

South and East of Naples Along the Tamiami Trail

Presentation by Paul Pacter

www.PaulVisits.com

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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.

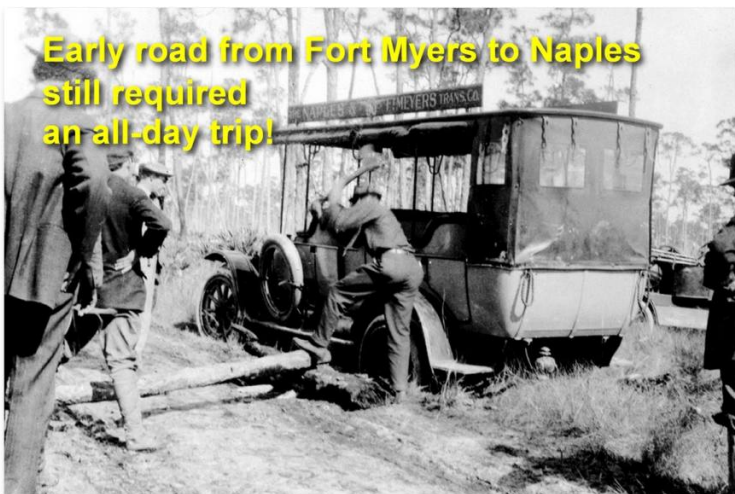


Tamiami Trail

- 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.



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. →



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

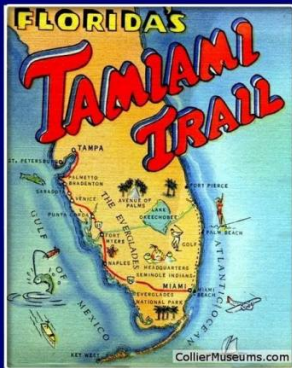


Mobile worker bunks, kitchens, toilets moved in the canal as the road progressed. Workers paid \$60/month. Worked all day standing in swamps, bitten by mosquitos.



Mobile Bunks

**Tamiami Trail
Opened Apr 25, 1928**



Festivities in Everglades

N-S was US41
E-W was US94



Marco Island



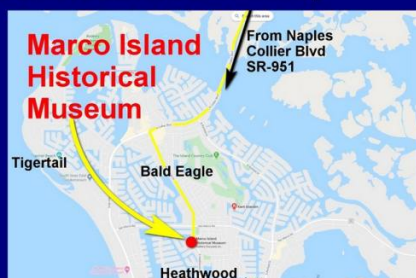
**Marco Island Historical Museum
One of Five Collier County Museums**

Website: www.colliermuseums.com

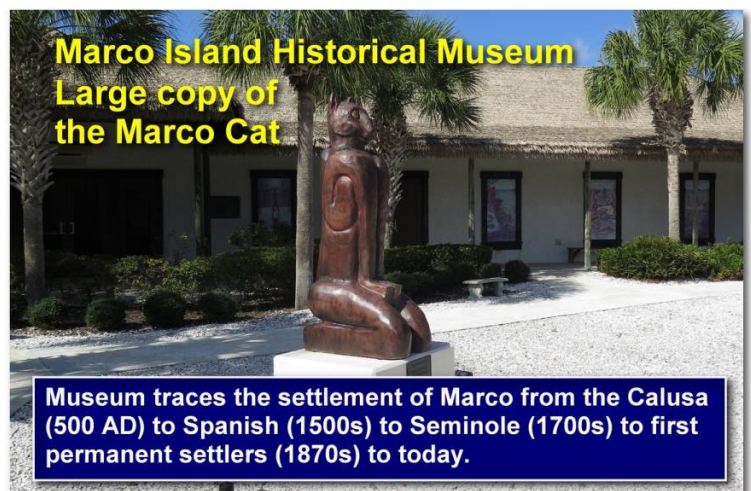
Where: 180 South Heathwood Drive, Marco Island.

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.

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.

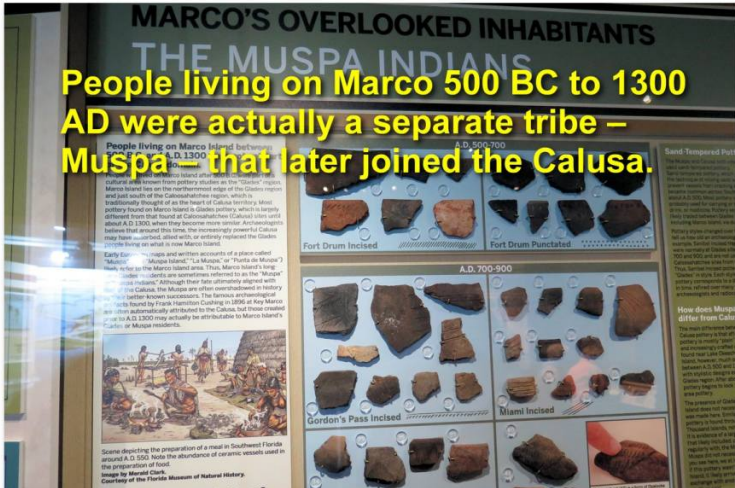
Museum has extensive history of the Calusa and other early native Marco Island people
Including 200 pre-Columbian artifacts.



Calusa Ceramic Bowl - 500-1500 AD



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



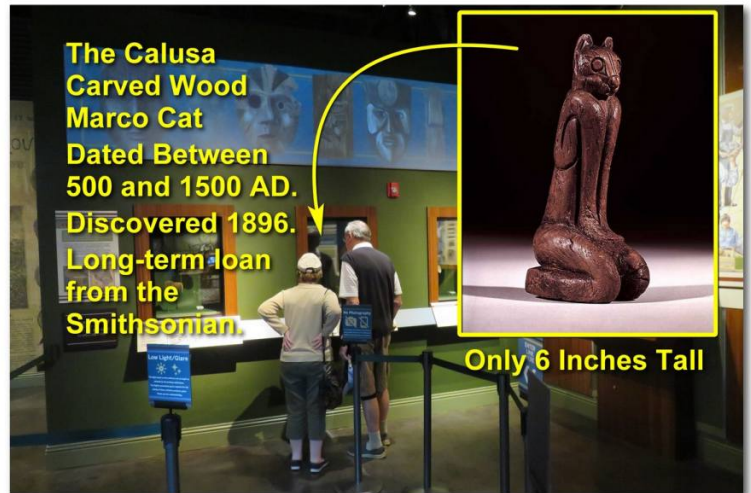
Calusa Tools – 13th-16th centuries



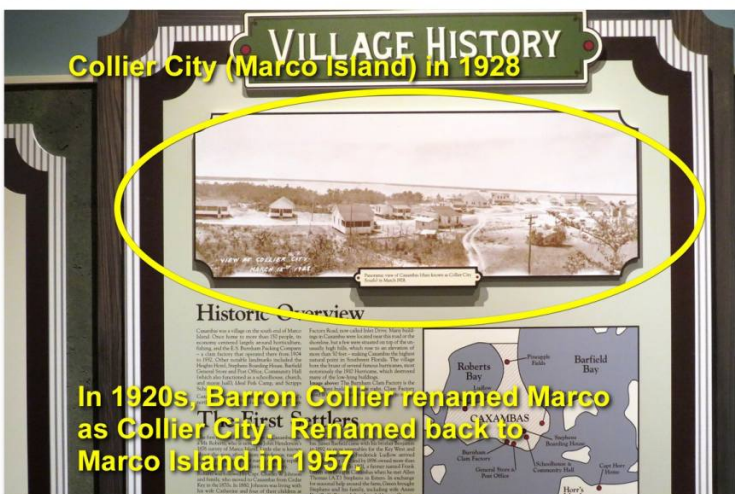
The Calusa Carved Wood Marco Cat Dated Between 500 and 1500 AD. Discovered 1896. Long-term loan from the Smithsonian.



Only 6 Inches Tall

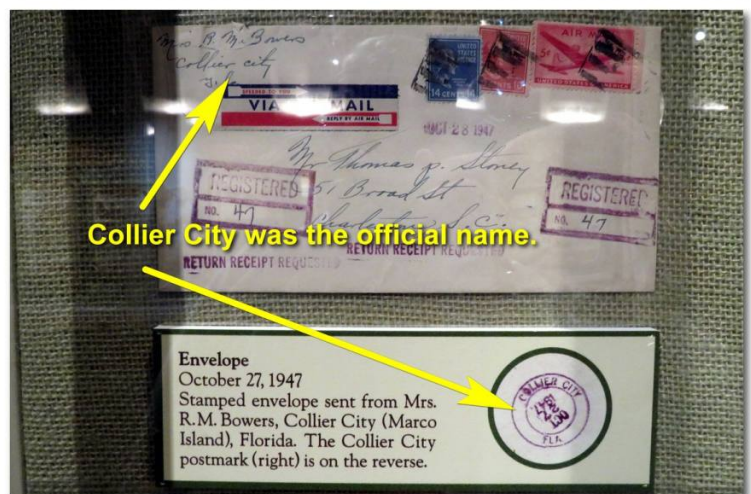


Collier City (Marco Island) in 1928



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

Collier City was the official name.





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).



The Mackle Brothers first visited Marco in 1962. In 1964 they bought Barron Collier's land and announced a \$500 million planned community.



Marco Island - Tigertail Beach
Parking Free with Collier County Beach Sticker

Gorgeous Beach

Park Here



Isles of Capri. Just off SR 951 Collier Blvd right before Marco Island Bridge.

Two "Old Florida" Places for Lunch:

Capri Fish House

Island Gypsy Cafe

Capri Fish House



Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

1. Learning Center
2. Shell Island
3. Keewaydin

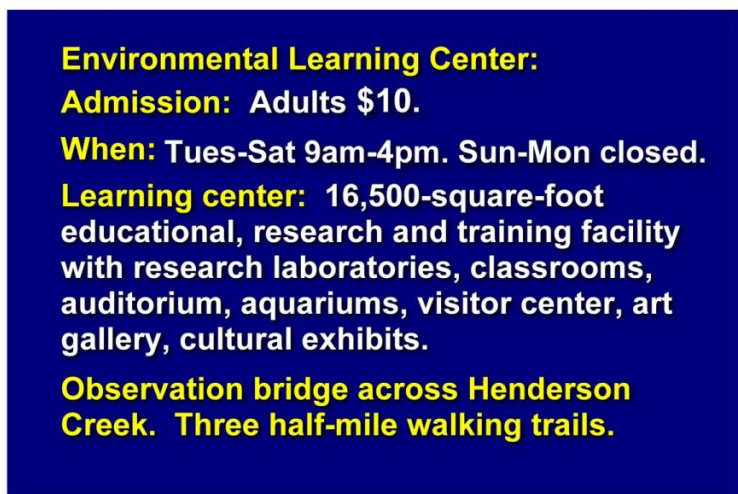
Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

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



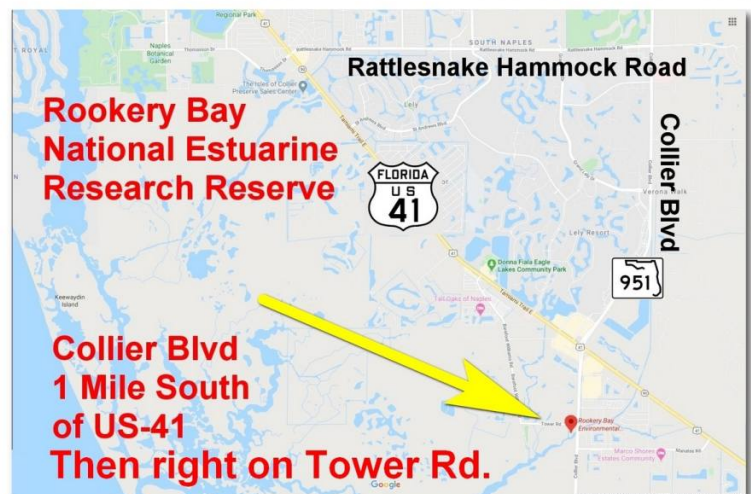
Environmental Learning Center:

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 National Estuarine Research Reserve

Collier Blvd
1 Mile South of US-41
Then right on Tower Rd.

**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



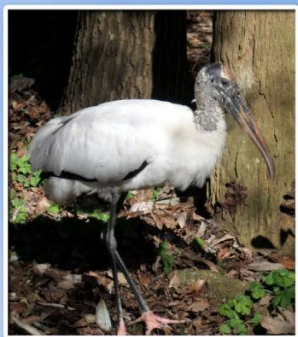
Rookery Bay Briggs Boardwalk Half-Mile Loop



Rookery Bay - Briggs Boardwalk



Rookery Bay Boardwalk Wood Stork

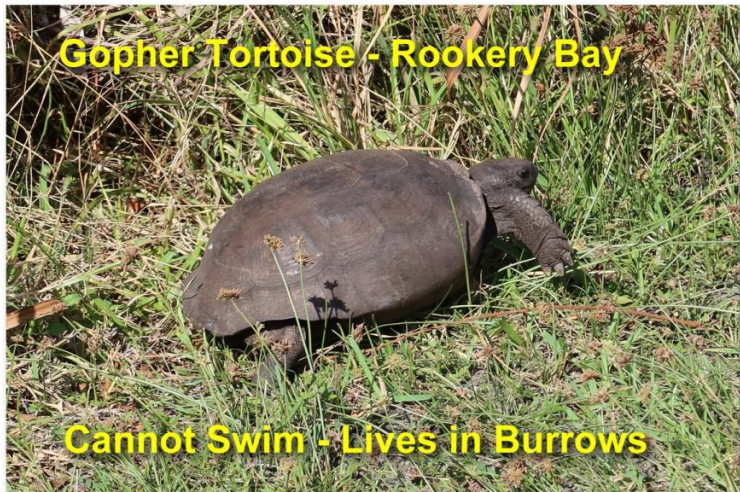


Sabal Palm – Florida State Tree (South Carolina too)
Can Grow to 65 Ft Height.
aka Cabbage Palm, Palmetto,
Swamp Cabbage.



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

1887 Water Tank

1901 & 1908 Gravestones



George Washington Kirkland
1832 to 1901

Jesse James Jones
1900-1908



Rookery Bay Nature Cruises

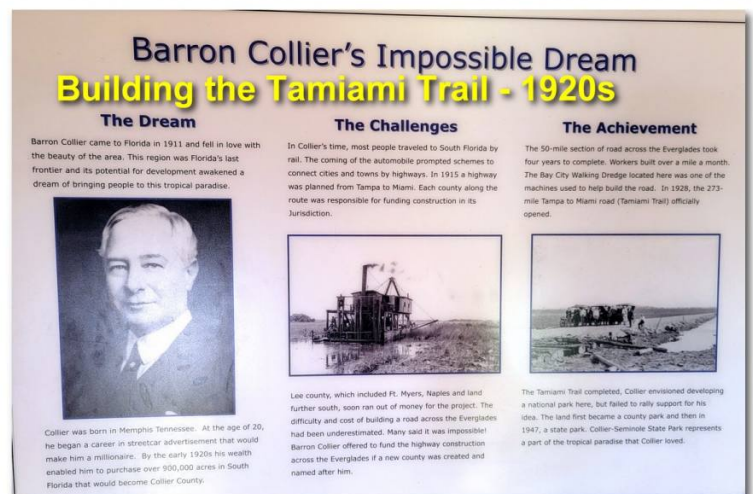
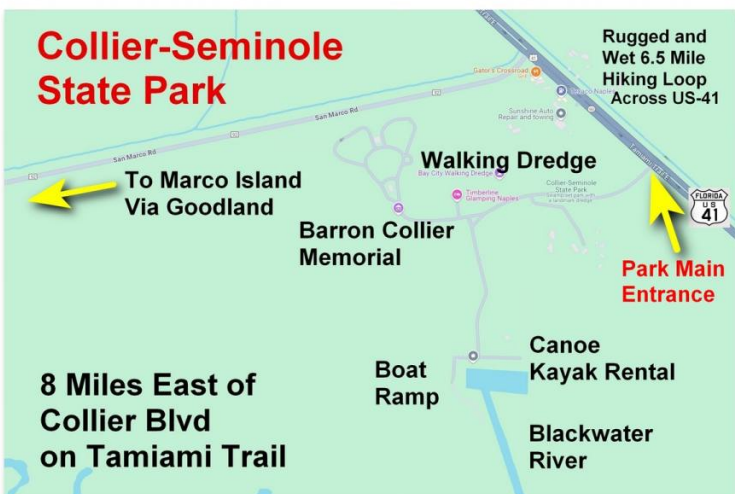
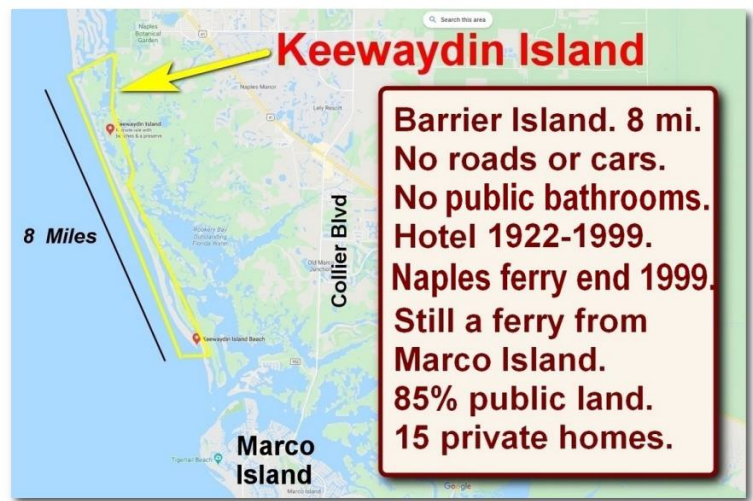
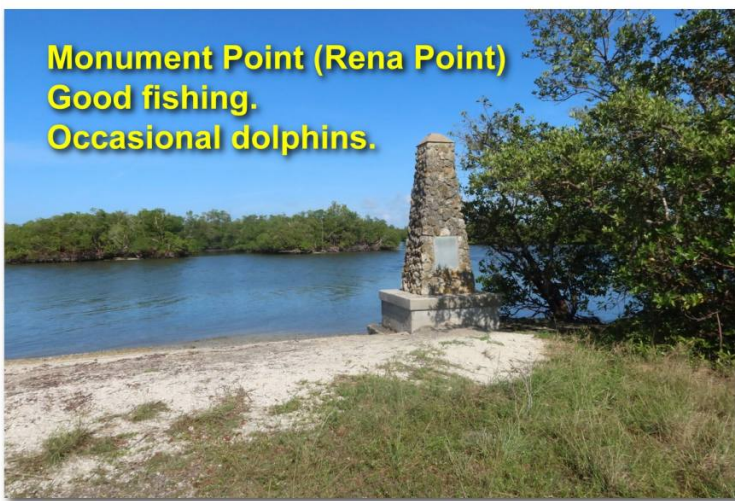


Rookery Bay - Shell Island Trail to Monument Point aka Rena Point



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







Bay City Walking Dredge - 1924
One mile per month

Designated "National
 Historic Mechanical
 Engineering Landmark"

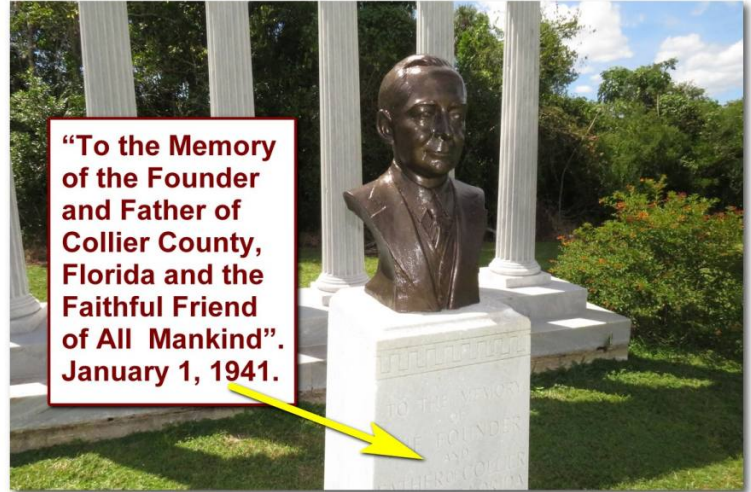


**BARRON COLLIER
 MEMORIAL**

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.**



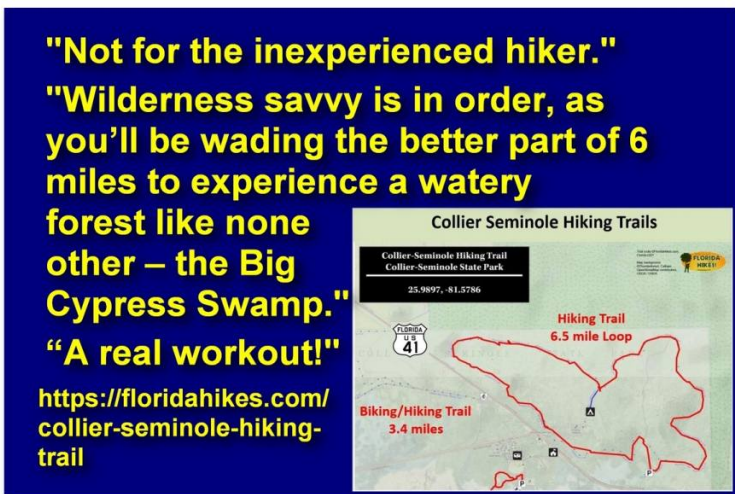
Collier-Seminole State Park
Blackwater River
Kayaking and Canoeing

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.

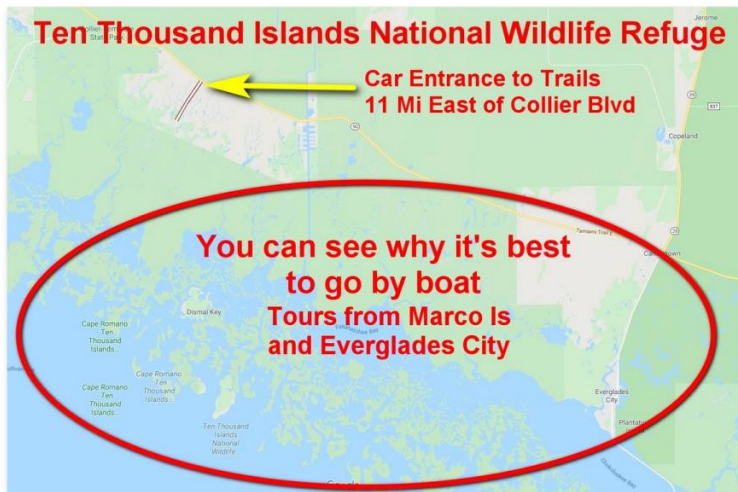
Daily: Free.

What: 35,000 acres.

Mangrove islands.

Countless plants, wildlife.

1-mile hiking trail, observation tower.



Boat Tours of Ten Thousand Islands From Everglades City:

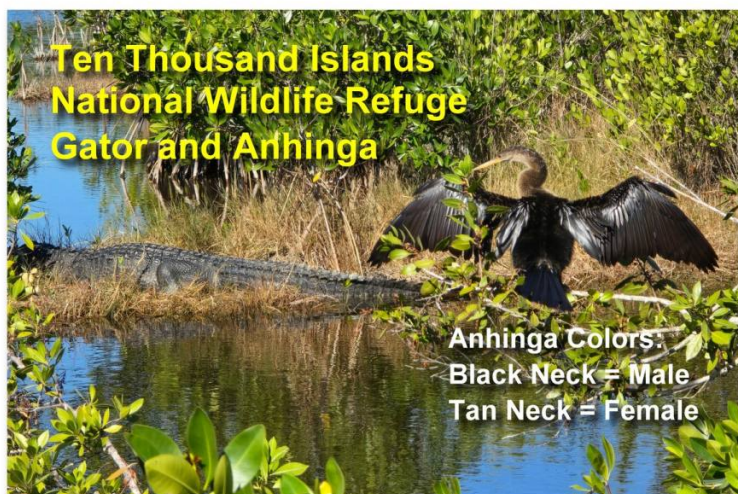
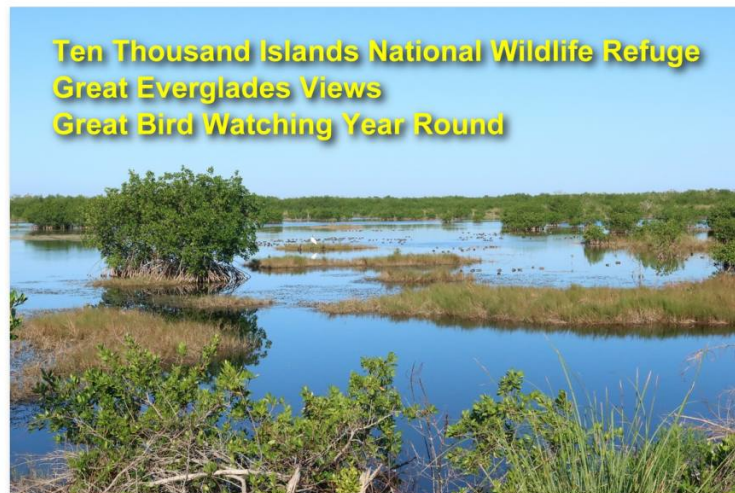
evergladesnationalparkadventures.com

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

From Marco Island:

ecoendeavors.org

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



Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge Observation Tower



Spectacular View from Observation Tower Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge

This is between rainy and dry seasons.
Rainy: Cannot see mangrove roots at all.
Dry: Mangrove islands have land around them.



Same place at
10,000 Islands
March 2020 to
May 2021.

10,000 Islands NWR Brown Pelicans



Today's Lunch Menu: Tilapia



True Story: On April 6, 2022 I was
sitting on this bench when...



Notice the tilapia or
turtle in its mouth

Cormorant Eating A Fish



Blue Heron



Gallinules (also called Moorhens) Ten-Thousand Islands



Limpkin

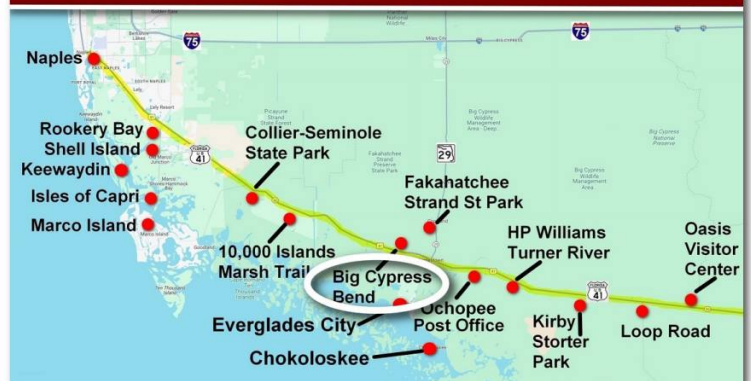
Their diet is dominated by apple snails. This one is at Collier-Seminole State Park next to Ten Thousand Islands.



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



Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk



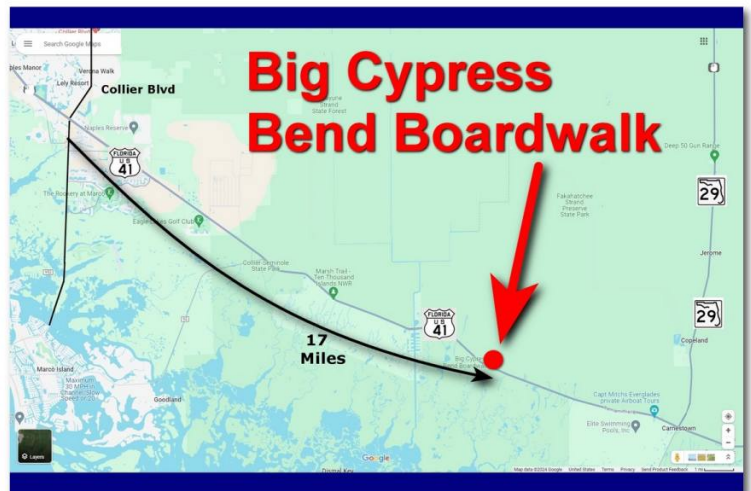
**Big Cypress Bend
Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park**
Website: www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park

Where: US-41, Copeland FL 34137.

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

When: 8am to sunset.

Admission: \$3.



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.

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.

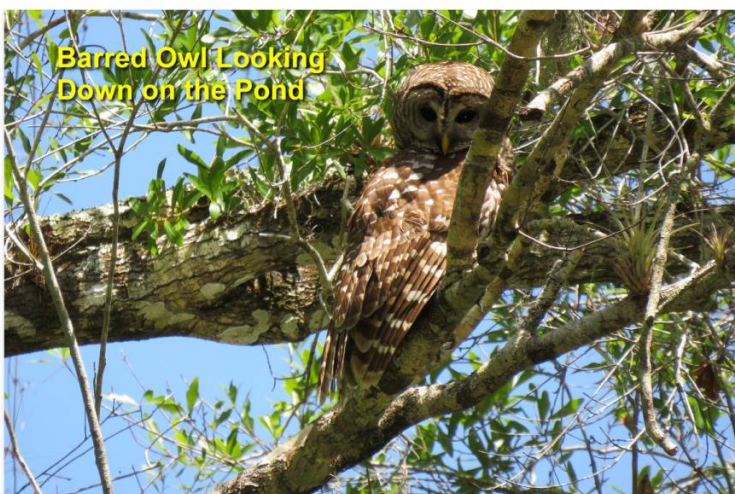
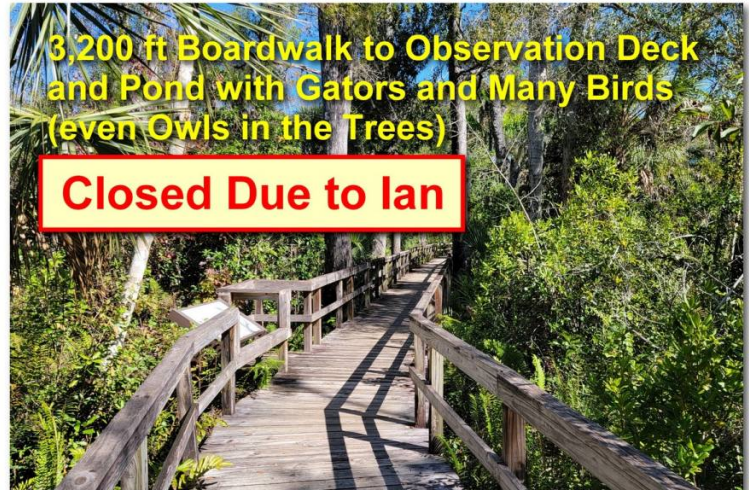
- The State had funding for only part of the new extension.
- Finally, in Feb 2024, about ½ mile of the new extension opened, along with a parking area and visitors' center.
- The State still needs funding for the rest of the new extension and also for repairs to the old boardwalk.

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.



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.

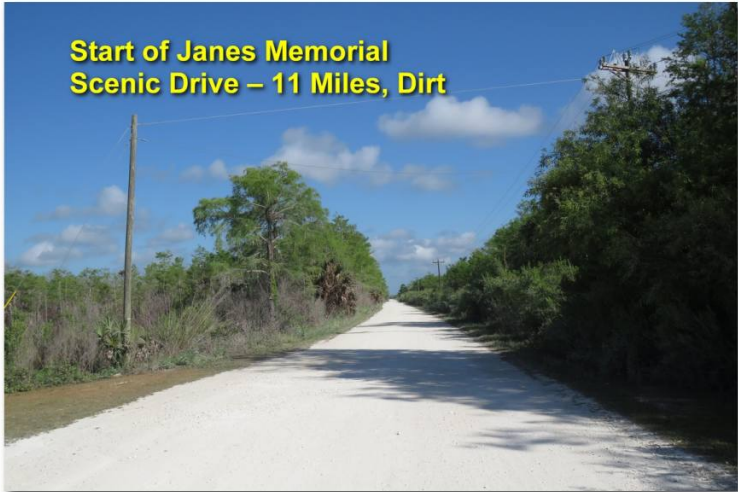
What: Florida's Amazon.

– **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.



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.

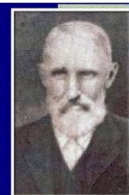
1870: First real settler William Smith Allen. Allen remained until 1889. Farmed along river front.

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



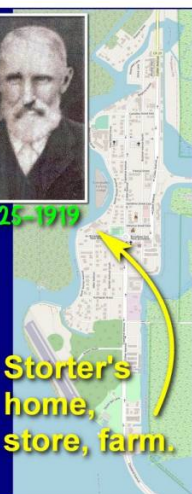
1881: First visionary settler George Storter Sr arrived. Invested in property and developed agriculture.

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.

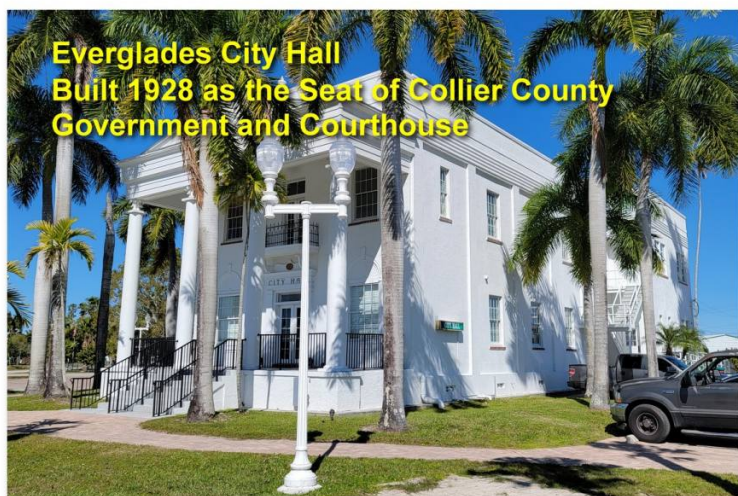
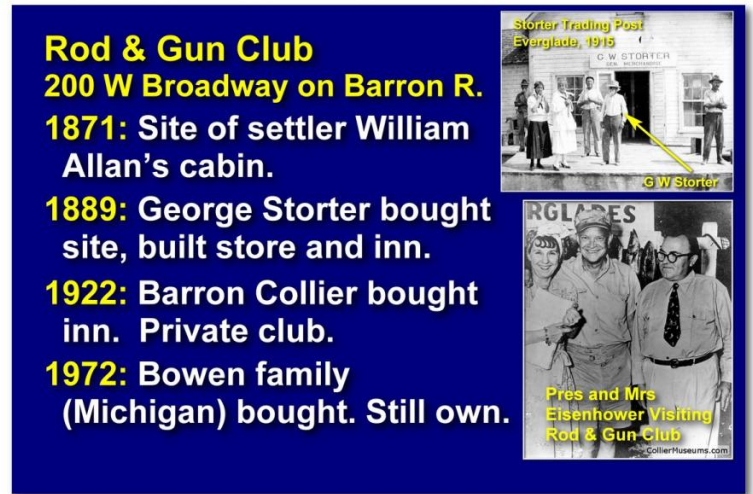
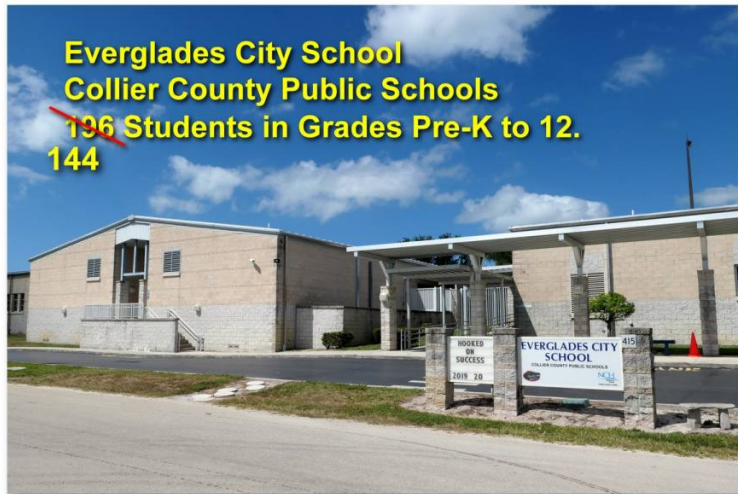
What: History of Everglades City including:

- 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.



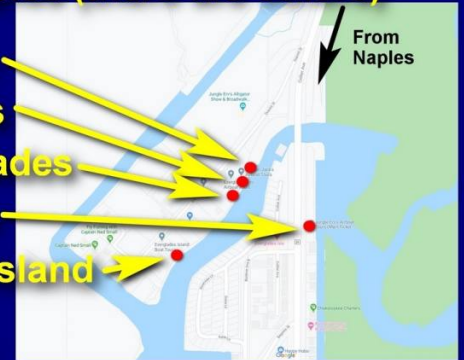
**Atlantic Coast Line
Everglades City Depot
1928**



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.

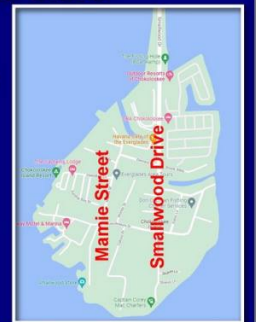


**In 1896 Ted Smallwood settled on
Chokoloskee. Started as a farmer.**

**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**





Ochopee Post Office

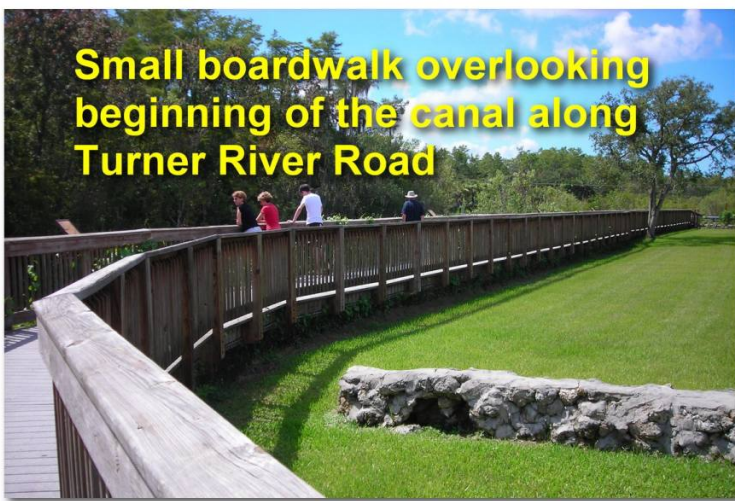


H P Williams Park Turner River Road



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.

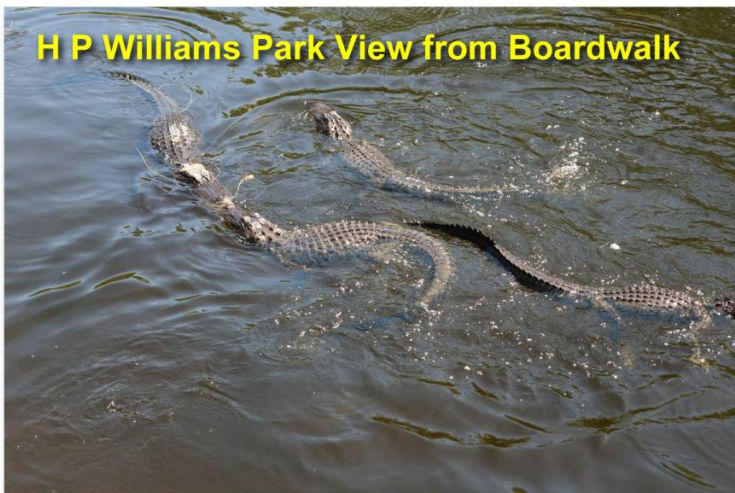


Swimming in Turner River Canal

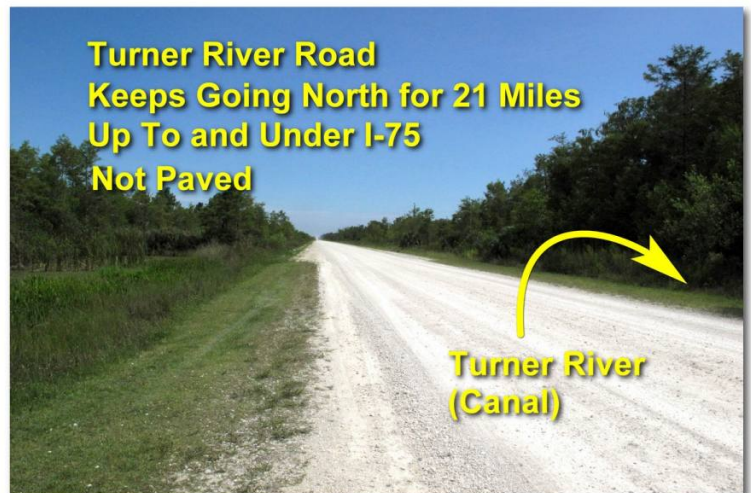
Propelled by Tail and Webbed Rear Feet



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
Website:

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

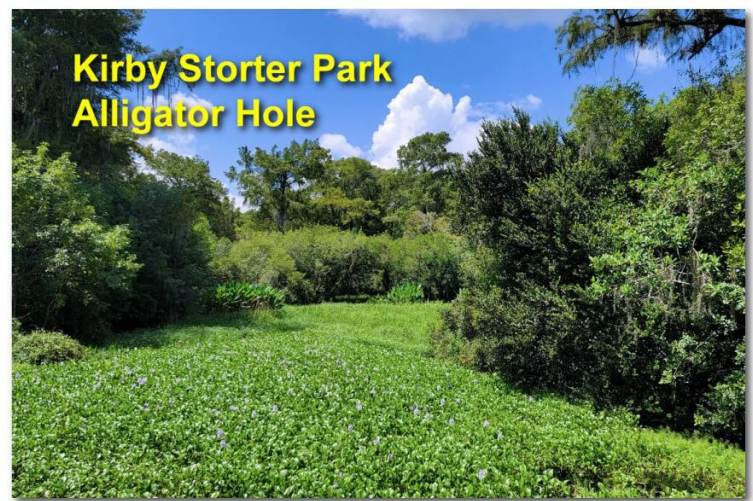
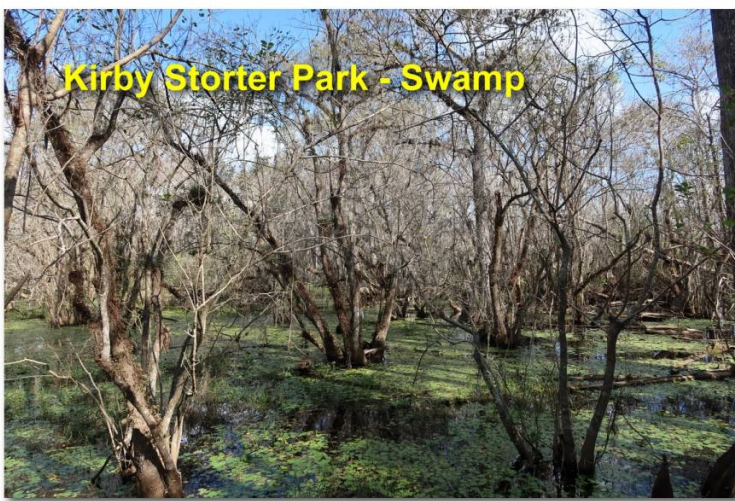


Kirby Storter Park
Beginning of Boardwalk

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.





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

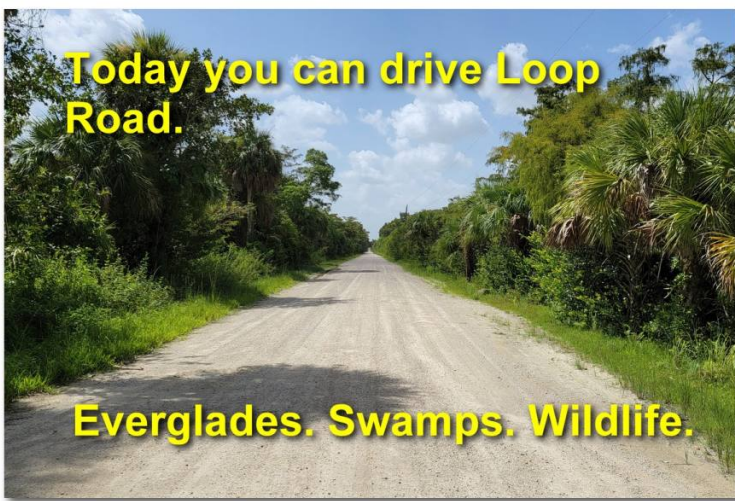


- Jaudon's company built a few rustic homes 1921-1923. And dirt Loop Road.
- But by 1923 he ran out of money. Could not find any outside investors.
- 1923 state awarded Tamiami Trail contract to Barron Collier.
- Including Jaudon's 24-mile section.

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.





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

