

National Park Service
2002 Environmental Achievement Awards
Honorable Mention

Terry Saunders,
Facility Manager, Big Cypress National Preserve

Terry Saunders has continually demonstrated commitment to natural resources while fulfilling his duties as Facility Manager at Big Cypress National Preserve. One of his biggest projects is the installation of a car wash station that will reuse water during the cleaning process. Water that has gone through the system will be collected and cycled through a series of tanks and a particulate filter, then reused for the next wash cycle. While Terry initially planned to use fresh water for the rinse cycle, he also researched the pros and cons of a completely “closed loop” system to see if it was possible to have a carwash that did not require fresh water to be added for every wash. Through his research, Terry learned that the most common complaints of a closed loop carwash are high maintenance filter replacements and filmy rinse water. Terry has decided to experiment with ways to avoid these problems and plans to build the carwash almost closed-loop. Settling tanks will be used to eliminate most of the need for filtration, which should reduce the maintenance associated with replacing filters. Also, some fresh water will be added to the rinse cycle to eliminate any soap film remaining in some closed loop systems. Terry is confident that this will result in a cost effective carwash that requires minimal fresh water.



In addition to this significant undertaking, Terry incorporates environmentally friendly practices into his routine activities. Whenever a building is being constructed or undergoes renovation, sustainable alternatives such as energy efficient lighting and recycled materials are purchased if they are cost-effective. Terry is working closely with design staff to ensure that the new visitor contact station, currently under construction, will be a “green” facility.

In regards to Big Cypress’ vehicle fleet, Terry has set a goal of phasing out all diesel fuel use and has taken the lead on replacing traditional fuel with biodiesel. In addition, he is researching quieter and more efficient motorized equipment such as airboats, swamp buggies, and electric vehicles.

In order to share his experiences with others and help other Parks improve their environmental performance, Terry serves as an NPS environmental auditor and was instrumental in planning the first Environmental Innovation “National Park Service Greening” workshop held at Big Cypress. Thanks to these efforts and others, Terry is helping the National Park Service achieve its mission of protecting and preserving natural resources for future generations.