

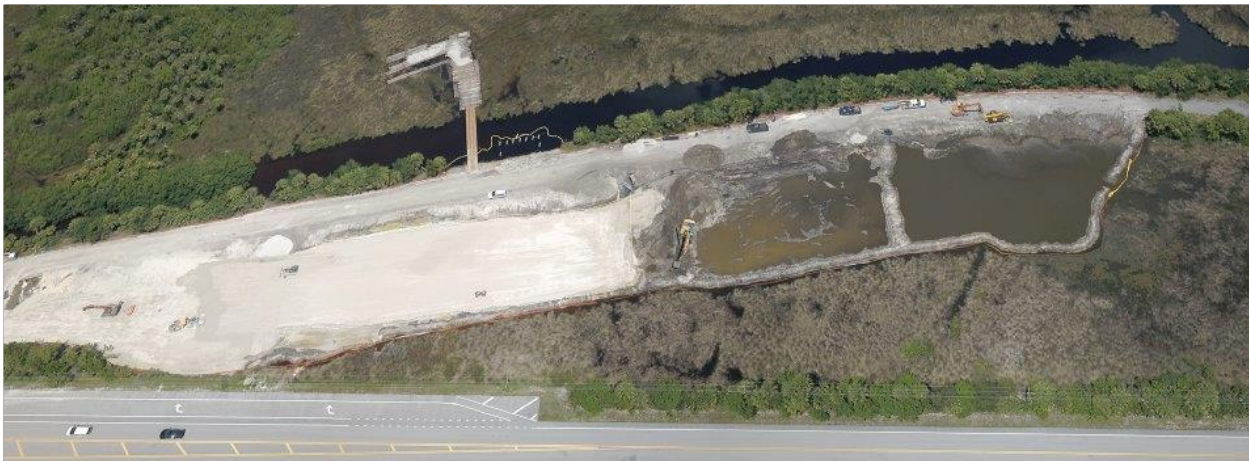


President and Executive Director's Letter

Since our June newsletter we can report that the Boardwalk Expansion project is making good progress and captivating our attention. Much to our surprise, the crucial de-mucking phase of the parking site is quite a lengthy process. With a little bit of research one discovers that de-mucking was necessary to remove years of decomposed matter that created unstable soil. When the muck is removed it is replaced with a compactable fill sand material installed in 12 inches lifts and compacted between each lift. They dug out the muck and as expected the water came up and there is still a parade of trucks bringing in sand. They will be ready to start building the parking site pad when the fill sand is completely compacted.

A temporary bridge was installed to cross over the canal and pictures give us an indication of the future location of the Interpretive Pavilion. We could fill several

pages of the newsletter with the numerous pictures we've received, and we are happy to share quite a few with you of this historic event in the Preserve. Below, an aerial view from Jay Staton gives the big picture.



On a different note, Will McGough, a reporter for CNN Travel magazine, wrote a very good article about the Fakahatchee that we know you will enjoy: [The 'Amazon of North America' could be Florida's best-kept secret](https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park-florida/index.html). (<https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/fakahatchee-strand-preserve-state-park-florida/index.html>).

We close this letter by saluting former FOF President Patrick Higgins who will be reading this newsletter at his new home in the UK. We send our best wishes to Patrick and Martha who moved back to the UK last June for what Patrick called their next adventure. We keep good memories of all the progress we made when Patrick was serving on the Board of Directors.

— Tom Maish and Francine Stevens



FOF tours tickets for the 2021-2022 season will soon go on sale! Check your September Ghostwriter for more information. Tours tickets can sell out quickly, so purchase yours as soon as possible!

Also remember - tickets make great gifts!

News from the Strand

Construction Progress at the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk

by Andrew Taylor, August 16, 2021

Many of you are aware that construction of the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk expansion was approved by Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection earlier this year, and construction has been underway since May.

The project is creating a “buzz” around Collier County, and on August 16th we were pleased to welcome Commissioner Rick Locastro, who represents District 1 in Collier County. The entire Fakahatchee property lies within District 1.

To explain the project and highlight developments to date, the Park Manager Allen Murray joined the Commissioner, Executive Director Francine Stevens and me on a hike of the existing Boardwalk, where Allen explained the plan for the Boardwalk going forward. We also showed off the Chickee Hut, which was erected in 2018 by the Friends, thanks to a generous donation from the Naples Garden Club. From there we took a hike to Green Heron Lake, to examine the mobile



Park Manager Allen Murray and Commissioner Rick Locastro at the Chickee hut adjacent to the start of the existing Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk.



Park Manager Allen Murray (right) and Commissioner Rick Locastro at the site of the future interpretative pavilion, situated east of the existing Big Cypress Bend boardwalk.

viewing platform installed by Allen’s team, as an addition to the existing facility. This lays just a short walk to the east of the existing parking area.

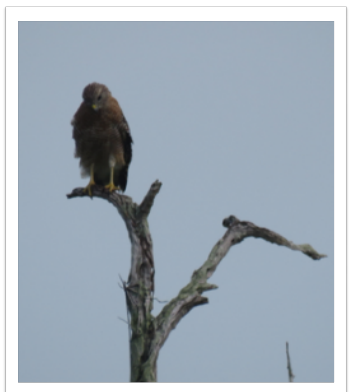
From there, we drove over to the construction area, where the on-site Project Manager walked us to the site of the pending bathroom and the new bridge that will connect the parking lot to the new Interpretative Pavilion. We all gained an appreciation for the complexity of the work involved, and I better understood what an accomplishment this will be when the project comes in on time.

Overall, I believe the visit was collectively beneficial, and the Commissioner offered to assist in helping with the flow of communications between the Park, the construction team and Collier County, where appropriate.

As you can see from the pictures that follow, the work site is exactly that at present, but it is exciting to progress underway. I also appreciated that the wildlife is still abundant around the construction site, and I hope that this is a wonderful omen for the future.



Left to right: Allen Murray (park Manager), Commissioner Rick Locastro (Collier County District 1), Francine Stevens (Executive Director, Friends of Fakahatchee).



A hawk keeping a close eye on the construction of the new visitors' area at Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk.

[illegible]

© Friends of Fakahatchee, all rights reserved.

Seen in the Strand

In the heat of Florida's summer in the Fakahatchee Strand, the natural world continues with life as usual. Fortunate for us, hearty souls visiting the park share what they encounter. Below are some plant and animal highlights. For more, join us for a virtual visit on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/orchidswamp>.



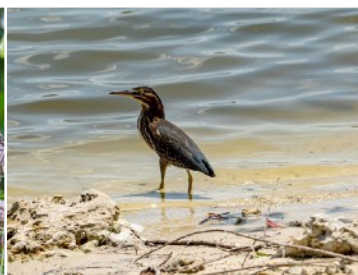
Bears on the Boardwalk - Photo by Richard Grannis



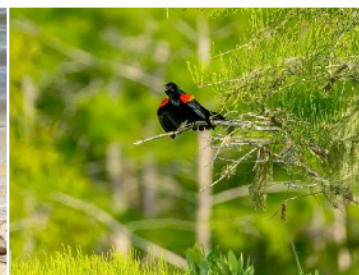
Francine Stevens heard rustling when in the ladies rooms, and three bucks strolled out of the bushes heading for Janes Scenic Drive. These two posed nicely.



Barred Owl - photo by Phil McGuire



Green Heron by Green Heron Lake Shore - Phil McGuire



Red Wing Blackbird - Phil McGuire



White Eyed Vireo at Jones Grade-Phil McGuire



Leafless Beaked Orchid



Pickerelweed



Swamp Rose-gentian

Plant photos by Phil McGuire. A special thanks to Glen Stacell for his help identifying the flowers...he should know them all since he wrote a book in 2009 with Gary Schmelz (A Guide to Native Wildflowers of Southwest Florida).

Membership News

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!

It's never too late to donate to the Annual Fund (<https://bit.ly/381KXzf>).



Many thanks.

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](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, 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/>.

Members make a difference.

Welcome to new members!

Glen Brown, Naples FL; Helen Connelly, River Forest IL; Elli Emmanuel, Fort Myers FL; Theresa Fabiano, Mount Pleasant MI; Jennifer Goen, Fort Myers FL; Thomas Hicky, Lakewood Ranch FL; Elizabeth Howley, Oregon City OR; Timothy Huey, Wiston Salem NC; Valerie Ricordi, Miami FL; Ann Sepe, Marco Island FL; Frank Taylor, Naples FL.

Membership total is 360.

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
Secretary – Glen Stacell

Tom DesFosses
Eric Foht
Richard Grannis
Zach Lombardo
Virginia Palmer Skok
Mark Perro

Ex-Officio

Bruce Bunch
John Eating
Dennis Giardina
Glen Stacell
Andrew Tyler

Francine Stevens (Executive Director)

Our mailing address is:
Friends of Fakahatchee, Inc.
PO Box 35, Everglades City, FL 34139

BOD meeting schedule

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.