



President and Executive Director's Letter



In the May newsletter we told you that DEP Bureau of Design and Construction (BDC) was waiting for a last permit from the Army Corp of Engineers to send out the invitation for bids for the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk Expansion Project. Finally we can confirm BDC received the permit and we have already seen the [“Notice of Invitation for Bids”](#) posted on the internet.

A mandatory pre-bid meeting with DEP took place on September 25th. The due date for bids submittal is October 15th. When construction will actually start is unknown at this time.

Special Fundraising Event January 16, 2020. Well-known Naples Artist [Paul Arsenault](#) is no stranger to the Fakahatchee. He's painted knee deep in water in the swamp, and has now offered to donate an original painting to raise funds for the FOF. On top of that, Paul will hold an event at his Banyan Arts Gallery on 3rd Street in Naples. This event is planned for Thursday, January 16, 6:00 PM to 8 PM.

As part of the event we will be honoring Laverne Gaynor Norris. Her father, Lester Norris, bought 640 acres in 1957 to prevent it from being logged. That tract of land is known to all of us as the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk. This fundraising event will give us the opportunity to express our gratitude to Mrs. Gaynor and celebrate her father's vision and generous donation of the land and Boardwalk to the State Park Service. We hope you can join us for this event to help realize the dream of the Boardwalk Expansion project.

The FOF tours that run November thru mid-April are now posted for ticketing. The first two Moonlit Tours are already sold out and the third almost sold out. We want to thank all our volunteers, guides and assistants, who have made a commitment to donate their time and skills to make the FOF tours program possible: Andrew Tyler, John Kaiser, Tom DesFosses, Patrick Higgins, Tom Maish, Don & Dee Leonard, Sam Peters, Jim Winger, Dave & Patti Boesche, Rita Bauer, Howard Lubel, Ursula Dubrick and Evelyn Garcia. Last but not least, thanks to our Public Relations Guru Bruce Bunch for his press releases to promote the tours.



– *Glen Stacell and Francine Stevens*

Tickets for FOF Tours on sale now

Tickets for the ever popular FOF Tours are selling fast – two Moonlit Tours are already sold out! Visit our online Adventure Store at <http://orchidswamp.org/adventure-store/> to purchase yours while there are still many dates to choose from.

Remember, Tour tickets make great gifts!



Mark your calendar for two special events

The **FOF Welcome Back Luncheon** will be held on **Saturday, December 14**, at the Naples Botanical Garden.

Naples Artist Paul Arsenault is sponsoring a FOF fundraiser on Thursday, January 16, 2020 from 6 to 8 PM at the [Arsenault Studio & Banyan Arts Gallery](http://www.arsenaultgallery.com/about.html) (<http://www.arsenaultgallery.com/about.html>) in Naples.

Additional details about both these events will be available in October.



Dates set for two volunteer work days



October 19 – clean-up at the North end lakes.

November 16 – improvements to the East Main trail parking area.

The workdays for groups of volunteers will be project-oriented. Each workday will begin at 8:30 AM, and volunteers are not required to work for an entire day.

To register (and for details), please e-mail Park Service Specialist Michael Duey at michael.duey@FloridaDEP.gov or call the Park Office at 239-695-4593.

You too can volunteer your time and talents! See how.

<http://orchidswamp.org/support/how-to-volunteer/>

News from the Strand

FOF at the Rookery Bay Environmental Center



President Glen Stacell and Exec Dir. Francine Stevens participated in the "Friends Supporting Your Back Yard" event at the Rookery Bay Environmental Center. Seventy-five people attended, and many stopped by the FOF table to learn how our Friends organization supports our Park.

Park staff replenishes gravel at two locations



Park staff spread several truck-loads of rock at the East River launch site and along the shoulder of US 41. Those who walk, launch, or park will benefit from the additional gravel at both areas. Well done, guys!

Typical Faka-Hacker Summer Weekend

Fearless FAKA-hackers, Paul Joslyn, Howard Lubel and Dino Barone working with Park Service Specialist Steven Bass, were cutting paths off of trams to go after large Brazilian pepper trees that have established themselves in some difficult areas. We would chainsaw down the Brazilian pepper trees then spray the stump to kill it.



Weed wacked the parking area around gate 7.



Sprayed east main for Caesar weed, made it to the Bailey Bridge trench



Around 2 PM, was advised by a hiker of a large cypress tree that had fallen across South main, about 50 yards south of the gate.



I headed to south main to handle. Around 3:45 PM a storm was rolling through south main, with winds, cold down drafts and lightning, so I took that as a sign it was time to leave.

I love my volunteering job in the Fak.
– Dino Barone

Membership News

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.

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.

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

Members make a difference.

Welcome to new members:

Susan Beittel, Sanibel FL; Nancy Collier, Powell Tennessee; Marilyn Garbett, Ft Myers FL; Daniel Kover, Naples FL; Rene Selva, Naples FL. We now have 347 members.

A special welcome to new Lifetime Member, Terry Heap of Delray Beach, FL.

Thanks to our Lifetime members:

Lifetime Preservers

Bruce & Janet Bunch

Lifetime Protectors

Kit & La Raw Maran

Lifetime Family

Members

John and Pauly Kaiser

Tom & Judy Maish

Noel Nation

Van & Jane Sayler

Glen & Laura Stacell

Lifetime Individual Members

Karen J. Berkley

Rita Bleasdale

Warner Blow

Elsie Caldwell

John Elting

Peter Haffenreffer

Don Harmon

Susan Hauze

Terry Heap

Patty Huff

James Nici

Wendy Becker Payton

Ken Shapiro

John Spengler

Carol Vartanian



You can now donate to FOF via your Fidelity Investment account with a Charitable program called the Fidelity Giving Marketplace, the following link will provide you with more information.

https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/?immid=EML_427_1



Stay up to date with what's seen in the Strand on our FOF Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/orchidswamp>

Friends of Fakahatchee Board

- President – Glen Stacell
- Vice President – John Kaiser
- Treasurer – Phil McGuire
- Tom DesFosses
- Paul Joslyn
- Donald Leonard
- Tom Maish
- Andrew Tyler

Ex-Officio

- Bruce Bunch
- Dennis Giardina
- Patrick Higgins
- Ken Shapiro (Secretary)
- Francine Stevens (Executive Director)

Contact the Friends of Fakahatchee at FOF_90@hotmail.com or call 239-695-1023.



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, 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/>)

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

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