



The Ghost Writer

OCTOBER 2012

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

EVENTS

GUIDED SWAMP WALKS

1st, 2nd, and 3rd Saturday
starting November 10

Cost: \$70 (\$50 for members)

Reservations Required.

Phone (239) 695-1023

or email FOF_90@hotmail.com

VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

2nd Saturday, 3rd Wednesday

Saturday, November 10

Wednesday, November 21

See article on page 3

BOARD MEETING

Sunday, Oct 14, 10:00 a.m.

Ranger Station, Copeland

For info, phone (239) 370-2654

Orchid Calendar Launch

Saturday, Oct 27, 4:30 p.m.

Players' Club, Lely, Naples

See article on page 2

Welcome Back Dinner/Talk

Sunday, Dec 2, 5:00 p.m.

Everglades Seafood Depot

See article on page 2.

MORE EVENTS

Nov 3: Swamp Buggy Parade

Nov 10: Florida Panther Fest

Dec 1: Swamp Heritage Festival

Dec 8: Art-in-the-Glades

For info, see page 2.

You can download an events calendar for the 2012-2013 winter season by clicking "Events" at our website www.orchidswamp.org.

M.O.ZONE - Seen Around the Strand

On 5/31/12, around 7:45AM, Renee Rau, Park Manager, observed an adult **White Pelican** off of US-41; another was observed on 6/10/12, around 7:30 AM by Steven Bass, Park Ranger, in the same area. On 5/21/12, around 7:00AM, Steven Bass observed a **Florida Black Bear** with 2 cubs off of Jones Grade. On 5/22/12, in the early evening, a visitor reported seeing a **Big Cypress Fox Squirrel** standing up in the middle of Janes Scenic Drive (JSD) around Gate 12/East Main.

On 6/5/12, 9:42AM, Mike Owen, Park Biologist, observed a **Red-Tailed Hawk** flying from the South landing in Pine in Dan House Prairie. On 6/7/12, around 12:30PM, Karen Johnson, volunteer, observed a female **Florida Box Turtle** with a 6.5-inch carapace crossing JSD. On 6/7/12, around 6:30PM, Mike Owen observed 2 **Common Nighthawks** flying over SR-29; later he observed a 25-inch-long **Florida Scarlet Snake** in the Harmon Building area.

On 6/13/12, early evening, a visitor reported an Adult **Florida Panther** in the Gate 7/West Main area and on 6/17/12 the same visitor reporting seeing an Adult Florida Panther and 3 kittens in the same area. On 6/26/12, at 4:58PM, Mike Owen observed an **American Swallow-Tailed Kite** flying over Coastline Drive and another over Four Stakes Prairie on 6/29/12. On 6/27/12, Steven Bass observed a **Florida Scarlet Snake**, in the process of shedding, in the Fakahatchee Shop area. On 6/28/12, in the morning, Karen Johnson and Skip Fisher, volunteers, observed a **Chicken Turtle** with a 5-inch carapace crossing JSD from East to West.

On 7/6/12, at 12:56PM, Mike Owen heard a **Red-Eyed Vireo** "singing in the Strand" off of Jones Grade. On 7/13/12, in the evening, Mike Owen observed about 25-pound adult **Bobcat** walking to the north in the Headquarters area. He also observed about an 18-pound Bobcat off of West Main on 7/14/12. On 7/18/12, between 8:30-10:00AM, Glen Stacell, volunteer, observed a mature **Bald Eagle** perched on a tall snag near Lake Harmon. On 7/24/12, around 5:00PM, Emily Louwsma, Administrative Assistant and now teacher, observed a **Florida Panther** near the filled-in Prairie Canal. On 7/31/12, at 5:35PM, Mike Owen observed 70 **Barn Swallows** on the wires over Fire Tower Pond as well as flying over the Pond.

On 8/4/12, at 3:20PM, Renee Rau observed a **Roseate Spoonbill** riding the thermals with 3 **Vultures** over the Fakahatchee Shop. On 8/22/12, Lauren Sheppard, while on her first day volunteering at Fakahatchee, observed an **American Swallow-Tailed Kite**, **Barn Swallows** flying with dragonflies, a **Red-Winged Blackbird**, a **Water-Thrush**, and two **Green Anoles**. On 8/23/12, she observed a juvenile **Lubber** as well as adult **Lubber Grasshoppers**, a **Red-Shouldered Hawk**, and a **Deer** with two buttons along the drive. On 8/22/12, around 5:30PM, Jeff Kneisley, Park Ranger, and Steven Bass observed a collared **Florida Panther** walking along Jones Grade and then walk off to the south. On 8/23/12, early evening, Cyril Marks, volunteer, also observed an Adult **Florida Panther** on Jones Grade.

On 9/1/12, at 10:10AM, Mike Cullinan and David Sose, volunteers, observed a 150-200 pound **Florida Black Bear** near Gate 18. On 9/2/12, in the early afternoon, Cyril Marks observed 2 **Red-Shouldered Hawks** in Dan House Prairie. On 9/3/12, Ray Cicero and Julio Arias, while visiting the Preserve, observed a **Double-Crested Cormorant**, **White Ibis**, **Cardinals**, **Ground Doves**, **American Alligators**, **Turkey and Black Vultures** and even a **Fawn** along SR-29 on their way home. On 9/6/12, Karen Johnson and Skip Fisher, volunteers, observed 2 **Ruddy Daggerwing Butterflies** feeding on Bidens flowers along the drive (see photo on page 4).

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.



Orchid Calendar Launch

Here's a first for FOF – an annual calendar with photos of some of the orchids found in the Fakahatchee, just in time for holiday gifts and the new year.

And, it will be launched at a gala event in Naples on **Saturday, October 27**, from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. Come along to learn about the Cigar Orchid Restoration Project and talk with the Orchid Experts.

The Players' Club & Spa at 8060 Grand Lely Drive have graciously agreed to host us. If you are driving on I-75, take Exit 101 and go south on CR-951 (Collier Blvd) past Rattlesnake Hammock Road and turn west into Grand Lely Drive.

Calendars will be for sale at the Launch and at all the events in which we are taking part (*see right column*).

They are also available by mail order on our website. If you want to send them as holiday gifts, just give us the addresses and we'll enclose a card saying that it is from you. The calendar price is \$20 including post & packing.

Welcome Back Dinner/Talk

We are honored to have Roger Hammer talk about "Endangered Flora of Florida" at our traditional Welcome-Back Dinner on **Sunday, December 2**. Roger is the author of *Everglades Wildflowers*, among other books, and knows the Fakahatchee well.



The dinner will take place at the Seafood Depot Restaurant in Everglades City starting at 5:00 p.m. Cost is \$30 for members, \$40 for non-members. The tentative menu is a roast beef buffet with a seafood pasta or vegetarian alternative.

Formal invitations will be sent in November but you can reserve places on our website now.

MORE EVENTS

FOF is taking part in several outside events this fall. We need volunteers to talk to people about the Fakahatchee, hand out brochures, and sell merchandise.

SWAMP BUGGY PARADE, November 3 (10am) in downtown Naples. *We have an entry in the Parade and would like members to march with us. This is a high-profile event and a way for the public to learn about the Fakahatchee. We are hoping to have youngsters, as well as adults, among our marchers and will have motorized transportation in case they get tired.* Contact Jimi Rinehart at (239) 293-8142 to let her know you'll take part in the parade.

FLORIDA PANTHER FESTIVAL, November 10 (10am to 4pm) at North Collier Regional Park, Naples. For info, see website www.floridapantherfestival.com. If you can help, contact Glen at (239) 348-3455.

SWAMP HERITAGE FESTIVAL, December 1 (10am to 4:30pm) at Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center in Ochopee. For info, contact Glen at (239) 348-3455.

"Amazing Adventures"

Rookery Bay is presenting its popular monthly lecture series again this season on the 2nd Friday at 5:30pm. Speakers are:

November 9: Randy McCormick, "Ecuador"

December 14: Dave Graff, "São Tomé"

January 11: Paul Moler, "Vietnam"

February 8: Mike Owen, "Cuba"

March 8: Ralph Arwood, "Bears of the Arctic"

For info and reservations, see www.rookerybay.org and click on the Calendar.

NEW SHIRTS!

For this winter season, FOF is introducing a new line of merchandise including our first-ever fishing shirt with long sleeves and lots of pockets. It's great for swamp walks.

Also, a first-ever polo shirt for ladies and men. This lovely collared shirt is suitable for golf or "resort casual" wear.

The new kids' T-shirt says "As Wild As It Gets" and features "critters from the strand".

There are also new colors for our popular adult T-shirts plus a ladies' shirt cut for a woman's body.

These make great gifts and ease the hassles of holiday shopping. When you order, you will be supporting the Fakahatchee and advertising our beloved park.

Coming soon ... more in our next newsletter or on our website. We will let you know when they are available so watch your email. For info, call Jimi at (239) 293-8142.

President's Message

by Ray Carroll

Welcome to the Swamp ... I mean, to the Fakahatchee Strand. This is the time of year when it is wet and green and one is reminded there are great forces at work; we are not in control.

However, your board of directors is pursuing the things we are responsible for, if not in control of. It has been a busy and productive Summer. The board adopted an internet-based file sharing tool that has improved communication and we launched an organizational audit with the help of EK Consulting of Naples. The Boardwalk Vision committee is advertising for proposals to help us build a program to support public safety improvements at Big Cypress Bend and eventually perhaps much more. Recently, FOF helped fund efforts to sustain endangered orchids and possibly to reintroduce orchid species that have been lost through predation.

This season we'll have new, better merchandise to sell and, maybe by January, a permanent place to sell it. The usual annual events are being planned and we might have a few new tricks up our sleeves. Swamp walks, boat tours and custom kayak trips are in the making.

During the Summer, FOF was able to assist Park management in a record-setting year for prescribed burning; perhaps our single most important land management effort.

I'm proud to say that you have a hard working board that works well together. Dino Barone does so well as Treasurer that he might go unnoticed; thanks Dino. If there was ever a cheerleader and organizer, board Secretary Francine Stevens is it. Vice-president Jimene Rinehart single-handedly shouldered responsibility for merchandise and will lead us into our new digs when the time is right. Past-presidents Tom Maish and Howard Lubel continue to volunteer their time and experience making my job possible. Heartfelt thanks to all.

So, get ready. There's a place for you. We need volunteers for everything from field work to sitting a visitor center. We need your help to connect our Swamp Walk and Boat Tour guides with the folks who want that kind of life experience. We need you to put your arms around your friends and lead them to membership in FOF. There's a place for everyone.

Y'all come,
Ray



VOLUNTEER CORNER

by Dino Barone



Ah, Summertime in South Florida. Heat, Humidity, Mosquitoes, and vegetation in turbo growth mode. WOW, you really get an appreciation and respect for volunteer help – *"Many Hands make Light Work"*.

With only 5 rangers, constantly wearing many hats and spread very thin with extremely limited resources (both financial and equipment), the need for help and assistance of Volunteers is very apparent. Just take a drive down Janes Scenic Drive. Some of the potholes could easily double as gator holes by the end of summer. Thank goodness I drive a Jeep!! Take a walk down the various tram trails and you can almost see the vegetation grow right in front of your eyes and below your feet. Great incentive to keep your machete, loppers, and saws very sharp. Fortunately mosquitoes were relatively mild this summer; thus working, riding your bike or slowly walking and exploring the park, enjoying the seasonal changes of plants and wildlife are all amazing.

Visit our FaceBook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Fakahatchee/297712619847?ref=ts>)

for photos on some of the work that was accomplished and the sights we enjoyed.

Cooler weather is just around the corner. Come on out and enjoy the Fakahatchee. The joys and rewards the Fakahatchee has to offer are limitless. The sloughs, the strands are finally filled with water. Stop by any culvert and watch the southern sheet flow of water and just smile.

The Park has a diverse need for volunteer help. If you have a special skill set and a few hours a week or month, we can sure use your help. See www.orchidswamp.org and click on "Volunteer" to download a form.

You can contact me at sunnyg8tr@aol.com.

Dino

Fakahatchee Fun

by Karen Relish

It is hard to call it a work day when you are in the swamp with volunteers who seemingly readily become friends having fun and even a free workout. You may even sweat a little. No black tie – just your old pants, shirt, shoes and socks. You may want to bring lots of water to drink, a snack/lunch and your gloves and your favorite trimming tools. A little trimming, okay a lot of trimming, a little cleaning and fixing up around the place. You may see some butterflies and maybe a bear, hear birds and frogs and smell the outdoors while breathing fresh air. You may have the opportunity to join Park Rangers and Park Services Specialist Jeff or Steven or Steve as well as some of the few and the brave summer, as well as seasonal, fun-makers. Look forward to seeing you out in the Fakahatchee!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We have 339 paid memberships plus 4 Introductory members. Renewal notices for the 4th quarter and reminders for the 3rd quarter have been posted.

Welcome to new members since our last newsletter:

- Suzanne Chapin, Madison, WI
- Ellie Krier, Naples
- Caroline McNair, Ft Lauderdale
- Anton Nassif, Ft Lauderdale
- Stephen Rohn, Miami Shores

BUSINESS PATRONS

Two of our business members have upgraded to Business Patrons: North American Canoe Tours (Ivey House) and Shamrock Bank. Thanks to them for their support.

THANKS

We received a substantial donation recently from Izaak Walton League, Gaithersburg, MD



Thanks to Karen Johnson for this photo of the colorful Ruddy Daggerwing Butterflies that she and Skip Fisher spotted on September 6. Read more in the MOZONE on the front page.

What Are We? Who Are We?

The Friends of Fakahatchee, 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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| | Secretary – Francine Stevens | Treasurer – Dino Barone | | | | | |
| BOARD: | Dino Barone | Bruce Bunch | Ray Carroll | 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
 BUSINESS PATRON: 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

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|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$20) | <input type="checkbox"/> Family (\$30) | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron (\$100) | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor (\$500) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Individual (\$1,000) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Family (\$1,500) | <input type="checkbox"/> Protector (\$2,500) | <input type="checkbox"/> Preserver (\$5,000) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Patron (\$200) | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Benefactor (\$500) | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra Donation (\$ _____) | |
- Youth (\$10) under 18 (birth date: month ___ day ___ year _____)

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MONTHS AT ALTERNATE ADDRESS:

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