



Swamp Walk: A Walk on the Wild Side

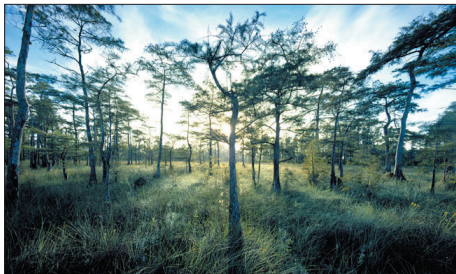


A ranger guided hike through the swamp is a great way to get your feet wet!

The Big Cypress National Preserve is a land of unique opportunity. From the slow meandering waters of the cypress strands, to the curiosity-filled waters of a gator hole; wet walking is a way of life in this swamp. Few places in the United States offer the prospect of getting your feet wet while traversing a primeval backdrop. Swamp walking is a fabulous way to get out into the backcountry of the Preserve and experience a type of America that can be intimidating, yet rewarding.

Through a little understanding, and proper planning a swamp walk will result in memories that will last a lifetime.

In addition to the information on the reverse of this card there are a few things you must do to ensure a safe experience. Never travel alone in the backcountry. Always tell someone where you are going and when you'll return. Always carry a form of communication in the event you need it. Never forget enough water, bring enough for two people.



Above: A view from the Florida Scenic Trail.



Right: A large group out enjoying a swamp walk.

What You Need

Wet walks are inherently different from regular hiking, in that you start and stop your hike in the water. There are a few essential items that will make this task much easier and more enjoyable.

-You need to have the proper footwear. Old sneakers work best. Since you'll be getting wet there is no need to bring an expensive pair of hiking boots. Also, waders are discouraged as there are times when the water line may be higher than the waders, which renders the waders useless.

-You will need long pants. The open prairies consist of saw grass which has serrated edges and can injure bare skin. By covering your legs you can alleviate painful scratches.

-You will need a good walking stick. The muddy and uneven soil can be difficult to walk on. By having the stability of a walking stick you can ensure a safer and less strenuous walk.

-You will want to bring a change of clothes to make the ride back to the campground or home a dry and comfortable one.

Where to Go

There are many options of places to wet walk within Big Cypress. Ranger guided walks are a great introduction to the area. Ranging in length and difficulty there is a ranger led walk for every ability. The ranger led activities schedule can be found on our website, www.nps.gov/bicy.

If you want to explore on your own the Florida National Scenic Trail and the Gator Hook Trail make great options, or stop by the Oasis Visitor Center or Swamp Welcome Center for additional recommendations.

State Law Prohibits the feeding and harassing of wildlife with offenses subject to penalties of fines up to \$500 and up to 60 days in jail.

In case of emergency, please call Park Dispatch at 800-788-0511, or 9-1-1

For more information please contact:

Big Cypress National Preserve
33100 Tamiami Trail East
Ochopee, FL 34141

239-695-4758, or
239-695-1201