



## President and Executive Director's Letter

Since our last newsletter the contractor encountered delays with Collier County Permit office. Finally a permit was issued on August 18 for the Interpretive Pavilion, the permanent bridge over the canal, and the boardwalk from the bridge to the Pavilion. A separate permit was issued on September 8 for the restroom facility in the parking area.

Aerial photos from September 29 by Jay Staton show the progress that has been made in positioning the pilings that will support the foundation of the Pavilion. An additional temporary bridge was installed across the canal, parallel to the first bridge, to increase the carrying capacity for the construction that will take place. (See photos page 2.)

Another VIP visit took place at the Park on September 8. Mrs. Jane Parks and her sons Randy and Ben were guided by Francine to the Boardwalk construction site and up to Janes Scenic Memorial Drive. We consider Mrs. Parks a VIP because of her efforts with Mel Finn to save the Fakahatchee. Fortunately for us, Mrs. Parks kept all her letters and newspaper articles and donated her historical treasures to the Friends for safekeeping. Former Board VP Andrew Tyler spent countless hours digitizing her documents. Beginning with this newsletter we will little by little share Mrs. Parks historical treasures taking us back to the debates in the 1960s about what to do with the Fakahatchee.

An exciting new tour is under development thanks to Phil McGuire, who happens to be an aficionado of astrophotography. This night time tour will take advantage of the Fakahatchee's dark sky to discover the stars and constellations and will be timed to capture a crescent moon with nearby planets.

We close this letter with a special thank you to our fabulous volunteers who once again have committed their time to help launch another FOF Interpretive Tour season: Dave Boesche, Eric Foht, Richard Grannis, John Kaiser, Gordon Saager, Virginia Palmer Skok, Glen Stacell, and Jim Winger.

*– Tom Maish and Francine Stevens*

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## Tickets for Tours are on sale now

The Moonlite Tours are completely sold out for this season! The ticket sales announcement that went out to everyone earlier this month generated a tremendous response. Many thanks to all who are supporting our mission through ticket purchases! Tickets for these great daylight tours are still available, but they also can go quickly.

Remember, they make great gifts for many occasions!

### Morning Ghost Rider Tram Tour - December 2021 to April 2022



An experienced guide leads each 2-1/2 hour tram tour and points out interesting aspects of the Preserve. The tour includes a 15 min. walk down an old logging path to see air plants, a variety of ferns, and seasonally blooming orchids. More info and Morning Tram Tour tickets here: <https://tinyurl.com/uwfxb2tc>.

### Introduction to Swamp Walk with Tram Tour - January to March 2022



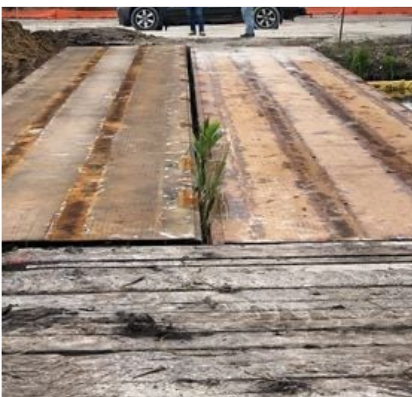
Friends' Ghost Rider tram to the site of the swamp walk. After about 90 minutes of wading through the swamp, participants board the tram for the return trip. More Important Information and Swamp Walk/Tram Tour tickets here: <https://tinyurl.com/a6jfd3ds>.

## News from the Strand

### Construction Progress Continues



This aerial photo by Jay Staton, taken on September 29, shows the progress that has been made in positioning the pilings that will support the foundation of the Pavilion.



A second temporary bridge was installed across the canal, parallel to the first bridge, to increase the carrying capacity for the construction that will take place. *(Photo by Richard Grannis)*



## VIP Visit from Mrs. Jane Parks and sons

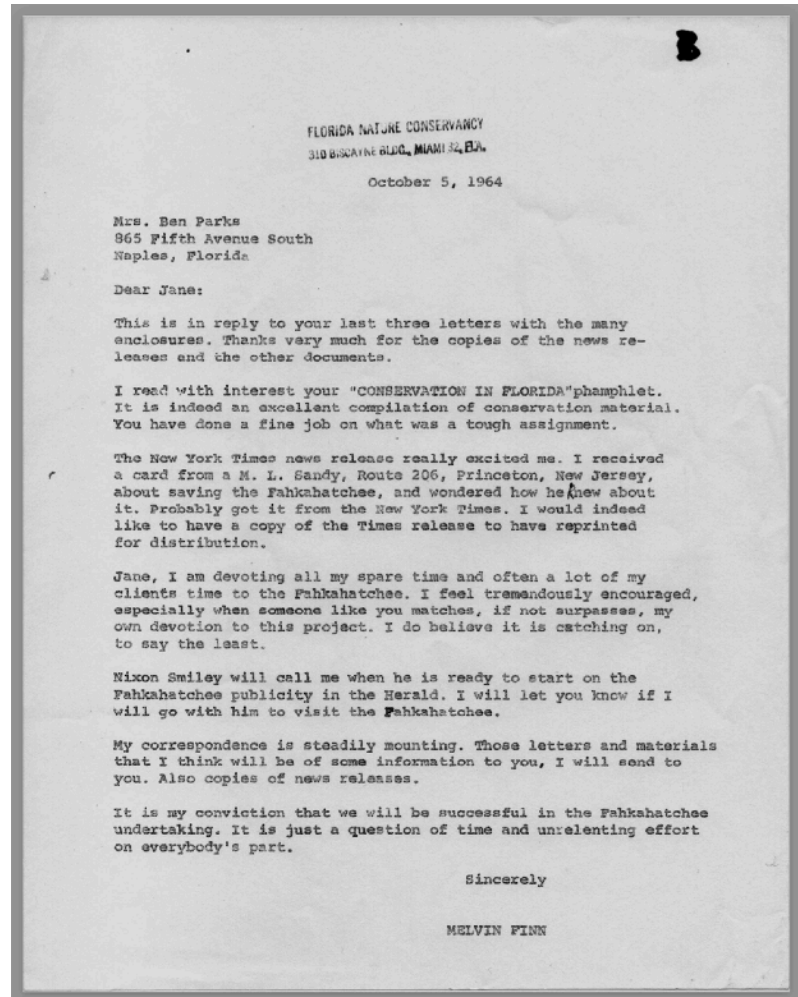


Memorable picture of a VIP visit. Left to right: Randy, Mrs. Jane Parks, and Ben (her sons). Randy is holding a 176 ft. roll of petition signatures to "Save the Fakahatchee," a petition campaign spearheaded by Mrs. Parks from 1964 to 1966.

Mrs. Jane Parks knew about the Fakahatchee before most of us did, having arrived in Naples in 1952 when only 1,475 people lived in Naples. In those days the Fakahatchee was not a Preserve, and with her husband and three young boys in tow they often drove their jeep to the Fakahatchee to explore, fish, and yes hunt.

She joined one of the two women's organizations in town, the Naples Junior Women's Club. Given her interest in conservation she was soon appointed Conservation Chair for the Junior Division of the State Federation of Women's Clubs. After talking with Attorney Mel Finn, the founder of the Florida Nature Conservancy, she decided her project as the Women's Club State Conservation Chairman would be "Save the Fakahatchee," and Mel accepted her offer to co-chair.

It would not be easy to save 42,000 acres of the Fakahatchee from speculators itching to clear the land for a residential development. It is our pleasure to present this early correspondence between Mel Finn and Mrs. Parks.



## Park Staff Spotlight



Park Ranger Rebecca Thornhill (left), and Park Services Specialist Laura Adams (right), are a welcome addition to the Park staff. They are both featured in the Park's Staff Spotlight on the Florida State Parks' website. Read more about them here: <https://www.floridastateparks.org/staff-spotlight-rebecca-thornhill-and-laura-adams>

## Seen in the Strand

## A donkey, a horse, and a park ranger...



*It's no joke that these two new Park staff, Park Ranger Rebecca Thornhill (left), and Park Services Specialist Laura Adams (front right) do much more than guide human visitors!*

***Here's what happened in Laura's words:***

"Rebecca and I were opening the Park on August 22 when we noticed a horse and a donkey walking down Janes Scenic Drive past the gate. With a little coaxing, we got them to follow us down Janes. Once we got within sight of their homes they knew where they were and galloped home when spooked by some visitors' vehicles. Their names are Hercules (donkey) and Dakota (horse). Their owner, a local resident, was grateful for their return. She said they had figured out how to open their latch, and that's how they made their escape".

**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.



**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:** [Check the State Park Website](#) for hours, closures, and other announcements.

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



## Membership News



### Continued thanks for support

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! (<https://bit.ly/381KXzf>).



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!

### 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. See <https://tinyurl.com/chbpw75r>



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/>

### Charitable Remainder Trust

On January 1, 2020, the SECURE ACT (Setting Communities Up for Retirement Enhancement) became law. The law had an immediate and direct impact on estate planning for IRA's. The ability for the owner of a traditional IRA to stretch the taxable payments of their IRA over the lives of family members is no longer available. The SECURE ACT mandates that an IRA must be fully distributed by December 31 of the tenth year following the owners death. Attorneys and estate planners have been offering techniques to help their clients deal with this, resulting in the idea of naming a charitable remainder trust (CRT) as the beneficiary of some or all their IRA.

The tax savings of this technique are compelling. As CRTs are considered a qualified charity (just like Friends the Fakahatchee) for tax purposes, any amounts received by a CRT from an IRA are free of tax. This means you can take a tax deferred IRA dollar and have it become a forever tax free dollar and still provide an income to your family. To learn more, it is important to consult your Attorney or CPA to see if this technique makes sense for you.

## Members make a difference.

### Welcome to new members!

Brian Abernathy, Bonita Springs FL; Josh Evans, Surfside FL; Barbara Fawcett Indialantic FL; Jean Hahn, Naples FL; Jeffrey Huebner, Atlantic Beach FL; Sharon Lynn, Rehoboth Beach DE; Elizabeth Williams, Fort Myers FL.

**Membership total is 376.**

### 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

#### 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

#### BOD meeting schedule

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](mailto:FOF_90@hotmail.com) or call 239-695-1023.

#### Ex-Officio

Bruce Bunch  
John Elting  
Dennis Giardina  
Glen Stacell  
Andrew Tyler

Francine Stevens  
(Executive Director)

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

**Miss an issue of the Ghostwriter? Visit the archives at**  
<http://orchidswamp.org/about-fof/the-ghost-writer-archives/>.

*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](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 (<https://csapp.800helpfla.com/>)

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