

## PORT OF THE ISLANDS Cycle Tour



Port of the Islands Cycle Tour is 28-mile round trip and 20 miles if you park and leave from the Everglades Area Welcome Center in Carnestown. However, there are many amenities in Everglades City (see [www.mulletrapper.com](http://www.mulletrapper.com)).

Port of the Islands Resort started out as an odd Florida real estate project back in 1963 called the Remuda Ranch, a resort primarily used by Gulf American Corporation to promote Golden Gate Estates and develop Cape Coral. They would fly prospective buyers into Remuda Ranch, entertain them at the resort, show them swamp land they could buy and fly them back. Many people remember the airstrip (now Sunset Cay) that brought in visitors and investors; it then became known as the "Port."

Around 1980 the Remuda Ranch was purchased by Bill Ray of California. In 1984 he began a multi-phased, multi-million dollar redevelopment that included residential living. In 1994 his family auctioned off the remaining property to private individuals and developers who completed dozens of new homes.

Port of the Islands has a county owned marina, a beautiful facility and good restaurant. It is a good jumping off point to exploring the wonders of the Everglades.

To start the cycle tour begin at McLeod Park in Everglades City and cycle 4 miles north on SR29 to Carnestown (named for Barron Collier's wife Juliet Gordon Carnes and son Samuel Carnes Collier). Take a left and head west on the Tamiami Trail (US41). Along this route, you will be traveling on shoulders so be cautious around the narrow bridges. As you ride along the canal, look for gators.

For the first 1½ mile you will pass two airboat facilities. A rest area with picnic tables is located on the south side in just 5 miles.

Approximately another two miles is one of the most popular hikes along the Tamiami Trail - the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk in the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. An Indian Village with Native American crafts is located at the entrance to the Boardwalk and well worth a visit.

Cycling is not allowed on the Boardwalk, but take time to hike through the cypress trees to the alligator pond at the end. You may see wildlife along the way with an eagle's nest high in the cypress dome. The area is a bird-watcher's paradise with red-bellied and pileated woodpeckers, catbirds, osprey, red-shouldered hawks, swallow-tailed kites, blue heron, egrets and wood storks. Future plans include an expansion of the Boardwalk with a new parking area, an interpretative center, shell pathways and an elevated walkway. For more information visit <http://orchidswamp.org/plan-your-visit/the-boardwalk>.

Continue cycling another 3 miles on US41 to reach Port of the Islands and enjoy a pleasant lunch overlooking the garden and swimming pool. On both the north and south side of US41 there are many paved roads throughout the community. Port of the Islands Marina has direct access to the

Everglades and coastal waters of Western Florida and is the destination for eco-tours of the Everglades and the 10,000 Islands area. They are known for being one of Florida's largest concentrations of wild manatees; visit the marina and its gift shop. There are boat slips for rent as well as live-aboard houseboats.

As you ride back towards Carnestown, look to the south and enjoy the open prairie land with its nesting birds. Culverts under the road have provided more water to the south side of the Tamiami Trail, allowing for wading birds to return to the area. You also have an opportunity to see roseate spoonbills, egrets, wood stork, ibis and herons. The round trip distance from Carnestown to the Port of the Islands is 20 miles. Turn right for another 4 miles back to McLeod Park.

Everglades City is only a half hour drive from East Naples or Marco Island; it is an old Florida town with wide range of accommodations and restaurants (check the local newspaper [www.mulletrapper.com](http://www.mulletrapper.com)).

Visitors to the area enjoy visiting the original Collier County Court House (now City Hall), the Museum of the Everglades, the famous Rod & Gun Club, and the Smallwood Store & Museum in Chokoloskee as well as participating in the many outdoor recreational activities.

Everglades City is one of the few coastal towns in Florida that has not changed much in the past 30 years. Residents and visitors alike appreciate the history, culture and the old Florida lifestyle. With little traffic (and no stop lights) it is a great place to walk and cycle.

Download a copy of the Everglades City Cycle Tour as well as other tours around in the Everglades area at the FROGG website [www.evergladesrogg.org/tamiami-trail](http://www.evergladesrogg.org/tamiami-trail).

## Trails along U.S. 41

There are many on and off-road options for hiking and bicycling through the various state and national parks.

### Collier-Seminole State Park

An original stand of native royal palm trees, coexisting with one of the world's largest mangrove swamps, distinguishes this park; it is also the site of the historic Tamiami Trail "Walking Dredge".

<http://alturl.com/s6nof>

### Ten Thousand Islands NWR

Established in 1996, this refuge protects important mangrove and marsh habitats and is the ultimate interface where land gradually gives way to the sea.

<http://alturl.com/dncvm>

### Picayune Strand State Forest

Comprised of 78,000 acres, this is Florida's 4<sup>th</sup> largest state forest and named after the largest of several cypress strands that once occupied its eastern portion.

<http://alturl.com/ezsm8>

### Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park

Swamps, prairies, tropical hardwood hammocks and pine rock lands with royal palms and bald cypress trees share the forest canopy with native orchids and bromeliad species. <http://alturl.com/j9ckk>

### Big Cypress National Preserve

Big Cypress contains a mixture of tropical and temperate plant communities that harbor many protected species, including the elusive Florida panther.

<http://alturl.com/ma366>

### Everglades National Park

The Park is dominated by the world renowned "River of Grass" freshwater prairies, tree islands, and many rare and endangered species.

<http://alturl.com/n2q73>

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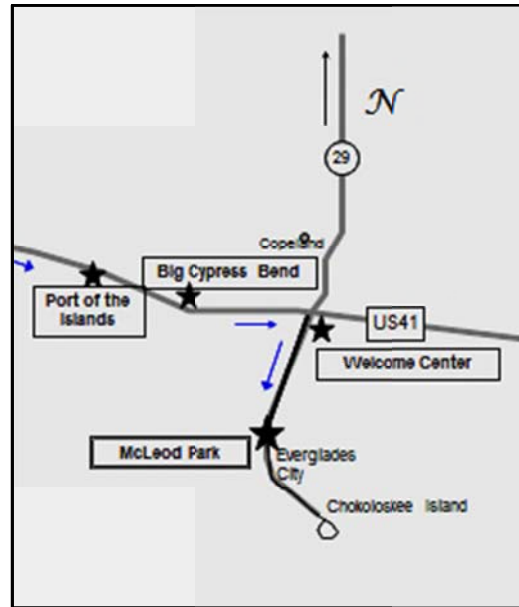
Distance: 28 miles round trip

Bicycle Type: road or hybrid

Road Conditions: paved road  
with shoulders

**CAUTION: narrow bridges**

Level: experience with heavy traffic



*This map illustrates a bike route (along the Tamiami Trail) through the Everglades area. While every effort is made to provide accurate and timely information, keep in mind the bike routes are intended for informational purposes only. No guarantee is made regarding the bike route safety because conditions change. In addition, we cannot guarantee anyone's safety by conforming to safety tips. Please use good judgment and be responsible for your own safety at all times.*

6/1/2017

## Port of the Islands Cycle Tour from Everglades City



### Friends of the River of Grass Greenway

*FROGG, a non-profit organization, is committed to establishing the safe use by the general public of US41 across the Everglades between Naples and Miami, focusing on safety and environmental education and stewardship for those hiking, walking, and cycling through south Florida and the Everglades.*

[www.evergladesrogg.org](http://www.evergladesrogg.org)

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