

The Ghost Writer

NOVEMBER 2004

Newsletter of the Friends of Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve

HOME OF THE GHOST ORCHID

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GUIDED SWAMP WALKS

October 16th 2004 through March 2005
1st & 3rd Tuesday, 2nd & 3rd Saturday and 11/23 & 12/28
phone (239) 695-4593 for reservations

GUIDED CANOE TRIPS

October 2004 through March 2005
First and Third Saturday in month
phone (239) 695-4593 for reservations

Volunteers' Picnic

Sunday, November 14th
12:30p.m. at the Copeland office
RSVP to (239) 695-2905 (see below)

Seafood Festival

Feb 5/6, 2005, Everglades City
volunteers for FOF booth needed!
phone Patty Huff at (239) 695-2397

Volunteers' Picnic

FOF will supply hotdogs but other **food** is needed:

- salads
- baked beans
- soft drinks
- potato chips & snacks
- mustard & relish
- deserts

Phone (239) 695-2905 to say what you will bring.

You should also bring a folding chair, bug spray and sun block ... and think about what jobs you can volunteer for to help the Fakahatchee.

All members and guests welcome!

SEEN AROUND THE STRAND

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A 5-ft long **American Crocodile** was seen on 10/26 at 10:30a.m. by rangers Steve Houseknecht and Dave Henley in the East River north of Daniel's Point! Steve also saw a **Black Bear** on Janes Drive 3/4mile past Gate 7 heading east across the ditch on 10/9 at around 9:30a.m.

Other sightings were mostly birds: **Limpkin** on 10/9 and 10/14 feeding in standing water on at Gate 19 on Janes Drive and 10miles north of Gate I; **Roseate Spoonbill** on 10/21 in field in Everglades City and in East River on 10/26; about 50 **Florida Mottled Ducks** on 10/21 3.5miles west of SR-29, south of US-41 in marsh by Mike Owen and Karen Relish and nearby on 10/26 about 15 **Blue-Winged Teal**; another 7 **Blue-Winged Teal** in Fakahatchee Bay on 10/26 around noon by Steve and Dave; also a **Hummingbird** at Well 6 on 10/4 by Mike.

Josh Wolfson, District IV AmeriCorps member, saw 3 **Great Blue Herons** within first mile of Janes Drive on 10/22. Another visitor, naturalist Steve Carbol, had a good day on 10/5: he saw a **Red-eyed Vireo**, an **American Redstart**, a **Black and White Warbler**, a **Yellow-throated Warbler** and some **White-eyed Vireos** around Gate 12 off Janes Drive.

This is a good time of year to see **migratory birds** and the weather is certainly more pleasant now for being out and about.

To volunteer for wildlife observation or to report sightings, phone Fakahatchee's resident biologist **Mike Owen** or **Karen Relish** on (239) 695-2886

Visit our website www.FriendsOfFakahatchee.org for a schedule of events and other newsletters.

What Are We? Who Are We?

The **Friends of Fakahatchee State Preserve**, a 501(c)3 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 and SR-29.

OFFICERS: President – John Elting Vice-President – Allen Caldwell
Secretary – Betty Foster Treasurer – Jack Horner

BOARD: Franklin Adams Signe Backus Connie Bransilver Elsa Caldwell
Patty Huff William Mesce Allison Nist Jerry Winters
Niki Woodard Jim Woodard Brian Call (FOFPR)

MANAGER SPEAKS AT MEETING

A good turnout for the Members' Meeting on October 15th heard Park Manager Ralph Smith talk about his plans for the Fakahatchee.

He said that he hoped to **keep the office door open** for visitors and introduced Verinetha ("Niecey") Fails who works as office assistant Monday through Thursday. He also introduced new ranger Rosi McCluney who will be the volunteer coordinator.

The Manager explained that **gates** at both ends of Janes' Scenic Drive were mandated in the State's plan and that Picayune Strand is also installing them. They will be open from 8:00 a.m. to sunset but anyone with a good reason to be in the Park at other times (eg, camping, property owner) can get a pass from the office. In addition, a yearly pass is available from any State Park Office.

Eventually, there might be a **trolley** on Janes' Drive which would help to alleviate the wear and tear on the surface and reduce the road kill of our wildlife.

Ken Alvarez, State District Biologist, announced that he is due to retire in January but will probably try to stay around long enough to follow the progress of the planned **Visitors' Center** at the intersection of I-75 and SR-29.

VOLUNTEERS AND COMMITTEES

FOF President John Elting introduced member Barbara Brown who is staffing the Office on Saturdays and greeting participants in the Swamp Walks and Canoe Trips. In keeping with Ralph Smith's wish to have some one in the office 7 days a week, he asked for **volunteer greeters for Friday and Sunday**.

Brief committee reports highlighted the need for other **volunteers for Swamp Walks & Canoe Trips and Grant Writing**.

Member Vicky Nagle volunteered to look after Resource Material (eg, brochures, T-shirts). Her effort will be combined with Public Relations, Special Events, and Publications (newsletter, website) in a new committee including Patty Huff and Marya Repko.

NEW DIRECTORS

Two **new directors** were appointed to replace resigning ones at the Board meeting on October 15th. Former Park Manager Greg Toppin gave up his place on the board when he moved and Jan Brock submitted a letter of resignation, pleading pressure of work. New directors are:

William (Bill) Mesce, photographer and swamp-walk leader, who lives with wife Pam on the fringes of Fakahatchee.

Connie Bransilver, photographer and author, who lives in Naples and is also active on the Picayune board.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Our current fully-paid membership stands at 236 including 18 members who have opted on their renewals for our new association with the Friends of the Florida Panther Refuge. To learn more about FOFPR, see their website www.floridapanther.org.

Unfortunately, there are also 20 lapsed members who will be dropped if we do not hear from them. If your membership is overdue, a notice is enclosed with your newsletter.

Welcome to new FOF members:

- Jinny Ball, Naples
- Michael Bittner, Ft Lauderdale
- Connie Bransilver, Naples
- David Kogut, Arlington, VA
- Eric Kimmel, Miami
- Philip H. Smith, Marco Island

BOARDWALK WISH LIST

Donations of the following items are still welcome:

- binoculars that visitors can use
- wheelchair that will allow elderly or infirm visitors to enjoy the Boardwalk

Please phone (239) 695-4593 to arrange drop off at the Copeland office.

Thanks to the Miller family for hosting our meetings on October 15th at the Oyster House Restaurant in Everglades City.

FOF MEMBERSHIP

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

Individual (\$15) Family (\$20) Business (\$40) Patron (\$100)
 Benefactor (\$500) associate membership with Friends of Florida Panther Refuge (add \$5.00)

NAME _____

date _____

STREET / P.O.BOX: _____

EMAIL _____

CITY _____

ALTERNATE ADDRESS _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

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MONTHS AT ALTERNATE ADDRESS:

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