



## Annual Meeting lines up FOF Leadership

The Annual Organizational Board Meeting took place as scheduled on March at 11 AM and the Officers were elected by the Board. In addition, Eric Foht, Richard Frannis, Zach Lombardo, Virginia Palmer Skok and Mark Perro were seated to serve their first two year term on the Board. Read the minutes of this meeting at <https://orchidswamp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Annual-Organizational-Meeting-minutes-20-March-2021.pdf>

Keeping with tradition, President Glen Stacell turned over the President Walking stick to elected President Tom Maish.



*New FOF Officers, left to right: Treasurer Phil McGuire, Secretary Glen Stacell, President Tom Maish, Vice President John Kaiser. Photos by Phil McGuire.*

## Executive Director Letter

Glen Stacell served as President for a little over two years, and a good part of his tenure was under challenging circumstances – 2020 was arguably the most challenging year any President has ever encountered!

Fortunately, Glen has served on the Board off and on for a decade and at least had enough experience with the business of the Board to support the park in many ways. He certainly did, as we say, “roll with the punches,” managing adverse circumstances and delayed projects, on top of adjusting to major changes with Park staff. All told, the situation demanded even more of his time than is usually expected of a President.

In my role as Executive Director I work closely with the President, and I am grateful for Glen’s steady and unwavering loyalty to the FOF mission. Glen will continue to be involved with the Board in his role as Secretary.

– Francine Stevens



## News from the Strand

### Installation of Wayfinding kiosks now complete

Visitors are already taking notice of this improvement at the East River, Jones Grade, West Main trail gate #7 and East Main trail gate #12. One more kiosk will be installed next to the visitor center this summer.



Tom Maish, Glen Stacell, and Park Manager Allen Murray by one of the completed kiosks.



Completed kiosks at (left) East Main Trail Gate 12 and (right) West Main Trail Gate 7.





*The Wayfinding kiosks at (left) East River and (right) Jones Grade are already in use.*

## Dave's Boardwalk Report

By Dave Boesche



Hi, Everyone. I have taken several weeks' leave to replace some body parts and therefore been in the hospital, then with home health. But I do want to share some of my recent visits to the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk.

Let's start at the beginning (no, this is not the Von Trapp's). The parking lot – not much change there, but the gravel isn't as loose as usual so I can't track which gator is going in and out of which lake. I especially like showing the kids the tail dragging marks; to be totally honest, I like them as well. But we seem to have only one in the front area, a female gator. She is still looking good, active, enjoying a fish lunch every once in a while and posing for numerous pictures. Wouldn't it be fun to discover where and in how many e-mails she has been featured?

As we walk in we find empty pamphlet/information holders. I mention this because I volunteered to re-fill them every week. This is keeping two ladies happy. Our Executive Director, Francine, because someone is actually doing this activity, and Patti (my understanding wife) because my collection of flyers/folders and general information is moving OUT of our garage and into the hands of others. Enjoy them when you can.

I always enjoy the gravel walk down to the boardwalk. Let's see if we do the same things.

1. Stop at each opening to view the water for whatever critter may be on display. Gator, bird, fish, snake, turtle, squirrel or raccoon, you just never know.
2. Stop and read the information signs and pictures of more critters. The pictures are great and always make me think of how many swamp things I may see this day.

3. Ponder the gravel path. Have you ever really looked at it? It's not gravel! Actually it is the basis of how the Everglades work!

This is more or less solid limestone, up to 2,000 ft deep in places. At one time it actually was the bottom of a sea full of fish, shells and plants that all compacted over many, many years to form this layer. There are passage ways thru this limestone so that the fresh rain water can seep thru and down into our aquifer. That is what cleans, filters and purifies our drinking water. Eat your heart out Culligan Man; Mother Nature had this idea first!

Stop here next time and see how many fossils you can find. Better yet, for the grand kids – or an adult male that acts like a grand kid (me) – take a look at the posts installed for the chickee hut right before the boardwalk. When they drilled the holes a bunch of this mix came out. All kinds of fossils can be found, and these are older than dinosaurs!

Now we are starting on the actual boardwalk. The original boardwalk was built by Lester Norris in 1957 shortly after he quickly purchased the 640 acres to prevent it from being logged. He built the Boardwalk and later donated the land to the state. That was a lot of feet, paws, claws and snake skins ago.

Many times, being the first person on the boardwalk at break of day is a mixed bag of..... thrills. What has been there overnight? What evidence is left behind? What might still be there, having a lazy start to the day? I usually have my ears, eyes, camera and whistle at the ready. Just have to keep their purpose in mind!

Please note on your right there is a now-dead cypress tree. There is no bark! The 160 MPH winds and rain from hurricane Irma's 2017 visit turned into a powerful pressure washer and removed the bark. We actually lost very few Cypress trees in that storm. They have evolved several defenses for hurricanes. That will be a lesson for another time.

As you walk along, within your first 50 yards on your left is a nice sign. Yes, we again have the Bald Eagle family, and the two babies are doing well. One cool day I could only see Mom's head above the nest. She likely had been keeping the eggs warm all night, but no Dad was in my field of vision. All of a sudden she lets out her best screech/twitter and, sure enough, Dad landed on a branch. Some vocals back and forth and he leaves again. Within 15 to 20 minutes he returns with what appeared to be a mouse or rat. Oh boy, the initial conversation was nothing to this tirade. She was NOT happy with lunch! He left again to return with a nice fish and an apology. She certainly liked the fish more than the mouse. Peace returns to the family.

I tried to take a picture of the eagle family less than two weeks ago, but I was too slow on the draw, so you have to imagine. Picture if you will, both parents perched above the nest on the dead branch. They were twittering back and forth which is a very pleasant sound, as they both looked at the now hatched chicks. I could just picture them saying, "They are so beautiful when they are asleep." Being a parent myself, there will be some times when the kids are not asleep and not so beautiful. But still and always special!

Sorry to say my new shoulder has had enough of typing. Time to apply my new friend the ice bag. So, I bid you goodbye and I hope to pick this up again next issue. Keep me posted with what you find at the boardwalk..

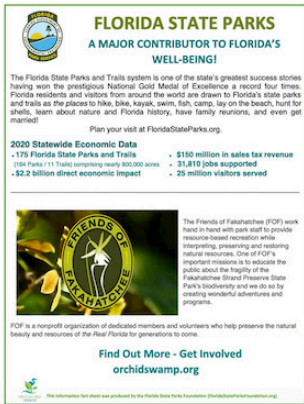




## Don't Feed the Wildlife!

On East Main trail near the historic cabin, alligators demonstrating aggressive behavior had to be removed by a licensed contractor paid by Fish And Wildlife Conservation. Such behavior indicates that they have been fed by visitors. Park staff installed a sign to remind visitors it is illegal to feed wildlife.

Photo by Park Staff



The Friends of Florida Parks Foundation published an Impact Report for all Florida State Parks and Trails. (<https://floridastateparksfoundation.org/2020-Impact>). As you review these statistics keep in mind the pandemic affected both visitation and economic impact.



Stay up to date with what's seen in the Strand on our [FOF Facebook page](#).



## Seen in the Strand

### *Life is good in the Fakahatchee*

*Photos by Phil McGuire*



*South Florida is one of only two spots in the US where you can see a Ruddy Daggerwing.*



*Gray Catbirds are relatives of mockingbirds and thrashers. Guess what they sound like?*



*It's always exciting to see our national bird, the Bald Eagle.*



*Barred Owls do not migrate and are territorial. Have you seen one in your neighborhood?*

**Our thanks to Park visitors Mario and Debbie Marconi** for sharing their photo of these two bucks. Deer are beautiful and important to the Fakahatchee. To meet more residents of the Strand, please visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/orchidswamp> where visitors often share images of plants and animals they encounter. Better yet, come visit and come visit and submit your own snapshots!





## 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!



If you haven’t yet opened your free AmazonSmile account, please take a few minutes to do so. Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://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](https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/?immid=EML_427_1)



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 adfter the endangered Ghost Orchid which blooms in the Preserve, is currently edited by Next Steps Collective, LLC, which also manages the [Orchidswamp.org](http://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](http://www.fsa.state.fl.us). REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

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:

7 Dragon media, Naples FL; Elizabeth Blackford, Palm Bay FL; Brian Cotterill, Bokeelia, FL; Laura Gaudette, Gainesville FL; Danielle Green, Naples FL; Elizabeth Lilly, Fort Myers, FL; William Little, Lakeland FL; James Taylor, Naples FL.  
Membership total is 366.

#### Continued Thanks to our Lifetime and Business Patron Members

**Lifetime Preservers**  
Bruce & Janet Bunch

**Lifetime Protectors**  
Kit & La Raw Maran

**Lifetime Family Members**  
Jan Bachrach  
Richard & Sue Jagels  
John and Pauly Kaiser  
Tom & Judy Maish  
Noel Nation  
Jim & Peggy Phillips  
Van & Jane Saylor  
Glen & Laura Stacell

**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-Tom Maish  
Vice President- John Kaiser  
Treasurer- Phil McGuire  
Tom DesFosses  
Eric Foht  
Richard Grannis  
Zach Lombardo  
Virginia Palmer Skok  
Mark Perro

#### EX-Officio

Secretary- Glen Stacell  
Bruce Bunch  
Dennis Giardina  
Andrew Tyler

Executive Director Francine Stevens

#### BOD meeting schedule

##### 2021

April 18  
May 16  
June 20  
July 18  
September 19  
October 17  
November 21  
December 18

##### 2022

January 16  
February 20  
March 19

**MEETINGS are SCHEDULED FOR 10:30 AM**