



President's Message

By Patrick Higgins



I know many of the park staff and our members suffered personal losses from Hurricane Irma. We each have our own story, and your Board extends its best wishes to everyone for a full recovery.

As Steve Houseknecht, our Park Manager, has reported below, the Fakahatchee is in remarkable condition despite Irma's destruction. This doesn't mean there's still not a lot to do, but the debris clearance on Janes Scenic Drive is better than many streets in Naples. This is due to the park's fantastic staff, who also provided assistance to Lovers Key, Collier-Seminole and Koreshan State Parks. The park also received tremendous support from the State in the form of outside contractors to do much of the heavy lifting. Below

you'll get an amazing glimpse of the post Irma recovery work by the fearless Faka-hackers in Dino Barone's report.

Meanwhile FOF is as busy as ever serving the park and getting ready for the upcoming season. Tour dates have already been posted on Eventbrite, and other improvements and projects are underway. The start of construction of the new Chickee rain shelter/outdoor classroom at the Boardwalk site has been pushed back, but probably by only a month until Boardwalk repairs have been completed towards the end of November. One fear was that damage to the State Park System by a major hurricane might suck up funds for the Boardwalk Expansion Project. I'm happy to report that this is still full steam ahead with permitting probably in place around February 2018. This includes monies for the new restrooms and the new visitor center (interpretive pavilion), funded by the last Florida legislative session.

Over the summer the park received a donation from our neighbors in Big Cypress National Preserve of enough long-life synthetic wood planking to resurface the entire length of the existing Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk. It's now all neatly stacked in pallets in the Harmon Building for when we're ready.

FOF has also just been awarded a \$46,720 grant by Collier County's Tourist Development Council to fund wayfinding in the park. The grants provides funds for creating a useful visitor map and information kiosks/boards at our hiking, biking and canoeing trailheads, which will add to the safety and enjoyment of our the visitors - so it's all systems go!

Patrick Higgins

President, Friends of Fakahatchee

Reserve your spot on this season's tours!
Go to <http://www.eventbrite.com/o/friends-of-fakahatchee>

News from the Strand Irma's Aftermath

Park Manager's Post-Irma Update

by Steve Houseknecht

Irma on its way to southwest Florida having devastated the keys. Photo by NASA.

.....

As you all know Hurricane Irma had a tremendous impact to the entire state of Florida, and Fakahatchee was certainly no exception. As a result of the storm, we had an exceptional amount of downed trees and copious amounts of water throughout the entire park. The area was without power for nearly 2 full weeks after the storm, during what was one of the hottest parts of the summer. This made recovery efforts very difficult as we were all still basically in survival mode.



And despite everyone's personal struggles after the storm, the staff showed up and accomplished some outstanding work to make the park safe and accessible to our visitors. Some of which included, but certainly was not limited to opening up of the East River for a couple of miles, which is no easy task to say the least. I couldn't be prouder!

Although the storm could have been much worse, we did sustain some damage. The Manager's residence flooded from the rain water that just didn't seem to end. We had some minor roof damage, lost a few sheds, some pretty significant Boardwalk damage, and the Orchid Shade House went for quite a ride. But I do have to say that the State responded.

We now have contractors working on debris clearing on Janes Scenic Drive, The Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk, and about 20+ miles of tram roads. As of today Janes has been cleared of debris from beginning to end, so now the crews are working on clearing the Tram Roads, including West Main, East Main, South Main, Jones Grade, Pennington Post, and Lancaster Grade. We are having 2 roofs replaced at the Biologist Residence and the Stilt House, repairing the Harmon Building roof, and renovating the Manager Residence. All of this work is being done by contractors as well. I also expect the contractors to begin repairing the Boardwalk in the next week or so.

As you all can imagine, this is taking a lot of work off our plate, allowing the staff to get back into more resource management activities and projects. Although we still have a long road ahead to get back to normal, I am extremely encouraged by all of the work being done, and the support the State has sent our way! I am confident that we will have another great season ahead of us!

Some effects of Irma on the park's ecosystem

by Patrick Higgins

John Kiser, Francine Stevens and Tom Maish on Sunday the 15th of October by hurricane debris at Gate 12. Amazingly, debris had already been cleared up to gate 12 except for this pile. Photo by Patrick Higgins.



After devastating the Florida Keys on the morning of September 10th and wreaking havoc on Everglades City and the Fakahatchee as it moved north, Hurricane Irma's eye made a second U.S. landfall on Marco

Island around 3:30 PM as a category 4 storm with sustained winds of 130 mph. Irma had been swirling at hurricane strength since August 31st and had been a major category 3 or above for nearly all of that time. It battered both coasts of southern Florida, swept up the peninsula and produced high seas and storm surges as far north as South Carolina.

We don't have a recording for the wind strength in the park because the anemometer failed and even an accurate rain gauge reading was not possible because much of the rain was horizontal. Although the park recorded some 12 inches of rain it probably received closer to 20. The tremendous destructive force of the hurricane was obvious to all from the downed trees, ruined powerlines, damaged roofs, collapsed structures, and flooding and debris everywhere. At one stage water was even flowing over Highway 41 and State Road 29. But there are many more subtle effects on the natural world which may not be as immediately apparent.

For instance, Hurricane Irma will have affected birds in the eastern flyway on their autumn migration from northern breeding grounds to their winter homes in the tropics. Not only will many have been blown perhaps hundreds of miles off course, and some even drowned at sea, but the landscape they traversed would have been substantially altered and in many cases denuded. Food sources like berries and insects may have been eliminated and flooding would have reduced foraging opportunities on the ground. Certainly in the storm's immediate aftermath in my own yard I saw the few butterflies that had survived desperately searching for nectar sources. All the blooms had been blown away.

But there will be some winners too. Driving down San Marco Road to Goodland a few days after the storm, our vultures had clearly benefited. Hundreds lined the causeway feasting on the fish that had been trapped on the road when the tidal surge receded.

Irma's path across Cuba may have transported a fresh infusion of orchid and bromeliad seeds to the Fakahatchee. Tropical storm winds are how many of our epiphytes originally arrived. Who knows, maybe some lost species could even reappear?

Toppled trees in our swamp will have created more horizontal habitat suitable for skinks and reptile sunning. Snapped tree trunks may have opened-up cavities in which small animals can make homes. Uprooted trees will also have left depressions which may later become ephemeral ponds which will be safe from predatory fish and available for tree frogs to spawn. The same uprooted trees will have exposed bare earth making it easier for seeds to sprout. Ground birds will benefit from increased shelter, and highly adaptable raccoons will find new food sources by scavenging Irma's debris.

When the water subsides, the dead material littering the forest floor will decay and the newly abundant sunlight streaming through gaps in the canopy will promote lush new growth in which small herbaceous seedlings will compete – ultimately probably unsuccessfully – with fresh vertical shoots from now horizontal trees. In this race vigorous vines may smother some of the defoliated trees before they have fully recovered, producing a dense secondary jungle-like habitat.

Openings in the canopy will allow formerly shaded saplings to make a dash for the Sun. Unfortunately some of these opportunists may be invasive species. A week after Irma I already noted Brazilian pepper rushing into bloom.

Some trees in exposed locations would have had their bark entirely stripped off and will die standing up, turning them into snags ripe for colonization by fungi and invertebrates. However, the many downed trees, broken branches and stripped leaves will increase the fuel load and the future risk of wildfire.

Wounded trees may also be more susceptible to future insect infestation and disease as happened in Everglades National Park following Hurricane Andrew. A few months after Andrew many pines began to yellow and die as they succumbed in their weakened condition to pine bark beetles and weevils.

Endangered species with small residual populations nearly always fare badly from catastrophic events like hurricanes. A huge number of epiphytes will have been torn from their perches. Some of the rarer species may take years to recover or disappear.

Generally however, our native plant species are better adapted to hurricanes than non-natives. For instance it was very rare to see a toppled royal palm in Naples despite their huge numbers and exposed street plantings. They just shed their fronds as the wind load increased, leaving their growing tip intact. This was very evident going up Janes Scenic Drive last week. Where everything else was reduced to a tangled mass, royal palms protruded upright and only slightly frazzled all along the road north of gate 7. Most were already in flower or even fruiting in reaction to the stress. Gumbo limbos pursue a different hurricane strategy. Their limbs are very brittle and easily shed to reduce wind load and then readily root where they land.

Our southern slash pine, *Pinus elliotii densa*, is also adapted to the higher frequency of hurricanes in south Florida. Unlike its cousins north of Interstate 70, it doesn't grow quite as tall and has a deeper tap root making it more resistant to extreme winds. My house is near Naples Airport where they clocked 142 mph gusts. I feared the 60+ ft pines behind my house would come crashing through the roof, but they stood firm just shedding a few limbs and masses of needles.

In the southern reaches of the park, Irma's wind and waves will have rearranged coastal sands and inundated sea turtle nests, wiping out the last 6 weeks of our hatching season. Further out, Gulf surface waters will have been reoxygenated by the storm's wave action, but this could also have churned up dormant red tide cysts which may haunt us later. Meanwhile, Irma may have temporarily broken up algal blooms, but the release of extra nutrient-laden floodwater from Lake Okeechobee is quickly countering this further up the coast.

Continued ...

The same forces will have driven salt water into our coastal marshes leaving salt concentrations that may persist for years. Conversely, subsequent floodwater discharge through the Faka Union Canal and East River will have reduced salinity in our bays, disrupting some estuarine life cycles.

Our tidal mangrove swamps, where many of our wading birds would have sheltered in the storm, acted as a natural buffer by absorbing its energy, but may suffer delayed damage as they did from Hurricane Donna. This was as the result of extra depositions of mud as the mangroves slowed the storm's water flow. In Donna's case the extra layer of mud interfered with the oxygen supply to the mangroves' roots, killing vast tracts months later where accumulations were the greatest.

But the speed of the natural world's recovery in a tropical-like environment is remarkable. The live oaks, West Indian mahogany and gumbo limbo in my yard were almost completely defoliated, yet 10 days later were leafing out again. Fresh blooms are everywhere as plants compete to produce seeds to exploit Irma's disturbance.

Sadly the economic loss and human recovery from the devastation takes much longer. I think we are all still a little shell shocked. The only saving grace from the prolonged loss of electrical power and a blacked-out Naples was that for the first time, I could see the Milky Way right in the city center – a reminder of the fragility of our civilization.

Fearless FAKA-hackers' post-Irma impact

by Dino Barone

Obstruction typical of Janes Scenic Drive.

Photo by FOF.

.....
Southwest Florida has seen some extreme weather in the last six months. Spring 2017 found SW Florida in a severe drought condition. Wildfires were everywhere, taxing both state and federal resources just to contain them. Plants and animals were adapting to the extreme arid conditions. June arrived and in the first two weeks so does twenty-plus inches of rain. WOOOSSHHH!! The park was immediately in high water conditions, typically not seen until September/October.



Janes Scenic Drive and most of the trams, normally high and dry ground, were under water. Some of the washouts in the park brought to mind the Nantahala River rapids. Parts of JSD – before you get to gate 7, the south side of the road – resembled a waterfall into the south ditch complete with pillowy-soft foamy water and an ascending mist in the air.

Now, at the beginning of the fall 2017 season, the Fakahatchee landscape has dramatically changed due to Hurricane Irma.

In the days following Irma, communication was a challenge in SW Florida. When I finally made contact with the park, fuel to run generators seemed to be what was really needed. Between Friday night and Sunday, September 15–17, the cavalry arrived into Everglades City bringing food, supplies and fuel to what felt like a forgotten community. That Saturday I brought over 25 gallons of fuel plus 5 gallons of 50/1 fuel mix for the chain-saws. Former FOF President Howard Lubel loaded up his Jeep with supplies and delivered these to the small community in Chokoloskee and to our park rangers.

The following Saturday Paul Joslyn and I took advantage of the path that had been chain-sawed out between gates 4 and 7. Our goal on this day was to extend the path up to gate 12. Standing at gate 7 looking north, that little voice in my head was saying, "Oh my, we do have a challenge."

Our chainsaws were full of fuel and bar oil, with nice shape teeth. We took a moment to put on our safety gear of chaps, earmuffs and gloves. Let's get ready to rock! The chainsaws came alive, while Steppenwolf's classic "Born to be Wild" resonated in my head.... "Get your motor runnin'..."

Visualize it. The water on JSD is above our work boots and flowing. Looking north all you can see is an unnatural mixture of horizontal and vertical trees. Before we begin to cut, we carefully look at the tree or limb to understand the stress (compression and tension) being exerted as well as potential reactions to the stress. We want to avoid surprises and ideally drop the cutting in a safe location. The path we are cutting is just wide enough for a UTV (utility task vehicle) to get through.

*Dino Barone with chips flying.
Photo by FOF.*



We would cut, clear then drive the vehicle forward. Maybe about a mile north of gate 7, JSD was no longer being washed over by water. Oh, I forgot to mention a FAKA-hacker's favorite plant to avoid – poison ivy! (Our beloved fruit-bearing, thorny hog plum runs a close second.)

Chain saw dust from the cut willows mixed with the urushiol is the perfect recipe for a week-long scratch fest. At least for a couple of days, I had poison ivy-induced, artificially swollen forearms that Popeye with his can of spinach would be proud of. Thank goodness for calamine lotion!

We would pause along the path we were carving to look east and west into the strand to see the aftermath of wind destruction. One of my observations of wind destruction was with the tall royal palms. At one particular location, the royal palms on the west side of JSD lost all of their palm fronds or were lucky to have one or two still attached, while the royal palms on the opposite side might have only been missing one or two fronds. Travel a bit farther north and it was the opposite. What kind of wind phenomenon could have caused this?

Guess it took us a bit over 3 hours to carve our path to gate 12. After stopping for some nutritional fulfillment, I ran an insane idea by Paul – Gee, let's see if we can make it up east main to the Hilton. We geared up, fueled up, sparked up those saws (yes, Steppenwolf was once again resonating), and off we went.

Now the challenge was easily disposing the tree limbs and logs, as east main tram is significantly narrower than JSD. And yes, the willows here are exceptionally covered in poison ivy. After 45 labor-intense minutes of cutting, we managed to traverse approximately 100 yards. It became blatantly obvious to me we were NOT going to get anywhere remotely close to the Hilton today. So we declared victory, did a 6-point U-turn and headed out off the east main tram. There is some good news to report. NO mosquitoes pestered us on this given day. How about that, sports fans?

The mighty maple just had no answer to the force and fury of Irma, nor did strangler figs or willows. In this two-mile stretch, we might have seen about a half dozen or so Cypress trees that were once growing on the edge of JSD succumbed to the winds. Maybe another half dozen or so slightly larger cypress on the far side of the ditches had their tops broken off and tossed onto JSD. Approximately half a mile north of gate 7 on the west side of the road, a large oak tree lost a branch I'd estimate to be about 3 feet wide. It had broken off falling east across the west ditch with the very top section landing on JSD. WOW! I could only imagine what wind force caused that!

The next Saturday, September 30, our goal was to clear/open the mangrove tunnels on the East River that lead to a lake approximately 2.5 miles south from the launch sight. Working with park ranger Steven "WWSBD" Bass, Fearless FAKA-hackers Sam Peters, Steve Irwin and myself loaded up two canoes with supplies and needed equipment. We departed around 9 AM, paddling south.

Earlier in the week, park rangers had already opened up the first two miles, leaving only half a mile to clear. We got this, should be easily done by noon, enjoy lunch, high fives and a casual paddle back. Or so we thought.

On the two-mile paddle we occasionally slowed/stopped to cut a renegade branch here and there. Periodically we stopped to look at the broken limbs or entire trees downed due to Hurricane Irma. The upper canopy and exposed branches, where mostly all the leaves were lost in the storm, were already regenerating new leaves. The recovery process was in full swing.

Even without the yellow flagging tape that was stretched across the river, it was apparent where the rangers stopped. Broken tree branches cluttered the water, some still partially attached to their tree. Time to go to work. Loppers were quickly replaced with a chain saw to cut through the branches. Ranger Steven WWSBD stuck his arm into the water, while grasping onto the paddle, trying to determine the water depth. He thought he could feel the bottom. Those who know Steven know exactly what happened next.



Park Specialist (Ranger) Steven Bass with chainsaw up to his neck in alligators clearing East River. Photo by Steve Irwin.

SPLASH! No, not a cannonball type of a splash, more like your pedestrian splash. Now there is Steven, all 6'5" walking in chest deep water. We would cut, he would remove. Then Steven took the chainsaw, walking in the water, chain sawing broken branches. Before long Steve Irwin is in the water helping to remove cut branches, then

Sam Peters is in the water working. I was still trying to cut from the canoe, however this was becoming more and more inefficient. Now all four of us are in the water. Water depth for the most part was chest deep, occasionally neck deep, and every now and then we lost contact with the bottom. Swimming lessons in the days of our youth are now paying dividends.

Along the way we saw some impressive fish-eating spiders, and a couple of large spiders we could not ID. At least three different times, as a branch Steven chain sawed through splashed into the water, carpenter ants surfaced looking for high ground. If we happened to be close to the ants, we made sure we were NOT the high ground they sought. We immediately found materials for them to climb upon, while warning the rest of the group to avoid this specific spot.



Faka-hacker Dino Barone guiding canoe carrying cutting equipment with Park Specialist (Ranger) Steve Bass in the water. Photo by Steve Irwin.

Finally, around the corner, a short distance away...THE LAKE...YEAH! At the same time the water was getting deeper. We were swimming and cutting through the mouth into the lake. Success! With the canoes nearby we could finally put the cutting equipment in them. Amazingly enough, we could also stand in the lake: more joy and happiness!

Took a look at my watch...holy McGillicuddy it's 3 PM! Between the cool water, and mostly overcast skies, we had just worked 5 continuous hours and missed lunch. Well, this was quickly remedied. There we were, standing in the lake, watching small tarpon roll on the top of the water, enjoying something to eat and drink, while talking about our accomplishments.

I guess we were in the tranquil, refreshing lake for about 15 minutes before we saw a curious gator. He slowly swam from the far side edge of the lake, towards the middle of the lake. His body was high out of the water, to get a better view of these four rascals lounging in his water. I'd say he was about 200 feet from us, and never encroached any closer. We hung out for a couple of more minutes before moving the canoes to the mouth of the river where we could more easily use the mangrove roots to stand on to get into the canoes. Our friendly gator was still in the same relative spot. We wished him a good day - Later Gator - while we began to paddle north 2.5 miles back to the launch pad.

Park management, our beloved biologist, and current rangers are invested and engaged, to the benefit of the Fakahatchee. We are VERY fortunate to have rangers like Steven Bass, Mike Duey and Guy DiGiovanni. I do not have enough accolades for these gentlemen towards their support of volunteers, our safety, providing solid leadership, while making every work day a fun, rewarding experience. Personally, I so look forward to every next visit. What will be this week's unique opportunity to better help and serve?



Dino Barone, FAKA-hacker

Trails go on forever, and the FAKA-hacking never ends.

Volunteer opportunities in the park are diverse. Please contact Mike Duey, parks volunteer coordinator at 239-695-4593, or via email michael.Duey@dep.state.fl.us

For an overview of FOLKS volunteer opportunities, visit our website at <http://orchidswamp.org/support/how-to-volunteer/>

The Eagle Has Landed

by Mike Owen

The old Bald Eagle nest was built around 1990 and the new nest was built around November 2016, probably a response to the Osprey nest that was built too close! I saw the new nest yesterday when I was documenting the impacts of Hurricane Irma. The 1990 nest is completely gone.

I think the Bald Eagles may keep using the new nest if the Ospreys build their nest too close to the old nest site again. Each year a pair of Bald Eagles will build a new nest on top of their old nest which is how their nests can come to weigh over 1,000 pounds after a few years!

The process of nest-building may play an important role in re-establishing the pair bond after the previous year's nesting season. Last nesting season (October through May) three pairs of Osprey built nests in the Big Cypress Bend area! Ultimately the Eagles will decide the best place to nest each year and that decision includes how close Ospreys build their nest. Bald Eagles have been known to build two nests in an area and use just one of those nests each season. This could be an insurance against nests blowing out or trees falling.

We have been very fortunate to have a pair of nesting Bald Eagles so close to our boardwalk. Fortunately for us and our visitors, the new nest is within view of the boardwalk, but not as visible as the old nest. The 215 acres of

old-growth Bald Cypress trees at Big Cypress Bend are proving to be a magnet for nesting raptors! A few years ago we documented 5 different raptor species nesting along the boardwalk of Big Cypress Bend: American Bald Eagle, Osprey, Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Red-shouldered Hawk!!

In my opinion the Bald Eagles should be fine and they will build a nest in the place they consider to be optimum, using cues to make that decision known mainly only to them.



Alternate bald eagle nest being used after their primary nest was destroyed by Hurricane Irma. This one is on the same west side of the boardwalk, but nearer the entrance. You have to look hard as it right on the edge of the strand, about 50 yards in and 100 yards south of the twin heritage cypress tree cut-out. It is partially obscured by some new cypress growth. Photo by Patrick Higgins.

Please help us fill our tours!

Registration for our tram tours and swamp walks are getting off to a slower than usual start. This is not surprising considering that many folks are still trying to bounce back from Irma. While we list the tours on our website and work to promote them through the news media, the personal touch is often most effective. Here's what you can do to help:

1. When you receive a press release about our tours, please forward it to interested friends encouraging them to participate.
2. When you hear from friends planning a Florida visit, refer them the www.orchidswamp.org website and advise them click Tours and Events.
3. Take your visitors on one of the tours. There's always something new to see and our naturalists keep their commentary fresh.
4. If you have suggestions on how we can promote our adventures, please let Patrick or Francine know. Income from these tours is a major source of our financial support for the park.

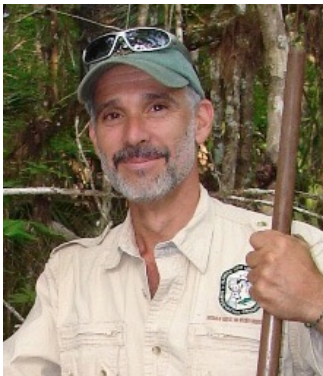
Drivers needed for Tram Tours



We are in need of FOF volunteers to drive for the tram tours. A valid drivers license is required, but no previous experience is necessary. For more information, please contact Francine at 239-273-4442.

Photo by TripAdvisor.

A Very Special Thank You!



On behalf of the Board of Directors, a special thank you to the following organizations who recently hosted a lecture by Dennis Giardina and donated generously to the Friends as a result.

Gold Coast Orchid Society
Pan American Orchid Society
East Everglades Orchid Society
Coccoloba Chapter of FL Native Plant Society

*Dennis J. Giardina
Everglades Region Biologist
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission*

Tram Tour/Swamp Walk – Fun and Educational!



"The history of the park and natural characteristics were enthusiastically shared by our guide. He told interesting stories while we traveled by tram, walked in drier prairie areas and sloshed our way through the swamp. We saw a variety of birds, cypress trees, alligators, orchids, snakes, and more. If you are interested in Florida wildlife, this is a great place to visit!"

— Visitor, Cooper City, Florida

Tom Maish represents the Friends



Tom Maish and Francine Stevens attended The Collier County Legislative Delegation on October 19. The work of the Friends of Fakahatchee was on the Agenda and Tom Maish represented the Friends with a short presentation.

Senator Kathleen Passidomo thanked Tom for his presentation and announced to the audience that Tom is an example of why she likes her job so much, because everything he has done for the Fakahatchee is completely on a volunteer basis. She shared how much she enjoyed the tram tour in the Fakahatchee conducted by volunteers. Representative Bob Rummel echoed Ms. Passidomo's sentiments. Well done, Tom!

Tom Maish, Chair of Boardwalk Vision

Membership News

Members make a difference.

Welcome new Lifetime Member, Susan Hauze!

Thanks to our lifetime and business members!

Lifetime Preservers

Bruce & Janet Bunch

Lifetime Individual Members

Rita Bleasdale
Warner Blow
Elsie Caldwell
Peter Haffenreffer
Don Harmon
Susan Hauze
Patty Huff
James Nici
Wendy Becker Payton
Ken Shapiro
Carol Vartanian

Lifetime Family Members

Tom & Judy Maish
Noel Nation
Van & Jane Sayler
Glen & Laura Stacell

Business Patrons

North American Canoe Tours
(Ivey House B&B)

Shurr Adventures

Become a Friend of the Fakahatchee
Visit <http://orchidswamp.org/support/memberships/>

Save the date for the FOF Welcome Back LUNCH!

This year the FOF Welcome Back Dinner will be a **LUNCH** scheduled for December 16, 2017 at the Naples Botanical Garden Kapnick Center. More details will be announced to the membership in November in a Special Bulletin.



Stay up to date with the ongoing phenomenal Post Irma clean up efforts by the FOF volunteers by visiting the FOF Facebook page at <http://facebook.com/orchidswamp>

The Friends of Fakahatchee, Inc, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation Citizen Support Organization, provides financial and volunteer support to preserve the unique ecology and cultural heritage of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park and to educate the public about its importance. The Fakahatchee is the largest cypress strand in the world and the deepest slough in the greater Everglades.



The Ghost Writer, named after the endangered Ghost Orchid which blooms in the Preserve, is currently edited by Next Steps Collective, LLC, which also manages the [Orchidswamp.org](http://orchidswamp.org) website. Contributions to Ghost Writer that relate directly to the business and purpose of the Friends of Fakahatchee, Inc. are welcome. Please write news@orchidswamp.org, subject line:

Ghostwriter.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR THE FRIENDS OF FAKAHATCHEE, A FLORIDA-BASED NONPROFIT CORPORATION (REGISTRATION NO. CH9223), MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE OR VISITING THEIR WEBSITE HERE (<https://csapp.800helpfla.com/cspublicapp/giftgiversquery/giftgiversquery.aspx>). REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.