

Big Cypress Big Cypress State Natural Area Class I Scenic Recreational State Natural Area

COUNTY: Weakley

ACREAGE: 270

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Rutherford

OWNERSHIP: State of Tennessee

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Coastal Plain

YEAR DESIGNATED: 1973

DESCRIPTION: Big Cypress is a 270 acre natural area occurring adjacent to a section of channelized Middle Fork of the Obion River (MFOR) in Weakley County. The natural area is primarily forested with bottomland hardwood and bald cypress forest). A bald cypress forest is present in the many sloughs and the depressional areas along the river. Bald cypress forest is comprised of bald cypress, river birch, sweet gum, sycamore, overcup oak, water oak, willow oak, and cherrybark oak. The bottomland hardwood forest that occurs at higher locations includes green ash, swamp chestnut oak, red maple, and slippery elm with some white oak.

The natural area includes the remains of the largest bald cypress tree in the United States and largest known tree species east of the Mississippi River. The stately cypress, historically referred to as the "Tennessee Titan", stood at 175 feet tall, 40 feet in circumference, 13 feet in diameter, and was estimated to be 1350 years old. Unfortunately, the tree was struck by lightning in July 1976.

The bottomland and the sloughs surrounding the Middle Fork of the Obion River provide habitat for wildlife and opportunities for bird watching. Swainson's warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*), a bird deemed in need of management in Tennessee, is known from the natural area and surrounding bottomland. Persistent wet conditions have closed the Big Cypress Tree trail. The MFOR must be forded to reach the site of the big cypress tree and at this time no signage exists for direction. Crossing the MFOR is not recommended. Contact the Division of Natural Heritage or Tennessee State Parks for access information. Future trail development is pending. More information about Big Cypress can be found at: <http://tn.gov/environment/parks/BigCypress/>

SITE MANAGEMENT: Tennessee State Parks, 401 Church St, 7th Floor L & C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243-0447 (615) 532-0001. Division of Natural Heritage, 401 Church St, 14th Floor L&C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243-0447, (615) 532-0431.

PUBLIC ACCESS: Limited public access; hiking trails are not provided at this time.

DIRECTIONS: From Jackson, take U.S. Hwy 45E north through Greenfield, then just north of Greenfield, turn left on Hy.445 (Kimerly Store Rd.), and follow the road for approximately 5 miles to the natural area entrance on the right.