
Visitor Services Project
Big Cypress National Preserve
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Big Cypress National Preserve (NPRES) during January 2-10, 1999. A total of 857 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 582 questionnaires for a 68% response rate.
 - This report profiles Big Cypress NPRES visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
 - Over one-half (62%) of the visitor groups were family groups. Sixty percent of visitor groups were groups of two. Fifty-two percent of visitors were over 50 years old.
 - Sixty-one percent of visitors were making their first visit to Big Cypress NPRES. Most of the visitor groups (81%) spent less than a day at the park. Of those groups that spent less than a day at the park, 71% spent four hours or less.
 - United States visitors were from Florida (32%), New York (3%), and 42 other states including Washington D.C. International visitors comprised 21% of Big Cypress NPRES visitors. They were from Germany (32%), Canada (21%), England (16%), and 18 other countries.
 - The sources of information most used by 390 visitor groups were friends or relatives (29%), previous visits (28%), travel guide/tourbook (27%), and highway information signs (23%).
 - On this visit, the most common activities were sightseeing (66%), viewing birds (66%), visiting the visitor center (63%), viewing wildlife other than birds (60%), and driving through to reach another destination (60%).
 - On this visit, the most commonly visited sites within Big Cypress NPRES were the visitor center (60%) and H.P. Williams Park (28%). The least visited sites include Bear Island Campground (4%) and the Florida National Scenic Trail (4%). The visitor center was the site listed most often as the first site visited within the park (47%), followed by H.P. Williams Park (14%).
 - Most of visitor groups (90%) indicated that the issue of wildlife habitat is either "extremely important" or "moderately important" to the future of Big Cypress NPRES. Eighty-six percent of groups rated endangered species as an "extremely important" or "very important" issue, and 83% indicated that water quality is "extremely important" or "very important" to the future of Big Cypress NPRES.
 - With regard to the use, importance, and quality of services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The services and facilities most used by 498 visitor groups were restrooms (71%), visitor center (70%), and roads (61%). According to visitors, the most important services and facilities were campgrounds (97% of 59 respondents), restrooms (89% of 332 respondents), and roads (86% of 280 respondents). The highest quality services and facilities were the visitor center movie (84% of 74 respondents), the visitor center (81% of 315 respondents) and the visitor center exhibits (81% of 199 respondents).
 - Many visitor groups (78%) felt that viewing wildlife was either "extremely important" or "moderately important" to their visit. Seventy-three percent felt scenic views were "extremely important" or "moderately important," and 72% felt experiencing wilderness was "extremely important" or "moderately important" to their visit. The highest "not important" ratings were given to hunting (80%), off-road vehicle use (66%), fishing (61%), and airboating (53%). Each of these activities were "extremely important" or "moderately important" to some visitors: 7% for hunting, 16% for fishing, and 15% for airboating.
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- Eighty-six percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services at Big Cypress NPres as "very good" or "good." Visitors made many additional comments.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit; phone (208) 885-7129 or 885-7863.
