

Big Cypress Tree 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 in Weakley County. It is a bottomland hardwood and bald cypress forest that occurs along the old river meanders and the channelized Middle Fork of the Obion River (MFOR). A bald cypress forest is present in the many sloughs and the depressional areas along the river. This 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 for which it is named. 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, leaving only a stump.

The bottomland and the sloughs surrounding the Middle Fork of the Obion River provide abundant 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.

Site Management:

Tennessee State Parks, 401 Church St., 7th Floor L&C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243 (615) phone 532-0001.
Division of Natural Heritage, 401 Church St., 14th Floor L&C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243, phone (615) 532-0431. Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, 200 Lowell Thomas Drive, Jackson TN 38307 phone (731) 423-5725.

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.