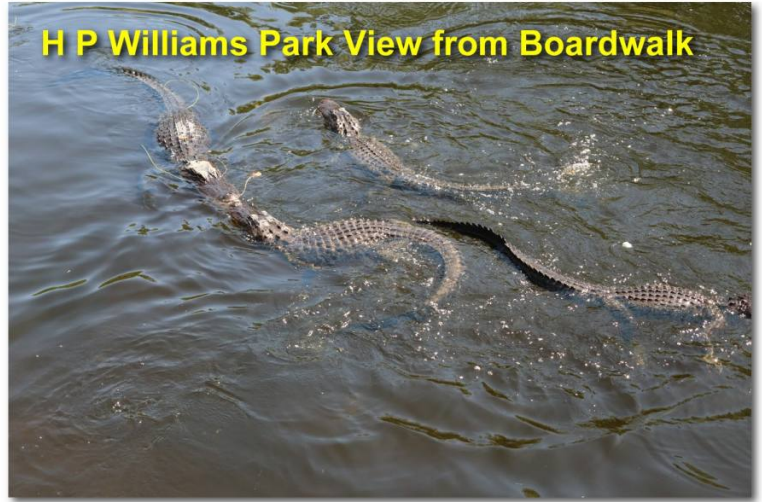


**Swimming in Turner River Canal**

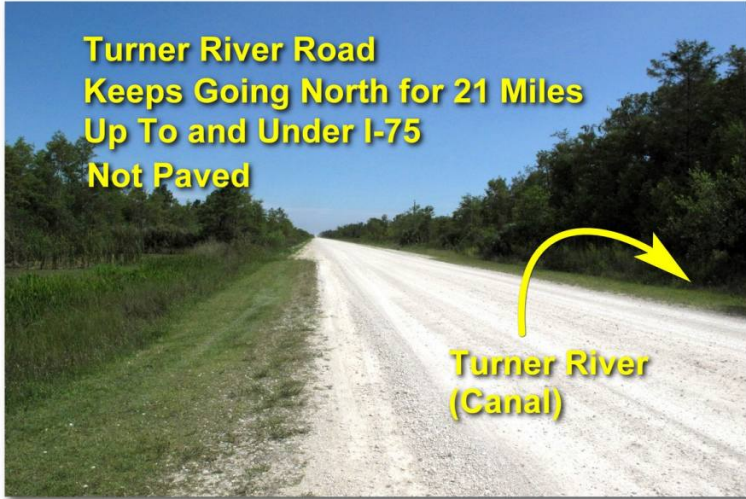
**Propelled by Tail and  
 Webbed Rear Feet**



**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

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

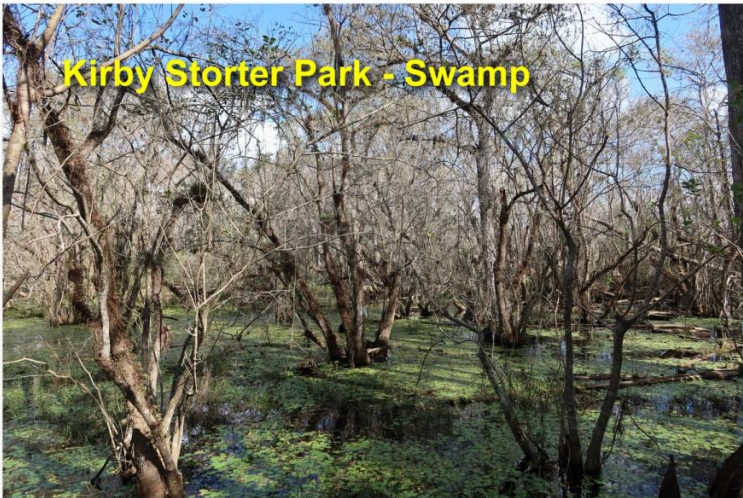


## Kirby Storter Park

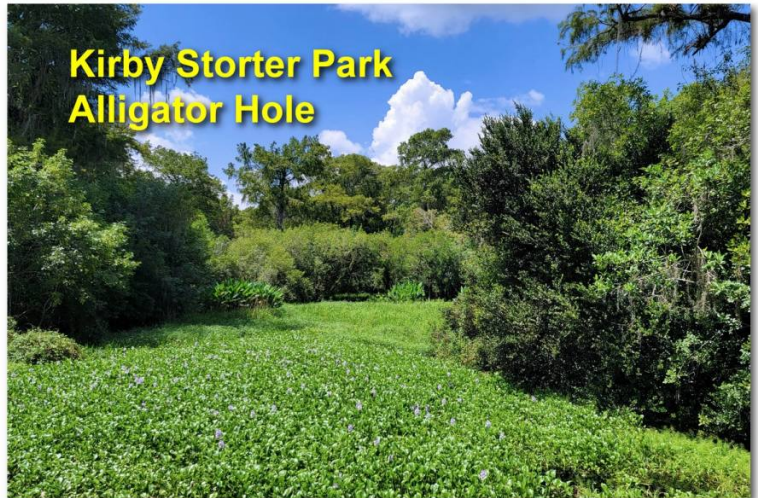
In October 2024, fire destroyed part of the Kirby Storter boardwalk. Part has now reopened, but the damaged part is not yet rebuilt.



## 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.



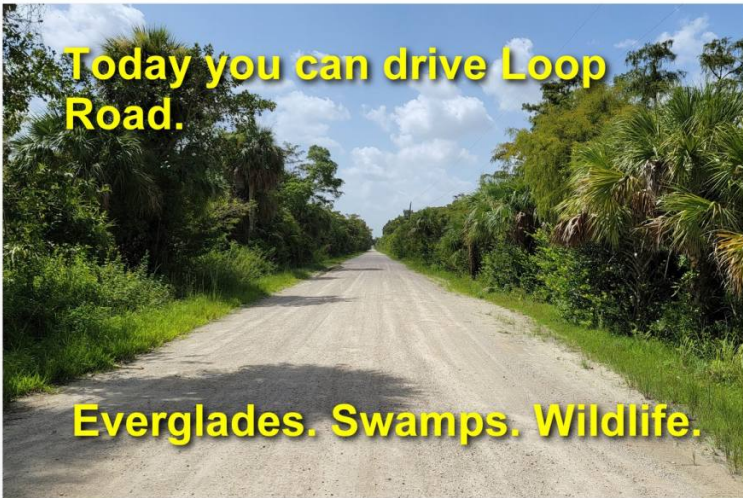
- Jaudon's company built a few rustic homes 1921-1923. And dirt Loop Road.
- But by 1923 he ran out of money. Could not find any outside investors.
- 1923 state awarded Tamiami Trail contract to Barron Collier.
- Including Jaudon's 24-mile section.



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**



**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**



**Most of the land  
between Naples  
and Broward and  
Dade Counties is  
public parkland or  
preserve.**

## 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

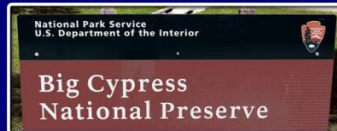
1947

## 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

