

The Ghost Writer

EARLY SUMMER ISSUE, MAY 2004

Newsletter of the Friends of Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve
HOME OF THE GHOST ORCHID

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Members' New Annual Meeting

Friday, May 7th, promptly at 6:00p.m.

Seafood Depot Restaurant, Everglades City

RSVP to (239) 695-4593

GUIDED SWAMP WALKS

ADVANCE NOTICE: booking starts in Sept

October 2004 through March 2005

1st & 3rd Tuesday, 2nd & 3rd Saturday and 11/23 & 12/28

GHOST ORCHID WALKS

to be scheduled in July/August

contact biologists at (239) 695-2886

Evening "Frog Choir" Walk, Big Cypress Bend
to be scheduled this summer, contact biologists

Why Another Annual Meeting?

The Board of Directors, after consulting with the members, voted to change the year-end to April 30th so that it coincides with our financial reporting period. The advantage of having a new officers and directors in May is that they have the summer in which to plan for the next busy winter season.

The Board is aware that some members have left the area in May and plans to continue holding the Annual Picnic during the winter as a separate, social function no longer combined with the formality of the Annual Meeting.

All members are welcome to the meeting on May 7th which will formally re-elect the Board of Directors and hear committee reports. You are advised to come early if you want to order food. *Please phone (239) 695-4593* so that we can let the restaurant know how many people to expect. You will also be able to renew your membership before the meeting, which starts promptly at 6:00p.m.

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SEEN AROUND THE STRAND

On March 14th Bob Czarnacki observed one **Black Bear** weighing approximately 200+ pounds near Gate 2 and on April 10th he noted a 12" **Striped Crayfish Snake** shedding on Janes Scenic Drive about 0.25 mile North of Gate 1.

On April 6th Russ Clusman saw an **Everglades Mink** at Gate 7 (West Main). On April 11th Park Ranger Buddy Griner observed an **Everglades Mink** 5.5 miles North of the Fire Tower on Janes Scenic Drive and on April 14th Mike Owen watched one run across West Main to the south close to Gate 7.

Mike Owen observed a **Red Shouldered Hawk** catch a **Green Heron** along Janes Scenic Drive on April 13th about 5.2 miles north of Gate 1 and on April 19th Kathy Hatch and Gerri Mann noted a **Red Shouldered Hawk** feeding on a **Florida Black Water Snake**.

On April 17, 2004, Mike Owen saw two **otters** cross West Main near Gate 7. He and Park Ranger Steve Houseknecht have been noting **green anoles** at the fire-tower house, biology office, and along Janes Scenic Drive, as well in the prairies and in the Strand during the months of March and April.

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

"I'll probably never forget the moment" said Russell Clusman about the discovery of a rare orchid in the Fakahatchee. His report "Lost for a Century" is included with this issue of the newsletter.

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 Greg Toppin Jerry Winters
Jim Woodard Niki Woodard

BOARDWALK NEWS

Jerry and Signe report that they have seen a lot of **snakes** recently and that the mother **alligator** has an “auntie” gator who helps to look after her several generations of brood.

Although the number of visitors is decreasing now that the winter season is over, we still get comments about what a “**wonderful, special place**” the Fakahatchee is. Travelers have come from as far away as Argentina, China, France, Israel, Holland, and Russia.

The volunteers have drawn up a **Wish List** of items for members and friends:

- ❖ donate a copy of your favorite photograph (8.5x11 format) taken in the Fakahatchee for the Interpretive Display
- ❖ donate binoculars that visitors can use while they are on the Boardwalk
- ❖ donate a wheelchair that will allow elderly or infirm visitors to enjoy the Boardwalk

The last Directors’ meeting approved funding for repairs to the Boardwalk. The work will be done in conjunction with the Park Manager.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.

Help us repair the Boardwalk!

This is heavy work that involves carrying building materials and digging post holes in the swamp. It should be done soon, before the rainy/buggy season. If you can help, please call Greg at (239) 695-4593.

Thanks to Jerry Winters & Signe Backus and to Caryl & Nelson Tilden for all the love and attention they lavish on the Boardwalk.

Thanks to Jim and Niki Woodard for organizing our booth at the Miami Orchid Show.

Thanks to Everglades Area Properties, 102 South Buckner Ave, Everglades City, for printing this issue of the newsletter.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

- Stefan & Anita Ambs (Silver Spring, MD)
- Barbara J. Brown (Naples)
- Philip & Jennifer Brown (West Palm Beach)
- Jean U. Bub (Naples)
- Jorge Casau Domecq (Miami)
- Susan Cioci (Lake Worth)
- Jack & Carol Connell (Chokoloskee)
- Gary Davis (Naples)
- Burl & Gwyneth George (Boca Raton)
- Sarah Hecox, Natural Habitat Adventures (Bolder, CO)
- Ray & Ruth Hefflefinger (Everglades City)
- Kathy Hoyt (Miami)
- John Irvine (Lake Worth)
- Julie Kim (New York, NY)
- Ruth Kitchin (Sanibel)
- Johanna Kitson (Wellington)
- Russ & Yvonne Koolhof (Naples)
- Bill & Virginia Leonard (Poland, ME)
- Joe Libertucci (West Palm Beach)
- Dale & Randy Lindquist (Marco Island)
- George A. Lopes (Naples)
- John J. Lopinot (Royal Palm Beach)
- Tammy & Ken Marks (Boca Raton)
- Mark McKeefry (West Palm Beach)
- Joanne Rose (Miami Beach)
- Jeff Samuels (Oakland Park)
- Richard Shellene (Ft Lauderdale)
- Lynn & Mike Thompson (Boynton Beach)
- Caryl & Nelson Tilden (Naples)
- Larry Webber (Everglades City)

Marya Repko, Membership Secretary, reports that we have 256 entries on our membership list but, unfortunately, 29 of these have not sent in renewals that were due in the first quarter of the year. She has been ruthless in weeding out the names of people who are in serious arrears.

If you have any questions about membership, you can phone Marya at (239) 695-2905 or email to the address below.

The good news is that more than half (164) our members receive the newsletter by email, thus saving about \$60 on each mailing. **If we do not have your email address, please send it to FOF_90@hotmail.com.**

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

NEW MEMBERSHIP

date _____

Please make check payable to “FOF” and send to: FOF Membership, P.O.Box 548, Copeland, FL, 34137

- 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