

# The Ghost Writer

DECEMBER 2012

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

## EVENTS

### GUIDED SWAMP WALKS

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday

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

**Reservations Required.**

Phone (239) 695-1023

or email [FOF\\_90@hotmail.com](mailto:FOF_90@hotmail.com)

or book online at our website

**See article on page 2.**

### VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

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

Saturday, December 8

Wednesday, December 19

**See notice on page 8**

### BOARD MEETING

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

Ranger Station, Copeland

For info, phone (239) 370-2654

### Orchids Lost & Found in Cuba

Mike Owen & Dennis Giardina

Saturday, Jan 12, 5:30 p.m.

Players Club & Spa, Lely Resort

**See article on page 4.**

### MORE EVENTS

Dec 8: Art-in-the-Glades

Jan 12: Art-in-the-Glades

Jan 12: Orchids in Cuba talk

Feb 16: Ultra Marathon

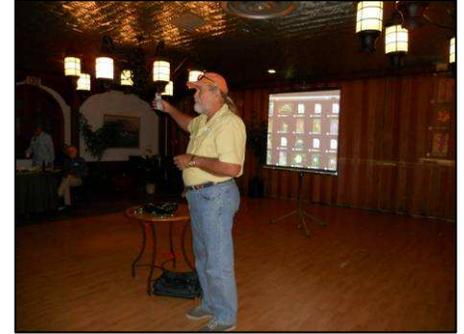
Mar 14: Elam Stoltzfus talk

Mar 2: Annual Picnic

Apr 14: Annual Dinner

For info, see page 3.

You can download an events calendar for the 2012-2013 winter season by clicking "Events" at our website [www.orchidswamp.org](http://www.orchidswamp.org).



About 60 members and guests enjoyed a delicious roast beef buffet before hearing Dr Roger Hammer speak about "Endangered Florida Flora" at the Welcome-Back Dinner in the Everglades Seafood Depot on December 2. Before Dr Hammer's entertaining and informative presentation, FOF President Ray Carroll thanked members for their volunteer participation and congratulated the park on a record number of prescribed burns, helped by some financial support from FOF.



The Fakahatchee was well-represented at the Swamp Heritage Festival at Big Cypress Swamp Welcome Center on December 1. The park had a booth and speakers included FOF members Franklin Adams (seen above talking at the campfire), Marya Repko, and Maureen Sullivan-Hartung.

## ORDER NOW

Do your holiday shopping the easy way ... let us send the FOF calendar and shirts to your friends and family with a gift card. See our website to download an order form or phone Jimene at (239) 293-8142 for info.



*Best Wishes for a Joyous Holiday Season and a Peaceful New Year!*

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 10/7/12, at 2:15PM, Mike Owen, Biologist, observed a male **Painted Bunting** prior to K2 over the West ditch. On 10/13/12, at 11:13AM, Mike Owen observed a **Merlin** fly to the east around Gate 19. On 10/18/12, in the evening, Mike Owen observed 2 **Florida Panthers**, an adult and a kitten, near Gate 7.

On 11/4/12, in the evening, Adia, UF Researcher, observed an adult **Bobcat** going to the east off of Janes Scenic Drive. On 11/6/12, around noon, Mike Owen observed a male **American Kestrel** at the beginning of the drive fly and land on a Cypress tree just east of Janes Scenic Drive (JSD). On 11/10/12, in the morning while on a Volunteer Work Day on Jones Grades, Jeff Kneisley, Park Ranger, and volunteers Dino Barone, Jim & Niki Woodard, Lauren Sheppard and Marques Lopez and Jenn Stine observed 2 **Florida Panthers**, an eight foot **American Alligator** in about 4 inches of water, and a **Limpkin**.

On 11/10/12, in the evening, Mike Owen near the beginning of JSD, heard a **Great Horned Owl** and observed an **American Bittern** and **Limpkin**. On 11/11/12, at 3:45PM, FOF members Rose Flynn and Howard Lubel saw an adult **Black Bear** cross Janes Scenic Drive (JSD) from East to West about 0.7 miles South of Gate 12/East Main. On 11/12/12, at noon, Marcel & Esther Meie, visitors from Switzerland, observed one adult **Florida Panther** on West Main (*see photos below*). On 11/12/12 around 3PM, Karen Johnson, volunteer, observed a 5.5 foot **Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake** crossing near the end of the Drive.

On 11/15/12, in the early afternoon, while on JSD, Bill and Sharon Pitkin, volunteers, observed over 30 **White Ibis** both adults and juveniles, 5 **Great Egrets**, 6 **Great Blue Herons**, 1 **Snowy Egret** and a **Little Blue Heron**, a **Red-Shouldered Hawk** fly from JSD ditch then fly to the north and a **Snapping Turtle** crossing from west to east. On 11/22/12, in the afternoon, while writing her journal, Amy China, observed at or over the Firetower Pond next to Park Headquarters-an immature **Little Blue Heron**, a **Double-Crested Cormorant**, a **Great Blue Heron**, a **Belted Kingfisher** and approximately 100 **Tree Swallows** flying over and seemingly drinking from the Pond and possibly Lake Gloria.

On 11/24/12, at 7:34AM, Dino Barone, volunteer, observed 47 **Wood Storks** among **Great and Snowy Egrets and Herons** along SR29 off of US 41. On 11/24/12, at 9:42AM, on a sunny and clear day, when heading down JSD, to trim Gate 12/East Main, Miss Judith, granddaughter of FOF member Tom Maish spotted an **Everglades Mink** (*Mustela vison evergladensis*) around Gate 3 crossing JSD, into the north side of the strand.

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)



Thanks to Marcel & Ester Meie from Switzerland for these wonderful photos of a panther they saw in West Main on November 12.



### **SWAMP WALKS + VISITORS = FUN!**

Don't know what to do with your energetic visitors? Send them on a Swamp Walk in the Fakahatchee.

If they are relatively fit and don't mind getting wet to the waist while wondering at the marvels of this primeval environment, they'll have memories and photos to take home of a Florida far from concrete condos and shopping malls.

Swamp Walks are held during the winter months. For info, call Pam at (239) 695-1023 or see our website where you can download a reservation form or book online.

We received this email after the Swamp Walk on 11/10/12:

My husband, Dave, and I had a great time on the Swamp Walk today. Mike Owen is a very knowledgeable walk leader. We also enjoyed meeting OPS Fakahatchee biologist Karen and Mike's friend, Donna. We were able to learn so much from each of them.

I am a 5th generation native Floridian and have never lived anywhere else. I had today a totally new experience of my favorite state. This trip was part of Dave's 2011 Christmas present. He loved the Swamp Walk!

## **MORE EVENTS**

### **ART-IN-THE-GLADES**

**Saturday, December 8** (10am to 2pm) at McLeod Park, Everglades City. Arts & Crafts Sale, Live Music, Hotdogs for lunch. FOF merchandise and calendars will be on sale. For info and to help out, contact Marya at (239) 695-2905.

### **CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

**Friday, December 14**

For info, contact Mike Owen at (239) 695-2886.

### **ORCHIDS LOST & FOUND IN CUBA**

**Saturday, January 12** (5:30pm) at the Players Club & Spa, Lely Resort, Naples. Talk by Mike Owen and Dennis Giardina about their trip to Cuba in October. Cost \$25 includes heavy hors d'oeuvres and drinks. For info and reservations, call (239) 695-2905 or see our website where you can download a reservation form or book online with a credit/debit card.

### **SOUTHWEST FLORIDA NATURE FESTIVAL**

**January 18/19** at Rookery Bay NERR

Registration now available at [www.rookerybay.org](http://www.rookerybay.org).



## **COASTAL CRUISES**

Explore a different aspect of the Fakahatchee – the ancient shell mound of that name in the Ten Thousand Islands.

FOF hosts Coastal Cruises through the mysterious mangroves of the Ten Thousands Island. On the way, you will probably see dolphins cavorting with the tour boat. When you arrive at Fakahatchee Island, a naturalist will point out unusual plants on the path up the ancient shell mound to the old cemetery. On the return journey, the boat passes by a famous rookery where the birds will be settling down for the evening.

The Cruises start at 3:00 p.m. from the National Park in Everglades City and return around 6:00 p.m. The dates this winter are **January 13, February 2, February 15, March 2, March 13, and March 25**

The cost is \$75 per person and reservations are required. For info, call Pam at (239) 695-1023 or see our website where you can download a reservation form or book online with a credit/debit card.

## **Art in the Preserve**

by Karen Relish



Have you ever painted a masterpiece in a swamp? How about composed a song with the wind, water, and birds as your accompanying band?

Join us at Fakahatchee Strand for Art in the Preserve, an En Plein Air event. Visit a specially-selected scenic location within the largest state park in Florida and create art in the medium of your choosing (art-pencil, charcoal, pastels, oils, acrylics, crayons, watercolor, mixed-media, music, journaling/writing). A Park Naturalist will be joining you to help with identification of local flora and fauna.

This free event is limited to 12 participants, RSVP required. Children are welcome, if accompanied by an adult guardian. Wear comfortable old clothing and shoes (closed toes preferred) and bring your art supplies, bag lunch, plenty of water and a portable chair or something to sit on. The group will meet at the Ranger Station before heading to the event location and if arrive later a sign posted on door of same to indicate location of artists as well as leading to artists. If provided and interested you may receive an email for directions for selected locations.

Dates for 2013 are Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on **January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20**

For information and to make a reservation, phone Karen Relish at 239-695-2886 or email Elizabeth Smith at [lizardart@gmail.com](mailto:lizardart@gmail.com).

## **ART SNIPPETS**

Everglades painter and FOF member Jo-Ann Sanborn has opened Sunshine Studios, a new gallery & workshop, at the Esplanade on Marco Island. For info, phone (239) 404-9179 or see her website [www.joannsanborn.com](http://www.joannsanborn.com).

Photographer and FOF member Jay Staton will exhibit his black & white fine art landscapes at the Annual Downtown Naples New Year's Art Fair on January 5/6.

## **RIVER OF GRASS GREENWAY COMMENTS WANTED**

Currently a Feasibility Study and a Master Plan are being developed for the River of Grass Greenway (ROGG) project, a proposed bicycle/pedestrian path between Naples and Miami. In January and February 2013 public workshops will be held in Naples, Everglades City and Miami for residents and visitors to participate in the process. In the meantime an interactive website is now available online for anyone interested in learning more about ROGG and to comment about the path directly. It is important to have the public's input at this stage in developing the Master Plan. For more info, call Patty Huff at (239) 695-2397 or visit [www.RiverofGrassGreenway.org](http://www.RiverofGrassGreenway.org). There is also info on [www.evergladesROGG.org](http://www.evergladesROGG.org).



# ORCHIDS LOST & FOUND IN CUBA

by Dennis Giardina

Mike Owen and Dennis Giardina were invited to attend an International Orchid Workshop at the Soroa Botanical Garden in Cuba where they presented a paper on the restoration of the cigar orchid in the Fakahatchee Strand. Their main objective however was to find – preferably in cultivation – the rat-tail orchid and *Acunae's Epidendrum*, two species of orchid that were once part of Fakahatchee's diverse flora but were completely wiped out by collectors in the 20th Century. The nearest extant populations of those two species occur in Western Cuba.

Mike Owen has been the Park Biologist of the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park for 19 years. A big part of his job is documenting and monitoring Fakahatchee's rare and endangered plant populations. Over the past six years Mike Owen, Dennis Giardina and their collaborators at Atlanta Botanical Garden have undertaken a restoration of the rarest Fakahatchee orchids, the cigar orchid and the dollar orchid with the intent of adding to their restoration project the two lost orchids.

Here are some photos taken by Dennis during the trip.



Bloom of one of Cuba's three ghost orchid species, *Dendrophyllax varius*.



A juvenile ash sphaero gecko fell onto one of the orchid conference attendees from the ceiling of an old house we were visiting.



We see you each day... pure like a child or like a pure-hearted man. Che, Commander and Friend



I was taking a picture down an Old Havana side street when this car turned onto it. Havana has many old American cars from the 1940's and 1950's and I especially like the old hood ornaments



One night we went to eat in a strange little gourmet restaurant at the top of a crumbling building in Old Havana. I slipped out onto a balcony at dusk and took this picture of the moonrise.

*Dennis Giardina is the Everglades Region Biologist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and was formerly the Park Manager of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve.*

You can see more photos and hear a full report on **Saturday, January 12**, at 5:30 p.m. at the Players Club & Spa, Lely Resort, Naples. Visit our website for info and reservations.

- - - VOLUNTEER REPORTS - - -

**Saturday, November 10**

by Cyndy Marquez

**Saturday, November 10**, was our kickoff to this year's Volunteer Work days out in the Fakahatchee. The day started out in the low 60's, with a breeze and an abundance of vitamin D sunshine to keep us all invigorated. Joining us were three first time fresh faces, Lauren Sheppard, Jenn Stine and Marques Lopez, eagerly excited, flexing their muscles and motivated to attack some major tram clearing up on Jones Grade, with our lofty goal of reaching the west end of tram on Pennington Post. Jim & Niki Woodward, long time friends and explorers of the Fakahatchee, joined us. The workforce was lead by Park Ranger/Volunteer Coordinator Extraordinaire, Jeff Kneisley.

While we transverse west on Jones Grade, moving from the prairie into the strand, we had a brief visual, about 100 yards in front of us, of two Panthers on the tram. Upon hearing us, they stopped, crouched down then headed south into the strand. As we progressed and stopped a little farther up to do some clearing, on the south side of the tram in the ditch, in about 4 inches of water was a healthy gator of approximately 8 feet, supervising our work. He was more interested in warming himself up, then in providing any pearls of wisdom to us. We wished him well, and moved on.

We encountered some thick areas of Brazilian Pepper, Smilax and Hog Plum clogging the tram, some so thick that a chain saw was required to quickly and efficiently remove these obstructions. Sometimes you just need to breakout the power tools.

Sorry, I did not take any pictures this day, as I was endeavoring to keep up with this fast moving workforce. Seems like every time I looked up, they were 50 yards ahead of me ... I just smiled and tried to keep up.

We got close but did not reach the west end of the tram on Pennington Post on this day, but good golly we gave it a gallant effort. Around 4:30 in the afternoon, with the sun descending upon the western horizon, and the yellowish orange hues filtering through the Cypress Trees in the strand, we reluctantly concluded our work for the day, and headed east on Jones Grade while slowly enjoying the true visual allure of the Fakahatchee Strand.



Thanks to Rose Flynn for this photo taken on November 24.

**Saturday, November 24**

by Dino Barone

On **Saturday, November 24**, a workforce of 9, led by Jeff Kneisley Park Ranger and volunteer coordinator, was assembled: Tom Maish and his granddaughter Judith, Saul Friess, Jim & Niki Woodard, Rose Flynn, and Howard Lubel. Focusing on a small section of East Main, where the Brazilian Peppers have already established residency and are rapidly muscling in to homestead an even larger section, not to the delight or amusement of the noble cypress, pond apples, pop ash or even the majestic royal palms.

We assembled at the garage at 9AM, ready to burn some calories from the delicious Thanksgiving feast, along with a few too many dessert helpings that have been enjoyed over the last couple of days. Arming ourselves with machetes, loppers, chain saws along with protective gear and coolers of refreshments. The morning was cool, temperatures in the 60's, and our eagerness to defend the tram against this non-native, invasive plant was peaking. We departed around 9:30'ish heading north on JSD. While traveling north on JSD in the prairie section, at one point we had a Great Blue Heron flying parallel as if he was escorting us to our destination. After squawking at us ( I am sure he was wishing us well ), he veered west into the prairie to continue his morning. Further in our travels, just as we passed Gate 3, an Everglades Mink ran across the road to the north side, chanting us all some encouragement for our work ahead.

By 10:30AM, we deployed and began to cut, hack, chop and saw our way through the Brazilian Pepper, methodically, one by one. By 12:30 we all took a pause to enjoy lunch, the scenic beauty of the tram, the trees, and the deep blue cloudless sky with I am guessing the ambient temperature in the mid 70's. WOW, just spectacular. After this well-deserved rest period, with our bellies full of nutrition and adequately hydrated, we continued on until around 4:30PM when we completely accomplished our goal. After a snack, some hydration and a thorough washing of our arms and faces, we headed back south on EMT to JSD, arriving just past sunset over the Fakahatchee Strand.

To me, what was especially cool was the diversity of our workforce with respect to talent and youth. We had a teenager, our volunteer leader in his twenties, (how did we miss the 30 & 40 year old demographics....hmmmmmm), the fifties, the sixties, the seventies, and our esteemed and sage veteran in his youthful eighties – have loppers, will cut. THANK YOU to all the motivated Volunteers for your time, energies and dedication to the Fakahatchee.

One project done, and always so many more to go. Let's try Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe ...

*See news about the next Volunteer Workdays on page 8.*

## **CSO Meeting Report**

by Tom Maish

DISTRICT 4 CSO MEETING 11/3/2012 was held at the historic Weeki Watchee Springs, now a Florida State Park. Weeki Watchee was started in 1950's as a private attraction featuring live Mermaids in the Springs.

Judy and I went up a day early to attend the Mermaid show. The Mermaids were quite graceful and had a nicely choreographed show. Later we took the guided boat trip down the Springs out-flow spotting a Manatee and her pup. The water is crystal clear! Definitely add this Park to your list to see.

Meeting theme was "Discovering Resources for your CSO" (Citizen Support Organization) presented by Peggy Calhoun of Miller Calhoun & Company. Peggy has extensive fund raising experience including for McArthur Beach State Park. More than a talk, Peggy sent us her book "Asking for Major Gifts" for our workbook.

Peggy's topics were:

- \* elements of the campaign
- \* what to do with the list of names
- \* preparing for the "ASK"
- \* making the ASK which required the group to "role play" a real life "need" as requested by the Park Managers present. The CSO members had to build a Case for Support for the "need" and then make a practice "ASK" on the prospective Donor.

This practice was quite interesting; especially the dissection and discussion by each of the groups making the "ASK".

Carol Imbriani Bennett, Park Programs Development Specialist of District 4, explained the role of the Partnership In Parks program (PIP) in fundraising. Although there a no matching funds from the Park Service available now, a CSO who wants to raise \$100,000 or more must submit the an application and be approved. The Friends of Fakahatchee has submitted their PIP and we have been approved .

Valinda Subic, Bureau Chief of District 4, told how District 4 has 23 CSOs – most in the State.

She emphasized that the Parks could not operate in today's economic climate without the CSOs.



**Judy Maish showed the FOF Orchid Calendar to Gail Jese, president of the CSO at the Gamble Mansion Historic State Park in Ellenton.**

**You can order your calendars at our website or phone Jimene at (239) 293-8142.**

## ***President's Message***

by Ray Carroll

Here I am, in Des Moines, Iowa, in the bosom of my family, overlooking a backyard overrun with white tail deer, turkey, and fox squirrels, yet I yearn for the Fakahatchee.

What is it about our resource that appeals so? For me it's not just the magic of Fall and childhood memories of camping with grandfathers. There is awesomeness about the Fakahatchee Strand. It is in the density and complexity of life. It is in the subtle interplay of seasons. It is in the power of the Fakahatchee to teach and to heal.

Our Winter visitors are returning, human and animal alike. Things are already getting busy. Some dates to remember are the Annual Members' Picnic on Saturday, 2 March, and the Annual Members' Meeting & Dinner on Sunday, 14 April. Go to <http://www.friendsoffakahatchee.org/events.php> for the full schedule of tours, talks and volunteer activities.

By now you should have received our Annual Fund appeal letter. I know there are difficult choices to make every year, but take a look at the Park needs list. We've worked to link the most needed items to specific donation amounts so you will know how your money will be put to work. Why not take a hand shaping the future?

Speaking of shaping the future ... some pretty exciting things are happening in resource management. We are blessed with an able Park Manager whose staff is dedicated and hard working. Things are getting done despite continuing cutbacks in State budget funding. Look for a special report to come from our own Mike Owen and Dennis Giardina concerning their recent, cutting edge exploits.

People everywhere are waking up to a better understanding of what it means to be part of a global community. Learning about the Fakahatchee Strand is a good way to teach young and old alike what it means to be interrelated and interdependent. Let's not drop the ball, our lives probably depend on it.

See you in the swamp.

*Ray*

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### ***ANNUAL FUND***

We have received 26 donations for our fundraising appeal to help the park for a total of \$2823. Members were all sent letters before Thanksgiving in which they were given a choice of sponsoring specific park needs (eg, new tires for the tractor, trail cameras) or just making a monetary donation that will be used to fill the gap left by State budget cutbacks.

The advantage to members of donating now is that the full amount qualifies as a tax deduction in your 2012 return

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### **BOARD ELECTIONS**

The FOF is looking for qualified candidates to stand for election to the 2013 Board of Directors. If you, or someone you know, would like to serve, please contact Jim Woodard for information at [friendsoffakahatchee@hotmail.com](mailto:friendsoffakahatchee@hotmail.com) or call (786) 566-3065.

## HOW & WHY?

### Members' Stories

First, truthfully, the name Fakahatchee intrigued us and then Mike Owen spoke so engagingly to Sanibel Audubon one winter. Eventually, we drove down for one of his guided walks, fell in love with the place, and joined FOF soon after. We have continued to maintain our membership because communication with the membership is so thorough and dependable.

*Two members from Sanibel and Tennessee.*

We were introduced to FOF by our friends on Marco Island when they invited us to attend a picnic at the strand. We realized then the great undertaking ahead of members of FOF.

*Pat and Jim Dougan Naples, FL.*

A friend told me about the swamp walks offered at Fakahatchee about 15 years ago. I had no clue what to expect on my first trip. The swamp walk was just wonderful, and Mike Owen was a splendid guide. By being a FOF member, I hope that I am helping to preserve this magical place.

FOF is doing a great job of educating the public and, hopefully through calendar sales and memberships, will increase revenues for Fakahatchee.

*Brenda Polewac*

Don and I are seasonal volunteers at the park and spend about 3 months there. It is very impressive to see the commitment others have for the park. We have been fortunate to be able to help with several park activities and fundraisers and find we like being involved with more than our daily park responsibilities. Membership in the FOF gives us the chance to help out and meet others who share a love for Fakahatchee.

We missed the Ultra Marathon last year but will be there for it this year. We heard such great things about it.

Thank you for the newsletter. It is a nice way for us to keep in touch with what is happening while we are north.

*Dee Leonard*

My husband and I joined following a terrific Florida Master Naturalist field trip to Fakahatchee. Ranger Mike Owens led us on a long and terrific hike through the swamp. Each year as I renew our membership I think of that experience.

*Carla Garbin, St Petersburg*

*We asked members how they heard about the Fak, why they joined FOF, and what they appreciate about our group. Look for more stories in our next issue ...*

## BOARDWALK VISION

### Committee Report

After Board approval in September, Francine Stevens sent out Requests for Proposals (RFP's) to four selected Consultants who were recommended by the Community Foundation of Collier County, Ave Maria, and the Conservancy of SW Florida.

Next, to prepare for the interview process, Francine Stevens sent out various articles to the Boardwalk Vision committee on subjects of:

- \* Should you hire a Consultant?
- \* Secrets to finding the Perfect Consultant
- \* Qualities of Great Consultants
- \* Sample contract for Consultants

These articles came from the Fund Raising class that Francine Stevens and Tom Maish attended last July.

As proposals came in each was circulated to the committee.

The committee met personally with two consultants and by phone with the other two to aid them in clarifying what the FOF was requesting. These meetings resulted in revised proposals by two of the consultants.

After all proposals were received, Francine Stevens developed a comparison chart to assist the committee in evaluating the written proposals. Since all committee members could not attend all meetings, an email synopsis was sent to all after each meeting.

After all the interviews; each member of the committee ranked each consultant by written proposal and interview. These rankings were tallied to select the top two candidates. Cyndy Marquez then drafted a questionnaire for checking references.

To place all of this in perspective, the reason a CSO (Citizen's Support Organization) exists is to assist the Park. Our yearly CSO Goals must be approved by the Park Manager and sent up the line for Park Service approval. As stated for the last several years, the FOF's #1 Goal is to improve the Boardwalk environment.

Attending the Fund Raising School proved that the FOF needed outside expertise! Most all of the 40+ attendees were paid professionals and most all used outside Consultants.

Hiring the right consultant to guide the Friends will be a great long term benefit to our organization; not just for the Boardwalk, but also to help in Event Planning, building our fund raising data base and conducting a successful annual fundraising campaign for Park needs.

Some expected results from the consultant are:

- Assisting in the selection of Donor Tracking Software
- Organization of the FOF database
- Internal review of why the FOF exists and how to make us more effective.
- Plus, help us identify other unknown folk who may become interested in the Fakahatchee with both personal involvement and financial contributions.

Our nine-member committee spent hundreds of hours over the past three months on this process! After all the meetings, one firm rose to the top – The Williams' Consulting Group. The committee believes this firm's experience, contacts, and energy will prepare FOF to take action on our goal of improving the boardwalk.

***Submitted by the Boardwalk Vision Committee:*** Bruce Bunch, Dennis Giardina, John Kaiser, Cyndy Marquez, Jimene Rinehart, Glen Stacell, Francine Stevens, Renee Rau, Park Manager, Ray Carroll President ex officio and Tom Maish, Chair

**MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

We have 346 paid memberships. Renewal letters for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2013 will be posted in early January.

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

- Joe & Nelly Beckhans, Doral
- Robin Gadsby, Naples
- Ed & Alice Hess, Venice
- Darlene Meadows, Marco Island
- Micky Ryan, Portland, OR

***ANOTHER FIRST!***

Thanks to Tom & Judy Maish who have become our first Lifetime Family members.

**Farewell to Friends**

- FOF member **Karen Mary O'Neil** of Old Lyme, CT, and Bonita Springs. A butterfly garden in her memory is being established by the Alligator Amblers.
- FOF volunteer **Phill Lawry** of Why, AZ, who spent many hours fixing equipment at the Fakahatchee.



**VOLUNTEER CORNER**

**DECEMBER WORKDAYS**

by Jeff Kneisley

**Saturday Dec 8:** The workday will trim and clear the appropriately named Mud Tram. The goal will be to reach the West end of the tram at the Prairie Canal bed. Portions of the tram are used in the upcoming Everglades Ultras race. The tram starts in very wet strand but gradually elevates into grassy areas with pines and then oak hammocks. The workday will begin at 9 am from the shop and return to the shop around 4 pm. We will have plenty of space in the cooler for anyone bringing a lunch.

**Wednesday Dec 19:** The workday will assist in the improvements of the visitor bathrooms and maintenance of the butterfly garden. There will also be work in converting the former office into a visitor center and FOF office. Work will begin at 9am and folks are free to stay as long as they would like. The day will also be an opportunity to learn about volunteer jobs at the soon to be visitor center!

***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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- OFFICERS: President – Ray Carroll      Vice-President – Jimene Rinehart
- Secretary – Francine Stevens      Treasurer –
- BOARD: 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, Tom & Judy Maish
- PRESERVERS OF THE FAKAHATCHEE: Bruce & Janet Bunch
- BUSINESS PATRONS: EarthTech Environmental, Naples Bicycle Tours, North American Canoe Tours, Shamrock Bank, Shurr Adventures

Friends of Fakahatchee, Inc. is registered with the State of Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (CH9223). A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
 STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
 STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**MONTHS AT ALTERNATE ADDRESS:**

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