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**Big Cypress Swamp
Welcome Center
Open House
September 20-27
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Members of the public are invited to tour the new Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center during a week-long open house beginning Sunday September 20 with screenings of a new Welcome Center film about the Big Cypress at 11a.m. and 12 p.m. A preview of the new Ken Burns series, "The National Parks, America's Best Idea," will be shown at 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.. See inside for directions to the center

Welcome to the "Western Everglades"

Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center Hosts Open House

The Big Cypress is an amazing place...

— A place so flat that mere inches make a difference.

— A place so large that the name itself, Big Cypress, only hints at the expanse of this ecosystem (> 2,400 square miles).

— A place so wild that orchids bloom in splendid isolation and panthers roam the land, rarely seen by people.

The Big Cypress is an amazing place, but it remains a mystery for many.

Few people truly appreciate what makes this incredibly diverse region of the Greater Everglades — a place often called the Western Everglades — different from its better known cousin to the east.

The Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center, now under construction on U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail) in eastern Collier County, promises to change that dynamic when it officially opens in February 2010.

Tens of thousands of visitors are

expected to visit the center each year to learn about the Big Cypress, its wetlands and wildlife.

The Big Cypress National Preserve is building the \$2.2 million center on U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail) as a gateway for all the public lands that protect the Big Cypress, including the preserve itself, Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park and the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge.

Construction began in late 2008 and is now nearly complete. The project itself won't be finished until the center's exhibits are installed (see the related story inside about the Big Cypress fundraising campaign), but the public is invited to tour the new center during a week-long open house beginning Sunday September 20.

The center will be open daily from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., with daily screenings of a new Big Cypress documentary by Elam Stoltzfus and an exhibition of Big Cypress photographs by acclaimed photographer Clyde Butcher.



The new Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center on U.S. 41 in Southwest Florida



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The South Florida National Parks Trust is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that supports South Florida's four national parks.

As the primary fund-raising partner for these parks, the Trust raises money from individuals, businesses and foundations to support park programs and projects in five critical areas:

- Environmental Education
- Visitor Services
- Resource Protection
- Volunteer Activities
- Community Outreach

Since 2002 the Trust has successfully funded more than 30 projects in South Florida's national parks representing an investment of more than \$2 million.

For a list of Trust projects, visit www.southfloridaparks.org

Summer Fun in South Florida's National Parks
West Miami Kids explore Everglades National Park

The Trust helped to organize a summer camp field trip in August (August!) to Shark Valley in Everglades National Park for the City of West Miami Recreation Center. The West Miami program also visited Biscayne National Park in August at Convoy Point in Homestead for a summer canoe trip.



"Butterflies of Biscayne" opens at Biscayne National Park, with daily showings through November 15, 2009

The butterflies of Biscayne National Park take center stage this fall in a new exhibit organized by the Miami Blue Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association.



More "field guide" than traditional art exhibit, the exhibit offers stunning photos of these winged insects with information about individual species that populate South Florida and the park, including the common zebra longwing (Florida's state butterfly) and the elusive, endangered Schaus' swallowtail.

The show is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through November 15 at the Dante Fascell Visitor Center at Biscayne National Park in Homestead. Admission is free. For more information about the show and directions to the park, call 305.230.7275.

Help Support South Florida's National Parks

You can support South Florida's national parks by donating online at our Web site www.southfloridaparks.org or by completing the form below and mailing it with a check made payable to South Florida National Parks Trust to SFNPT, 1390 South Dixie Highway, Suite 2203, Coral Gables, FL 33146. Donations to the Trust are tax deductible.

Name: _____ Amount of Donation: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center Design Sketches

The South Florida Trust's Big Cypress Campaign

The South Florida National Parks Trust has embarked on a fundraising campaign to purchase exhibits for the new Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center on U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail).

The Trust is seeking to raise \$250,000 in matching funds to purchase permanent exhibits to explain and describe the history, hydrology and habitats of the Big Cypress. All gifts will be matched dollar for dollar by the Big Cypress National Preserve.

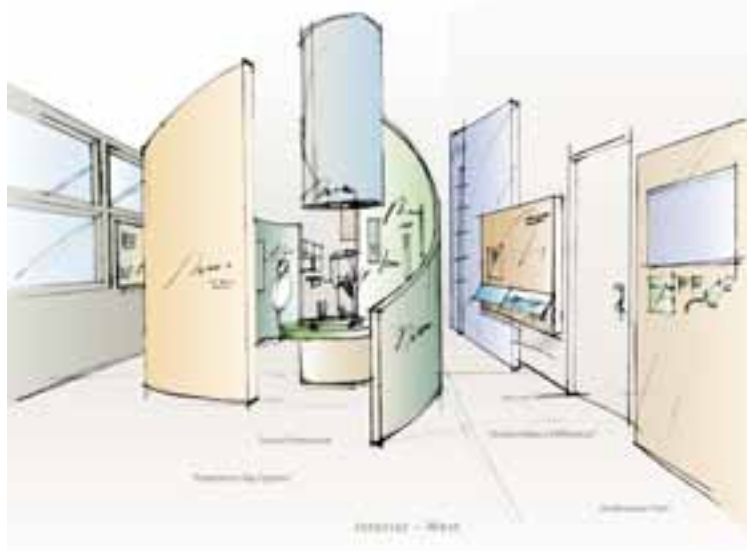
Construction of the center began in November 2008 and is now nearly complete. An official ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for February 2010.

When complete, the center will tell the story of the Big Cypress, sketch its history and describe its wildlife for an estimated 250,000 visitors a year.

Individual, corporate and foundation donors can support the project by underwriting specific exhibits or by making a contribution to support the general campaign. For a complete list of exhibits, contact the Trust.



Above: Alligators & other top predators, West Breezeway.



Right: Interior of Welcome Center.

Below Left: Waters of the Big Cypress, East Breezeway.

Below Right: Locator map for Big Cypress Welcome Center.



New documentary tells the story of “The Western Everglades”

“Big Cypress Swamp: The Western Everglades” captures the heart of Big Cypress. To learn more about the film, go to www.bigcypressswamp.org



Producer and Cinematographer Elam Stoltzfus has teamed up with photographer Clyde Butcher and musician Sammy Tedder to produce a new film that takes viewers deep into the heart of the Big Cypress Swamp. The hour-long documentary began airing on public television nationwide in September. Elam, Clyde and Sammy have worked together before, notably on “Living Waters, Aquatic Preserves of Florida” and “The Apalachicola River: An American Treasure.” Their latest project features some stunning footage captured in the Big Cypress, and interviews with folks who know and love these “Western Everglades.”

DVD copies are available for purchase through the Trust for \$20. All proceeds benefit the Welcome Center and Big Cypress National Preserve.



Sammy Tedder, Clyde Butcher and Elam Stoltzfus



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