



# The Ghost Writer

Newsletter of the Friends of Fakahatchee

The Ghost Writer – October 2018

## President's Message

by Patrick Higgins



It's only just over a year since the Fakahatchee and SW Florida were ripped by Hurricane Irma. We were still experiencing its lingering effects in the form of persistent red tide until Hurricane Michael swept by. Modeling shows that had Irma's windspeed matched Michael's (20% greater), the result would be 3 times the destruction. It's hard to imagine when we think back to what it was like for us 13 months ago.

Sadly, we must now think of our fellow Floridians in the Panhandle. At the time of writing this column we still don't know the full extent of Michael's devastation, but death tolls are rising daily. What can you do for people for whom there are no houses to which to restore power? In all, 28 of our State Parks were closed by Michael; many others have stepped up to provide storm assistance for evacuees in the form of free dry camping for self-contained rigs. Our park is sending up three rangers to help with trail clearing and disaster relief efforts. No doubt they'll have an interesting report on their return.

With sustained winds of 155 mph and a central pressure of 919 mb, Michael is the most powerful storm to have ever hit the region. Just two other Atlantic storms have ever exceeded its force: 1935's Labor Day storm with 185 mph winds that savaged a 40-mile-wide stretch of the Florida Keys and wiped out the over-the-seas railway, and 1969's Camille whose 175 mph winds produced a peak storm surge of 24 feet, killing hundreds in coastal Mississippi.

We have to face the fact that these recording-breaking weather events are the new norm. We are entering an age of extremes. Rainfall events like Harvey and Florence are no coincidence. We must ask ourselves with sea level rise will there even be a Fakahatchee or Everglades by the end of the century?

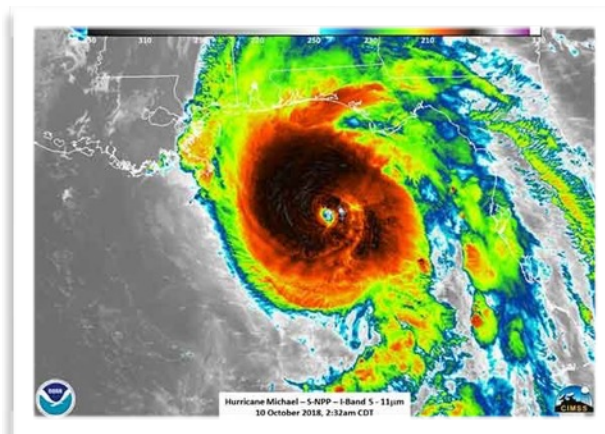
Buried by news of Michael's onslaught was the latest IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report on global warming. It was published just as Michael went through its third intensification in the Gulf. It says we now have only 12 years to stem catastrophic climate change and warns we must make "rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society".

Yet the US is rolling back the previous administration's targets for cutting emissions, trying to revive the polluting coal industry and withdrawing from the Paris Agreement. The latest report says we will reach the crucial threshold of 2.7° F (1.5° C) above pre-industrial levels as soon as 2030, "precipitating the risk of extreme drought, wildfires, floods and food shortages for hundreds of millions of people". This is half a degree centigrade lower than the previous threshold scientists considered would avoid the most severe effects of climate change.

And now our bad example is potentially going to be followed by Brazil – guardians of the Earth's lungs: The Amazon. The victor in first round of their presidential elections, held on the very same day as the publication of the new IPCC report, has threatened action similar to that of the US. This includes withdrawing from the Paris Accord, the closure of Brazil's environment protection agencies, doing away with the legislative protections for environmental reserves and opening up vast swathes of the Amazon for development and mineral extraction – sound familiar? While we focus on immediate assistance for the Panhandle we must not lose sight of the big picture.

It may only be an increase of 0.3 to 0.5° F per decade, but over Earth's 196.9 million square mile surface area, that's a lot of extra energy going into our climate system. You don't have to be a scientist to know if you heat water it expands and if you heat ice it melts! Every increase in global temperature increases the risk of long-lasting effects such as the loss of complete ecosystems. The clock is ticking, and time is running out before change becomes irreversible.

*Patrick Higgins*



## Notification to the membership of a proposed amendment to the By-laws



At the November 18, 2018 Board of Directors meeting the following amendment to Article VII, Section 15 of the by-laws will be on the agenda: "All Members of the Board, Officers and Employees shall be bound by and comply with all Conflict of Interest Policies promulgated by the Board."

Any member of the corporation desiring to submit comments for consideration by the Board regarding any proposed amendment of the By-Laws may do so by forwarding such comments to the Secretary of the Corporation via email at [FOF\\_90@hotmail.com](mailto:FOF_90@hotmail.com) or by U.S. mail at FOF PO Box 35, Everglades City, FL 34139.

Any such comments must be received by the Secretary at least 72 hours prior to the Board meeting at which the proposed amendment(s) will be voted on by the Board. The Secretary shall ensure that Board Members receive copies of any such comments prior to voting upon any amendment of the By-Laws.

## Executive Director's Report

Who ever said summer days were lazy days was not involved with the Friends of Fakahatchee. It was such a busy summer that before I noticed we slipped into fall! Let me begin by thanking all the volunteers who answered my call to make the FOF 2018-2019 tour program possible: Patrick Higgins, John Kaiser, Glen Stacell, Dee Leonard, Don Leonard, Jim Winger, Tom Maish, Tom DeFosses, and Dave Boesche.

Dave is also pursuing his Master Naturalist classes in November and December in addition to volunteering as the driver for numerous tram tours and making time to rove the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk sharing his enthusiasm about the Fakahatchee with our visitors – I think he has what we call the Faka-habit!

I also want to remember Sam Peters, who might be able to conduct a few swamp walks this season. This is significant news because it means his lady, Cynthia Peters, is holding cancer at bay as we continue to send our prayers her way. Cynthia served as a valued Board member in 2011.

As the holiday season will soon be knocking on our shopping list, it's a fact that every year more people shop on-line for the holidays. I want to remind all our members who shop on-line to shop at [www.AMAZONSMILE.com](http://www.AMAZONSMILE.com) so the FOF receives a donation based on your purchase. It's free money that doesn't cost a dime to the shopper. Since 2016 the FOF has received \$266.00 from AmazonSmile, funds that we use to support our Park.

If you haven't yet opened your free AmazonSmile account, please take a few minutes before you get caught in the hectic holiday season. Visit <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-3511352>, then choose the Friends of Fakahatchee as your charity to receive the donations from your purchases. This works for your shopping all year round, and when more FOF members join in the donation parade, we'll see more money for our Park. Thank you!



*by Francine Stevens  
Executive Director, Friends of*



### Important Reminder

As of November 1, 2018 all commercial operator's conducting any tours or commercial activities within the boundaries of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, including on the East River, must have entered into an Independent Subcontractor Agreement with FOF and display an FOF issued permit badge on their vehicle windshield or face FWC enforcement.

For more information about the Concessionaire Program, see <http://orchidswamp.org/concessionaire-program/>



## News from the Strand

**Ready? Set! Go!**  
**Get your FOF Guided Tour tickets now!**



The race is on to get your tickets for the 2018-2019 FOF guided tour program! We've received several calls for the anticipated [Moonlit Tram Tours](#). The first tour scheduled for October 24th sold out quickly! The following link leads to our entire tours list – <https://tinyurl.com/FOFevents> . Please share this news with all your friends.

**No more access from Picayune Forest**



It is official! There is no longer access to the Fakahatchee from the Picayune Forest now that it's gated. *Photo at boundary by Dino Barone.*



As featured on the [FOF Facebook page](#) we're delighted to see Park Biologist Mike Owen back in his favorite 'office', even if he was finding invasive climbing fern. Park Ranger Guy DiGiovanni happily accompanied him and located some possible panther shredding. *Photos courtesy of Guy DiGiovanni.*

## Membership News

### 20th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon tickets now on sale

Join us for the Friends of Fakahatchee's 20th Anniversary on Friday, December 7 with a luncheon in Everglades City. Our guests of honor are Director of State Parks Eric Draper and Environmentalist Franklin Adams. We will also honor the FOF founders and all FOF Presidents.

All FOF Past-Presidents received a personal invitation and we hope that most will attend this special milestone event. We are missing contact information for the first FOF President Roger Dykstra and fifth President Lee Russel. If anyone out there can help please call Francine Stevens, Executive Director, at 239-695-1023. We look forward to going down memory lane with all who have paved the way since 1998. Going forward, the future looks good! We will have a few silent auction items so bring your check book!



Luncheon tickets for members of the Friends of Fakahatchee are \$20.00 each. Non-members are welcomed at \$45.00 per person, which includes a one year membership for each reservation. Non-member reservations are available by telephone only at (239) 695-1023.

Members, get your tickets now by copying and pasting this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/friends-of-fakahatchee-20th-anniversary-celebration-luncheon-tickets-51560049496>.

Tickets are also available through our website ([orchidswamp.org](http://orchidswamp.org)) [event page](#).

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### Does your employer have a “Matching Gift” program?

Several of our members have taken advantage of their employer's matching program (General Electric, Exxon Mobil) for donations to not-for-profit organizations by sending us the “matching” form. We do the rest – it's that easy! We have revised our Membership Form with a reminder.

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

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### Annual Fund appeal to build the Pole Barn continues

You can still donate to the Pole Barn Project which will protect the FOF and Park equipment and vehicles. Give via PayPal through our website at <http://orchidswamp.org/>. If you prefer to mail a check, download the 2018 ANNUAL FUND APPEAL FOR POLE BARN form at <http://orchidswamp.org/support/>. Either way, many thanks for your ongoing support of the Park!



#### Ruggedly beautiful place to bike or hike

*The website says that, “the emphasis at Fakahatchee is on the preservation of its natural character” and they’ve done a fantastic job of that. This is wild Florida at its finest and it’s amazing.*

– Cabopc, Ft. Myers, Florida



#### Follow us on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/orchidswamp>

#### Our mailing address is:

Friends of Fakahatchee, Inc.

PO Box 35, Everglades City, FL 34139z

Contact the Friends of Fakahatchee at [FOF90@hotmail.com](mailto:FOF90@hotmail.com) or call 239-695-1023.

Miss an issue of the Ghostwriter? Visit the archives at <http://orchidswamp.org/about-fof/the-ghost-writer-archives/>

## Members make a difference.

Welcome to our new members Genevieve Block and John & Camille Sykes!  
We now have 337 members!  
You are all individually contributing to the mission of the Friends of Fakahatchee. Bravo!

### Lifetime Preservers

Bruce & Janet Bunch

### Lifetime Protectors

Kit & LaRaw Maran

### Lifetime Individual Members

Karen Berkley  
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

### Business Benefactor

Everglades Day Safari



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 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](mailto: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.

### Friends of Fakahatchee Board

President – Patrick Higgins  
Vice President – Glen Stacell  
Secretary – Ken Shapiro  
Treasurer – Scott Geltemeyer  
Chris Gair  
Paul Joslyn  
Donald Leonard  
Tom Maish  
Gayle Norton  
Andrew Tyler  
Stacy Wolfe  
Executive Director – Francine Stevens