



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Cypress
National Preserve

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Big Cypress ORV Education and Permitting

For use of an ATV, Airboat, Swamp Buggy or Street Legal - 4 X 4 within Big Cypress National Preserve operators are required to have: **1) an operator's permit (free), 2) an inspection sticker (free), 3) an annual vehicle permit (\$50.00 per year), and 4) a backcountry permit.** Motorcycles and other two-wheeled motorized vehicles are not permitted in the preserve backcountry. The ORV Permitting Office is located within the Big Cypress National Preserve Oasis Visitor Center. The office hours are Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

In addition to the required permits ORV operators are provided education and information about the Preserve and proper vehicle operation through a powerpoint presentation that they review at the time they receive their Operator's Permit. The Preserve is planning on updating this presentation to a more informational video or multi-media type of program. Funding is available for this project and we hope to begin the design phase in the summer of 2008.

The Preserve has bulletin boards at each backcountry access point. These bulletin boards are in need of repair and are difficult to maintain with up-dated material. Preserve staff are committed to standardizing the informational panels at the access points so that they provide a more professional, up-to-date appearance and information. We are currently beginning the design phase of this project and hope to begin implementation by winter 2008/09.

The ORV Office also has printed information available that reiterates appropriate rules and regulations. These materials include maps and a newsletter. The National Park Service has made strides to improve access to this material by posting it on the Preserve website at www.nps.gov/bicy/planyourvisit/orv-use.htm

The NPS also recognizes the need to increase personnel, in the field contact with visitors that access the area by ORV and we are in the process of standardizing and implementing an ORV Volunteer Trail Ranger Program that we hope to have up and running in the Fall of 2008.

The Divisions of Law Enforcement and Interpretation work closely together to ensure that the appropriate information is generated for the public. Additionally, we implement "Tread Lightly" and "Leave No Trace" messages when possible.

Obtaining Permits and Vehicle Requirements for Operating Within the Preserve

1) Operator's Permit

In order to get this identification card, visitors must come to the Big Cypress Visitor Center at Oasis, located halfway between Naples and Miami on Highway 41 (Tamiami Trail). They must have a **valid state driver's license or learner's permit (required)**. **Note** — Those who have a learner's permit must be accompanied by a licensed adult 18 years or older (while operating an ORV) who also possess a Big Cypress National Preserve ORV operator's permit. **Unlicensed drivers are not permitted to operate ORVs in Big Cypress.**

The visitors are shown the orientation powerpoint presentation and a photo of the visitor is taken to create the Operator's Permit. Visitors are required to carry the operator's permit with them whenever they are operating an ORV in the Preserve.

2) Vehicle Inspection Sticker

Visitors are advised to bring their vehicles to the visitor center on **Fri, Sat, Sun, or Mon 9:00 am to 3:30 pm**. The inspection sticker is valid for 3 years, at which time, the vehicle will need a reinspection. ORV staff inspect the vehicles to ensure the vehicle requirements are met.

ORV VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS

ATV 3 and 4 Wheelers

Front Tires minimum of 7" tread face.
Rear Tires minimum of 9" tread face.
Working white Headlight
Working Red Tail Light
Muffler
VIN#
PROOF OF TITLE (State Law Requirement)

Airboat

Working White Aft Light to be seen 360'
Current State Registration Decal
Hull Length 14' max excluding grass rake
Width 8' max
Muffler (automotive style. See www.myfwc.com for details)
Minimum of 3" FL #'s displayed on each side of bow

- OR -

Minimum of 6" FL #'s displayed on both sides of rudders
Orange Safety Flag 10x12" or larger – flown at minimum 10 feet
above vessel

Fire Extinguisher
PFD (Life Jackets) for each occupant
Port and Starboard lights (Coast Guard Requirement)

Swamp Buggy

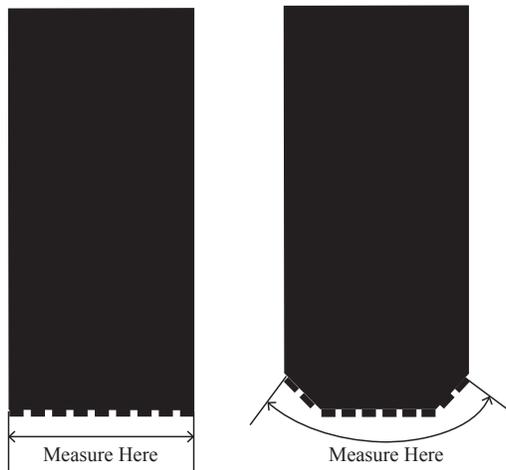
All Tires minimum of 9" tread face.
Working White Headlights
Working Red Tail Light
Muffler
Width 8' max
Weight (will be weighed at inspection)
Must not be registered or licensed for highway use

Street Legal 4x4

Tires minimum of 9" tread face
Working White Headlights
Working Red Tail Lights
VIN#
Muffler
Weight (will be weighed at inspection)
Registration/Insurance

Measuring Tire Tread Width

Measure tread width from edge to edge along face



Tread Face – That portion of the outer surface of the tire that actually makes contact with the trail substrate during normal use. This includes those portions of tread which extend onto the sides of the tire since they are designed as such to aid in cornering and in soft ground are load bearing.

Measurement of Tread Face – Tread Face will be measured using a flexible tape measure capable of conforming to a rounded surface. The measurement will be from one edge of the tread face to the other, along the flat or rounded tread surface of the tire as viewed in cross – section.

3) Annual Vehicle Permit

Once the visitor has obtained an operator's permit and their vehicle has passed the inspection and received an inspection sticker, they may then purchase the \$50.00 annual ORV permit. **These permits are valid from January 1 of each year to January 31 of the following year - a thirteen-month period, however, they are NOT prorated from the date of purchase.** This means that whatever the date of purchase is, the permit will still expire on January 31, and therefore it is more economical to purchase it early in the year! Permits go on sale mid-December of each year and 2,000 permits are available each year. All permit sales are on a first-come, first-served basis at this time, but a drawing system may be used as demand approaches the 2,000 permit limit. **Permits are not transferable between vehicles.**

4) Backcountry Permit

Finally, all visitors that access the backcountry are required to fill out a backcountry permit. Typically these permits can be obtained at backcountry access points or at the Oasis Visitor Center. We are currently researching ways to make the permit available on-line or at the FWC wildlife checkstations.

We strongly encourage that visitors provide us with up-dated contact numbers, physical and e-mail addresses so that if there are any notices or other information related to backcountry access we can notify them in a timely fashion.

Overall, the NPS needs to make further improvements in up-dating and professionalizing our backcountry access information for all visitors. We recognize this and continue to move towards improving our program. Future educational opportunities may include the implementation of "Tread Lightly" and ATV Safety Institute training opportunities for the visitors that hold ORV permits.