

THE  
**FUTURE**  
OF  
**AMERICA'S**  
**NATIONAL**  
**PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Big Cypress National Preserve

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: BICY

Year: 2007

**Vision Statement**

Big Cypress National Preserve is located in southern Florida, centrally located between Miami and Naples. It consists of 729,000 acres and is noted for its diversity of native plant species, and rare and protected wildlife such as the Florida panther, the Cape Sable Seaside sparrow, bald eagle, and the red-cockaded woodpecker. The primary resource in Big Cypress which supports all of this diversity is water. Strands, swamps, and sloughs are the major corridors of water flow in Big Cypress and are important to the Everglades ecosystem. Hardwood hammocks, old-growth pinelands, and mangrove forests provide essential habitat for all wildlife. This resource also includes cypress domes, which provide pockets of permanent water and wildlife habitat similar to cypress strands.

Big Cypress National Preserve was established in 1974 for the purpose of ensuring "the preservation, conservation and protection of the natural, scenic, hydrologic, floral and faunal, and recreational values of the Big Cypress watershed in the State of Florida and to provide for the enhancement and public enjoyment thereof".

Culturally, Big Cypress contains almost 400 archaeological sites which date back to 500 B.C. Today, Seminole and Miccosukee Indians depend on the preserve as a source of natural materials for housing, crafts and other cultural and religious uses.

Visitors to Big Cypress participate in a wide variety of recreational activities including hiking, camping, canoeing, off-road vehicle use, and hunting. The Preserve also has a very active education program that reaches almost 7000 students on an annual basis.

The Centennial vision for Big Cypress and its partners is to move resource protection programs forward that protect those resources and provide for visitor enjoyment, and accomplish that in a way that builds social capital. Increasing social capital builds support for the Preserve and its resources. The Centennial Initiative provides an opportunity to engage more closely with our partners and collaborate with new ones to complete projects and programs that highlight preservation, education and access to the resource.

Some of the partners already working with Big Cypress include: Friends of Big Cypress, South Florida National Parks Trust, Everglades Association, Collier County School System, and the Collier County Extension Service Master Gardner Program.

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

Karen Gustin, Superintendent

Site: BICY

**STEWARDSHIP**

**Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

**Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.**

Rehabilitate high-priority historic building by rehabilitating, repairing and stabilizing the landscape and parking area of historic Monroe Station, and bring the area up to good condition. PMIS # 109180 [Rehabilitation, Repair and Stabilization of Landscape and Parking area of the Historic Monroe Station]

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

**Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

1. Restore native habitats through regular treatment of Big Cypress National Preserve lands infested with invasive plants, such as Brazilian pepper and melaleuca. PMIS # 41189 [Aggressive Removal of Exotic Vegetation], plus #3901, 3902, 58998, 59000, 102341, 102400, 1n3 122206.

2. Participate in recovery and population monitoring efforts for Big Cypress federally listed species such as the Florida panther, red-cockaded woodpecker and West Indian manatee. PMIS #s 3882, 3900, 3905, 58576, 58890, 122079, and 122408.

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Site: BICY

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.**

**Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

1. Demonstrate environmental excellence and green practices through the design and rehabilitation of the Preserve's Swamp Education Center. PMIS # 89474 [Modernize the Big Cypress Swamp Education Center]

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

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RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

1. Increase access to lesser-known parts of the Big Cypress backcountry through the rehabilitation of the Gator Hook Trail. PMIS # 68168 [Rehabilitate Gator Hook Trail]

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

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EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

1. Increase number of curriculum based school programs through partnership with Collier County School system and the South Florida National Parks Trust.  
2. Construct exhibits for the Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center that focus on the watershed of the Everglades ecosystem. PMIS # 68544 [Fabricate/Install Exhibits, and Install Audio Visual Equipment for Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center]

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PROFESSIONALISM

Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

1. Maintain or decrease the number of annual visitor accidents/incidents at Big Cypress National Preserve to 5.

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