



*Thought you might enjoy reading about one of our special area "secrets."
We have so many natural wonders to be thankful for.
Thank you for your friendship and your loyalty to our business.*

*Alan & Linda
Cathy, Nancy, Tom, Mari-Jo, Rachel & Robin*

Big Cypress Bend, one of the area's best kept secrets

BY DEBORAH WIGHT
Staff Writer

Nature is inviting, but tasting her delights is especially welcoming when there are no admission charges or long lines.

Big Cypress Bend isn't touted with smart advertising or slick billboards. No guards protect the entrance. In fact, there's a place for donations if a guest desires to make a contribution.

Part of the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, Big Cypress Bend offers a long, winding boardwalk through thick, untouched vegetation. The area looks much as it did when the first Europeans arrived in America, reads a sign introducing the Bend.

Still-standing virgin cypress trees have earned Big Cypress Bend the distinction of being a National Natural Landmark.

This region of the Fakahatchee Strand, located about 30 miles toward Miami on U.S. 41, was the only part of the swamp spared from logging activities. But what is a swamp?

It's defined at the Bend as "a forest that grows in the water and sometimes contains other natural communities..."

Green, green, green – as far as the eye can see. The lush greenery frames the wooden path with boughs bending and twisting to touch limbs on opposite sides of the boardwalk.

On this particular Saturday afternoon, the only ceiling beyond the hand-in-hand boughs was a bright blue sky decorated with cotton ball-like clouds. This untouched trail into the wild at the Bend is indeed a true getaway.

Hard to fathom that just 30 miles away condos and perfectly manicured lawns dominate the landscape and beaches bustle with activity.

While the sight is beholding and pristine, the visual atmosphere is complemented with trail markers along the boardwalk railing which explain the environment and its characteristics.

Newlyweds were taking photographs on their way in. An elderly couple strolled arm in arm on their way out.

A pair of college students parked their economy car in the area where only a few vehicles fit on the north side of U.S. 41. They appeared rested, relaxed and ready to casually explore this unpublicized attraction they "just happened upon."

A sign beside the roadside canal explains alligators are "a part of real Florida and may be found anywhere there's a natural body of water."

They aren't dangerous and are afraid of humans unless people feed them, which causes them to lose their fear.

Grasshoppers are bigger than typically seen perched on porch plants or traveling through backyard lawns. History makes its statement here.



The boardwalk leads guests on a walk into the wilderness.

Did you know that Tigertail Beach on Marco Island is part of the Great Florida Birding Trail?



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