

Nature & History

A major portion of the Fakahatchee Strand is a narrow forested swamp about 20 miles long and three to five miles wide where the underlying limestone has dissolved to form a shallow, seasonally-flooded depression with a canopy characterized by bald cypress, red maple and royal palm trees. Within Fakahatchee Strand, deeper channels called sloughs provide a protective environment for tropical plants that cannot survive South Florida's extreme temperatures. The deeper sloughs flow through layers of organic soils where smaller trees form a rain forest-like canopy, often laden with epiphytes, including bromeliads and orchids. Contrasting the forests, open prairies and small hammocks of cabbage palm trees and pines can be found throughout the park. The southern portion of the Preserve is composed of salt marshes and mangroves which border Fakahatchee Bay. During the rainy season, fresh water flows southward into the Gulf of Mexico, gradually mixing with the salt water of the Ten Thousand Islands, creating conditions for a highly productive estuarine ecosystem.

The park's wildlife is as diverse as its flora. Imperiled species such as the American crocodile and the West Indian manatee dwell in the mangrove lined waterways to the south, while wood storks, bald eagles, Florida black bears, Everglades mink and Florida panthers make their home throughout other areas of the park.

Human activity at the Fakahatchee Strand has been documented as far back as 2,500 years ago. Archaeologists have noted several sites indicating pre-Columbian Indian activities. From 1944-1954, a timber company harvested bald cypress trees from the Fakahatchee Strand. Approximately 192 miles of tram roads, built to haul cypress logs from the swamp, are now overgrown with forest vegetation. Several are kept clear for access and hiking.

Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park
137 Coastline Drive
Copeland, FL 34137
(239) 695-4593 • Fax: (239) 695-2133

FloridaStateParks.org

Park Guidelines

- Park hours are 8 a.m. to sunset, 365 days a year.
- Entrance fee is required. \$3.00/motorized vehicle, \$2.00/walk-in or bicyclists.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. They must be kept on a hand held leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Hunting, fireworks and the use of ATV's and other off-road vehicles is prohibited.
- The delicate nature of the natural resources at this park dictates that camping, swimming, and boats with combustion engines be prohibited.
- For your enjoyment and protection, Park Rules in 62D-2 F.A.C. are enforced.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the park office.

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**Fakahatchee Strand
Preserve
State Park**

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Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park encompasses much of Florida's most spectacular swamp. More native orchid species grow in this approximately 80,000-acre wilderness than any other place on the continent. Visitors can experience Fakahatchee by enjoying a leisurely drive or bike ride on the 11-mile park road, hiking one of its numerous trails, paddling the East River, or strolling along the boardwalk.

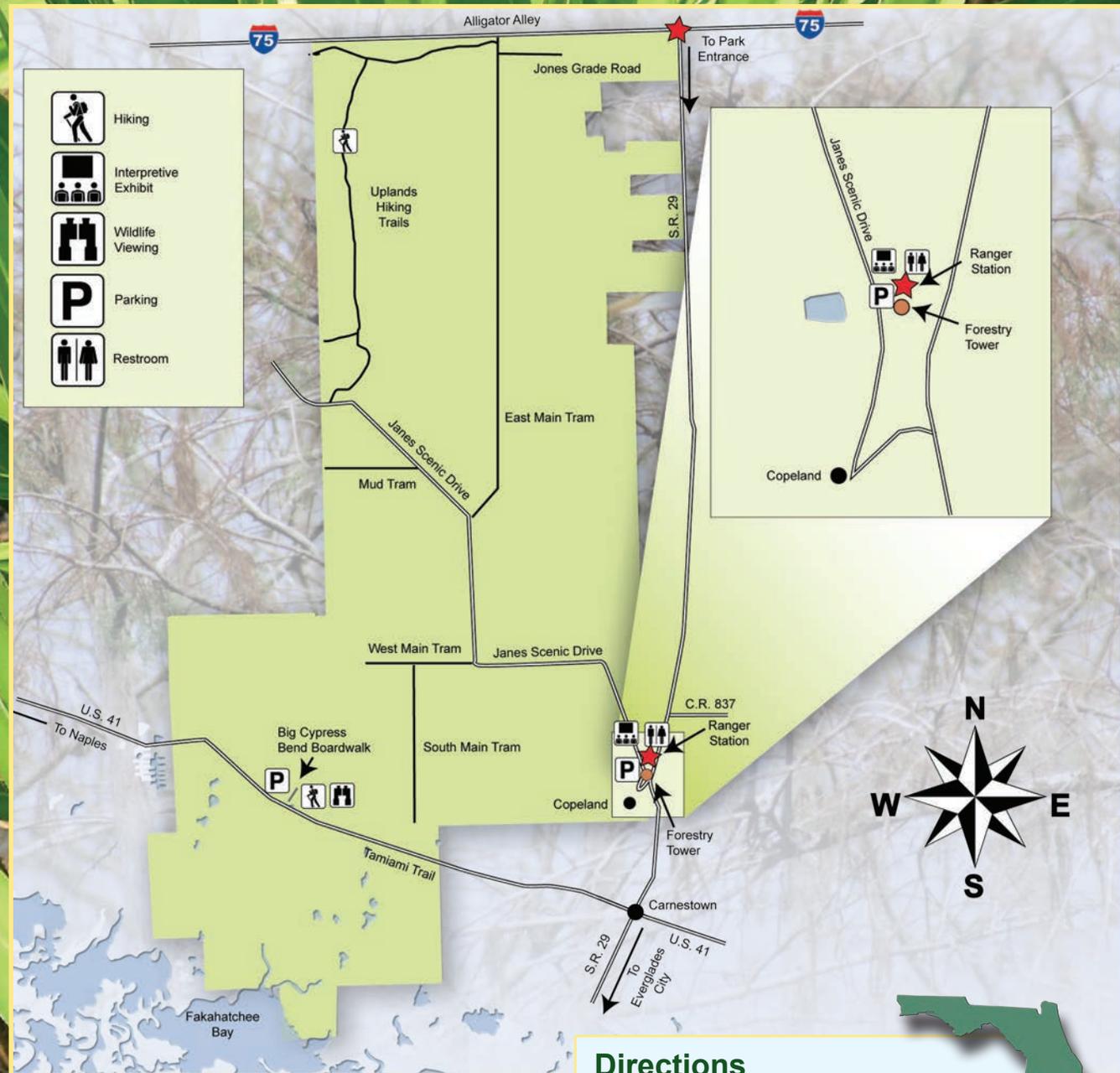
The emphasis at Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park is on the preservation of its natural character. In keeping with this goal, facilities and activities are limited. The park is a wilderness to enjoy and explore.

Adventurous visitors can participate in a **guided swamp walk** and wade into the Fakahatchee Strand to see its tropical ferns and bromeliads. Those who don't want to get their feet wet can **hike** along one of the many remnant logging tram roads which are high, dry and open year-round. The East and West Tram are excellent hiking choices.

The East River **canoe launch** is tucked away down an unmarked dirt drive off US Hwy 41, five miles west of State Road 29, on the south side of the road. The river is a primarily brackish and tidal responsive creek that flows southwest to Fakahatchee Bay and the 10,000 Islands.

To spend an enjoyable morning or afternoon at the park, visit the **Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk** on U.S. 41, seven miles west of State Road 29. Together the rock path and Boardwalk is about 3,000 feet long one-way and ends at a swamp pond where a variety of plants and wildlife may be observed.

For information on reservations for guided swamp walks, tram tours, boardwalk tours or to become a volunteer and/or join the Friends of Fakahatchee, please visit www.orchidswamp.org.



Directions

To Park Entrance: Take I-75 to exit 80/State Road 29. Go 15 miles south. Take a right on Janes Scenic Drive.

To Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk: Take I-75 to exit 80/State Road 29. Travel south for 18 miles to U.S. 41. Turn right and go seven miles.