

# Along the Way ...

The Everglades, sometimes called the "river of grass," seasonally supports a shallow, slow-moving, sheet of water that flows from Lake Okeechobee to the Gulf of Mexico and Florida Bay. During the wet summer months, the vast grassy prairie acts both as a home to a

tremendous variety of plants and animals and as a filter for the fresh water river. These clean waters ultimately supply and nourish the productive coastal estuaries, and provide drinking water to South Floridians.



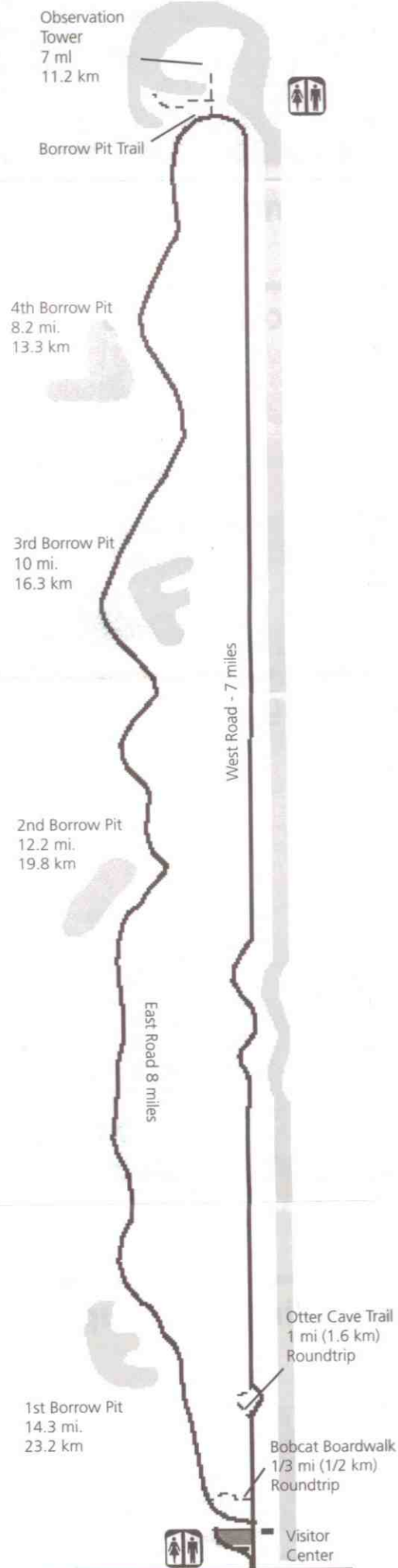
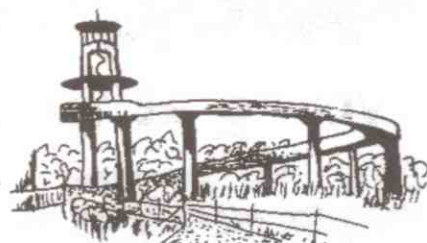
Along the road are four artificial ponds or "borrow pits". These quarries (used to build the road) serve as pools that attract a variety of wildlife during the

winter months when the sawgrass prairie is dry. Look for alligators, wading birds, anhingas, and turtles around these human-made "gator holes."



Throughout the Everglades large tree islands called "tropical hardwood hammocks" and smaller shrubby islands known as "bayheads" dot the open prairie. The hammocks grow on limestone ridges rising a few feet above the seasonally wet sawgrass prairie. These "hills" provide a flood-free area that can support a multitude of tropical and temperate trees, and serve as a dry refuge for deer, bobcat, and other mammals.

Bayhead communities, also grow on "hills" in the sawgrass prairie, but are much lower in elevation. Some bayheads grow on ridges just inches high, limiting these habitats to a host of flood-tolerant plants. The Bobcat Boardwalk and the Otter Cave Hammock trails, both near the Visitor Center, provide opportunities to explore bayhead and hammock communities. Please park your bicycle to visit these unpaved trails.



**For emergency assistance or to report violations dial #NPS from your cell phone**