



President and Executive Director's Letter

After over a decade we can finally announce with assurance that the Boardwalk Expansion construction is afoot! The project was awarded to DEC Contracting Group Inc. out of Fort Myers in February and the official commencement date declared by Collier County was May 10. DEC is already bringing equipment to the site and they will begin by removing the existing asphalt, de-mucking, clearing vegetation, doing all the underground work and bringing tons of fill to prepare the parking site.

The blueprints' details include 58 standard parking spaces, 4 RV/Bus parking spaces, and 3 ADA compliant parking spaces. In addition, there are plans for two resident volunteer RV camping sites and restrooms. A bridge over the canal will connect a boardwalk leading to the Interpretive Pavilion and Green Heron Lake via the current Boardwalk.

The project will be completed in 2022, and we will keep you posted about this significant project in the Fakahatchee!

– *Tom Maish and Francine Stevens*



DEC Contracting Group Inc. equipment at the Boardwalk site. Photo by Phil McGuire.



DEC has already started working at the new parking site. Photo by Francine Stevens.



Corban Architects' rendering of the bridge (left), and the Interpretive Pavilion (right).



*Swamp, a poem by John Elting, Former FOF President, Chair Emeritus Florida Audubon Society, Member of Corkscrew Board of Directors.
– Background image courtesy of Rita Bauer.*



Farewell Cynthia Peters

Cynthia Peters passed away peacefully on March 23. A decade ago Cynthia served on the Board Directors as Chair of the Events Committee. Of the many successful events Cynthia organized, a couple stand out; the 2011 Welcome Back Dinner with very special speaker Nathaniel Reed (former Assistant Secretary of the Interior), and an inspiring Fundraiser Event with environmental cinematographer/director Elam Stoltzfus.

Cynthia devoted countless hours to supporting the mission of the FOF. While serving on the Board she also maintained a demanding, full-time work schedule, traveling all over the world. We send our sincere condolences to her husband Sam Peters, who is one of the Naturalists who conducts the Friends' tours program.

Swamp

*If it's solitude and the sounds of silence
You require*

*Then into the muck and mire
Feel the pull of each step
This is not gravity but years
Of rot and vegetation dead
That pulls at ones boots
Like sheets of lead*

*Quiet can be a deafening roar
Quicken your heart as you explore
A bird, a bear, a panther cat
Catch your breath
What was that?*

*Sharp shadows cool your moistened brow
Pop Ash, pond apple overhead
A canopy of green
To urge you ahead*

*Look an owl and an orchid
Both silent, both still
One for a lifetime
The other until*

*The startling sound of wings unfurled
For a moment your balance,
Your footing is insecure*

*This is a world of alien order
This is a world of new unexpected odor*

*Phosphorous, nitrogen, chemicals combine
To tease your senses, plant your mind
To another point in time.*

*Go forward, turn back, indecision,
For a moment lost, in confusion,
What was my intent
Where, by god, is my cement?*

*But then an awakening occurs
Not all at once, but slowly,
A pull of confidence, omnificent
Of Nature here right in front, behind,
And overhead
Why the dread?*

*Here it is where I am standing
A world not of man
But of a greater hand
Life and death in full review
A pretty good sign of
What's behind and what's ahead*

*Okay, I'm fine, I smile
A joy is sensed
I'm gone for now
But will be back in awhile.*

John Elting

News from the Strand

Mobile observation platform set at Green Heron Lake

The new mobile observation platform was constructed and then installed at Green Heron Lake.

Retired Park Ranger turned volunteer Alan Miller, "designed this mobile observation platform and built it for us with the help of Glen Stacell and our new Ranger Rebecca Thornhill," reports Park Manager Allen Murray.

The Friends funded the cost of the material for the observation platform. Once constructed, it was transported to Green Heron Lake next to the Boardwalk. Nineteen volunteers answered our call for the April 24th Volunteer Day to clear out the overgrown trail leading to the site of the platform.

We send our heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers for their help; Michael Brown and his son Josh, Jeanne Tucker, Jerold Winter and Signe Backus, Benoit Clement, Denise Perry, and Mark Tootle. A special thank you to FOF member Debra Taylor (Chair of the Florida Trail Association (FTA), Alligator Ambler chapter) who rallied five of her FTA members to help: Sherrie Ode, Chris Stinauer, Janet Hildebrand, Annette Marchand, and Robert Reige. And of course, thanks to Glen Stacell.



The new mobile observation platform was constructed and then installed at Green Heron Lake. Many thanks to the FOF Board, Park staff, and volunteers who made this possible. Photo by Debra Taylor.



Left: Glen Stacell and Rebecca Thornhill building the platform. Right: Designer Alan Miller adds finishing touches. Photos by Allen Murray.



Nineteen volunteers, worked to clear out the overgrown trail leading to the site of the platform. Photo by Glen Stacell.



Left: The platform was moved to Green Heron Lake. Photo by Glen Stacell. Right: Glen Stacell helped with the installation. Photo by Debra Taylor.

Volunteer for time and talents!

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

Seen in the Strand

Flying flowers in the Fakahatchee

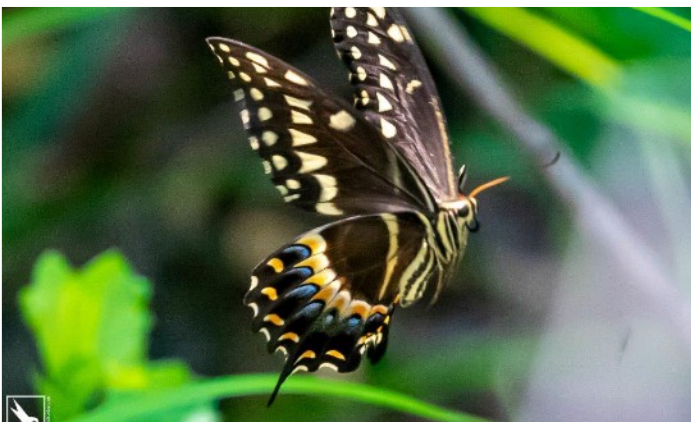
Photos by Phil McGuire



Great Southern White (Ascia monuste): found around salt marshes, beaches, roadsides. Larval host plants are Virginia pepper grass (*Lepidium virginicum*), saltwort (*Batis maritima*), limber caper (*Capparis flexuosa*), and sea rocket (*Cakile lanceolata*).



Julia Heliconian (Dryas iulia): found along forest margins, open woodlands, shrubby sites, gardens, and parks. Larval host plants are corky-stemmed passion flower (*Passiflora suberosa*), many flowered passion flower (*Passiflora multiflora*).



Palamedes Swallowtail (Papilio palamedes): found in wet woods near rivers and broadleaf evergreen swamp forests. Larval host plants are the Laurel family (*Lauraceae*) especially Red Bay (*Persea borbonia*).

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: [Check the State Park Website](https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park) for hours, closures, and other announcements.

<https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park>

Remember, 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



Members generously support the Annual Fund Appeal

We so appreciate our members' warmhearted generosity in donating to the Annual Fund Appeal! Your support is vital to accomplishing our mission. We couldn't do it without you! *Many thanks.*

It's never too late to donate to the Annual Fund.

Go to https://www.paypal.com/donate/?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=ANMDVJDWUDU5RW

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

Membership News



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/>

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.

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](https://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

Members make a difference.

Welcome to new members!

Charles Byrne, Delray Beach FL; Barbara Clark, Naples FL; Rudy Wilms. Membership total is 374.

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 Sayler

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

Secretary – Glen Stacell

Treasurer – Phil McGuire

Tom DesFosses

Eric Foht

Richard Grannis

Zach Lombardo

Virginia Palmer Skok

Mark Perro

Ex-Officio

Bruce Bunch

Dennis Giardina

Glen Stacell

Francine Stevens

(Executive Director)

BOD meeting schedule

June 20, 2021

July 18, 2021

September 19, 2021

October 17, 2021

November 21, 2021

December 18, 2021

2022

January 16, 2022

February 20, 2022

March 19, 2022

Meetings are scheduled for 10:30 AM

Contact the Friends of Fakahatchee at

FOF_90@hotmail.com or call 239-695-1023.