



# The Ghost Writer

APRIL 2013

NEWSLETTER of the Friends of Fakahatchee, "Home of the Ghost Orchid"

## EVENTS

### GUIDED SWAMP WALKS

**April 6 (end of season)**

Phone (239) 695-1023  
or book online at our website

### TRAM TOURS

**Tues/Thurs in April**  
**Reservations Required.**

Phone (239) 695-1023  
or book online at our website

### VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday**

Saturday, April 13

Wednesday, April 17

**Please call the Park for details.**  
**See article on page 3**

### BOARD MEETING

**Sunday, April 14, 2:00 p.m.**

Ranger Station, Copeland  
For info, phone (239) 293-8742

### ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

**Sunday, April 14, 5:00 p.m.**

Everglades Seafood Depot  
**See articles on page 1, 3**  
For info, see our website or  
phone (239) 695-2905



### JSD BIKE RIDE

The Everglades Bike Ride on **Sunday, April 7**, includes a fat tire option along Janes Scenic Drive. The event is hosted by Naples Pathway Coalition and partly benefits the Friends of Fakahatchee. To register, see [www.evergladesrogg.org](http://www.evergladesrogg.org) or phone Patty at (239) 695-2397.

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE EVENTS

## We Have Our Own Tram!

Friends of Fakahatchee have purchased a tram for their guided "Ghost Rider" Tours down Janes Scenic Drive. It will take up to 20 passengers on the 2½ hour trip which leaves from the Ranger Station on Tuesdays and Thursdays in April. Cost is \$25 and reservations are required. You can book online at our website or phone Pam at (239) 695-1023.

If you would like to help by driving or guiding, contact Tom at (239) 478-0077.



photo by Jay Staton, taken April 2, 2013



## Star Speaker at Annual Dinner

*St. Petersburg Times* columnist Jeff Klinkenberg will speak at the Friends of Fakahatchee Annual Dinner on Sunday, April 14. Klinkenberg writes about Florida culture in his column "Real Florida" and is the author of "Pilgrim in the Land of Alligators." His work has won numerous awards and has been published in *Esquire*, *Outside*, *Travel and Leisure*, and *Audubon*.

"If Jeff Klinkenberg isn't careful, he may give journalism a good name," says author Carl Hiaasen. "He has a rare eye for marvelous detail, and an affectionate ear for those small, wise, bittersweet voices that tell the true story of Florida."

The Friends of Fakahatchee Annual Dinner Meeting at the Everglades Seafood Depot in Everglades City is open to the public. It begins at 5 p.m. with a cash bar, followed by a roast beef buffet dinner. Reservations are \$30 per person for members and \$40 for non-members. To reserve online, go to [www.orchidswamp.org](http://www.orchidswamp.org) and click on Events where you can pay with a credit/debit card or download a form to send with a check. Deadline for reservations is Tuesday, April 9. For information, call (239) 695-2905.



Thanks to Francine Stevens for these photos taken at our event on March 14 when the speaker Elam Stoltzfus and musician Grant Livingston attracted a good crowd.



Visit [www.orchidswamp.org](http://www.orchidswamp.org) for events, newsletters, colored tram map, history, and more.

## M.O.ZONE - Seen Around the Strand

On 2/28/13, at 11:25AM, Mike Owen, Biologist, observed a **Great Crested Flycatcher** and a **Palm Warbler** and heard a **Eastern Tufted Titmouse**, **American Crow** as well as a **Barred Owl** while on West Main. On 2/27/13, Maureen Bonness observed 2 **panthers**, an adult and juvenile/kitten, on Janes Scenic Drive (JSD) about a ½ mile north of West Main Trail head. The adult was sitting on the side of the road and she got close enough to tell that the cat was not collared. On 2/28/13, early evening, while on East Main, Mike Owen, Diane Allen and Paul Hines of New Hampshire heard a **Northern Parula**, **Eastern Phoebe**, **Barred Owl**, **Red-winged Blackbird**, two **Belted Kingfishers**, 6 **Common Grackles**, an **American Crow**, 10 **White Ibis**, an **Anhinga**, and a **Red-Bellied Woodpecker**.

On 3/2/13, Bente Torvund, Administrative Assistant, observed a **Reddish Egret** and a **White Pelican** off US-41. On 3/2/13, at 9:30AM, Cynthia and Jim Krakowski observed an adult healthy **Florida Panther** walk over Jones Grade. On 3/2/13, while guiding a tram tour, FOF members, Linda and Steve Koreny, Dave Pickering and Howard Lubel as well as their tram guests saw 4 **White-tailed Deer** as well as a **Common Snapping Turtle** sunning itself on JSD about ½ mile from the office. On 3/3/13, in the afternoon, FOF members, Shaun Floyd, Rose Flynn and Howard Lubel saw two adult **Deer** further down the drive. On 3/4/13, around 2:30PM, Bente Torvund observed 2 **Glossy Ibis** in the marsh ponds on the south Side of US-41 as well as a **Swallow-Tailed Kite** and a **Mangrove Cuckoo** flying over US-41.

On 3/5/13, during the JSD tram tour, Tom Maish and his Ghost Riders observed flora and fauna including a **Red-Shouldered Hawk**, **Deer** and **Raccoons**. On 3/4/13, in the morning, Don Leonard, volunteer, observed **Deer** and a **Raccoon** along JSD. On 3/7/13, Mike Owen observed an **American Kestrel** in the beginning of JSD. On 3/7/13, in the morning, Karen Johnson and Skip Fisher observed an **American Kestrel**, **Deer** and **Vultures** along JSD. On 3/9/13, in the morning, Karen Relish, OPS ranger, observed 3 **White Pelicans** flying low going south over US-41 on the way into Fakahatchee. On 3/9/13, in the early evening, Linda Koreny and Barbara Savino, volunteers, saw a **Blue Jay** and **Mocking Birds** near Park headquarters.

On 3/11/13, at 7:50AM, Steve Houseknecht, Park Services Specialist, heard **Sandhill Cranes** calling north of the Firetower. On 3/11/13, in the early afternoon, Steve and Linda Koreny, volunteers, observed a **Common Snapping Turtle**, **Deer** and 2 **American Alligators** along JSD. On 3/12/13, in the late morning/early afternoon, Steven Bass, Park Ranger, and Fred Savino, volunteer, observed a **Black Racer**, **Deer**, and **Raccoon** while in 4 Stake Prairie. On 3/12/13, during the tram tour, Cindy Carroll, Larry, and their group observed a **Box Turtle**, **Raccoon**, **Barred Owl**, **Red-Shouldered Hawk**, **Deer**, and even a male **Northern Harrier** flying while on JSD.

On 3/14/13, Jay Staton and his "Ghost riders" observed 2 **Red-Shouldered Hawks**, a **Woodstork**, **Great Blue Heron**, **Turkey Vulture**, and **Deer**. On 3/18/13 and 3/22/13, Karen Johnson and Skip Fisher observed **Flamingos** off of I-75 en route to Fakahatchee from the East Coast. On 3/23/13, 3/24/13 Bente Torvund while in Dan House Prairie, observed an **American Goldfinch**, **Grasshopper Sparrows**, a **Sedge Wren** and heard **Eastern Meadowlarks** singing. On 3/23/13, Charlie Kneisley observed a **Ring-Necked Snake** and **Deer** as well as a tall fast-moving Bass.

Dino Barone emailed: *On 3/16, shortly after the spectacular sensory overload of a orange purplish color burst of an awesome sunrise, Charlie Kneisley could barely contain his excitement upon ocular recognition of a **Bobcat** on Jones Grade.*

If you want to report sightings, contact Park biologist Mike Owen or his assistant Karen Relish by phone at (239) 695-2886 or by email at [FOF\\_90@hotmail.com](mailto:FOF_90@hotmail.com)



Friends and volunteers helped Mike with the annual Central Slough Survey, as seen in these photos by Rose Flynn.







## VOLUNTEER CORNER

by Jeff Kneisley



The season is almost over and it is amazing how many ways there are now to get involved with the park and FOF. I would like to recognize all of the various efforts made by individuals. As many of you know, Nelson and Carol Tilden left some big shoes to fill at the boardwalk. The following people have stepped in or in some cases up and maintained business as usual at the boardwalk: Dick and Edite Hughes, Bud Scott, Cathy Hatch, Glen Stacell, Jimene Rinehart, and Linda Koreny. Thank you for taking such care of the boardwalk and its visitors!

One of the newest efforts embarked upon were the tram tours. Tom Maish and Glen Stacell dedicated themselves to making these a success. There were also a number of individuals that helped drive or assist the tours. Anyone that would like to assist in tram tours should talk to Tom Maish. I would also like to thank Everglades Ultras aid station workers again as the park was very well represented on that day. Our dedicated trail volunteers were instrumental in making that day a success by charging hard in the months prior. Lastly, I was privileged to learn how much work and dedication is put in by the FOF board and committees to make so many things happen!

Looking ahead to this summer, we are in need of a few good men or women to help with trails, light maintenance, exotics, mowing and garden work. By the fall we hope to fully operate the visitor center 7 days a week from 10-4. We will need people willing to work shifts to keep it running. The minimum time commitment required to volunteer at the visitor center is 4 hours a week.

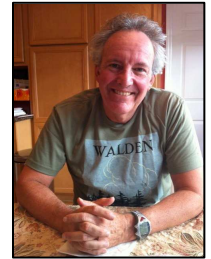
One thing to note – our various successes this year changed the way we plan projects and work. As a result, there will be no scheduled CSO workdays next year. The tall undertakings of this year led to success in finding the right people for the right job at the right time! There are many ways to get involved and we are always looking for eager volunteers.



Thanks to Franklin Adams for this photo of an unusual piebald deer taken by a stealth camera in his Naples yard at the end of February.

## Discovering Florida with Jeff Klinkenberg

by Cynthia Peters



Although I've lived in several different states in my life, I always seem to end up back in Florida, where my family moved when I was three. I'm pretty sure most people would consider me a Florida native. I grew up in Ocala in the 50's and early 60's, my alma mater is the University of Florida in Gainesville and, before moving to Miami in 1992, I spent several years living in St. Petersburg on Florida's gulf coast. It was there I first got to know Jeff's writing and became hooked, reading his column in the *St. Pete Times* before the paper merged with the *Tampa Tribune* (now called the *Tampa Bay Times*).

I think many Floridians have a love-hate relationship with our home state. The rampant, "anything goes" development mentality was only too obvious in Ocala in my formative years. The main drag, Silver Springs Boulevard, was flanked by a tacky assortment of billboards and cheap motels, an example of the no-holds-barred mentality of the time; everyone was trying to make a buck in Florida and the tourism draw of warm winter weather, beaches, and fresh citrus trumped zoning for our city fathers. Fast forward a few (being kind to myself) decades and the development schemes still threaten; most everyone, including our politicians, are still out to make a buck and exploit the resources that make Florida paradise. And of course, we have lots more high density population centers now; more traffic, more concrete, more pavement, more noise, less space in which to move and think.

And this is why the writing of Jeff Klinkenberg is so satisfying to me – he shares not only the authentic, timeless, wild places that make Florida so unique and makes us so thankful to be here, but also shines a light on the people indispensable to the fabric of this diverse, quirky, and oh, so unique, part of the world. Jeff finds people doing interesting things, with interesting passions and strong opinions, who often fly under the radar of who we typically think of as a "Floridian." For those of you who don't already know his writing, you are in for a treat.

**Don't miss him and his new book, *Alligators in B-Flat*, featuring a lot of Everglades stories, including two about the Fakahatchee Strand, at the Annual Dinner on April 14! For details, see page 1.**

### TAMIAMI TRAIL CELEBRATION

The Trail (US-41) across the Everglades was completed in 1928, thanks to Barron Collier, founder of our County. But he also built what is now SR-29 and the railroad, opening up Copeland to tomato farming and the Fakahatchee to logging.



There will be an all-day 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on **Saturday, April 27**, in Everglades City to commemorate the original Opening on April 26, 1928. The activities include a pancake fly-in, arts & crafts, historical walking tour, parade, antique cars, circus, story-telling by older residents, and historical re-enactors. For info, see [www.evergladeshistorical.org](http://www.evergladeshistorical.org) or call (239) 695-0008.

## How & Why?

*We asked members how they heard about the Fak, why they joined FOF, and what they appreciate about our group.*

I'm not an active member since I live in the Panhandle, but I love to visit the boardwalk when I am on all-too-seldom trips to that area. My goal is to be there for one of the swamp walks. Maybe it will happen this winter! I joined FOF because I believe in supporting the places and things that I value. As an active conservationist in Bay County, I know how much effort and passion goes into preservation of natural spaces.

*Candis Harbison*

- *How did you hear about the Fakahatchee?*

Tom Maish brought FOF to my attention and flew me over the area several years ago.

- *Why did you join the Friends?*

Tom's story of FOF was compelling and I am an environmentalist concerned about Florida wetlands.

- *What is important to you about the Friends?*

Maintaining this unique area forever and providing a safe haven for plants (orchids in particular) and animals of the Fakahatchee.

*A Member from Madison*

I always have enjoyed the Everglades since I was a child. I would go off-roading with my friends. Several years ago on a Thanksgiving weekend we heard of this place in Naples to go off-roading "the blocks" but we had to drive through this long bumpy dirt road to get there. When we drove through the strand I was amazed by it and fell in love with it. A couple years had past and I joined a Jeep club and I meet a very kind person by the name of Dino. He invited me and another club member to walk one of the trams with him. That Sunday hike was simply breath taking. Dino explained to us the history of the strand and showed us some many interesting aspects of it. So I have to thank Dino – he's the person that truly introduced me the Fakahatchee . That's how I joined.

*Harold Valdes*

- *How did you hear about the Fakahatchee?*

I was the former Park Manager

- *Why did you join the Friends?*

Former Friends of Fakahatchee President John Elting encouraged me to apply for the Fakahatchee Park Manager's position in 2005. When I accepted a new position with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in 2008, I joined the Friends of Fakahatchee and was elected a member of the Board of Directors.

- *What is important to you about the Friends?*

That a group of well-intentioned volunteers contribute their time and energy to help support the management of the Preserve's natural resources, provide environmental education and outreach to the public and assist with the development of facilities that will be necessary to accommodate the increasing number of visitors that the future will bring.

*Dennis Giardina*

## President's Message

by Jimene Rinehart

With our annual meeting and dinner just around the corner on April 14<sup>th</sup> I am reminded that another "Season" has flown by. It is a time to appreciate the hard work that goes into running our organization and we will begin with a warm "Thank You" to Ray Carroll who has served as our President for the last eleven months. Ray has decided that the needs of his business and other volunteer responsibilities will keep him from continuing his Board position. We send him our best wishes.

New board members will be joining us on April 14<sup>th</sup> and we send them our best wishes as well. Many of our board members contribute over five hundred hours a year in volunteer time. It takes tremendous dedication to our goals and great love of the Fakahatchee to do that. I would like to thank Glen Stacell for all the hours and planning he has put into our Fakahatchee Coastal Cruise and our new Ghost Rider Tram Tours. Our Secretary, Francine Stevens has taken over the big job of membership that Marya Repko did for so many years. We have new membership software and it is installed and running thanks to Francine's efforts. Cynthia Peters, who has coordinated our Events Committee for many years, is leaving the Board and we want to say a big thank you to her for her effort.

I hope we will see you at the Annual Dinner and that you will wear your Fakahatchee shirts and hats wherever your summer plans take you.

## BOARDWALK SURVEY

During February we conducted a Survey of visitors to the BoardWalk.

Thanks so much to Ray Carroll for drafting the Survey questions. Ray's draft was sent on to the Naples-Marco Island-Everglades Tourist Bureau for their review.

Then, appreciation to FOF members Kathy daSilva; Cathy Hatch, John Kaiser, Linda Koreny, Judy Maish, Jimi Rinehart, Jay Staton, Francine Stevens, and Jim & Niki Woodard who spent time greeting and taking the survey questions from our Visitors at the BoardWalk over a thirty day period.

And, a Special Thank You to Kathy da Silva our new Treasurer! Kathy tallied responses from over 1300 Visitors into a spread sheet she designed for her report to the Board.

All of this was expedited for a meeting with the Collier County Metropolitan Planning Organization. The results of the survey demonstrated to the CCMPO the economic importance of the Fakahatchee in attracting Visitors from Florida and many parts of the world to Collier County. Our objective is to enlist the support of various public officials for our BoardWalk Vision.

Tom Maish, Chair  
BoardWalk Vision Committee





Sylvia Fulcher visited the Boardwalk early in March and caught this photo of a Common Snapping Turtle just moments before it entered the water.



Dionys, an avid photographer, was watching the eaglet at the Boardwalk (see Report in right column) and took these photos. Keep in mind that the young Eaglet does not develop the white head for 3 to 5 years.



## BOARDWALK REPORT

by Linda Koreny

Dry years are normal and important. This is the time that seeds from the **Pond Apple** and **Pop Ash** trees will be able to germinate and take root rather than float down stream. This is the tail-end of the dry season in a dry year and the only water visible above ground now is in the ‘gator ponds. Because the water is shallow, the adult **Alligator** can be easily seen now from the Observation Platform at the far end. Usually five juveniles can be seen in the afternoon on the east bank of the borrow canal across from the corner of the Indian Village fence. Their mother can sometimes be seen near the picnic table by the parking lot.

Everything is bright green now. Have you ever noticed the variety of fern along the Boardwalk? So far, these 11 have been pointed out: **Birds Nest Fern, Boston Fern, Leather Fern, Resurrection Fern, Royal Fern, Sawtooth Fern, Shoestring (Spaghetti) Fern, Swamp Fern, Strap Fern, Sword Fern** and **Whisk Fern**. Have you seen any others?

In addition to our often observed **Barred Owl, Vultures, Red-Bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers**, visiting Birders have also reported: **Black Crowned Night Heron, Northern Water Thrush, American Red-start (male feeding), Eastern Phoebe, Carolina Wren, Grey Catbird, Palm Warblers, Black & White Warbler, Yellow-Rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Great Crested Flycatcher** and **Northern Parula Warbler**.

The **Osprey** can be seen on its nest and now two young ones! One afternoon at the ‘gator pond a **Red Shouldered Hawk** flew to a branch over Observation Platform; a few minutes later he swooped down over the now relatively shallow pond and the **fish** began splashing the water in a frenzy, an unexpected fun surprise.

Maybe even more exciting than that is our young Florida Bald Eagle’s progress. On 3/15 one of the adult **Bald Eagles** was in the nest and the young **Eaglet** was outside the nest on the branch. A few minutes after my arrival the second adult flew into the nest with a fish and a lot of calling began by the two adults; the young one then began to flap his wings, flew into the nest and was rewarded with the fish.

The next day the young Bald Eagle was again on the branch and one adult was visible in the nest. The young Eaglet flew off to the north and the adult flew out to the branch. Seven minutes later the young one flew back into the nest and then out onto the branch again. The two adults flew into the nest, one after the other and began calling to the young Eaglet; flight training is in full swing!

The summer “rainy season” will soon arrive, the leaves of the **Bald Cypress** trees will be mature and begin evaporating moisture into the air from the water their roots have absorbed and the “Everglades Rain Machine” as Park Manager, Renee Rau, likes to call them will complete the cycle and the strand will be full of water again when we return to the Boardwalk in the fall.

Have a wonderful, enjoyable summer!

### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We have 394 memberships including 40 who are now in arrears for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter and have been reminded by post and email. Renewal notices for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter are being posted.

**Welcome to new members since our last newsletter:**

- Robert C. Aaron, Lighthouse Pt
- Donald & Jackie Beaman, Homestead
- Joseph Campbell, Naples
- Ilge Coxe, Naples
- Roger Barry Davis, Hallendale
- Harry Denen, Miami Beach
- Alan Greenstein, Palmetto Bay
- Jay Kolsky, Palmetto Bay
- Sharon Kolsky, Palmetto Bay
- Lawrence Leven & Patricia Wheeler, Atlanta, GA
- Selma Nettles, Naples
- Tim Purtell, Shelter Island Heights, NY
- Neil & Susan Quirk, St Louis, MO
- Bradley Rhineland, Tampa
- Sally Richardson, Naples
- Bill Tulia, Ft Lauderdale
- Charles Wolfe, Bonita Springs



**We received this email report and photo:**  
**FOF members Tony Marx and Malee Earle on Sunday, March 17 at 12:30PM saw a red-shouldered hawk catch a small snake at the pond in front of the ranger post. It alighted on the Post sign briefly to disable the snake then Malee got a quick photo as it flew over the parking lot with half its prey.**  
**Later that day they also saw a panther cross JSD about 2.5 miles north of Gate 12 but did not have time to take a picture.**

### What Are We? Who Are We?

The **Friends of Fakahatchee, Inc.**, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation Citizen Support Organization, provides financial and volunteer support to preserve the unique ecology and cultural heritage of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park and to educate the public about its importance. The Fakahatchee is the largest cypress strand in the world and the deepest slough in the greater Everglades. Its 80,000 acres are bordered by I-75 (Alligator Alley), US-41 (Tamiami Trail), SR-29, Fakahatchee Bay, and Picayune State Forest.

**The Ghost Writer**, named after the endangered Ghost Orchid which blooms in the Preserve, is edited by Marya Repko with contributions from members and friends. It is issued at least six times a year and has an average circulation of over 300 copies.

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 Secretary – Francine Stevens Treasurer – Kathleen da Silva
- BOARD: Bruce Bunch Kathleen da Silva Frank Denninger Shaun Floyd Dennis Giardina John Kaiser  
 Howard Lubel Cynthia Peters Jimene Rinehart Glen Stacell Francine Stevens Charles Wright
- LIFETIME MEMBERS: James Nici, Warner Blow, Tom & Judy Maish, Ken Shapiro  
 PRESERVERS OF THE FAKAHATCHEE: Bruce & Janet Bunch  
 BUSINESS PATRONS: EarthTech Environmental, Naples Bicycle Tours, North American Canoe Tours, Shamrock Bank, Shurr Adventures

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## NEW MEMBERSHIP

date \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to "FOF" and send to: FOF Membership, P.O.Box 35, Everglades City, FL, 34139

- Individual (\$20)       Family (\$30)       Patron (\$100)       Benefactor (\$500)
- Lifetime Individual (\$1,000)       Lifetime Family (\$1,500)       Protector (\$2,500)       Preserver (\$5,000)
- Business Patron (\$200)       Business Benefactor (\$500)       Extra Donation (\$ \_\_\_\_\_)
- Youth (\$10) under 18 (birth date: month \_\_\_ day \_\_\_ year \_\_\_\_\_)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 STREET / P.O.BOX: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
ALTERNATE ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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 PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

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MONTHS AT ALTERNATE ADDRESS:

- JAN    FEB    MAR    APR    MAY    JUN    JUL    AUG    SEP    OCT    NOV    DEC