



The Ghost Writer

SEPTEMBER 2006

NEWSLETTER of the Friends of Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, Inc.

EVENTS

GUIDED SWAMP WALKS

1st & 3rd Tuesday
2nd, 3rd, & 4th Saturday
starting November 4th
no reservations until October
phone (239) 695-4593

GUIDED CANOE TRIPS

schedule to be announced
no reservations until October
phone (239) 695-4593

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

for Exotics Removal
Wednesday, November 15th
phone (239) 695-4593

"National Estuaries Day"
Rookery Bay

Saturday, September 30th
phone (239) 417-6310
or see www.rookerybay.org

Annual CSO Meeting
Cocoa Beach, Florida

November 16-18

Topics include: Strategic Planning,
Basic CSO Management, Grants,
Endowments, Prospect Donor Research,
Strategic Planning, Special Events
phone Carol at (941) 486-2155

NEWS FROM THE PARK



Park Manager Dennis Giardina reports that the new boom mower attachment, for which the Friends contributed a substantial amount, is a great help in keeping trams and paths clear (photo courtesy of Dennis).

He has submitted plans for the new Visitor Center to the State and is preparing for the new trailer that will serve as the manager's residence but also has enough space for meetings.

Janes Scenic Drive is mostly under water after a very wet rainy season. When it dries out, he hopes to improve its condition so that it will be easier to maintain. Visitors who do not want a very wet and bumpy ride should go to Jones Grade which has been cleared to Pennington Post and beyond to Picayune Strand, thanks to the efforts of Jim & Niki Woodard and their team of volunteers.

Finally, over 50 miles of fire lines on the west side of the Preserve were cleared last spring and Dennis looks forward to an active burn season. Three of the Friends have been certified to take part, having passed a 3-day course. If you are interested in helping with burns, contact Dennis to find out when the next class will be held.

To volunteer for indoor or outside work, phone (239) 695-4593

THANKS to Everglades Island Properties and Snook Publications for reproducing this newsletter.

Letter from the FOF President

Just a note to all of you hoping that you are having an enjoyable summer and, where appropriate, a profitable one. Having just completed my annual letter to Michael Bullock, head of the Florida Parks Department outlining FOF's accomplishments, challenges, and plans for the coming season together with my assessment of improved park management, I thought I would bring you up to date on developments.

The Park has now received the boom mower we purchased and is in the process of working Janes' Scenic Drive. Later in the fall, when the major trams are cleared of obstacles, it will be applied there also (hopefully no hurricanes to complicate the process).

The road crew that had been working State Road 29, and afforded sanctuary in the Fakahatchee, was contracted to upgrade and improve Janes' Scenic Drive. Despite explicit instructions on procedure, they apparently made a mess of it. Dennis is working with the District to resolve the problem but the bottom line is that the Park does not have the equipment, time, or personnel to adequately maintain the road. The State will have to provide further resources for maintenance.

Dennis is presenting our plans for an extension of the visitor center to the District. Hopefully these plans will be approved and construction can begin in the fall

Schedules for swamp walks, flatwood walks, and canoe trips, will be completed in the next month. As plans now stand, we will be making further use of our swamp buggy outside of the strands for trips to the flatwoods and prairies. Those who would like to participate, either as interpretive guides or drivers, should contact me at (239) 395-3760.

On Saturday, November 15, we have scheduled a day to work exotics (Brazilian pepper, lantana, etc) on the west side of the Park north of gate #19. Volunteers would be much appreciated. Please contact Dennis at (239) 695-4593.

John Elting

Gary Nederveld, 1941-2006

This tribute was written by Pat Gladstone of Bonita Springs. The photo was taken by John Sernovitz.

Gary Nederveld, a resident of Bonita Springs, Florida, and Grand Haven, Michigan, died in a mountain biking accident on September 2, 2006, while visiting his daughter in McCall, Idaho. Like many of the Friends of Fakahatchee Strand, Gary became an enthusiastic supporter of the group when he walked through the swamp with Mike Owen.



Gary liked to tell a story about one of those swamp walks. While preparing for his hike through the muck, Gary realized that he had forgotten his camera in Michigan. His wife, Kathy, suggested that he purchase a disposable camera at the drugstore on his way out to Fakahatchee Strand. Gary thought that this would do in a pinch, but being a bit of an equipment freak, he was disgruntled to find himself so modestly equipped. Insult was added to injury when he arrived at the site in his little blue BMW convertible to find a group of orchid enthusiasts, newspaper reporters, and professional photographers sporting bazooka-sized telephoto lenses. Sheepishly, Gary joined the group and snapped away as he walked through the swamp. Days later, Gary had to laugh when an article featuring the Preserve appeared in the *Palm Beach Post* (8/20/04): "Quiet, bespectacled Gary Nederveld" was the first among the laymen to spot the ghost orchid. He had a photo to prove it.

Gary's love of Southwest Florida's natural communities led him to found Calusa Kayaking Adventures. He was an ACA certified canoe and kayaking instructor and urged the Pelican Landing community in Bonita Springs to purchase kayaks and create a paddling club. He volunteered many hours teaching community residents to paddle. Always striving toward excellence, Gary completed two University of Florida Master Naturalist modules this past summer. His generosity, humor, and leadership abilities are well-known to his friends. He will be missed.

Gary was due to lead canoe trips for us during the season so his tragic loss will deprive participants of meeting a unique person. To read more about this multi-talented man, see the obituary and guest book at www.KlaassenFuneralHome.com.

Our thanks to the many friends who have sent donations in Gary's memory. His name will be added to the plaque in the Park Office.



LABOR DAY MUCK ABOUT

Lashing rain did not dampen the spirits of a constant stream of visitors to Clyde & Niki Butcher's annual event at the Big Cypress Gallery. Cars stretched down both sides of Tamiami Trail (US-41) and used the Oasis Visitor Center as an overflow parking lot.

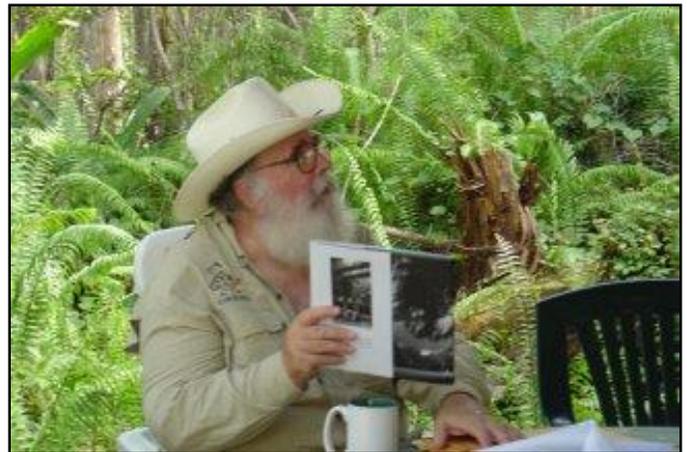
Our own John Elting and Mike Owen (above) were among the Swamp Walk leaders and our Tshirt booth was well-staffed by volunteers. Thanks to Allen & Elsie Caldwell, Tom & Judy Maish, Rick Cruz, Patty Huff, Marya Repko, and especially to Vicky Nagle (below) who organized the merchandise. Over the 3-day event Vicky was the first to arrive at our table and the last to leave, carefully sorting out the inventory and takings.



Photos of the "Muck About" courtesy of Patty Huff.



"Shoes for the Soul" is a charity that collects old shoes and refurbishes them for needy youngsters in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. They had plenty of welcome donations after the swamp walks through Big Cypress. For more information, see their website www.ShoesForTheSoul.org.



Host Clyde Butcher was signing copies of his latest book of photographs "Apalachicola River; An American Treasure". Demonstrations of his glass-plate camera took place during the three days. The unusual 8x10-inch negative allows his pictures to be enlarged so greatly. For more information, see www.ClydeButcher.com.

Get Well Wishes to swamp walk leader Bill Mesce who is recovering from surgery.

MEMBERSHIP

We have 237 fully-paid members in the following categories: Individual (66), Family (144), Patron (21), Benefactor (3), and Business (4). There are also 13 members in arrears from the Third Quarter of 2006 who have been sent reminders.

Newsletters are sent to 192 members by email, saving almost \$75 per issue. *Please let us know by email if we do not have your address or if it changes.*

Welcome to new members:

Dale & Cindi Armstrong, St Petersburg
Gene Darst, Naples
Donna Glann-Smyth, Melbourne
Billy Herrera, Hialeah
Eric Irelan, Mt Vernon, WA
Jim & Stephanie Logan, Englewood
Byron Maharrey, Palm Springs
Manfred Marggraf, Naples
Bonnie McLaughlin, Ft Myers Beach
Thuy Pham, Plantation
Richard J Ray, West Palm Beach
Kelly Robinson, Naples
Richard & Irene Sperber, Miami Beach
John R Storms, Davie
Bishop & Carol Wright, West Palm Beach

THANKS!

Dragonfly Expeditions of Coral Gables have made a generous donation to us after leading almost 200 people on walks through the Fakahatchee. The company specializes in environmentally "green" travel in Florida and the Caribbean. See their website www.dragonflyexpeditions.com

MEET OUR NEW DIRECTOR ... CATHY HATCH

"There can be no places in the U.S. so different as Montana and Florida", wrote Cathy in a recent email. She was appointed to the FOF Board last spring to fill the vacancy after one of our directors resigned.

Cathy Hatch was born in the mining town of Butte, Montana and, after getting her degree, taught first, third and fifth graders for 28 years. She became involved in Outdoor and Environmental Education and was invited by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to become a "Project Wild" facilitator.

After retirement in 1995, she and husband George came to Florida in 1997 where she says "I have enjoyed learning about different plants and animals. Volunteering at the Fakahatchee gave me an opportunity to do this".

Welcome, Cathy, and thank you for all you do for our Preserve.



PANTHER FRIENDS

The Friends of the Florida Panther Refuge have new officers and have produced a Summer issue of their newsletter *Panther Tales* which is available on their website. See www.floridapanther.org.

What Are We? Who Are We?

The **Friends of Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve**, 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 Ghost Writer newsletter is edited by Jenifer Adams-Mitchell and Marya Repko with contributions from members and friends. It is issued at least six times a year and has an average circulation over 300 copies. (c) 2006, FOF. All rights reserved. No part of this newsletter, including pictures, may be reproduced without permission.

OFFICERS: President – John Elting Vice-President – Nelson Tilden
 Treasurer – Patty Huff Secretary – Jenifer Adams-Mitchell

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