



## President and Executive Director's Letter



### Florida Parks 4th National Gold Medal Winner.

It's official! The [Florida State Parks website](#) declared "On Tuesday, September 24, the National Recreation and Parks Association, in partnership with the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, announced Florida State Parks as the 2019 National Gold Medal Winner. This achievement makes Florida the first park system in the nation to win a fourth Gold Medal. Florida previously won the Gold Medal award in 1999, 2005 and 2013." Congratulations to Park staff, all volunteers, members and donors, truly a collective effort and a well-deserved award!

FOF helped celebrate the Florida State parks' gold medal achievement at the Annual Park Managers and CSOs Meeting in Tampa in early November. Shown below, Boardwalk Vision Chair Tom Maish, Executive Director Francine Stephens and President Glen Stacell pose with Parks Director Eric Draper. Citizen Support Organizations play a critical role in operations of Florida State Parks – see the numbers [Statewide](#) and our own [District 4](#) in poster format.

Speaking of awards, [GuideStar](#), the go-to website for donors who want to check on non-profit legitimacy and rating, has given the Friends of Fakahatchee the "Gold Seal of Transparency."

Volunteers are essential to the Park. We want to thank all the volunteers who answered our call in the last newsletter and signed up for the October 19th clean-up at the North end lakes as well as volunteers and other Parks and Preserves staff who helped at Daniels Point. Also a special thank you to volunteers Dino Barone and Paul Joslyn, along with Park Specialist Steven Bass, for taking care of clearing gate 2 just in time for the first sold out Moonlit Tram Tour on October 13.



We welcome [Florida National Parks Association](#) (FNPA) as the latest Sub-contractor to provide visitor services in the Fakahatchee. FNPA is the non-profit partner of the National Park Services providing immersive educational experiences for visitors to Biscayne National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park, Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve.

– Glen Stacell and Francine Stevens

## FOF Welcome Back Luncheon tickets on sale now



[Get your tickets](#) for the Welcome Back Luncheon, Saturday, Dec. 14. The luncheon, catered by Friscos, will be held at noon at the Naples Botanical Garden, and is open to the public. [Tickets are \\$35 and must be purchased by December 12, 2019.](#)

Dennis Giardina, Everglades Region Biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, will speak on "**Restoring Our Fakahatchee Orchids.**"

## Mark your calendar for January FOF fundraiser

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](#) in Naples.

A special bulletin will be sent to the membership about this event.



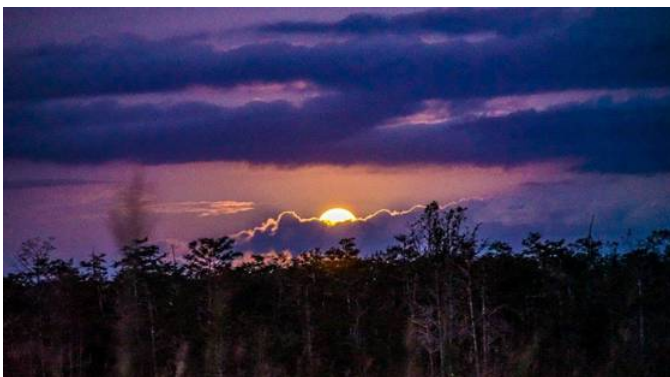
## Tickets for FOF Tours on sale now

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!*



## Ghostrider Tram Tours are not to be missed



Everyone should get a chance to see the moonrise over the Fakahatchee Strand. Volunteers such as Glen Stacell and Andrew Tyler share their wealth of knowledge on Ghostrider Tram Tours. Day or night, Ghostrider Tram Tours are a treat that's hard to beat. Knowledgeable and entertaining volunteer guides share a wealth of information while ride up high with a fabulous view of the Park. [Get your tickets – or purchase some as gifts.](#) Why wait?

*Photos by Phil McGuire.*



## News from the Strand

### October volunteer work day a success



*Volunteers pictured, from left: Andrea Clement, Benoit Clement, Dino Barone, Tim Winschel and Petu Kummala.*

We worked on the Jones Grade Tram trail trimming and clearing. We had 11 people, including me, that came out to help. Not pictured but also there: Bob Kennedy, Jeanne Tucker, Howard Lubel, Debbie Kaprielian and me. The day started out rainy but everyone that showed up had a great time and is looking forward to coming back for the November 16th workday.

To register as a volunteer please e-mail Park Services Specialist [michael.duey@FloridaDEP.gov](mailto:michael.duey@FloridaDEP.gov) or call the Park Office at 239-695-4593.

### Parks staff and volunteers clean up Daniels Point



*The crew removed exotic plants and cleared around historic structures at the Park's southern tip, Daniels Point. From left: Mike Duey, Steven Bass, Justin Tiseth, Matt Kruse, Steve Houseknecht, Steve Bertone, and Jeanine Windsor.*





*Mike Duey takes notes on the condition of Cisterns 1 and 2.*



*Cistern 3 – Still holding water 100 years after construction.*



*Fakahackers – and junior archaeologists – Debbie Kaprielian and Dino Barone.*

From October 21st to the 26th, Park staff and volunteers, along with staff from Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Collier-Seminole State Park and Estero Bay Preserve State Park removed exotic plants and cleared around historic structures at the park's southern tip, Daniels Point.

The site is only accessible by boat and is home to a prehistoric and historic site. The historic site features three cisterns and the remains of a home site. The historic site required many days of chainsaw work to remove trees and root systems that threatened the stability of the structures.

Other staff members spent all week removing exotic plants from the rest of Daniels Point. Staff and volunteers worked hard to help preserve the sites and eliminate destructive exotic plants. It was great to spend some time at a part of the park we don't often get to.

## Fallen swamp maple tackled by trail team

– by Dino Barone

One recent Saturday Park Specialist Steven Bass, Paul Joslyn, and I headed out into the park to do some trail clearing. Approximately 1.5 miles down one of our trams we encountered a large fallen swamp maple. Donning our safety gear, we then methodically began cutting up the tree. After the top heavy section was removed, the bottom section lifted up several feet. We persevered in cutting hefty slices of the tree – and rolling them aside – until it was no longer on the tram. Ah, just another one of the fun days of trail maintenance in the Fakahatchee!



*Park Specialist Steven Bass and Fakahacker Dino Barone confront large downed maple.*





*The bottom section lifted up several feet after the top heavy section was removed.*



*The team cut hefty slices of tree and rolled them off the tram trail.*

**You too can volunteer your time and talents!**  
Visit [orchidswamp.org/http://orchidswamp.org/support/how-to-volunteer/](http://orchidswamp.org/support/how-to-volunteer/)

## **Fakahatchee staff help with prescribed burn at Picayune Strand State Forest**



*Park Services Specialist Steven Bass and Park Ranger Guy DiGiovanni joined with Picayune Strand State Forest Rangers to assist with a prescribed burn on Monday, November 4. The Fakahatchee Strand Preserve shares a border with the Picayune Strand State Forest.*



Steven and Guy were in holding positions on Miller Blvd to make sure the fire didn't jump outside of the planned burn area. This was the first prescribed burn the staff had a chance to participate in so far this season. Guy said, "All went well and we had a great time helping out our neighbors over at Picayune."



## Seen in the Strand

### Panther sighting

by Ursula Dubrick

I wanted to share this photo of a panther that I took at the end of October in Fakahatchee. I was there checking on 2 trail cameras that I have set out and was just getting ready to leave Gate 7, when this panther got on the trail on the other side of the gate. It was amazing to see, and even more amazing that it was noon!

I didn't expect to see one at that time of day. It didn't seem bothered by my presence, as it stopped to look back at me. I took a few photos and the panther just kept walking along the trail. I couldn't tell if it was a male or female. It was a thrilling experience!!





## Rare sighting of entire Park Staff together

*Debbie Kaprelian managed to get this nice shot of Park staff. Individual members of this esteemed group are frequently seen in the Strand, sometimes even two or three together, but capturing the entire flock is a rare encounter Left to right, Front - Guy DiGiovanni, Nichole Ellison, Steve Houseknecht. Back - Steven Bass, Mike Owen, Mike Duey.*



*If you haven't yet opened your free AmazonSmile account, please take a few minutes before you get caught in the hectic holiday season. Click on the [amazonSmile](#) logo, 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!*

## 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.



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](https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/?immid=EML_427_1)



## Membership News

**JOIN THE FRIENDS TODAY!**

<https://orchidswamp.org/support/memberships/>

### Members make a difference.

#### Welcome to new members:

David & Carla Corban, Naples FL; Lissa Roberts, Wilmette IL; Debra Taylor, Townsend Maine; Thomas Trotta, Naples FL. We now have 348 members.

#### 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

### 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.



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