



The Ghost Writer

OCTOBER 2007

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

EVENTS

GUIDED SWAMP WALKS

every 1st, 2nd, 3rd Saturday
price \$40 (\$35 members, \$15 kids)
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!
phone (239) 695-2860
or email: islandgirlm@msn.com

GUIDED CANOE TRIPS

2007: Nov 17, Dec 22
2008: Jan 19, Feb 16, Mar 15, Apr 12
price \$45 (\$40 members, \$15 kids)
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!
phone (239) 695-2860
or email: islandgirlm@msn.com

BOARD MEETING

Sunday, November 11, 11:00 a.m.
City Seafood, Everglades City
for info, phone 239-695-2905

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Boardwalk Clean-Up
Saturday, November 3
see page 3

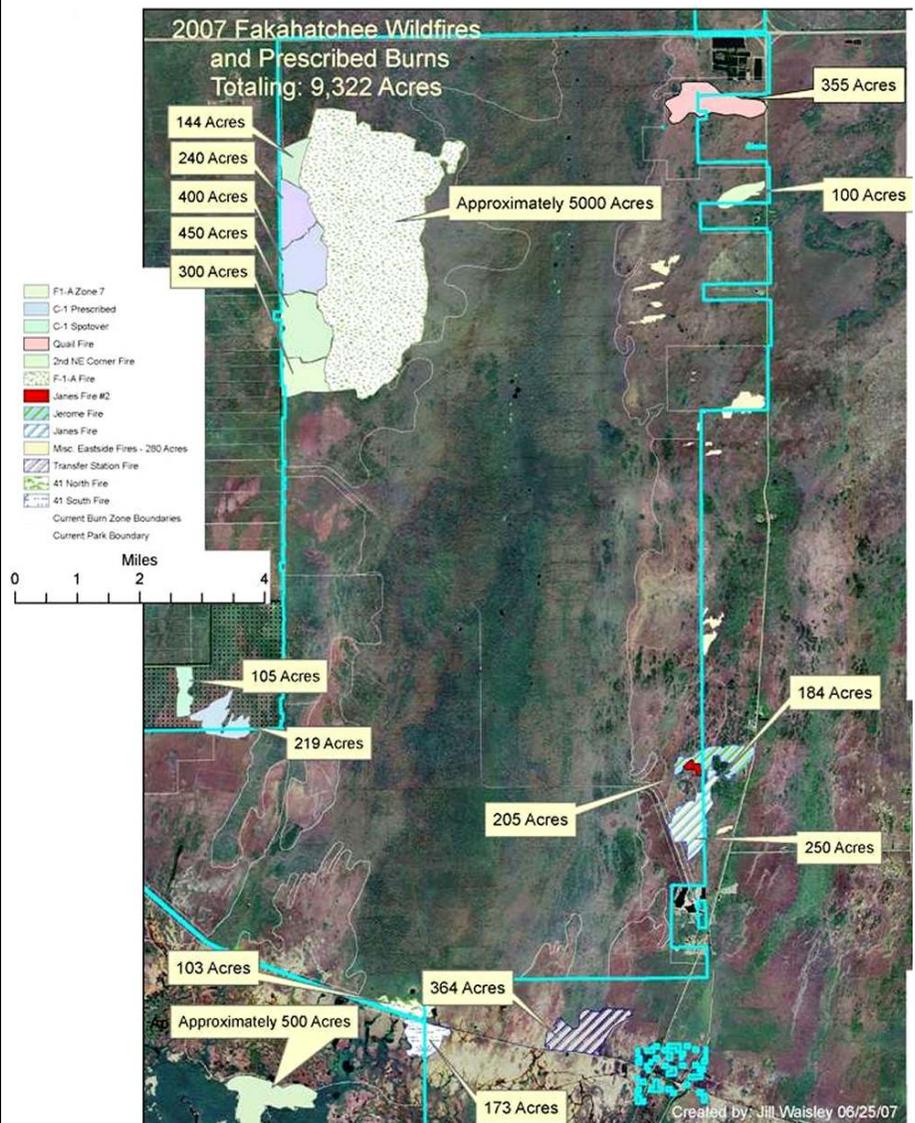
Notes about Guided

Swamp Walks and Canoe Trips

Wear lace-up boots or sneakers, a hat, long-sleeve shirt, and long pants. Bring water, snacks, or lunch. Biting insects are not usually a problem during swamp walks but they can be for canoe trips; bring repellent if you are sensitive. Put anything you don't want to get wet in zip lock or plastic bags. For swamp walks, be prepared to wade in cool water up to your waist for half a day, learning about and enjoying the flora and fauna of the Fakahatchee Strand. Participants can expect to be back at their cars by 4:00 p.m. A change of clothes would make the drive home more comfortable.

WILD FIRES AND BURNS

Some of these fires were caused by arson!
See the Manager's Musings on the next page.



The Naples Orchid Society is holding its Annual Plant Sale on Saturday, October 20, at The Conservancy (1459 Merihue Drive) from noon. Plants go fast so get there early. For info, phone Kit at 262-0987.

Manager's Musings

by Dennis Giardina



It's been an eventful summer at Fakahatchee Strand. It seemed to start off with Russ Clussman and Mike Plecas finding several cigar orchids (*Cyrtopodium punctatum*) growing on the side of Janes Scenic Drive. Initially we were excited but when Mike Owen (photo above), Karen Relish, John Elting and I went to check them out, the foliage looked about right but two things seemed strange: instead of growing on the side of a cypress tree or on top of cypress knees with a mass of thin brown roots, they were growing in the ground with thick white roots. They turned out to be an exotic orchid, *Cyrtopodium polyphyllum*, from South America. A week later Mike and I went to visit a county park in the Kendall area of Miami where this same species of orchid is being studied because they are spreading like wild fire!

Speaking of wildfires, we had a lot of them this year. Arson was the cause of 25 or more separate wildfires along SR-29 and US-41 (see map on front page). Lightning strikes ignited several more, including a 9 day, five thousand acre wildfire that burned up in the northwestern quadrant of the Preserve in May. Because the Department of Forestry was already committed to other fires around the county, they weren't able to respond with bulldozers. They did send SEAT (Single Engine Air Tanker) planes to help our people on the ground. The many miles of fire lines we established in that area and the 2 ½ inches of rain that fell the night before the lightning strike helped keep the fire cool, contained and under control.

Looking forward to the year ahead, I'm hoping that we can start looking and applying for grant funding to improve the facilities at the Boardwalk. The Unit Management Plan will be reviewed and updated sometime during 2008 and I will talk more about that at an upcoming board meeting. The District Office has given us some funding to renovate the inside of the Harmon building to create space for a bunkhouse and a new office. Hopefully we'll be able to start work on that over the coming months. We have been cooperating with Guy Quail and other private landowners to repair Jones Grade Road over the past month or so and it should be finished soon. Janes Scenic Drive is next on the list and I'll be doing everything possible to get funding and resources to manage the right-of-way vegetation and repair the road this winter.

I will be away for the first couple of weeks of November again this year. I am going back to Guatemala to continue to look for parasites of the Mexican bromeliad weevil. The parasitic fly that has been in quarantine for many years has finally been released in several places, including right next door in Big Cypress. This is a great development and the hope is that this fly, *Lixadmontia franki*, will be able to persist in the natural areas of Florida, help control the Mexican bromeliad weevil and protect our native bromeliads. To hedge our bets, the search continues for another parasite species. I'll write more about this expedition in an upcoming newsletter.



President's Message

It is my pleasure and privilege to serve this year as President of the Friends of the Fakahatchee. In this message I want to share with you some of my enthusiasm for the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park.

Last year well over 50,000 visitors experienced our park and learned firsthand that it is one of the treasures of Southwest Florida. As a volunteer for several years at the Boardwalk, I can attest to the large numbers of visitors who say the Fakahatchee is one of the best places they have seen anywhere. If you are reading this as a member of the Friends of the Fakahatchee, you already know what a great resource our park represents.

What you may not know is that our park, at 80,000 plus acres, is geographically the largest state park in Florida and yet is staffed by only three rangers, a biologist and a park manager. That fact is a major reason for the existence of the Friends of the Fakahatchee. The park functions most effectively with the active involvement of volunteers. And hopefully that is where YOU come in.

There is a wide variety of volunteer opportunities. Some are physical in nature, such as trail clearing, carpentry and vegetation trimming at the boardwalk, assisting with exotic plant removal, and trash pick-up. Others could involve service on an FOF committee, representing the FOF at area festivals, greeting visitors or providing interpretation at the boardwalk, assisting with swamp walks and canoe trips, or even folding trail maps and literature for our kiosks.

Whatever your interest, the Friends of the Fakahatchee would benefit greatly from even a few hours of your time. And best of all, to volunteer in the Fakahatchee is to be a part of one of the most beautiful environments in the world. For more information about volunteering, feel free to email me at nelsontilden@msn.com.

Come join us!

Nelson Tilden

Policy Statement on the Qualifications of Candidates for the Board of Directors Friends of the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, Inc October 2, 2007

Nominees for a position on the Friends of the Fakahatchee Board of Directors shall meet the following qualifications:

1. Be a member in good standing of the Friends of the Fakahatchee
2. Complete a volunteer Application/Agreement form and submit it to the Park Manager
3. Be at least 18 years of age at the time of nomination to the Board
4. Participate in a minimum of two different volunteer projects approved by the Park Manager, and submit time sheets to the Park Manager documenting the service. The volunteer projects shall be performed in the twelve month period preceding the nomination.
5. Complete a biographical statement containing the following information:
 - a) Name, address, phone number, email address, and date of birth
 - b) Reason for interest in serving on the Board
 - c) Description of experience and/or education relevant to service on the FOF Board
 - d) Description of volunteer service in the Fakahatchee

Notwithstanding the provisions of this policy, the Board of Directors shall have the right to add a highly qualified person or persons to the slate of nominees for board membership. Such nomination(s) shall require the approval of an absolute majority of the board.

Uses of the biographical statements will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

BOARD MEETING

The Board of the Friends of Fakahatchee meet on **Sunday, November 11**. The agenda includes a report from the Treasurer, adoption of amendments to the by-laws, and plans for the forthcoming season. Members are welcome to attend.

HELP CLEAN UP THE BOARDWALK

We will have a volunteer work day at the Boardwalk on Saturday, November 3, at 10:00 AM. We will clip vegetation along the Boardwalk, sweep leaves and debris, and do some trash pickup around the parking area. It will last about two hours. We will meet at the parking area at 10:00 AM. Bringing a Lopper or clipper and a broom would be helpful.

MEMBERSHIP

We have a total of 289 members, including 33 from the first and second quarter who have not renewed who will receive final reminders and then will be dropped.

The newsletter, in full color, is emailed to 249 members, a saving of over \$102 in postage for each issue.

Renewal notices for the fourth quarter of 2007 are being sent with this newsletter, as well as reminders for the third quarter.

Welcome to new members:

Cornelia Fowle, Englewood
 John & Christine Kennedy, Shelby, OH
 Chris & Misti Little, Sunrise
 North American Canoe Tours, Everglades City
 Betty K. Prevatt, Ft Myers
 Thomas A. Rahill, Plantation
 Louis & Barbara Schulman, Tampa
 Steven Swait, S.W. Ranches
 Tracy Swait, S.W. Ranches
 David Swait, S.W. Ranches
 Tom Wolfe, Lutz

Members Jon and Marilyn McCollister gave an illustrated talk to the Concord Garden Study Club in Concord, Ohio, about the flora and fauna of the our area, including this photo which they call "The Laughing Stork".



Marilyn wrote in her email:
I heard Carl Hiaasen speak last winter at the Naples Barnes and Noble and he said for each day spent in Disney World, people should spend an equal amount of time in the Everglades and 10,000 Island area ... the "real" Florida. Aren't we lucky?



OUR THANKS TO THE CONCORD, OHIO, GARDEN CLUB FOR SENDING A DONATION TO BENEFIT THE FAKAHATCHEE.

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 stand in the world and the deepest slough in the greater Everglades. Its 80,000 acres are bordered by I-75 (Alligator Alley), US-41, SR-29, Fakahatchee Bay, and Picayune State Forest. The mission of the Friends of Fakahatchee is 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 Park, 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. (c) 2007, FOF. All rights reserved. No part of this newsletter, including pictures, may be reproduced without permission.

OFFICERS:	President – Nelson Tilden	Vice-President – Tom Maish			
	Treasurer – Vicky Nagle	Secretary – Jenifer Adams-Mitchell			
BOARD:	Jenifer Adams-Mitchell	Signe Backus	Allen Caldwell	Elsa Caldwell	Rick Cruz
	Frank Denninger	John Elting	Cathy Hatch	Tom Maish	Bill Mesce
	Bud Scott	Nelson Tilden	Jerry Winters	Niki Woodard	Jim Woodard

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)

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