

Big Cypress National Preserve



Oasis Backcountry Access

25° 51.464'N 81° 1.950'W

Backcountry access into the Preserve provides an opportunity to explore the beauty and solitude of the Big Cypress Swamp. People can access the backcountry by hiking, biking, and off-road vehicle. Everyone accessing the backcountry of the Preserve must fill out a backcountry permit. Permits may be found online, at visitor centers, and at backcountry access points. All off-road vehicles and their operators must have the appropriate, current permits and inspections. For more information on off-road vehicle permits, visit the Off-Road Vehicle Office, located at the Oasis Visitor Center, or call 239-695-1205.

Off-Road Vehicle Use in the Preserve

Off-road vehicle operation on designated trails for hunting, fishing, frogging, camping, wildlife observation, transportation to private property, and other traditional nature-based activities are consistent with the Big Cypress National Preserve enabling legislation and the Addition Act, and are, therefore authorized in the Preserve.

Operation of off-road vehicles in excess of the authorized speed limit, off designated trails, or for the purpose of challenging the vehicle against Preserve resources or other vehicles, such as racing, mudding, sport riding, motocross riding, and competitive events, is not consistent with the Big Cypress National Preserve enabling legislation, or the Addition Act. These non-traditional pursuits damage the resource and, therefore, are not authorized at Big Cypress National Preserve. Engaging in these activities can result in forfeiture of off-road vehicle access privileges.

The Future of These Trails Depends On You. Stay on Designated Trails.

Other Off-Road Vehicle Considerations

Speed limit for swamp buggies, all-terrain vehicles, and street legal 4x4s is 15 mph.

Only permitted swamp buggies and all-terrain vehicles are allowed within the Turner River and Corn Dance Units of the Preserve.

Off-road vehicle use is prohibited between 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m.

You may hike in from any off-road vehicle trail to any part of the Preserve. Be sure to park along the trail in such a manner that allows others to pass.

Be familiar with and recognize the limitations of your vehicle and your Off-road vehicle driving skills. Operate in a manner that minimizes resource impacts.

An off-road vehicle operator's permit (with photo), a valid driver's license, or learner's permit, is required of all persons operating an off-road vehicle. If the operator has a learner's permit, he or she must be accompanied by or within 100 feet of a licensed/permitted adult 18 years or older.

Riding double on all-terrain vehicles is prohibited, unless the vehicle was manufactured for such purposes.

Riding in, or on, any trailer being towed by an off-road vehicle is prohibited.

Consumption of alcohol or possession of an open container of alcohol in or on a motor vehicle, including off-road vehicles, is prohibited.

Hunting

Various hunting seasons occur within the Preserve from September through early April. All hunters are responsible for knowing regulations. Visit www.myfwc.com for details related to the Big Cypress Wildlife Management Area.

All hunters must check in and out of the Wildlife Management Area. Check stations can be found at Dona Drive, Monroe Station, 40-Mile Bend, and Bear Island.

During general gun hunting (early November through the end of December) all people entering the backcountry should consider wearing a light-weight fluorescent-orange vest.

Licensed hunters are allowed to take Conditional Reptiles incidental to lawful hunting activities during established hunting seasons. Conditional reptiles shall not be transported alive from the area. Please report all take of Conditional Reptiles at 866-392-4286, or at www.myfwc.com.

Private Property

There are several private properties in the backcountry. Respect private property and do not trespass. Private landowners will typically have their land clearly identified.

Hiking

Travel by foot is allowed in all areas of the Preserve. Be prepared by bringing a map, compass, and GPS unit. There are several hiking-only trails, including the Florida National Scenic Trail. Hikers may also use off-road vehicle trails.

Biking

Bicycling within the Preserve, is allowed along designated off-road vehicle trails only.

Camping

Dispersed camping continues to be allowed within the Turner River and Corn Dance Units of the Preserve. You may drive your off-road vehicle to a location along a designated trail nearest the camping spot you prefer, park your vehicle along the shoulder of the trail in such manner that does not impede travel by others, and carry your camping equipment to the campsite.

Camping adjacent to designated off-road vehicle trails is allowed. Do not camp on designated trails.

Pets

Within the backcountry the possession of dogs and other pets (other than bird dogs and waterfowl retrievers for hunting purposes during appropriate seasons) is prohibited. Landowners may transport pets to private property.

Tread Lightly and Leave No Trace

Respect the rights of all recreational trail users, campers, and others. Allow them to enjoy their recreational activities, undisturbed.

Do your part by leaving the area better than you found it by properly disposing of waste, minimizing the use of fire, and avoiding the spread of invasive species.

Firearms

People who can legally possess firearms under applicable federal, state, and local laws, may legally possess firearms in the Preserve. It is the responsibility of the visitor to understand and comply with all applicable state, local, and federal firearms laws before entering the Preserve. Federal law prohibits firearms in certain facilities within the Preserve; those places are marked with signs at entrances.

Emergency Contacts

Cell phone coverage is spotty, and you should not rely on them alone. Be sure to let a family member or friend know where you are going and when you are expected to return. Advise them that if they do not hear from you within a reasonable time from your pre-arranged plan to contact our dispatch at – **800-788-0511**

Report hunting violations to – 800-404-FWCC (3922).

