



The Ghost Writer

MAY, 2010

NEWSLETTER of the Friends of Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, "Home of the Ghost Orchid"

EVENTS

GUIDED SWAMP WALKS

1st, 2nd, and 3rd Saturday
4th Tuesday

through May, weather permitting
Cost: \$50 (\$40 member), \$15 child
Reservations Required.
Phone (239) 695-1023
or email islandgirlm@msn.com

GUIDED CANOE TRIPS

1st Saturday: resume in the fall

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

2nd Saturday, 3rd Tuesday
resume in the fall

BOARD MEETINGS

2nd Sunday at 10:00 a.m.
resume in the fall

NEXT SEASON

Nov 6: Coastal Cruise
Dec 5: Welcome Back Dinner
Jan 22: Coastal Cruise
Feb 26: The SAFARI
March 20: Coastal Cruise
April 10: Annual Dinner

WARNING: These dates may change.

AMAZING ADVENTURES

1st Friday at 6:30 p.m.
resume in the fall
See www.rookerybay.org

This is the last issue of
The Ghost Writer
until the fall or until we have
breaking news to announce.

Note our new website address
www.orchidswamp.org.

M.O.ZONE - Seen Around the Strand

On 3/28/10, in mid-afternoon, Fred Sanvino, volunteer, observed a **Swallow-tailed Kite** flying along with a vulture over Lake Gloria in Copeland. On 3/28/10, around 2:30PM, Dennis Giardina, FWS Biologist, and Mike Owen, Park Biologist, observed an **Indigo Bunting** flying down East Main. On 3/29/10, Barb Sanvino, volunteer, also saw a **Swallow-tailed Kite** flying over Lake Gloria. On 3/31/10, in the mid afternoon, Terrance Craig, Park Ranger, was alerted about a approximately 2 foot injured **Greater Siren** (an eel-like salamander) on Janes Scenic Drive (JSD). On 3/31/10, around 11AM, the **Everglades Mink** that had the injured eye and taken to The Conservancy for rehabilitation was released back into Fakahatchee.

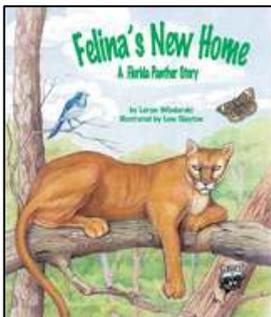
On 4/1/10 and again on 4/4/10 Fred Sanvino and on the later both he and Steve Houseknecht, Park Service Specialist, observed a **Swallow-tailed Kite** flying solo over Lake Gloria. On 4/2/10, around 8AM, **Alicia Campanella**, observed 3 **Black-necked Stilts** in flight going east over SR-29 near the intersection of SR-29 and US-41. On 4/4/10, in the early morning, Tony Marx and Malee Earle, visitors, observed an adult **black bear** at the end of JSD near the filled in Prairie Canal. Off the drive, they also heard two **American Alligators** bellowing 5-6 times in succession. On 4/5/10, around 10 AM, Mike Owen and David Shindle, Biologist from The Conservancy, observed a **Red Shouldered Hawk** trying to carry a dead marsh rabbit from the beginning of JSD away from 15 Black Vultures.

On 4/9/10, in the early afternoon, Donna Glann-Smyth, volunteer, and Vince Lamb, visitor, observed a three foot long **cottonmouth** on JSD. On 4/11/10, Alayna and Jay Galbraith, frequent birders to the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk, reported seeing a **Black-throated Green Warbler**, **Black and White Warbler**, **Carolina Wren**, **Great-crested Flycatcher**, **Northern Parula**, **Pileated Woodpecker**, **Red-Bellied Woodpecker**, and a **Swallow-tailed kite**. On 4/12/10, around 3:30PM, Ralph and Wyvette Chafin, visitors, and Karen Relish, Park Ranger, and Richard Fagan, volunteer, stopped and helped a **soft shell turtle** with a 15 inch carapace cross from South to North on US-41, possibly on the move because April is soft shell turtle nesting season per Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Be careful; soft shell turtles have a very long neck can bite hard and claw.

On 4/15/10 Mike Cullininan, visitor, observed a 9-10 inch **Ringneck snake** with an orange neck ring on the East Main tram as well as fresh **panther tracks**. On 4/26/10, Scott Randolph, OPS Ranger, and Connie Randolph, volunteer, observed a **Barred Owl** sitting on a power line off of JSD just north of Park Headquarters. On 4/27/10, in the morning, from the beginning of the drive to about Gate 7/West Main, Ron Kotliar, volunteer, observed an adult **Florida Snapping Turtle**, **Striped Mud turtle** with a 3.5 foot carapace, a **crayfish** and a 3.5 foot long juvenile **American Alligator**. On 5/1/10, in the morning, Karen Relish observed a total of 8 **Mottled Ducks** in the marsh on the south side of US-41 between the boardwalk and intersection of SR-29/US 41.

If you want to report sightings, contact Park biologist Mike Owen or his assistant Karen Relish by phone at (239) 695-2886.

Visit www.orchidswamp.org for events, newsletters, colored tram map, history, and more.



Felina's New Home; *A Florida Panther Story* reviewed by Dennis Giardina

When Marya asked me to review the children's book *Felina's New Home, A Florida Panther Story*, written by Loran Wlodarski and illustrated by Lew Clayton, I said, "sure." I mean, who could say no to her, but I really didn't feel qualified. I was thinking that a youngster would be a much better book reviewer than me. Be that as it may, I did read *Felina's New Home* and these are my thoughts:

I liked Felina and I was bummed out that human beings were wrecking her old home. I also liked that Felina was very sociable, having amiable, if not depressing conversations with red-cockaded woodpeckers, gopher tortoises and manatees but when she was talking to the American crocodile, I wanted to say "No! Felina, No!" As if it weren't bad enough for Felina and her neighbors, dealing with pollution, roads, cars and unruly ATV riders, one day a man (that looked suspiciously like to Roy McBride), popped up and shot her with a tranquilizer dart and Felina's world faded to black.

The underlying theme of the book is familiar; the human beings are out of control and the other species of the planet are suffering because of them. However, the book also reflects that some of the human beings care and are trying to do something about it. Those are the human beings that I want to know. I want to be friends with them and help them help Felina and her friends. I hope the budding biologists of tomorrow who read *Felina's New Home* will feel the same way. The back of the book contains fun facts for creative minds and a lot of other good information. The book was beautifully illustrated and the drawings of the other rare and endangered species that share Felina's home with her were very well done.

Although it's been a while since I've read a book like this and don't currently have a seven-year-old to read it to, *Felina's New Home* brought out the kid in me and that kid wants Felina to have a happy new home.

Dennis Giardina is vice-president of FOF and a member of the Florida Panther Capture Team.

The book is available for \$8.95 at the Everglades Chamber of Commerce (corner of US-41 & SR-29), Everglades National Park Boat Tours, the Ivey House B&B, and WinCar Hardware.

Thanks to FOF member Stefan Ambs who sent this email on March 29:

Mark Larcoque, Hal Horwitz, and myself visited the Fakahatchee last Saturday and saw three panthers on James Scenic Drive (about 10:00am). It was a mother with her almost grown two cubs. They crossed the road, played a while along the other side of the road and then crossed back over the road and into K2 where they disappeared. We had an excellent view of them from our car.

PHOTO CONTEST



Send your best pictures of birds into the National Audubon Society for their annual contest. Up to ten entries may be submitted by professionals, amateurs, or youth between May 15 and September 7. For info, see www.audubonmagazine.org.

GREEN CONCERNS



The Southwest Florida Green Directory lists news, events, and businesses in this area that benefit our natural environment. Keep up with what's happening at www.swflgreen.org.

FWC News

You can read the news and regulations about hunting, fishing, and animals at the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission website www.myfwc.com.



What's in a Name?

A new movie titled "The Ghost Writer" directed by Roman Polanski was released recently. Of course, we have been using the phrase for almost a decade. In October 2000, the new Friends of Fakahatchee held a contest to name their newsletter and "Ghost Writer" was the winner. If you know who thought up the title, please contact Marya at (239) 695-2905 or email FOF_90@hotmail.com.

PARK SERVICE BIRTHDAY

The Florida Park Service was founded in 1935 when Governor Sholtz signed a bill establishing it as a division of the Department of Forestry. A new book has been issued to commemorate the birthday.

Florida State Parks ... 75 Years by Phil Werndli has historical introductions to each chapter and a plethora of photos from parks around the state including Collier Seminole.

The book was published by Florida Media and is available for \$28.95 at www.floridabookstore.com.



A Time Capsule to celebrate 75 years of the Florida Park Service was buried in O'Leno State Park (near Gainesville) by the Friends of Florida State Parks who collected documents and artifacts about our parks.

FFSP encourages volunteers and visitors for all the State Parks in Florida. FOF is a corporate non-profit member but individuals can also join.

FFPS issues the "Florida Parks & Wildlife Magazine" and an email newsletter.

For more info, see www.floridastateparks.org.

President's Message

It is a pleasure to report another successful season!

Probably most important is the increasing numbers of members who are stepping up to volunteer. It reflects growing awareness of our members' interest in the Fakahatchee.

Board actions in April included changing our name to FRIENDS OF FAKAHATCHEE, INC. As someone remarked; we were running out of space on our logo.

Another important action voted was to assist the Atlanta Botanical Gardens to re-propagate Cigar Orchids into the Fakahatchee. Seems that in the olden days there were showy Cigar Orchids in abundance, but not today. What better Park Support can we provide?

Our Annual Meeting Dinner had record attendance. Steve Terry, Land Resources Manager and also Historian of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, spoke on the history of the Miccosukee in Florida. Have you wondered what went on in the "Indian Village" next to the Boardwalk? Next time there, stop in and see the beautiful hand crafted items. Lois Doctor and her friends were very kind to bring their display to our meeting.

Our annual ritual of awarding the Mel Finn Award was presented to Marya Repko by FOF Historian Capt. Franklin Adams. Marya, who NEVER sets foot in the Swamp, was long overdue as a recipient! Without her tireless work in membership, public relations, and *The Ghost Writer* we would be in dire straits. It is Marya's work that keeps us focused.

The first FOF Scholarship was presented to Matthew Berning by Susan O'Farrell. Matt was an excellent candidate and showed us his presentation on re-cycling that earned him the Eagle Scout Award.

Attached (*see page 4*) are the List of Accomplishments this season and our CSO (Citizen Support Organization) Goals that we submit to the State for next fiscal year. Although many of you return to other areas, our work goes on.

Please review our Goals and let us know how and where you would like to Volunteer. You will note that we have much to accomplish next year!

If you have any ideas or comments please feel free to email me at tommaish@aol.com with subject heading Friends (so my spam-blocker lets you through) or call 239-992-5963

All the best,

Tom Maish

SUCCESSFUL SAFARI

The SAFARI on February 27 accomplished both of the Goals of the Board: (1) introducing new people to the Fakahatchee plus (2) earning funds for Park Support. There were 109 paid Guests and 40 plus Volunteers! After all the numbers were in we earned \$6,873.24.

The SAFARI was the largest event ever produced by the Friends. Although the weather challenged us, folks braved the wind and rain to attend all of the activities. The wine and bonfire revived everyone to enjoy the foggy evening that changed into a star-lit night sky.

Place February 26, 2011, on your calendar.



At the Annual Dinner on April 11 at Port of the Islands, members enjoyed a wine reception before hearing the guest speaker Steve Terry talk about the Miccosukee Tribe. After the meal, awards were presented, including the first annual FOF Scholarship. Seen here are winner Matt Berning and FOF Board member Susan O'Farrell who coordinated the search for a Collier County high school senior with an interest in the environment.



Thanks to FOF member Jim Woodard who sent this photo of a hawk eating a rabbit off Janes Drive at the beginning of April. He emailed that a turkey vulture was hanging about, waiting for scraps.

MAJOR FOF ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2009-2010

The Florida Park Service prepared preliminary sketches of new routes for the Boardwalk and design ideas for the proposed Visitor Center based on FOF CSO Goals #1 & #2.

The Partnership in Parks (PIP) Grant has been submitted with the FOF portion of \$100,000 reserved in the bank requesting the Park Service match of \$66,667.

There were two new Interpretative programs initiated this season: Fakahatchee Coastal Cruise and The SAFARI. Both were successful in introducing new people to the Park and raising funds.

There were five major articles in South Florida newspapers including the winning photograph of the Ghost Orchid by Board member Jay Staton. These articles were instrumental in bring many new Visitors to the Boardwalk this year. That, with the new Iron Ranger, has resulted in record donations to the FOF.

Additional Swamp Walks were scheduled this season on Saturdays and on one Tuesday. Leader P J Marinelli joined John Elting and Bill Mesce to enable the extra schedule.

The Boardwalk had regular twice-monthly maintenance sessions. Boardwalk Naturalists Caryl and Nelson Tilden were joined this year by Kathy Hatch to assist in guiding our visitors.

The Friends contributed funding for exhibits in the new Big Cypress Visitor Center.

Our promotional DVD "Window to the Fakahatchee" was completed to use in fundraising for our Boardwalk and Visitor Center.

The use of PayPal for the ease of our Guests in paying for events and membership was installed.

Accounting software was purchased to make our growth more manageable. It will be used starting in the new fiscal year.

CSO GOALS 2010-2011

1. Define the FOF requirements for the expanded Boardwalk and the Visitor Center
2. Meet with Florida Park System planners to develop a "request for proposal" to select a Design firm and start the permitting process
3. Identify, interview, and select a Fund Raising firm to lead our campaign
4. Identify, interview, and select a Grant Writer to search for funding
5. Increase our Interpretation and Fund Raising with additional Events
6. Construct a pad for a portable toilet and picnic table at the East River canoe launch site
7. Provide funding to renovate the Harmon Building for Park offices and FOF meetings
8. Clear the East Main trail from Ballard Camp to Jones Grade
9. Provide resources for Burn support and Exotic Species removal

Cigar Orchid Restoration Project Update

by Dennis Giardina

On April 22 and 23, about a dozen of Fakahatchee's few remaining cigar orchids were visited by a group led by Mike Owen, Park Biologist, and Matt Richards from Atlanta Botanical Garden to collect the seed pods from the cross-pollination effort that was undertaken last year and to pollinate the huge new cigar orchid we found last summer.

On behalf of all the collaborators, I would like to thank the Friends of Fakahatchee for financially supporting the cigar orchid restoration project.



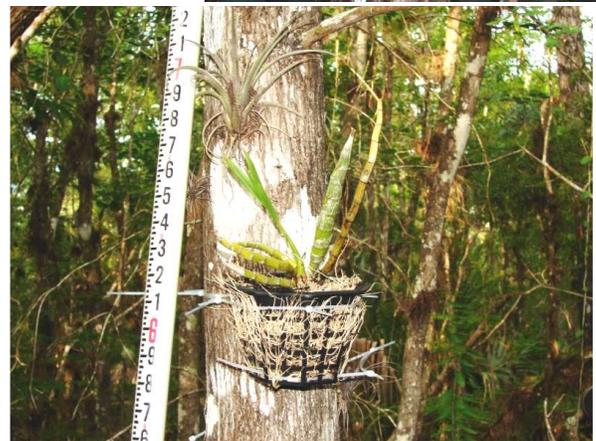
Cypripedium punctatum flowers by Brad Wilson



Matt Richards pollinates newest and largest known Fakahatchee cigar orchid CPDG09, fifteen feet above the ground



Ralph Arwood trims ferns and vines away from a cigar orchid to let in more light above the ground



Mike Owen and Dennis Giardina celebrate the return of a rehabilitated cigar orchid removed for a year from the wild for resuscitation at Atlanta Botanical Garden

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We have 285 fully-paid memberships plus 12 lapsed members from the 1st quarter who will receive final notices. There are also 23 Introductory members who joined after The SAFARI and Coastal Cruises. Of the 9 new members who joined since the last newsletter, 3 used PayPal.

Renewals for the 2nd quarter are being sent with this newsletter. *The Ghost Writer* is emailed to 289 members, saving over \$127 per issue.

Welcome to new members:

Virginia Buker, Vero Beach
 Amy China, Key Largo
 Wayne & Nancy Ghirardini, Wolfeboro, NH
 Rebecca Marr, Vero Beach
 Robin D. Pearsall, Pembroke Pines
 Nathaniel Reed, Hobe Sound
 Rod Webster, Miami
 Kent Wolfe, Orlando
 Adriana Wyckoff, West Palm Beach

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Welcome to new Board members Julie Cardenas, Frank Denninger, Cindy Hackney, and Howard Lubel.

And, thanks to retiring Board member David Shindle who conducted the election and presided over the by-law changes.



FOF President Tom Maish took our display panel to "Party for a Planet" to celebrate Earth Day at Naples Zoo. Thanks to Annette Cullman for this photo.

THANKS!

FOF has received generous donations recently from
 Tom Trotta and Marilyn Brooks
 Eco-Quest Nature Tours (Wendell Vaught)
 Florida Humanities Council
 Shurr Adventures (Justin & Alli Shurr)
 Peace River Audubon Society
 Dragonfly Expeditions
 Nathaniel Reed

What Are We? Who Are We?

The **Friends of Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, Inc.**, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation, is the Citizen Support Organization of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, 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 Friends of Fakahatchee strive to aid in the preservation of this ecologically unique area and to educate the public about its importance.

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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OFFICERS: President – Tom Maish Vice-President – Dennis Giardina
 Secretary – Susan O’Farrell Treasurer – Saul Friess
 BOARD: Allen Caldwell Elsa Caldwell Julia Cardenas Frank Denninger Saul Friess Dennis Giardina
 Cindy Hackney Howard Lubel Tom Maish Susan O’Farrell Glenn Stacell Jay Staton Carol Swingle

NEW ANNUAL 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) ___ Business (\$50) ___ Patron (\$100) ___ Benefactor (\$500) ___ extra (\$ _____)
 ___ Youth (\$10) birth date: month ___ day ___ year ___ (members under 18 years old must select this)

NAME _____
 STREET / P.O.BOX: _____

 CITY _____
 STATE _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE _____

EMAIL _____
ALTERNATE ADDRESS

 CITY _____
 STATE _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE _____

MONTHS AT ALTERNATE ADDRESS:

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