

HISTORY AND NATURE

The Fakahatchee Strand is a forested swamp about 20 miles long and 5 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. Deeper sloughs flow through layers of organic soils where smaller trees form a rain forest-like mid canopy, sometimes laden with epiphytes such as bromeliads and orchids. The southern portion of the preserve is composed of salt marshes and mangroves bordering 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. Wood storks, bald eagles, Florida black bears, Everglades mink and Florida panthers make their home elsewhere in 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 to 1954, a timber company harvested cypress from the Fakahatchee Strand. Approximately 192 miles of tram roads, built to haul cypress logs from the swamp, are overgrown with forest vegetation. Several are kept clear for access and hiking.



FAKAHATCHEE STRAND PRESERVE STATE PARK

137 Coastline Drive
Copeland, FL 34137
239-695-4593

PARK GUIDELINES

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee of \$3 per vehicle (up to 8 people) or \$2 per individual is required.
- The collection, destruction or disturbance of plants, animals or park property is prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a hand-held leash no longer than six feet and be well-behaved at all times.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- The use of ATVs and other off-road vehicles is prohibited.

MORE INFORMATION

- Become a volunteer and join the Friends of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. For information, visit Orchidswamp.org or check with park staff.
- Florida State Parks are committed to providing every visitor with equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

FloridaStateParks.org

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FAKAHATCHEE STRAND PRESERVE STATE PARK

*The world's largest
cypress/royal palm forest*



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EXPERIENCES AND AMENITIES

Fakahatchee is home to the world's largest strand swamp. More native orchid species grow in this 80,000-acre wilderness than in any other place on the continent. Visitors can explore Fakahatchee by **hiking** one of its numerous trails, **strolling** along a boardwalk, or **bicycling** or **bird-watching** on the 11-mile park road.

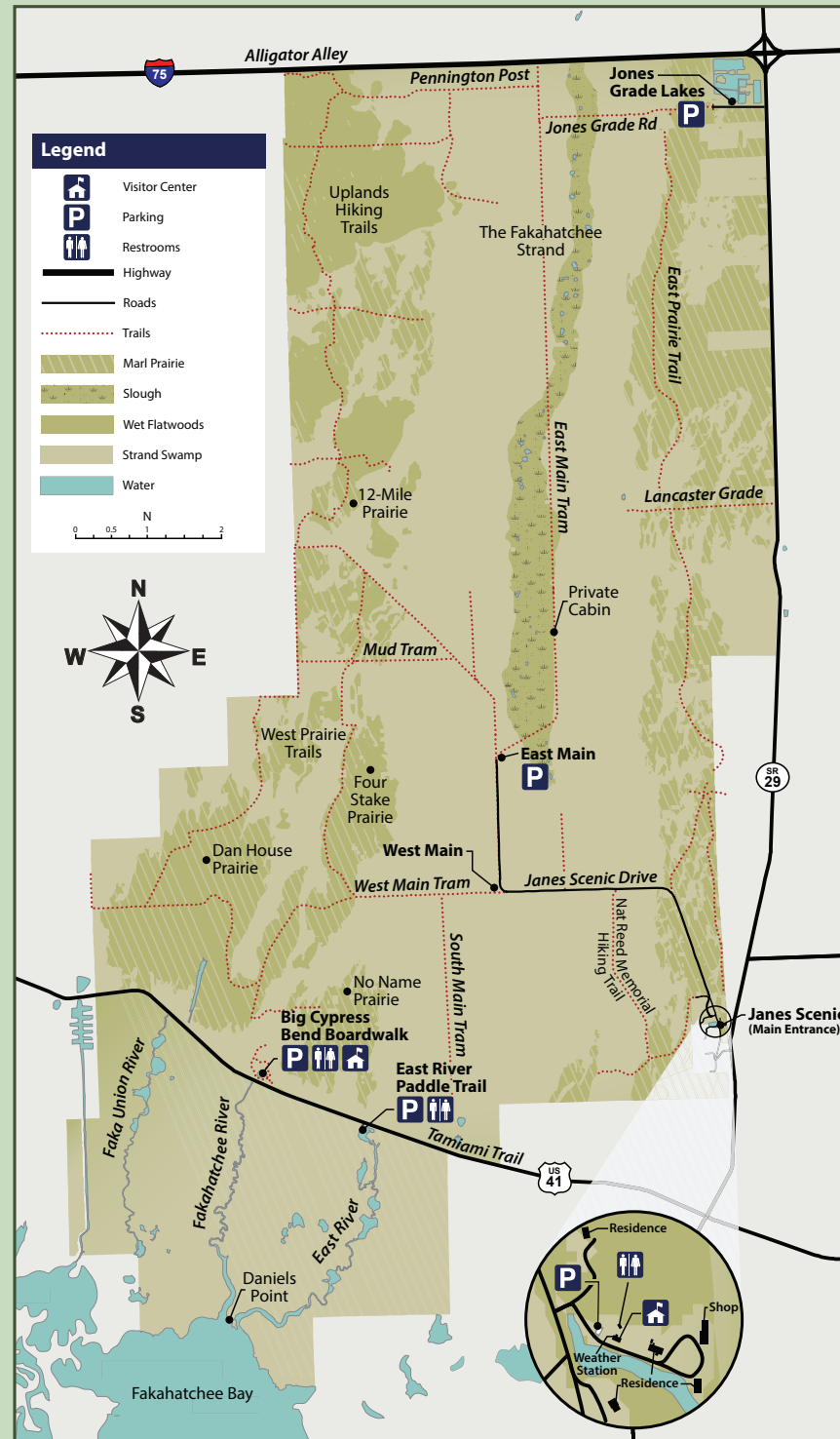
The emphasis at Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park is on the preservation of its natural character. In keeping with this goal, facilities and activities are limited. The park is a wilderness to enjoy and explore.

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 Main Tram** are excellent hiking choices. The less adventuresome can take a leisurely drive through the wilderness along **Janes Scenic Drive**. **Canoeing** and **kayaking** are popular activities, and a launch is located on the East River.

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. The boardwalk is approximately 2,500 feet long and ends at a swamp pond where a variety of plants and wildlife may be observed.



Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park



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

