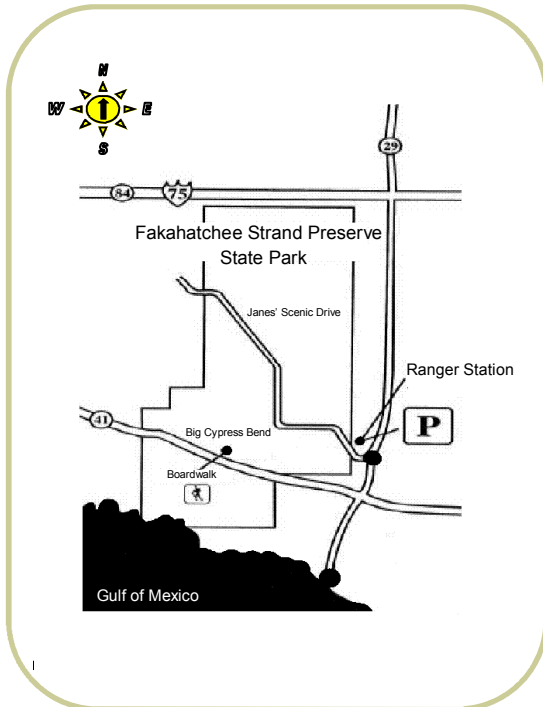


FAKAHATCHEE STRAND PRESERVE STATE PARK



FAKAHATCHEE STRAND
PRESERVE STATE PARK
IS OPEN FROM 8AM TO SUNSET,
365 DAYS A YEAR

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and
www.friendsoffakahatchee.org

BIG CYPRESS BEND BOARDWALK



at

FAKAHATCHEE STRAND PRESERVE STATE PARK

Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk ...the window to Fakahatchee Strand

Welcome to one of the most unique and beautiful locations in all of Florida.

The Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk takes you into the heart of the Fakahatchee Strand, the largest bald cypress/royal palm swamp forest in the world. The wetlands of Fakahatchee are nature's way of managing water and water quality. The swamps recharge the underground water supply in the porous limestone. Swamps moderate the climate and maintain moisture to guard against wildfires. They provide food and cover for wildlife. These wetlands are a precious resource.

The Fakahatchee Strand is a major drainage slough of the Big Cypress Swamp and a part of the greater Everglades ecosystem. Water drains through the swamps of the strand, to the mangroves of the 10,000 islands and the Gulf of Mexico.

As you walk along the boardwalk, you are stepping into the central slough, the deepest part of the Fakahatchee Strand. The dominant trees you'll see on your walk are bald cypress, many of which are hundreds of years old. You will also find native royal palm trees, sable palms, pop ash and pond apple, a tree of East Indian origin. Pop ash and pond apple are small trees with multiple trunks and rough bark that support the growth of epiphytic orchids, ferns and bromeliads. Common aquatic plants here are pickerel weed and alligator flag.

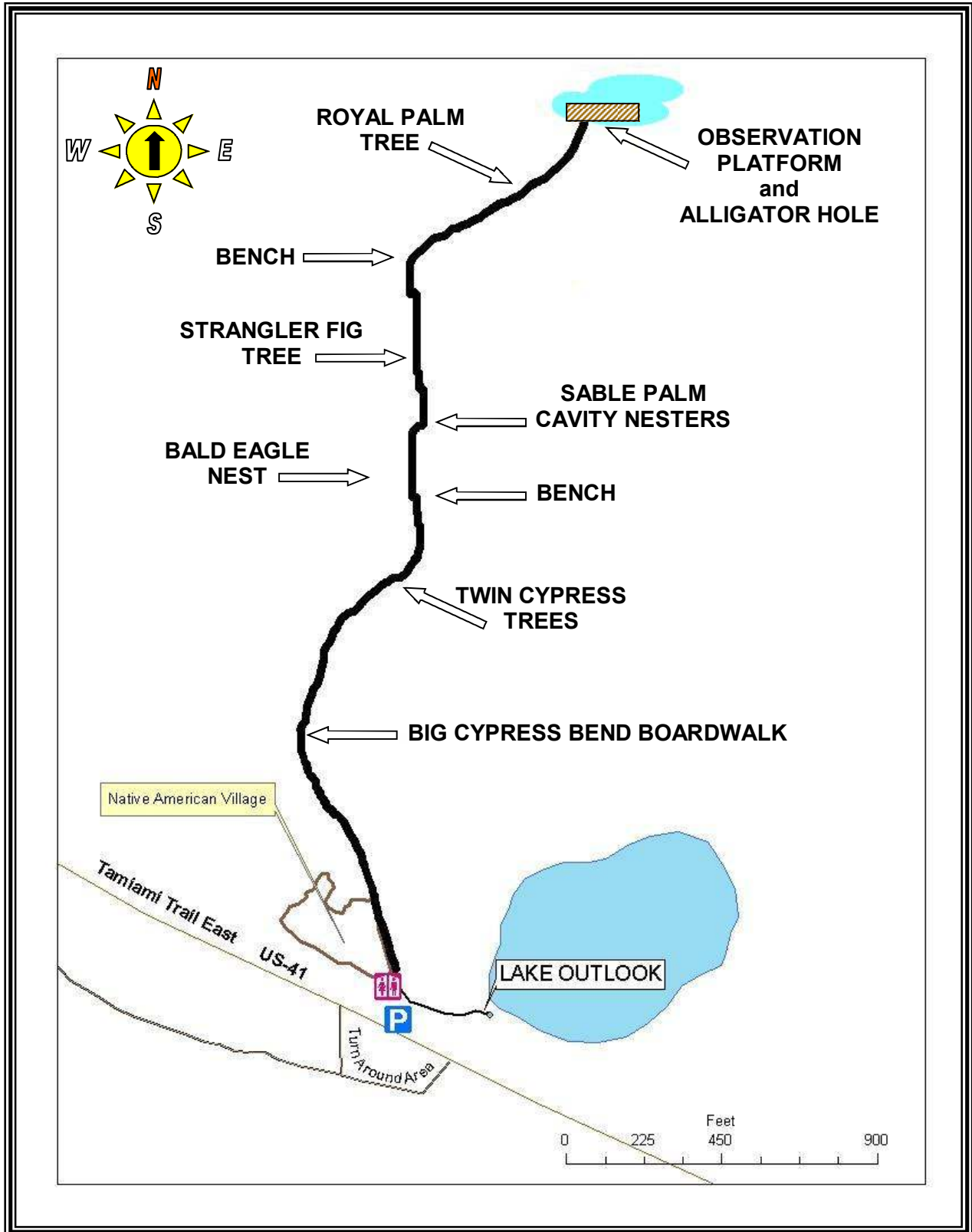
At the end of the boardwalk there is a beautiful pond. It is a good example of an alligator hole, a water sanctuary for many types of animals, especially during dry periods. Often two adult female alligators and two or three generations of juvenile alligators may be found basking in the sun. The pond also supports many wading and diving birds.

Enjoy your journey through the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk, a part of the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. This area was spared from logging activities in the early part of the 20th century and it looks much like it did when the first Europeans arrived.

The trail leading to the boardwalk is 856 feet long. The wooden boardwalk is 2300 feet long, making the one-way trip about 6/10 of a mile. Forty interpretive signs provide information along the way.



BIG CYPRESS BEND BOARDWALK



WHAT TO LOOK FOR DURING YOUR WALK

- Trees: Sabal palm, bald cypress pond apple, pop ash, strangler fig, laurel oak, live oak, red maple
- Epiphytes (air plants): Bromeliads, orchids, Spanish moss and many types of ferns
- Bald eagle nest: Large nest continually used since 1991
- Alligator flag and pickerel weed: Large-leaved plants found in deeper water often inhabited by alligators
- Snags: Dead trees that play an important role in the life of the swamp
- Birds: Woodpeckers, warblers, red-shouldered hawks, vireos, eagles, barred owls, wrens, kingfishers, herons, egrets, ibis, wood storks, anhingas, flycatchers
- Alligators: Several adults and two or three generations of juveniles
- Snakes: Florida banded water snake, cottonmouth (water moccasin)