



The Ghost Writer

Newsletter of the Friends of Fakahatchee

The Ghost Writer – December 2019

President and Executive Director's Letter



We were pleasantly surprised last month to see an article about the Moonlit tours in the Friday Nov 22nd Naples Daily News Neapolitan section. Author Dave Osborn had been a guest on the Nov 11 Moonlit tour conducted by Dee and Don Leonard.

Impressed by the tour, Dave wrote and published an article in the Naples Daily News. His article was even picked up by the Ocala Banner and Palm Beach Post. Within 2 hours of the morning publication all moonlit tours were sold out thru April 2020! Francine answered many phone calls and 26 people are on a waiting list. *Bravo to Don and Dee!*



[Read the article online](#) or you can [download a pdf](#) of the article.

The Welcome Back Luncheon on December 14 at Naples Botanical Garden was a real treat for the Board of Directors after their meeting just prior to the event. We all enjoyed a good lunch and visit with our wonderful members. We thoroughly enjoyed our favorite speaker Dennis Giardina's in-depth report on the progress of the Fakahatchee orchid restoration project funded by the Friends of Fakahatchee.

Glen Stacell presented the Mel Finn award to Dick and Edite Hughes, for their 15 years of dedication to keep the Boardwalk in good repair. The Park is the beneficiary of their skills and the generosity of their time through the years. Francine also thanked



the Tours Program team for their selfless commitment to its success and congratulated them on generating \$30,000 in revenue for 2019.

A very special thank you to Bob Becker the Race Director of the annual Everglades Ultra Trail races in the Fakahatchee. His very generous donation of \$4,500 is certainly much appreciated and is being put to good use for some needed park equipment repairs. Mark your calendar for the next Ultra race on March 14, 2020.

In closing another year of Ghostwriter publication, we thank Cindy Liberton and Suzanne Blakeman who have both done a phenomenal job putting together the newsletter in 2019.



Best New Year wishes to all our members, volunteers and generous donors!

– Glen Stacell and Francine Stevens

Tickets still available for Five Faces of Fakahatchee



An exclusive preview of the original paintings by Paul Arsenault for the Five Faces of Fakahatchee fundraising event were unveiled by Tom Maish and Kathy Pepee at the Welcome Back luncheon.



Naples Artist Paul Arsenault has been quite busy painting for the FOF fundraiser on Thursday, January 16, 2020 from 6 to 8 PM at the Arsenault Studio & Banyan Arts Gallery (<http://www.arsenaultgallery.com/>) in Naples. [Tickets to the Gala are available online here.](#) You can also order tickets at <https://orchidswamp.org> by clicking on the Event button, top right.

Paul has been painting knee deep in the Fakahatchee for the Five Faces of Fakahatchee fundraising event.

Farewell to Frank Denninger

Frank Denninger, former member of the FOF Board of Directors, passed away November 23rd. Frank was a tireless advocate for the traditional Gladesmen culture.

[Read a News-Press story about Frank](#) and other Gladesmen, published in 2015.



Tickets for several FOF Tours are still available

Tickets for the ever popular FOF Tours are selling fast – Although ALL Moonlit Tours are sold out, there are still many opportunities for Swamp Walks and Tram Tours. Visit our online Adventure Store to purchase yours while there are still many dates to choose from

News from the Strand

Another great volunteer work day in November

by Mike Duey



More than a dozen volunteers joined Park staff to work on widening and clearing the East Main parking area and install picnic tables, along with clearing on Janes Scenic Drive, East Main, and entrances to other trams. Many thanks to everyone for all your help!



On Saturday, November 16th, Park staff and volunteers worked to widen and clear the East Main parking area and install picnic tables. Volunteers also cleared on Janes Scenic Drive, East Main, and the entrances to some of the lesser used trams.



Thank you to everyone for all your help! Virginia and Andy Skok, Andrea and Ben Clement, Janet Hildenbrand, Alex Suleki, Michael Brown, Terry Heaps, Larry Kruhm, Debra Taylor, Rita and Eric Bauer. Howard Lubel, Dino Barone, Guy DiGiovanni. Steve Houseknecht, Nikki Ellison, Debbie Kaprielian. All enjoyed lunch funded by the FOF.

You can register as a volunteer! Please call Park Services Specialist Mike Duey at the Park Office at 239-695-4593 or email him at michael.duey@FloridaDEP.gov.

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/)

Howard Lubel leads a private swamp walk

"Thank you doesn't seem like enough, but for the moment, it's what I've got. The pictures are lovely. The day was magical indeed! Certainly one of my best days ever."

Regards, thanks, and best wishes for great holidays and I hope to share the swamp with you all again."

– Mark and Ardes



Schedule your private swamp walk today!

A Friends of Fakahatchee (FOF) private tour can be the highlight of the season for your community or organization. To arrange an exclusive private swamp walk, tram tour or board walk tour for your group, please email the FOF Executive Director, Francine Stevens at fof_90@hotmail.com.

Tis the season for a friendly swamp walk

Park Biologist Mike Owen, Carol Vartanian, and her friends Vivianne and Maxine pose for a Swamp Walk portrait.

FOF Lifetime member Carol Vartanian organized a private swamp walk with her friends and favorite biologist Mike Owen. The ladies raved about their experience!



Seen in the Strand

Seen during a Swamp Walk

The Space Coast Master Naturalists enjoyed a Swamp Walk with Mike Owen in November. Rita Bauer photographed the group and several orchids, shown below.



Clearing sky creates dramatic image

Hi Francine,

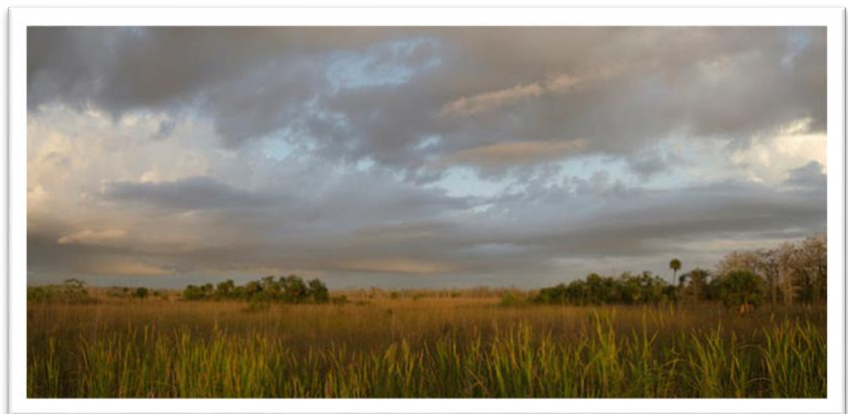
Last week I was in the neighborhood and decided to take a hike out at Gate 7. I had lunch at the picnic table, then continued on, past the old homestead "ruins" on the north side of the trail and beyond.

I wound up getting caught in a brief storm, but it was a blessing in disguise, as the clearing sky made for a dramatic image as I drove back through the prairie. I sat for a while, waiting for the light to change before capturing the landscape, as I often do with my photography.

I couldn't think of a more beautiful place to be that evening in South Florida. Anyway, attached is an image from that day. Actually it is two separate images blended in Photoshop.

*We always love our adventures in the Strand!
Hope to be back soon!*

– John Hayes, New York



Like John Hayes, we can't think of a more beautiful place to be in South Florida than the Fakahatchee Strand.

Membership News

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	Lifetime Individual Members
Bruce & Janet Bunch	Karen J. Berkley
Lifetime Protectors	Rita Bleasdale
Kit & La Raw Maran	Warner Blow
	Elsie Caldwell
Lifetime Family Members	John Elting
John and Pauly Kaiser	Peter Haffenreffer
Tom & Judy Maish	Don Harmon
Noel Nation	Susan Hauze
Van & Jane Saylor	Terry Heap
Glen & Laura Stacell	Patty Huff
	James Nici
	Wendy Becker Payton
	Ken Shapiro
	John Spengler
	Carol Vartanian

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.

November – December Sightings Reported at Visitors Office

Date	Observation
21-Nov	Everglades Mink 2.6 miles
22-Nov	6 Alligators, Turtle, Cottonmouth
23-Nov	Osceola Turkey, Wood Stork, 2 Alligators
24-Nov	Marsh Rabbit at VC, Ruby Crowned Night Heron, Cottonmouth
26-Nov	Everglades Mink on West Main
27-Nov	6 Peregrine Falcon family, Green anoles, Brown anoles
28-Nov	Panther East Main, Panther Gate 2, Roseate Spoonbill, 20 Woodstorks, 20 Great Blue Herons
29-Nov	Alligator stalking bird, Baby alligator with mother sunning, Everglades Mink, 2 Great Horned Owls
30-Nov	Cloudless Sulphur, Zebra Longwing, White Peacock butterflies; Great Blue Heron
1-Dec	Red Shouldered Hawk
2-Dec	3 Turtles, 1 Duck, 2 Alligators, Egrets, Great Blue Heron
3-Dec	Opossum, 9 Alligators, Everglades Mink ~ 3 miles JSD, Butterflies, Dragonflies, Crow, Squirrel, Panther on JSD ~ Gate 15, 2 Turkeys Gate 15, Everglades Mink ~ Gate 12
4-Dec	9:50 am Panther at BCB seen by Don Leonard (Volunteer)
5-Dec	Alligator
6-Dec	Large Alligator ~ Ballard Cabin boardwalk, numerous Herons, egrets, turtle, butterfly, many crows & vultures
7-Dec	1 Bald Eagle & 2 Ospreys ~ BCB, Cottonmouth & 3 Deer on JSD, Deer at 1.5 miles, 2 Barred Owls mile 2, Cottonmouth mile 0
8-Dec	Monarch & Zebra Longwing butterflies, Ballard Cabin: 4 alligators by outhouse & 1 on porch
12-Dec	Tram Tour: Baby alligator, many Great Blue Herons, many white egrets, 3 Hawks (1 with lunch in talons), baby alligator, white Ibis, hawk,
14-Dec	White tailed deer, Hawk, Egrets, Great Blue Herons, Black Bear ~ 5 miles
16-Dec	Red Shouldered Hawks, Egrets, many Great Blue Herons, alligators



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



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!



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/>.

Our mailing address is:
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Contact the Friends of Fakahatchee at
FOF_90@hotmail.com or call 239-695-1023.