

SPECIAL PARK USES AT BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE

"The service...shall promote and regulate the use of ... national parks ... [its] purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." (16 U.S.C. 1)

Big Cypress National Preserve is home to many beautiful landscapes and settings that are ideal venues for a variety of special activities or events. Most special events and activities held in the Preserve require a *Special Use Permit*, issued only after the National Park Service (NPS) determines that the activities involved will not impair Preserve values and resources.

Most requests should be processed within 30 days if the application is complete and without alteration. Requests involving multiple locations, complex logistics, or coordination with other visitor activities will require a minimum of 30 to 45 days to process. Projects that require environmental or cultural resource evaluation must be submitted no less than 30 days before the start of proposed activities and may require additional time dependent upon project complexity. In compliance with the requirements of the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, applicants must submit their social security number or Federal Tax ID number when filling out the application for permit.

Special Park Uses

A special park use is a short term activity that takes place in a park area and that:

- Provides a benefit to an individual, group, or organization rather than the public at large;
- requires written authorization and some degree of management control from the NPS in order to protect Preserve resources and the public interest;
- is not prohibited by law or regulation;
- has a specific legal authority authorizing the requested use; and
- is neither initiated, sponsored nor conducted by the NPS.

Special uses are further categorized as either rights or privileges during the screening process. The following are examples of special uses:

First Amendment Activities

Freedom of speech, press, religion, and assembly are constitutional rights. However, the courts have recognized that activities associated with the exercise of these rights may be reasonably regulated to protect Preserve resources. Therefore, all first amendment activities require special use permits and the NPS may regulate the time, place, and manner in which they are conducted. Some examples of special events that require permits are:

- Distribution and/or sale of printed matter;
- religious services;
- political events;
- public demonstrations or assemblies, etc.; and
- collecting signatures for petitions.

Special Events

Special events are activities that fall under the category of privileges such as:

- sporting events;
- public spectator attractions;
- pageants;
- entertainment;
- concerts;
- ceremonies;
- large group camps or rendezvous; and
- cultural programs.

Special events may be authorized provided a meaningful association between the Preserve and the event can be demonstrated; it contributes to visitor understanding of the significance of the Preserve; and a permit has been issued by the Superintendent.

Policy

The NPS may permit a special event if the proposed activity will not:

- Cause injury or damage to park resources; or
- Be contrary to the purposes for which the park was established; or
- Unreasonably impair the atmosphere of peace and tranquility maintained in wilderness, natural, historic or commemorative locations within the Preserve; or
- Unreasonably interfere with the interpretive visitor service or other program activities, or with the administrative activities of the NPS; or
- Substantially impair the operation of public facilities or services of NPS concessionaires or contractors; or
- Present a clear and present danger to public health and safety; or
- Result in significant conflict with other existing uses.

The NPS will not permit the public staging of special events that are conducted primarily for the material or financial benefit of the organizers or participants, or which involve commercialization or in-park advertising or publicity.

Commercial Filming/Photography

A photography/filming permit is required for any commercial filming or photography. For more information about photography and filming permits, including restrictions and application procedures, contact the Special Use Permit (SUP) Coordinator.

Weddings

The Preserve's inspiring vistas and natural settings are ideally suited for small, informal weddings. All weddings require an approved wedding permit. For more information, including restrictions and application procedures, contact the SUP Coordinator.

Miscellaneous Activities

Other activities may require permits if there is the potential for interference with visitor use, congestion of a highly visited area, possible impact on Preserve resources, or uses and activities

regulated by 36 Code of Federal Regulations. Examples include: Military Operations, public use limits, camping, scattering of human ashes, aircraft use, etc. For more information, including restrictions and application procedures, contact the SUP Coordinator.

Costs

The National Park Service is required to recover all costs associated with most permits arising from privileges. All administrative costs involving permit application and processing are nonrefundable and will be charged to the permittee.

Insurance and Bonding

Insurance and Bonding – In most cases, general liability insurance by a U.S. company must be carried by the permittee showing the U.S. Government, National Park Service, Big Cypress National Preserve 33100 Tamiami Trail East Ochopee, Florida 34141-1000 as additionally insured. Certificates naming the U.S. Government as “certificate holder” only are not acceptable. The insurance certificate must identify the applicant by name and business address (if applicable); if the permittee uses a different name than listed on insurance policy, the relationship between insured and permittee must be identified. Short term policies must show coverage on "occurrence" basis. Personal or homeowners liability is not acceptable. Hand-written certificate holder information is unacceptable. We will accept a faxed copy of the certificate until your insurance company can mail us the original.

The minimum amount of commercial liability insurance is one million dollars. Additional amounts may be required for high risk activities. Smaller, low-risk activities may be eligible for a reduction to \$500,000. Contact the Preserve for details.

Bond

Certain activities may trigger the need for the permittee to post a refundable damage bond. The amount of the bond will be equivalent to the estimated cost to BICY for cleanup, repair or rehabilitation of resources or facilities that could potentially be impacted by the permit activities. At the conclusion of the permit, the bond will be returned to the permittee after costs of clean up, repair or rehabilitation are deducted.

The bond amount is determined by estimating the cost of monitoring and site restoration should you fail to adequately care for or complete clean-up of the site. This amount will be specified in the permit. The permittee is responsible for removal of equipment, props, trash, and restoration of the site to original condition or in a condition satisfactory to the National Park Service. If this is not done, all or part of the damage bond will be retained to offset clean-up/recovery expenses. If a surplus remains after the costs have been reimbursed, the surplus is returned to the permittee. If the bond does not cover all the costs, the permittee will be billed for the difference.

Note: Because costs are based on the services provided, the National Park Service does not differentiate between profit and nonprofit documentary projects. Permittee will be billed for monitoring, scouting, conferencing, and any other personnel services provided for filming activities according to the cost recovery schedule.

Application Process

Special Events, First Amendment Activities, and Applicable Miscellaneous Activities:

Applications must be requested by phone, e-mail, fax or letter. Completed applications must be returned to the Preserve with payment. There is a \$100 non-refundable application review fee (except for First Amendment Activities). Payment can be in the form of check, money order, or you may pay by credit card using pay.gov (<https://www.pay.gov/public/form/start/79732383>).

Your request will be evaluated on the basis of the information in your application. If substantial staff resources are expended in the evaluation of the request, the applicant will be billed for the additional costs. Therefore you are encouraged to attach maps, diagrams, detailed descriptions of activities to be conducted etc., with your application to assist Preserve staff in evaluating your request.

Please submit applications as far in advance as possible.

Contact Information:

- Mail
Big Cypress National Preserve
33100 Tamiami Trail East
Ochopee, Florida 34141-1000
Attn: Kit Carrington, SUP Coordinator
- Email
Bicy_permits@nps.gov
- Phone
239-695-1117 voice
239-695-2850 fax

Special instructions are listed on the application form; please read carefully.

Commercial Photography/Filming and Wedding Permits: These activities require different permits. For application procedures and fees, contact the SUP Coordinator.

The following are activities requiring permits, which are administered separately from special use permits. For more information about obtaining authorization for these activities, please call the following:

- Specimen collecting, research, and some science education activities –Chief of Resource Management Office (239)695-1111
- Engaging in or soliciting any business – Christine Clark, 239-695-2000
- Off-Road Vehicle Use or Camping in designated campgrounds – Off Road Vehicle Office, 239-695-4111 x 3