

The Ghost Writer

OCTOBER 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 Last Saturday in month
phone (239) 695-4593 for reservations

Members' Meeting

Friday, October 15th at 7:30 p.m.
Oyster House Restaurant, Everglades City
SPEAKER: new Park Manager, Ralph Smith

Florida Panther Refuge OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, October 9th, 8 a.m. to noon
west side of SR29, half-mile north of I75 (exit 80)
phone (239) 353-8442, ext. 233

"FakaPanther" Volunteers' Picnic

Sunday, November 14th
time and location to be announced

Notes about Swamp Walks

There will be four swamp walks each month this season from October through March. John Elting and Bill Mescse will lead the walks on the first and third Tuesdays and second Saturdays; Mike Owen will lead walks on the third Saturday. In addition, there will be holiday walks on November 23 and December 28. Other walks for special interest groups can be arranged on request.

The walks are limited to 15 people and must be booked in advance. The cost is \$25 (\$15 to FOF and FOFPR members). The group leaves from the Park office on Janes Scenic Drive at 10a.m. and will be out for five to six hours. Wear runners and long pants. Bring drinking water, lunch, sunscreen, bug repellent, camera, binoculars. You will probably get wet so it might help to have a change of shoes and pants in the car.

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SEEN AROUND THE STRAND

New Ranger Rosi McCluney saw a **Black Bear** on 9/25 about 1.6 miles north of Gate 1 off Janes' Scenic Drive. **Everglades Mink** were seen on 8/7 by Mike Owen 3.2 miles north of Gate 1 and as roadkill on US-41 near bridge 68 on 9/16 by Ranger Steve Houseknecht. A 3-foot long, healthy **Yellow Rat Snake** was seen by Mike on Janes' Scenic Drive on 8/31 and Karen Relish saw a 9-inch long juvenile **Green Water Snake** near the office on 8/7. A **Florida Panther** track was observed by Mike going east on K2 after rain on 9/12.

Founding FOF member Barb Lewinski and Mike Owen saw **Sandhill Cranes** and **American Bittern** on Wet Prairie in the afternoon of 9/30 as well as a **Red-tailed Hawk**. **Limpkin** and **King Rails** were seen on 9/29 during well readings by Mike Barry and Mike Owen who also saw **Limpkin** on 8/31 on Mud Tram about 0.7 mile east of Prairie Canal.

Other avian sightings by Mike were **Barn Swallows** on 8/17 on wires over Fire Tower pond, **Purple Martins** flying east near the office on 8/25, **Eastern Kingbirds** near Gate 1 on 8/25, **Bobwhite** in Dan House Prairie on 8/27, **Tree Swallows** flying north over the shop area on 9/2, **Eastern Kingbirds** hitting water surface of Fire Tower pond on 9/9, and **Loggerhead Shrike** 1.1 mile north of Gate 1 on 9/28.

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 Jan Brock Elsa Caldwell
Patty Huff Allison Nist Jerry Winters Niki Woodard
Jim Woodard Brian Call (FOFPR)

PHOTOGRAPHS, HURRICANES, ETC

Photographer Rick Cruz is donating 10% of the proceeds from his one-man show to Friends of Fakahatchee. The exhibition takes place from November 11th to December 1st at the Gilded Hand Gallery (165 Aragon Ave, Coral Gables). Cruz specializes in capturing images of the Everglades, including the Ghost Orchid. For more information, see www.rickcruzphotography.com.

Another photographer, amateur Paul Rebmann, has set up the website www.wildflphoto.com which has photos of Florida wildlife as well as a plant data base.

Our own William ("Bill") Mesce, who leads FOF swamp walks, has collected his photos on website www.swampshots.com.

Hurricane Frances forced Clyde & Niki Butcher to re-schedule their traditional Labor Day Swamp Weekend to September 18th to 20th. Thanks to FOF members Betty Foster, Barbara Brown, Elliot Mascoop and Jim & Niki Woodard who spoke to visitors about the Fakahatchee and raised over \$130 for us by selling T-shirts. Brian Call from the Friends of the Florida Panther Refuge shared our booth. The website for the Butchers' gallery is www.clydebutcher.com.

Fortunately, none of the four hurricanes this summer has done serious damage to those living in the Fakahatchee area. However, Park Manager Ralph Smith reports that erosion on Janes' Scenic Drive will cost about \$100,000 to repair and that trees along the Drive have fallen as a result of the washouts. The Manager is requesting funding from the state.

Ralph and the Rangers have been helping other less fortunate State Parks in the clean-up after the storms. If you want to volunteer to join them, phone (239) 695-4593.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Our current fully-paid membership stands at 230 including 7 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.

Welcome to new FOF members:

- Ivonne Arias, Hilaleah
- Julie & Warren Barber, Naples
- Jo & John Bartlett, Mt Hood, OR
- David Bogardus & John Adornato, Oakland Park
- Dan Combs, Cookeville, TN
- Rick Cruz, Coral Gables
- James Fisher, Lighthouse Point
- Eileen Horgan, Ft Lauderdale
- Sarita & Arthur Jennings, Davie
- Maxine M. Long, Coral Gables
- Frances M. Lynn, Durham, NC
- Lee & Scott Massey, Miami
- Pamela C. Schade, Miami
- Carol & Ronald Sekura, Key Largo
- Jody Smith, Hollywood
- Evelyn P. Stevens, Ft Lauderdale

NEW POST BOX

Observant readers will have noticed that we have a new address. Friends of Fakahatchee now have their own box in the local Post Office. This arrangement should ensure that membership and other correspondence is dealt with more promptly.

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.

NEW MEMBERSHIP

date _____

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 Panther Refuge (add \$5.00)

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

STREET / P.O.BOX: _____

ALTERNATE ADDRESS

CITY _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

PHONE _____

MONTHS AT ALTERNATE ADDRESS:

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