



For updates on the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, please visit the [website](https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park) at <https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park>

President and Executive Director's Letter

Member Kevin Sheets of Naples passed away on August 10, 2020. Susan Bay, his longtime companion, friend and business partner told us Kevin visited the Fakahatchee regularly and even completed a book of his photography in the Preserve.

Although we did not know Kevin personally, we mention this because we received generous donations in Kevin's memory. Susan became a member and enrolled the Bay Design Store as a Business Patron. Kevin was Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at Bay Design Store in Naples. We are touched by the generosity of Kevin's family and friends.



The pandemic continues to affect everyone's personal life, and impacts the Friends' capacity to support the Park. The Boardwalk is still closed with no sign it will re-open anytime soon. We are working with the Park Manager to determine how the FOF tours program can safely proceed while following all CDC guidelines. The tours usually start in November, however we anticipate that tours will not be offered until January 2021, pending Park Manager approval. To provide social distancing, tram capacity will be capped at 10 people instead of 20. No decisions have been made for swamp walks yet.

We all know that this area is relatively quiet from May thru October, then the winter visitors start returning, reaching a peak in Jan, Feb and March. How this increase in population will affect the pandemic infection rate locally is our concern as we strive to safeguard the health of our volunteers, Park staff and visitors. We will keep an optimistic outlook while preparing for adversity.

On-line shopping will certainly be how most people will shop for the coming Holiday Season, and so we remind everyone to register at [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and choose the Friends of Fakahatchee as your charity. Amazon Smile will donate 0.5 % of the cost of your purchases to the Friends of Fakahatchee.

– Glen Stacell and Francine Stevens

Seen in the Strand

Sat Sept 5, 2020.....Mud Tram

On the ground report by Dino Barone

Mike Duey and I had just finished chainsawing some Brazilian Peppers on Mud Tram around 8:40-ish AM. I no sooner started up the UTV, and this adult panther, maybe 100 feet in front of us, casually strolled onto mud tram from the north ditch, saw Mike and I, then laid down across the tram looking at us.

After a few moments I turned off the UTV to enjoy this magnificent sight in front of us. The panther appeared to be very calm, so I slowly got out of the UTV, heading to the back of the vehicle where my backpack with my point and shot camera was. Got back into the UTV and began to take a few shots. Mike and I then decided to get out of the UTV to slowly walk a bit closer, hoping for a clearer unobstructed view. Respecting this apex predator, we kept our distance, while observing the calm demeanor of this panther.



After a few more moments of panther calmly stood up and began to walk west, away from us. The hind legs appeared to be normal. After a few more strides to the west, the panther found an opening and walked south off of mud tram, and was soundlessly gone.

More sightings in September

by Dino Barone



The Owl was sitting on a branch, just off the side of East main tram.



The Gator was in the ditch, hiding in the hydrilla. Photos by Dino Barone.



Caesar-weed was in our way. The park spends many hours yearly endeavoring to control this highly invasive plant, which can grow up to 7 feet tall, and has a purple flower the insects so enjoy

Jay Staton catches a cat nap in the Fakahatchee



While endangered Florida panthers are usually nocturnal hunters, sometimes they need to just stop and take a short 'cat nap'. This beautiful female Florida panther decided to stop directly in front of Jay Staton's DSLR camera trap and take a 15 minute nap. The flashes from his camera didn't seem to bother her. You can see more like this on the Friends of Fakatchee's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/orchidswamp where we follow Jay's work.

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.



If you haven’t yet opened your free AmazonSmile account, please take a few minutes to do so. Go to smile.amazon.com, 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!



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>



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:

Friends of Fakahatchee, Inc. PO Box 35
Everglades City, FL 34139

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

Members make a difference.

Welcome to new members:

Susan Bay, Naples FL; Jeremy Morace, Fort Myers FL; Julie Sheperd, Naples FL; Chuck Thompson, Placida FL. Membership now totals 357.

Special thanks and welcome to Bay Design Store of Naples FL, our new Business Patron Member.

Continued thanks to our Lifetime and Business Patron Members:

Lifetime Preservers

Bruce & Janet Bunch

Lifetime Protectors

Kit & La Raw Maran

Lifetime Family Members

Richard & Sue Jagels

John and Pauly Kaiser

Tom & Judy Maish

Noel Nation

Jim & Peggy Phillips

Van & Jane Saylor

Glen & Laura Stacell

Lifetime Family Members

Richard & Sue Jagels

Business Patron Member

Bay Design Store

Lifetime Individual Members

Karen J. Berkley

Rita Bleasdale

Warner Blow

Elsie Caldwell

John Elting

Carolyn Ginther

Peter Haffenreffer

Don Harmon

Susan Hauze

Terry Heaps

Patty Huff

James Nici

Randy Parks

Mark Perro

Wendy Becker Payton

Ken Shapiro

John Spengler

Carol Vartanian

Board Members

President – Glen Stacell

Vice President – Andrew Tyler

Secretary – Ken Shapiro

Treasurer – Phil McGuire

Tom DesFosses

John Kaiser

Don Leonard

Ex-Officio

Bruce Bunch

Dennis Giardina

Patrick Higgins

Tom Maish

Francine Stevens (Executive Director)

BOD meeting schedule

October 18, 2020

November 15, 2020

December 12, 2020

January 17, 2021

March 20, 2021

Meetings are scheduled for 10:30 AM

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