Dear Ms. Whittington:

On behalf of the 61 members of the Everglades Coalition committed to the protection and restoration of America’s Everglades, we congratulate Big Cypress National Preserve for becoming the first National Park Service (NPS) unit east of the Mississippi River to earn an International Dark Sky Place designation and the second location to earn this designation in the State of Florida and within the Greater Everglades Ecosystem.

Big Cypress National Preserve has some of the last remaining dark night skies in Florida, where it is still possible to view the Milky Way. It is also one of the most biologically diverse areas within the America’s Everglades with many species that depend on a natural nocturnal environment to thrive, including fireflies, moths, the endangered Florida Panther, Florida Bonneted Bat and ghost orchid.

By earning a Silver-tier International Dark Sky Park designation, the Preserve has distinguished itself for having good quality night skies and exemplary nighttime lightscapes. The Preserve has set an example in stewardship of the night sky by improving its own outdoor lighting to reduce local impacts of light pollution and by educating the public on a diversity of topics related to the night. This designation will also help elevate the importance of night sky conservation across South Florida and encourage others to protect this valuable natural resource.

We commend the Preserve for its outstanding night sky conservation efforts and playing its part in protecting the America’s Everglades at night.
Sincerely,

Cara Capp
National Co-Chair

Michael J. Baldwin
State Co-Chair

cc: Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director, National Park Service
    Stan Austin, SE Regional Director, NPS
    Karen Treviño, Chief, NPS Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division
    Pedro Ramos, Superintendent, Everglades National Park
    Collier County Commissioners
    Miami-Dade County Commissioners
    Monroe County Commissioners