

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

Presentation by  
Paul Pacter

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



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

In 60 minutes, we'll cover the highlights of what's there, including:

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

Great day trips in the Naples area.



Building the Tamiami Trail **Naples to Dade Line 1923-1928**

Tampa to  
MIAMI 284 miles.

AKA  US-41

Tampa to Naples  
is North-South  
163 miles.

Naples to Miami  
East-West  
121 miles.

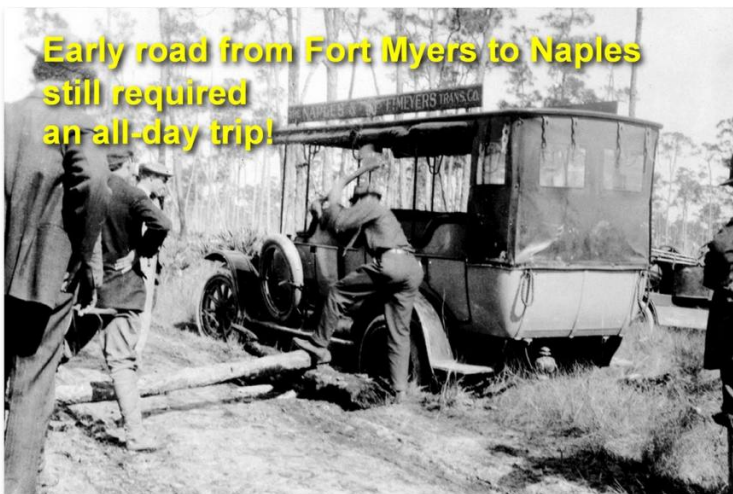


### Tamiami Trail

- 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!



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.** →



**After dynamiting, digging was done by a:**

**Walking Dredge** →

**or a:**

**Floating Dredge.** →

*Dredges were built in Bay City, Michigan*



*See one at Collier-Seminole State Park*

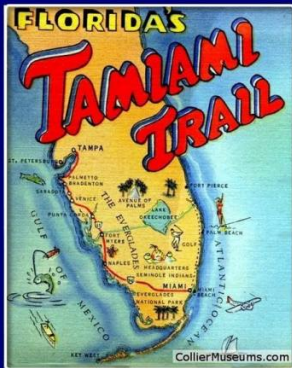


**Mobile worker bunks, kitchens, toilets moved in the canal as the road progressed. Workers paid \$60/month. Worked all day standing in swamps, bitten by mosquitos.**



**Mobile Bunks**

**Tamiami Trail  
Opened Apr 25, 1928**



**Festivities in Everglades**

N-S was US41  
E-W was US94



## Marco Island



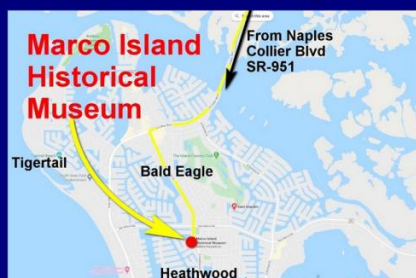
**Marco Island Historical Museum  
One of Five Collier County Museums**

**Website:** [www.colliermuseums.com](http://www.colliermuseums.com)

**Where:** 180 South Heathwood Drive, Marco Island.

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

**Admission:**  
Free.



**What:** Traces the settlement of Marco from Calusa (500 AD), to Spanish, to Seminoles (and Seminole Wars), to permanent settlement in 1870.

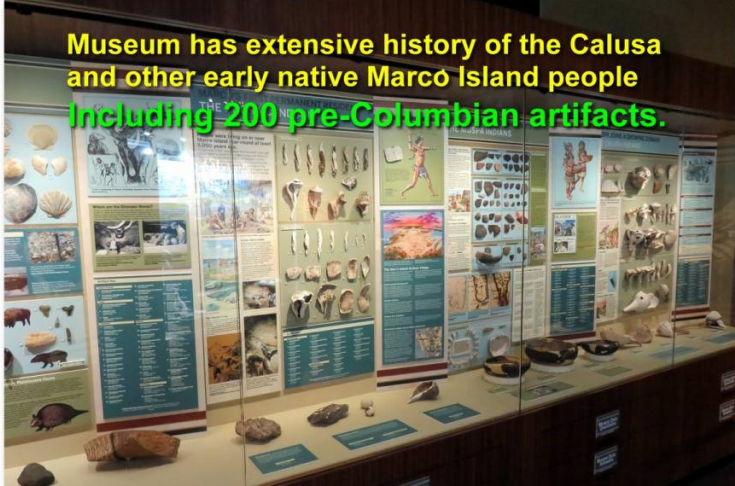
From there, the museum covers Marco's agricultural history (fishing, clamming, and pineapple farming), growth of the village (early 20th c), and major property development (1920s and again beginning in 1960s).



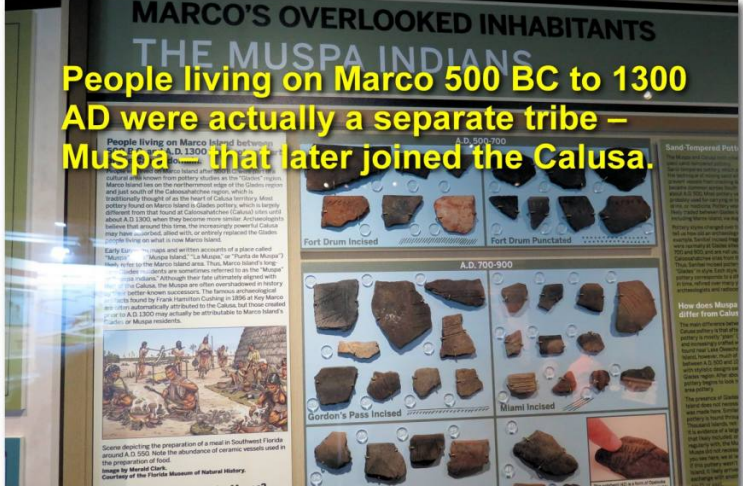


**Marco Island Historical Museum**  
**Large copy of**  
**the Marco Cat**

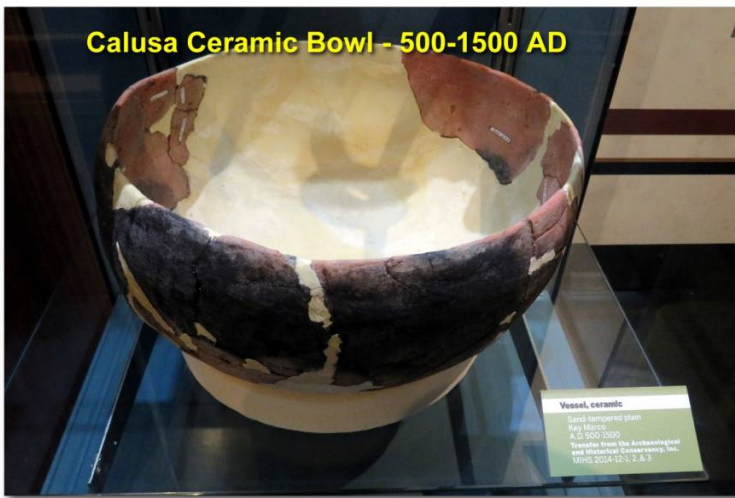
**Brief History of Marco Island**  
**500 AD:** Calusa Indians arrived from Yucatan.  
**Mid 1500s:** Spanish explorers arrived.  
**1700s:** Creek Indians (Seminoles) from GA-AL.  
**1870:** First permanent settler William Collier (not related to Barron).  
**1912:** Ferry service began.  
**1920s:** Barron Collier bought. Renamed Collier City. Development failed.  
**1938:** First bridge (via Goodland).  
**1960s:** Mackell Bros bought Collier's land. Development took off.



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



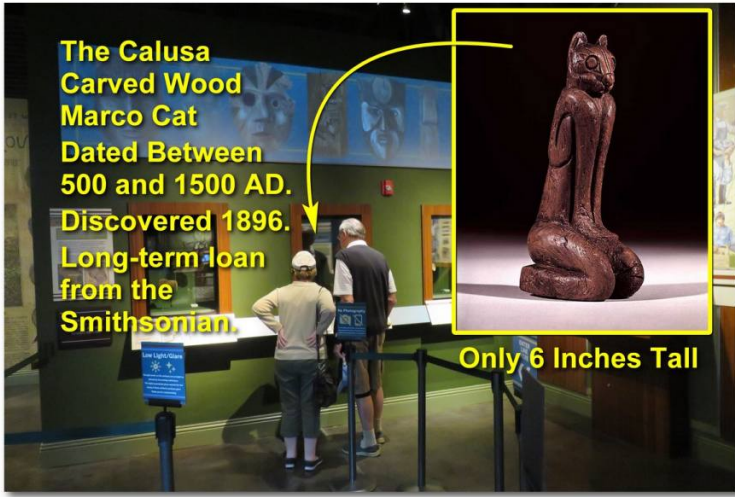
**People living on Marco 500 BC to 1300 AD were actually a separate tribe – Muspa – that later joined the Calusa.**



**Calusa Ceramic Bowl - 500-1500 AD**



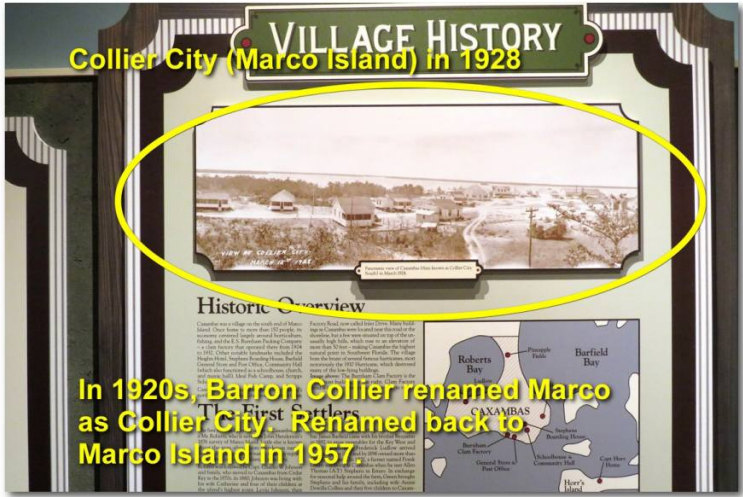
**Calusa Tools – 13th-16th centuries**



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



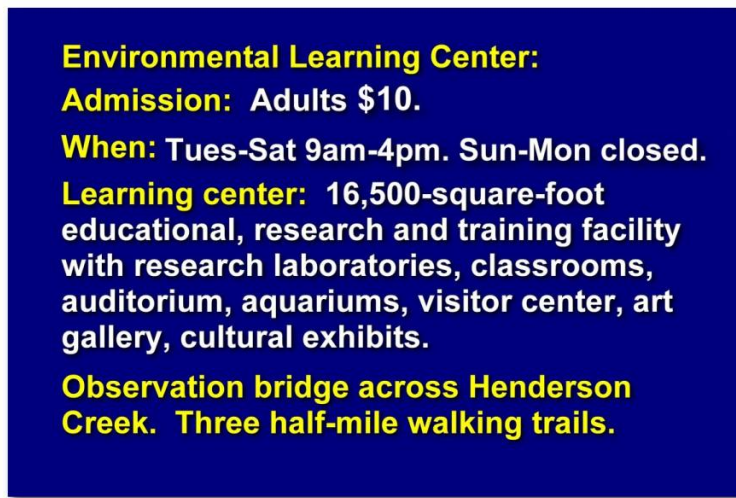
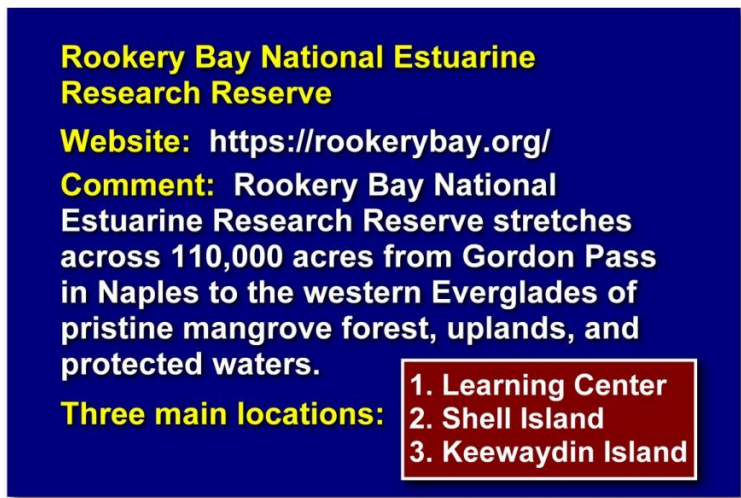
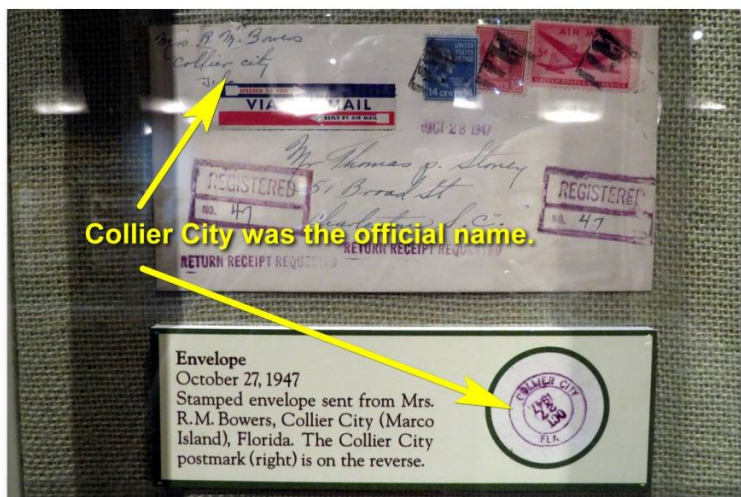
**Only 6 Inches Tall**



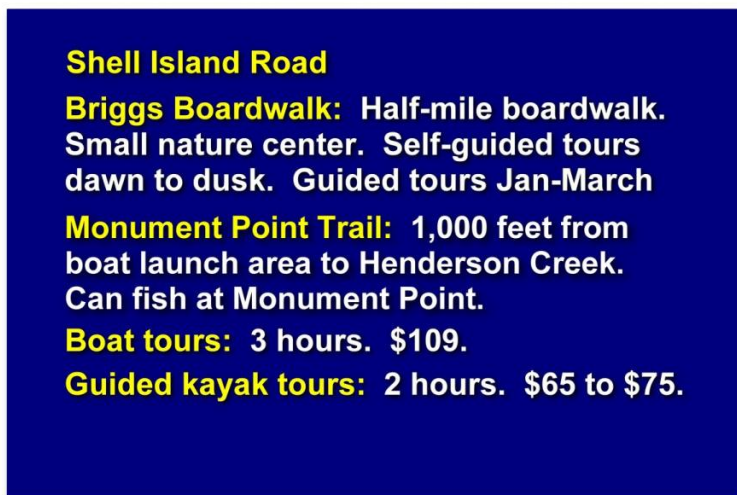
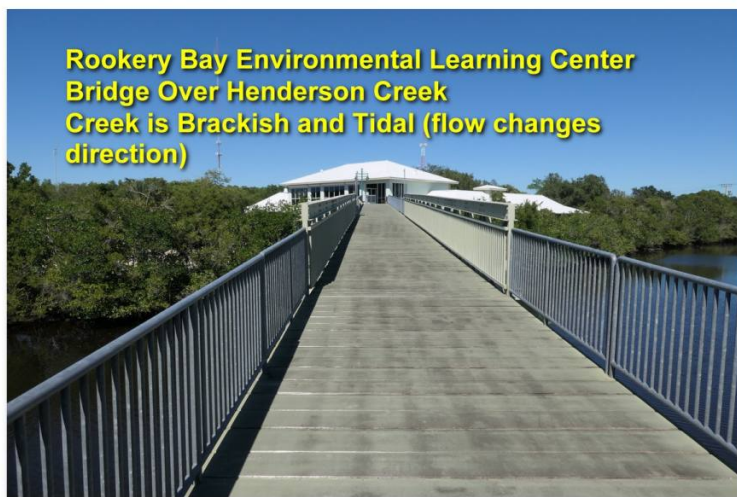
**Collier City (Marco Island) in 1928**

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











## Rookery Bay - Briggs Boardwalk



Beautyberries  
Birds eat them.  
Humans should  
not eat but  
can make jelly.



## Rookery Bay Boardwalk Wood Stork

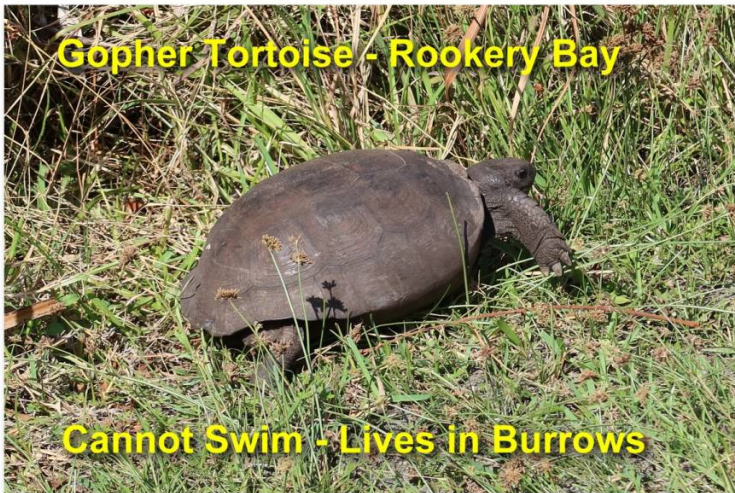


Sabal Palm – Florida State Tree (South Carolina too)  
Can Grow to 65 Ft Height.  
aka Cabbage Palm, Palmetto,  
Swamp Cabbage.



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



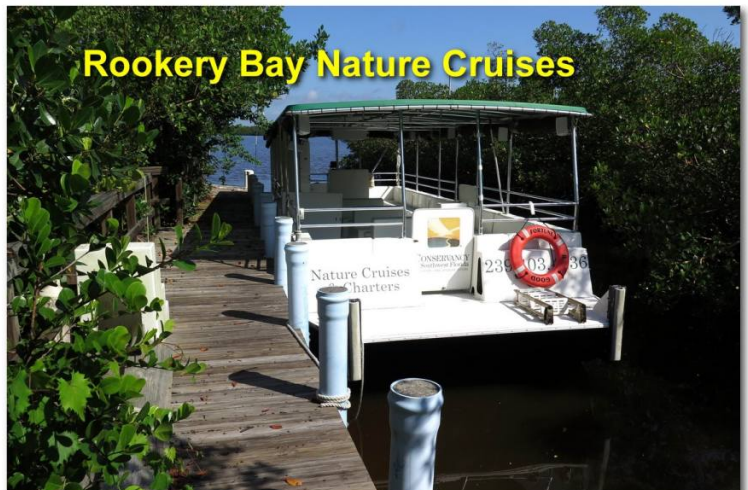
## Bits of History on Shell Island

1901 & 1908  
Gravestones

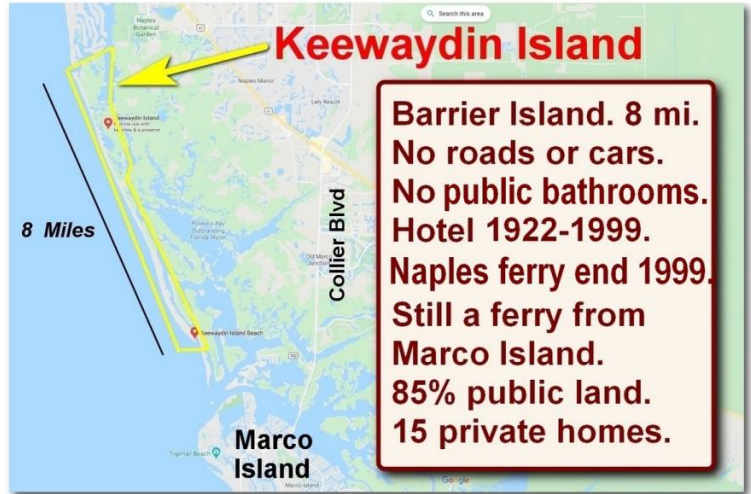
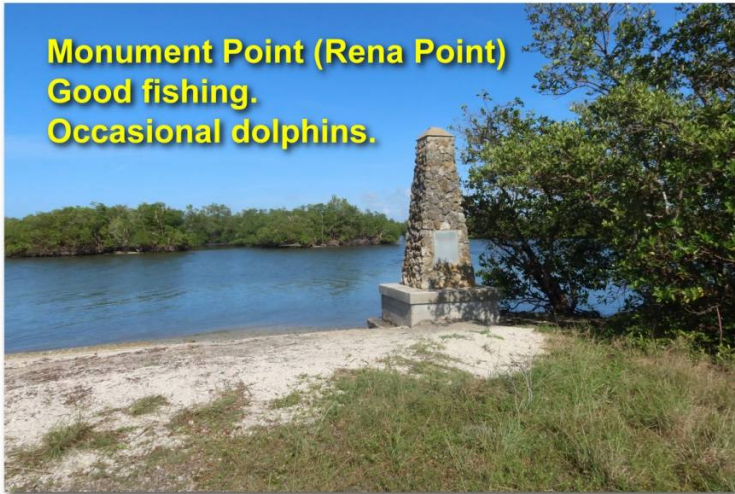
1887 Water Tank



## Rookery Bay Nature Cruises









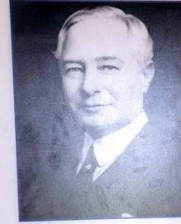
## Collier-Seminole State Park



## Barron Collier's Impossible Dream Building the Tamiami Trail - 1920s

### The Dream

Barron Collier came to Florida in 1911 and fell in love with the beauty of the area. This region was Florida's last frontier and its potential for development awakened a dream of bringing people to this tropical paradise.



Collier was born in Memphis Tennessee. At the age of 25, he began a career in streetcar advertisement that would make him a millionaire. By the early 1920s his wealth enabled him to purchase over 900,000 acres in South Florida that would become Collier County.

### The Challenges

In Collier's time, most people traveled to South Florida by rail. The coming of the automobile prompted schemes to connect cities and towns by highways. In 1915 a highway was planned from Tampa to Miami. Each county along the route was responsible for funding construction in its jurisdiction.



Lee county, which included Ft. Myers, Naples and land further south, soon ran out of money for the project. The difficulty and cost of building a road across the Everglades had been underestimated. Many said it was impossible! Barron Collier offered to fund the highway construction across the Everglades if a new county was created and named after him.

### The Achievement

The 50-mile section of road across the Everglades took four years to complete. Workers built over a mile a month. The Bay City Walking Dredge located here was one of the machines used to help build the road. In 1926, the 273-mile Tampa to Miami road (Tamiami Trail) officially opened.



The Tamiami Trail completed, Collier envisioned developing a national park here, but failed to rally support for his idea. The land first became a county park and then in 1947, a state park. Collier-Seminole State Park represents a part of the tropical paradise that Collier loved.

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



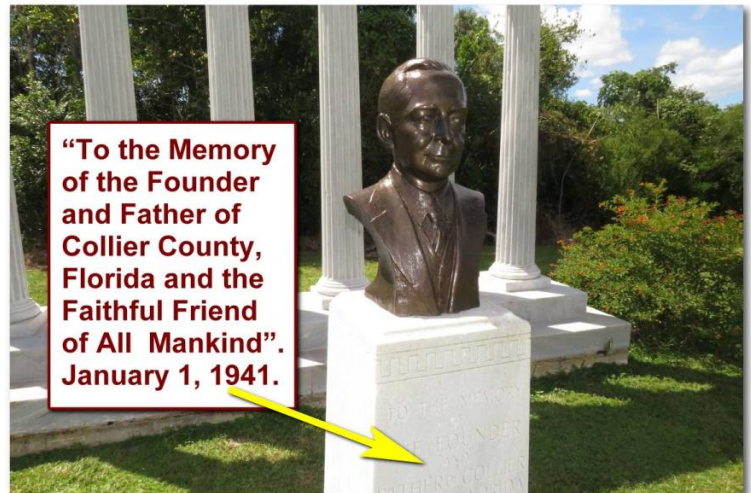
## BARRON COLLIER MEMORIAL

IN THE 1920'S BARRON COLLIER OWNED A MILLION ACRES. THIS SPOT WAS A SMALL HARDWOOD FOREST KNOWN AS ROYAL PALM HAMMOCK BECAUSE OF A MAGNIFICENT STRAND OF NATIVE ROYAL PALM TREES. COLLIER RESERVED 150 ACRES HERE FOR WHAT HE HOPED TO HAVE DESIGNATED "LINCOLN-LEE" NATIONAL PARK. THOUGH COLLIER ADDED ENOUGH ADDITIONAL LANDS FOR A NATIONAL PARK, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DID NOT ACCEPT. THE LAND BECAME A COUNTY PARK AND WAS TURNED OVER TO THE STATE IN 1944.

## 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.**



## Collier-Seminole State Park Campsites October 2021

Also, within the park is a "Glamping" site. Private company provides tent, platform, fridge, bed, linens, picnic table, fireplace, etc. <https://naples.tlglamping.com/>





**"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.

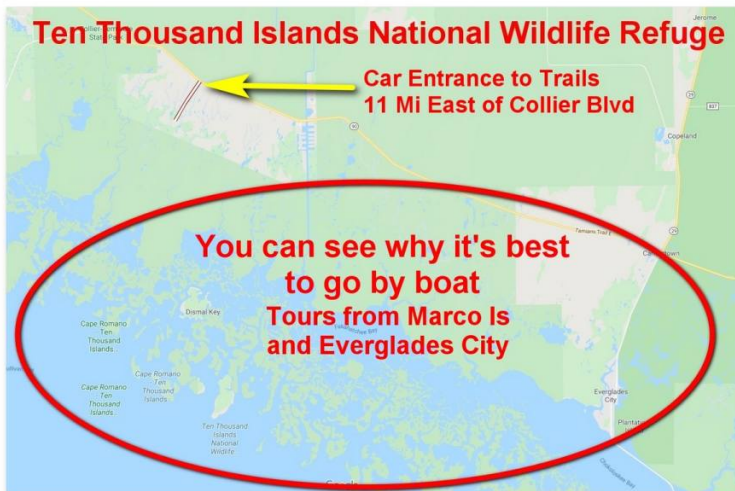
**What:** 35,000 acres.  
Mangrove islands.  
Countless plants, wildlife.  
1-mile hiking trail, observation tower.



## Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge

**Car Entrance to Trails**  
11 Mi East of Collier Blvd

**You can see why it's best to go by boat**  
**Tours from Marco Is and Everglades City**



## Boat Tours of Ten Thousand Islands From Everglades City:

[evergladesnationalparkadventures.com](http://evergladesnationalparkadventures.com)

– Scheduled, daily, around 90 minutes, around \$50.

## From Marco Island:

[ecoendeavors.org](http://ecoendeavors.org)

– Not scheduled – Whole boat charter.  
– Up to 6 people, 2.5 hours, \$420.

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

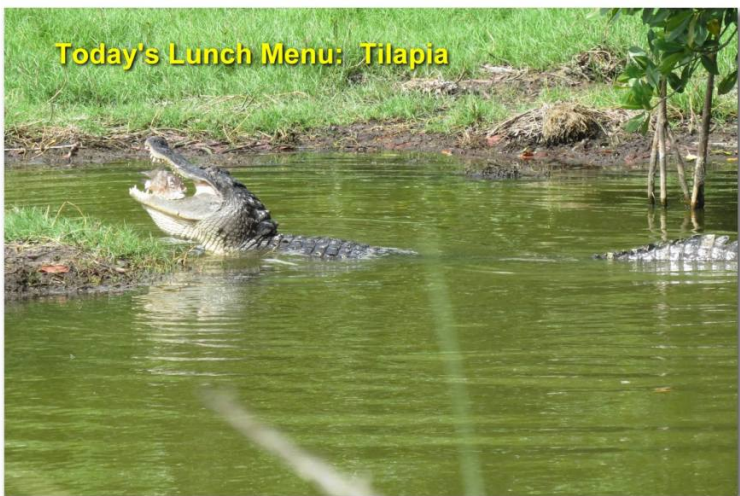
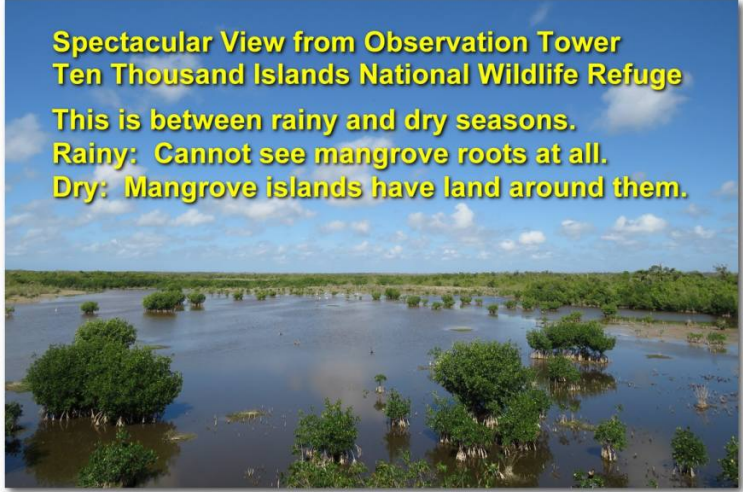
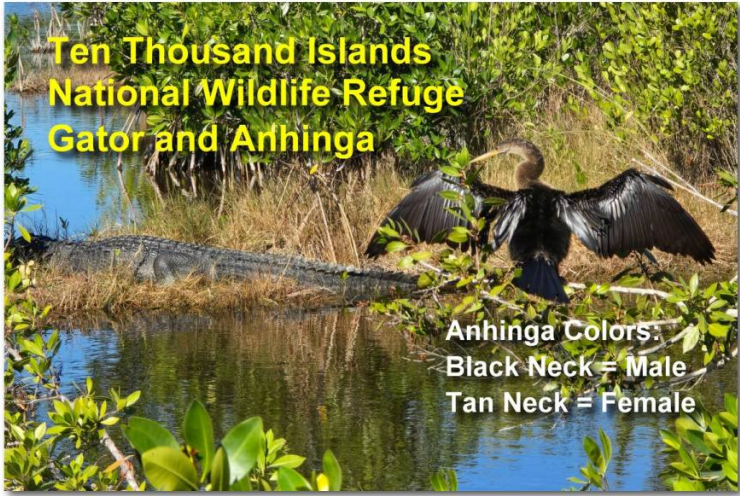
**Do Not Forget!**



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









**Cormorant Eating  
A Fish**



**Blue Heron**

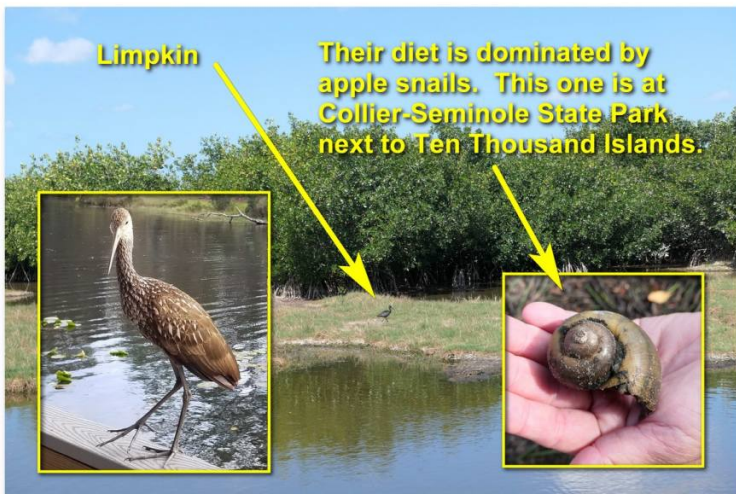


**Gallinules (also called Moorhens)  
Ten-Thousand Islands**



**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



**Big Cypress Bend  
Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park**  
**Website:** [www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park](http://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park)

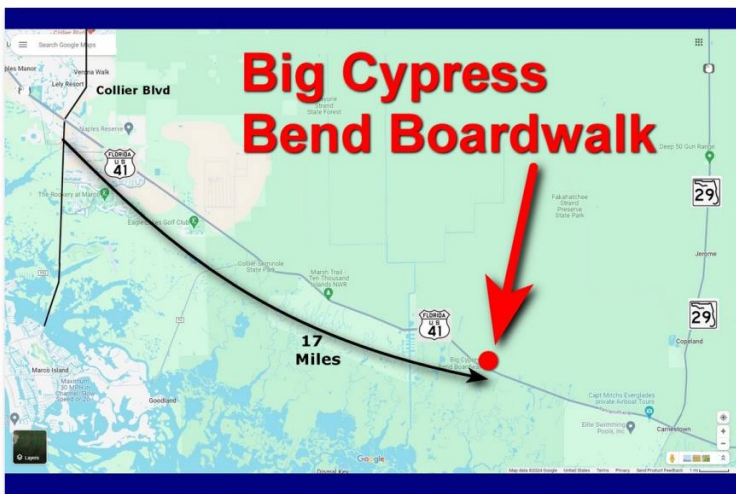
**Where:** US-41, Copeland FL 34137.

**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.**

**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.

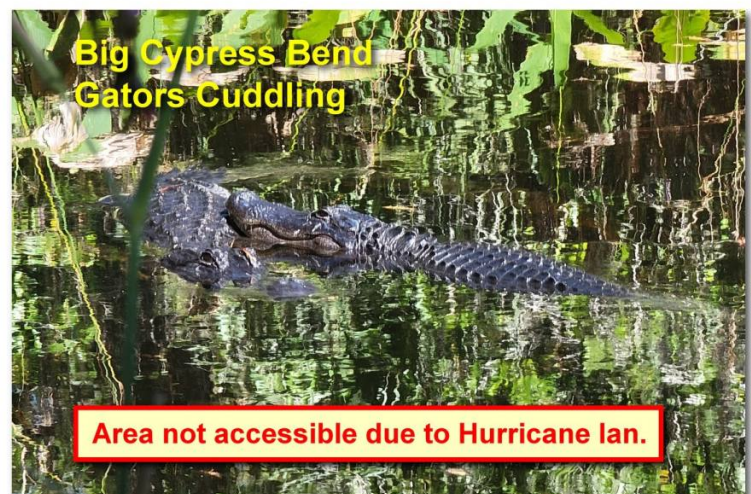
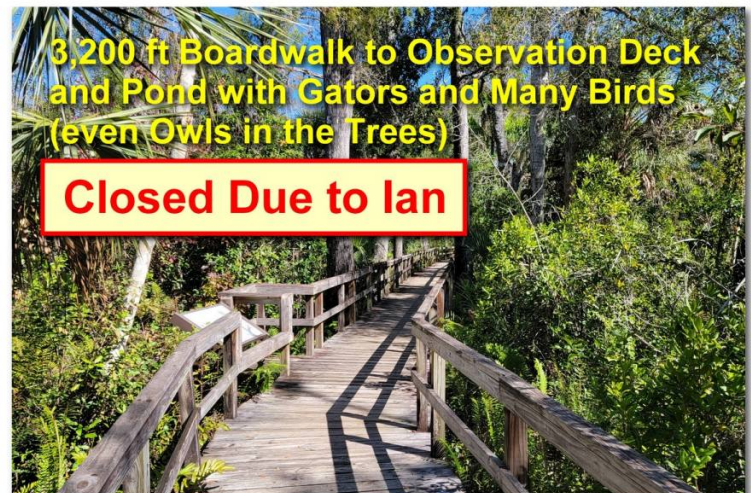
*The map on the next slide illustrates all of this.*

**The next 4 slides show the OLD boardwalk and alligator pond.**

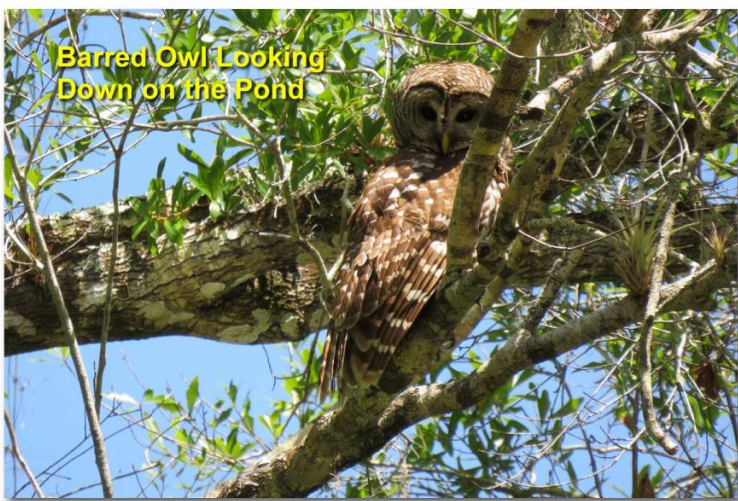
- These are not currently accessible due to Hurricane Ian damage.
- After the old boardwalk is repaired, it will become part of the expanded hiking loop (including boardwalk, canopy walk, and trails) shown in the previous map.

**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.

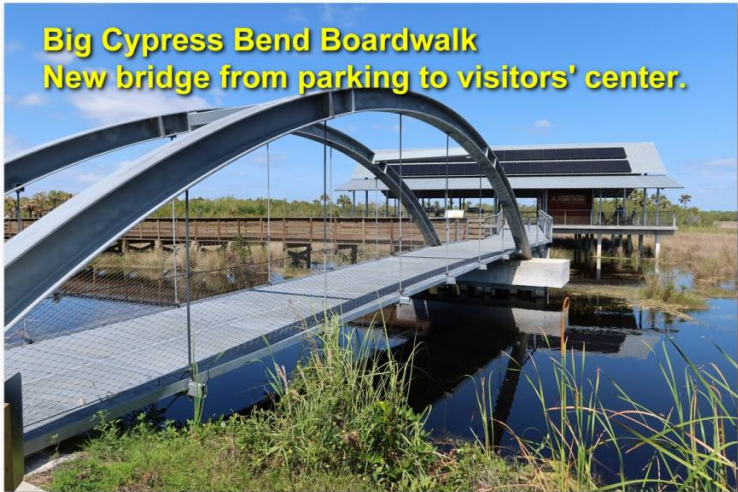






**Barred Owl Looking  
Down on the Pond**

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



**Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk  
New bridge from parking to visitors' center.**



**Visitors' Center Overlooks a Wet Prairie**



**Start of New Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk**



**Under the Boardwalk at Big Cypress Bend**



**Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk  
At Green Heron Lake**



**Big Cypress Bend**



# Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park



## Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park

Florida's largest State Park.

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

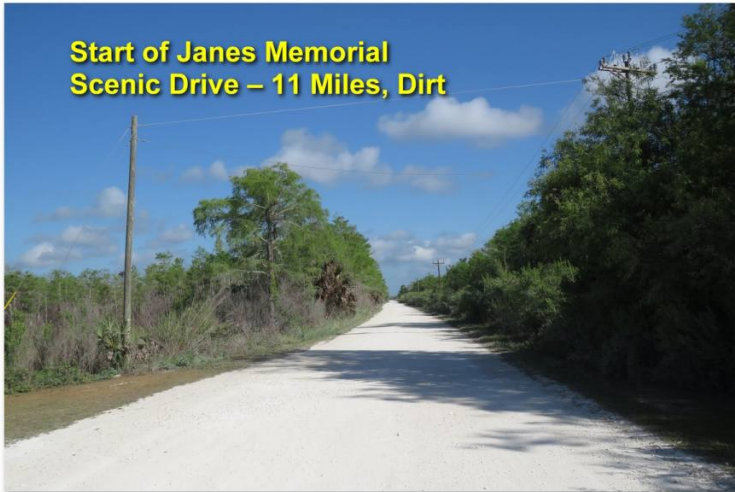
**What:** Florida's Amazon.

– **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.

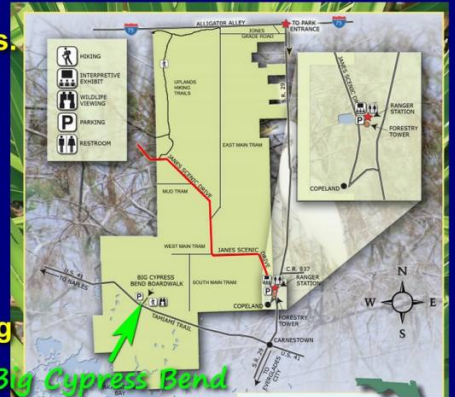
Ruts and potholes.

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!*



### 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.

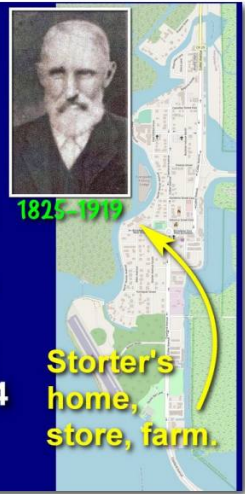
**1870:** First real settler William Smith Allen. Allen remained until 1889. Farmed along river front.

**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.



### 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.**

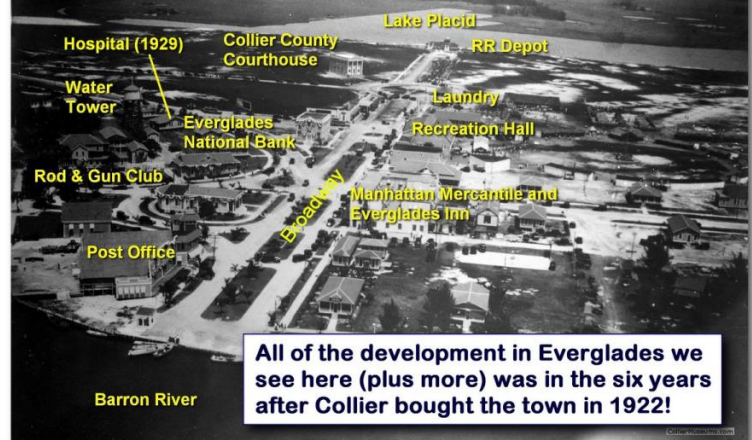
- Renamed the Allen River the Barron River.
- Added an s to the town's name (Everglades).
- At that time only one dozen resident families. Plus a few fishing and hunting cabins owned by non-residents.**



### 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.

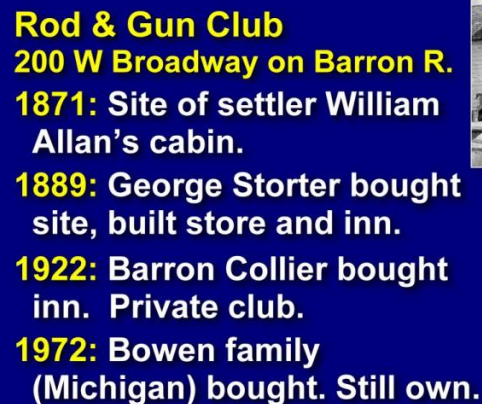
**Get There:** South on US-41, right on US-29. 35 miles from central Naples.

**Admission:** Free.

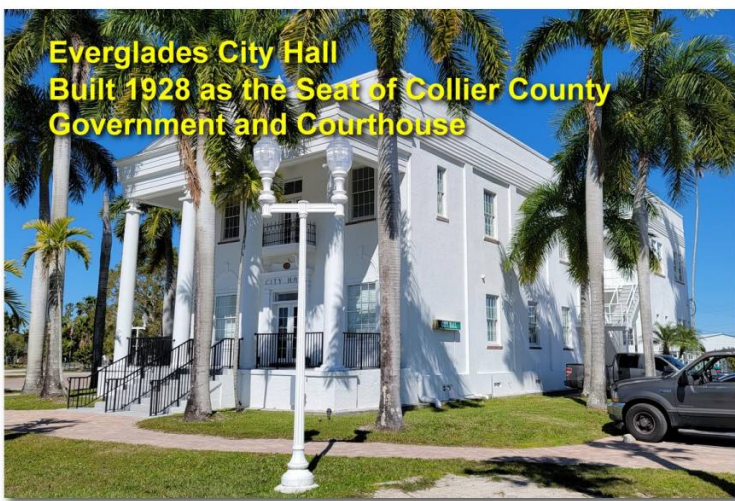
**When:** Tues-Sat 9am to 4pm.



- **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.**







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



**Everglades Community Church**  
1940

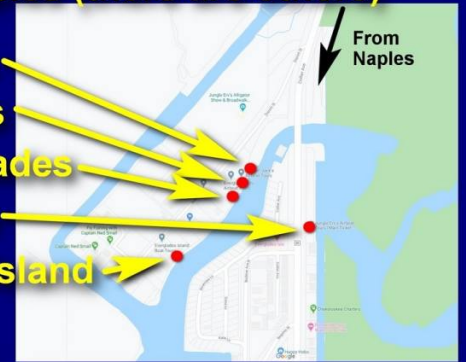


**Atlantic Coast Line**  
**Everglades City Depot**  
1928

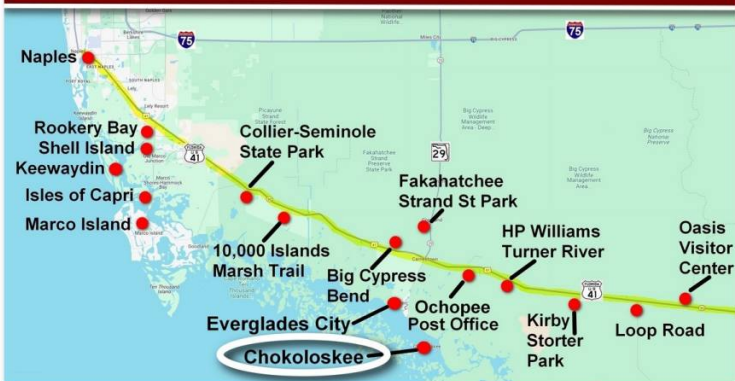
## Airboat Tours from Everglades City Some Examples (there are others)

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.

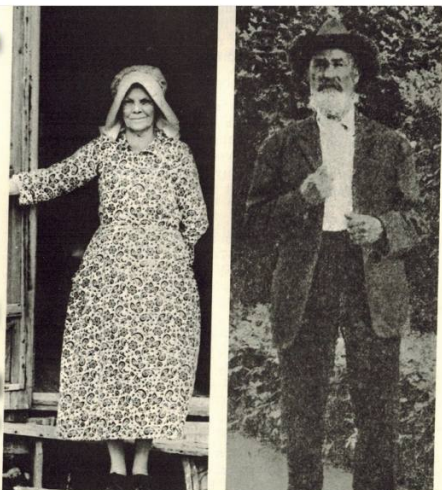


## First settlers on Chokoloskee.

**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.**



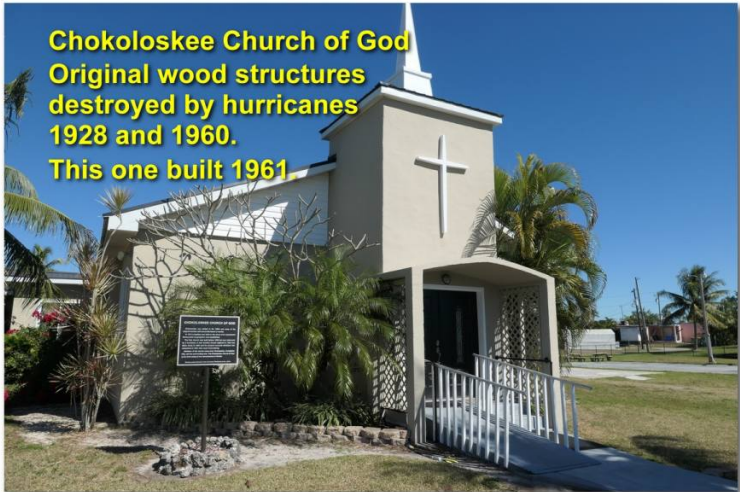




**Ted Smallwood's Store**  
**Started 1906**  
**This building 1917**



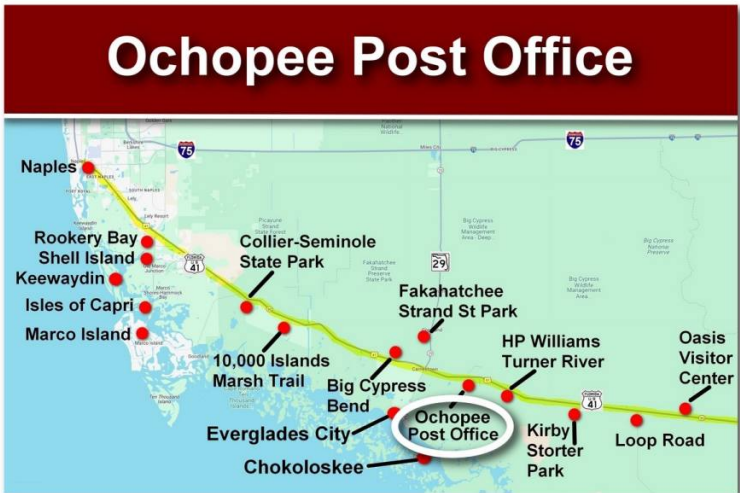
**Ted Smallwood Store**  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**360 Mamie Street, Chokoloskee**  
**Daily 11am to 5pm, \$5**  
**[www.smallwoodstore.com](http://www.smallwoodstore.com)**



**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**



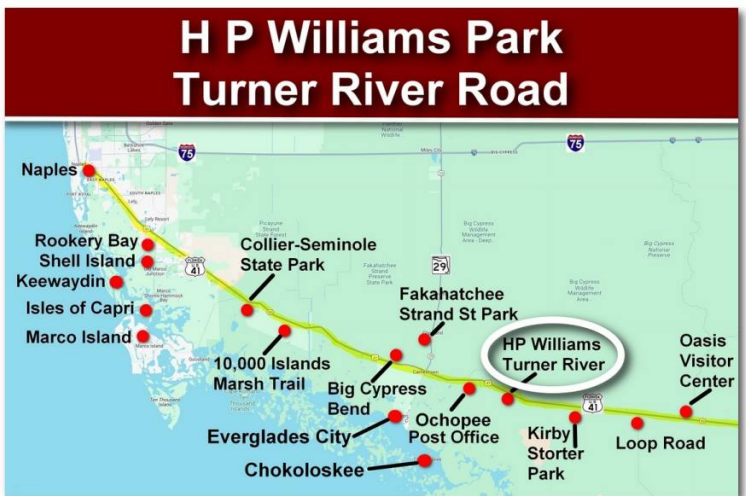
**Smallest Post Office in USA**  
**Ochopee, FL 34141**  
**Open Monday-Saturday**

**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).

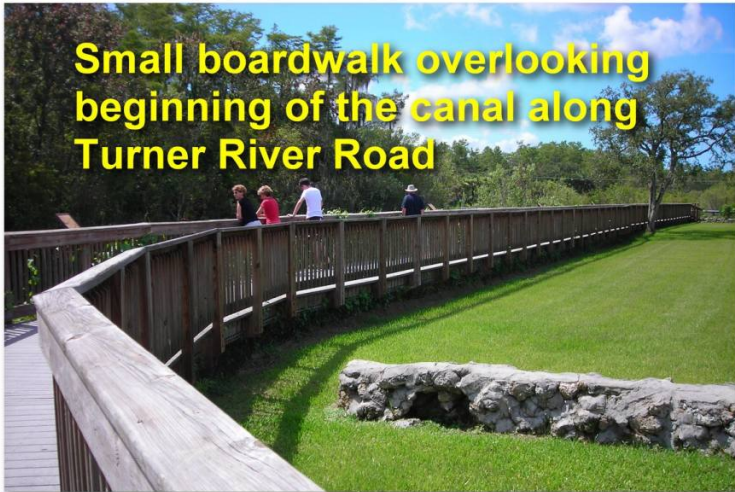
**What:** Small park with boardwalk and alligators. *HP Williams Park*

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**

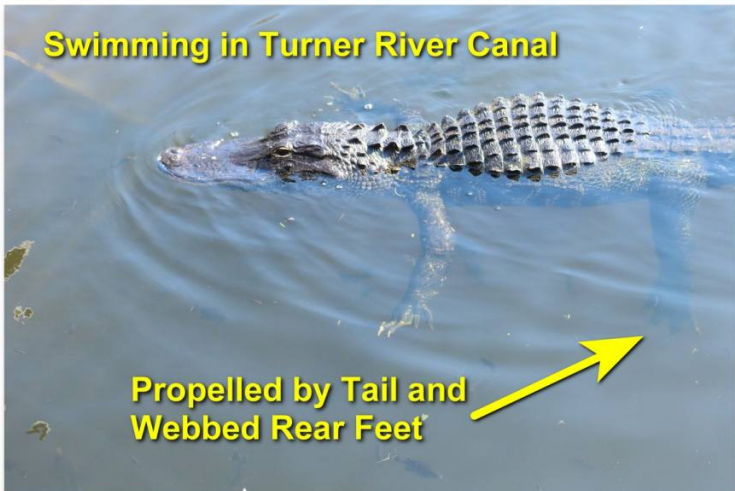


**Turner River Canal Near the Boardwalk**



**Upward-facing nostrils for breathing while under water.**

**Swimming in Turner River Canal**

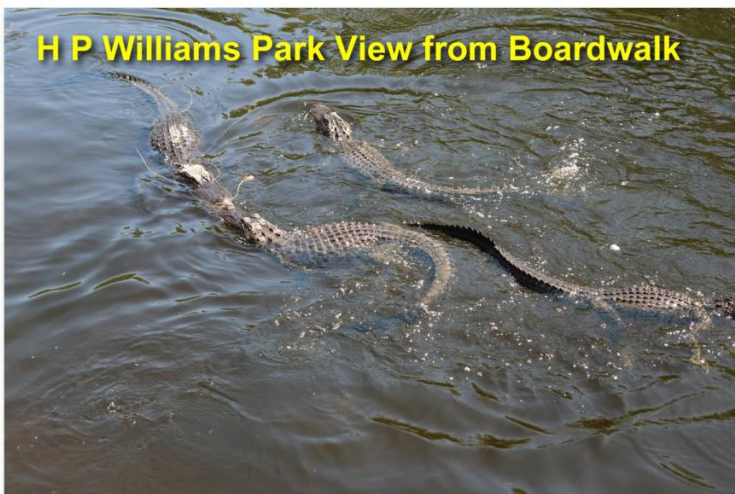


**Propelled by Tail and Webbed Rear Feet**

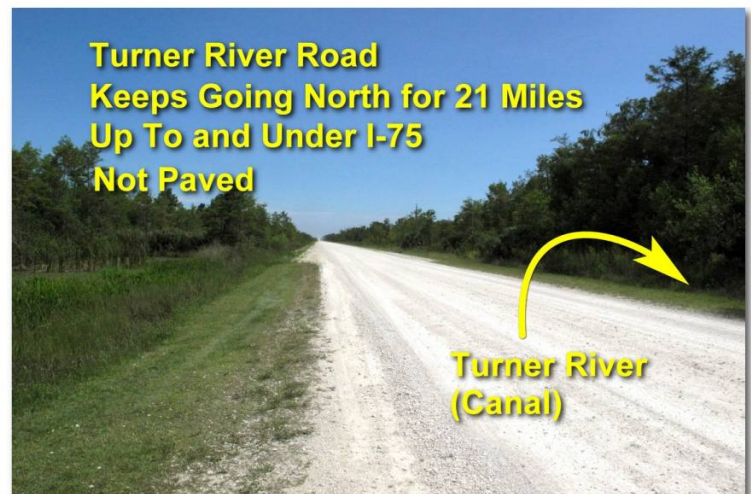
**Behind the Bathrooms Next to the Boardwalk**



**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



### Kirby Storter Park Part of Big Cypress National Preserve Website:

[www.nps.gov/bicy/planyourvisit/kirby-storter-roadside-park.htm](http://www.nps.gov/bicy/planyourvisit/kirby-storter-roadside-park.htm)

**Where:** 48900 Tamiami Trail E, Ochopee, FL 34141.

**Get There:** On US-41 (Tamiami Trail) 37 miles east of Collier Blvd. Or take I-75 to State Rd 29 exit then down to US-41.

**Admission:** Free. Open dawn to dusk.

### What:

- Half-mile boardwalk. Non-strenuous.
- Starts on a sawgrass prairie.
  - **Chickee hut for birding.**
- Continues through a cypress swamp.
- Ends at an overlook at a gator hole.
  - **Gator hole is a pond dug out by alligators to assure deep water even during dry season.**
- Wildlife include birds, snakes, fish, turtles, and alligators.

### Map of Big Cypress National Preserve





## Kirby Storter Park Beginning of Boardwalk

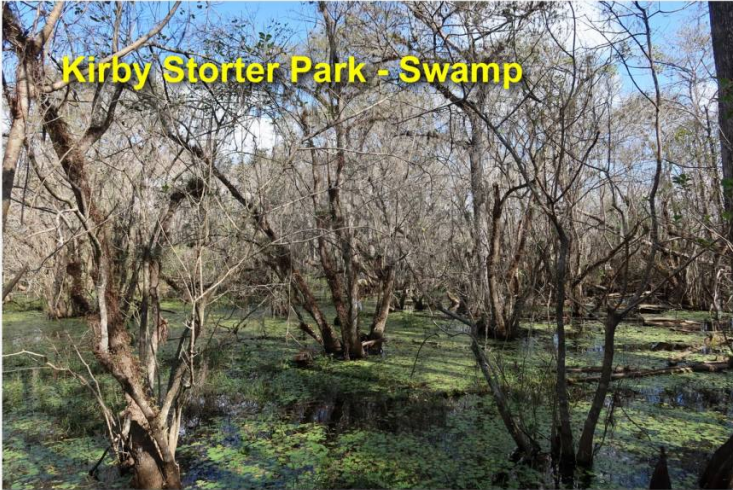


## Kirby Storter Park

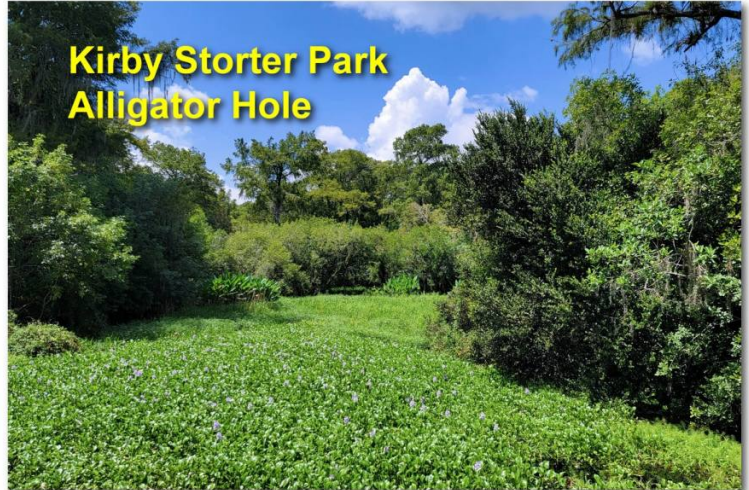
In October 2024, fire destroyed part of the Kirby Storter boardwalk. Part has now reopened, but the damaged part is not yet rebuilt.



## 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.
- But Jaudon ran out of money. And could not attract outside investors.
- Then the state awarded the 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 gravel 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 in "Pinecrest".

**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.**



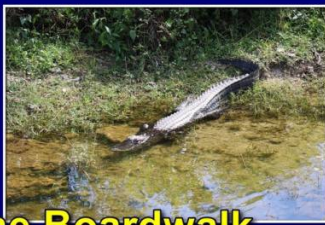
**Big Cypress  
National Preserve  
Boardwalk  
Open Daily**



**Big Cypress Preserve  
Oasis Visitor Center**



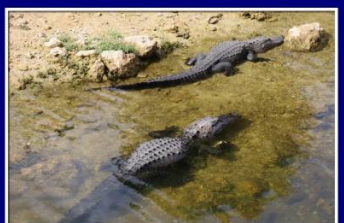




**Views from the Boardwalk**



**Rear legs  
4 toes**



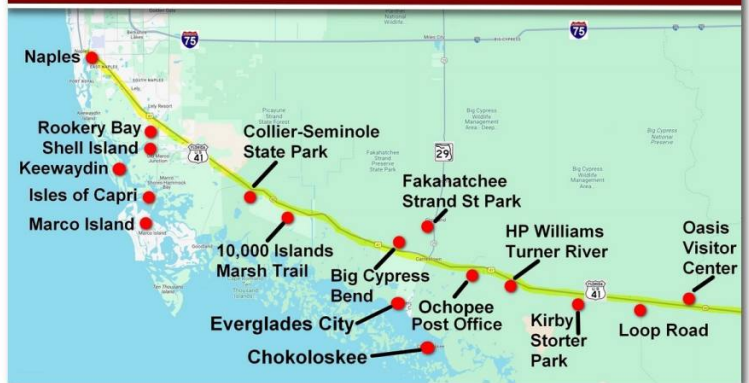
**Front legs  
5 toes**

**Oasis Visitor Center  
May 14, 2025**

**Lunch?**



## 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 con-  
struction.  
Opening  
late 2025.**



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

