



Invest in Our Planet This Earth Day

Earth day is a day meant for us all to reflect and appreciate the natural world that surrounds us.

In South Florida, we are graced with one of the most unique ecosystems on the planet, and that is on full display in the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. Orchids, bromeliads, panthers, alligators, birds of every variety and countless other species of flora and fauna make this place their home. This place is a treasure that, in the age of uber-development and commercialization, the Friends vow to protect. We cannot do this without the support of our Members and Donors.

The current year, 2022, will be a monumental year for the Preserve and for the Friends. Our 12 year-long support of international scientists' restoration of the beautiful Cigar Orchid, a native orchid almost lost to the Preserve, is showing fantastic results. The Boardwalk expansion is well underway. We are restoring the Visitors' Center so park-goers have a hub for their adventures. We are supporting Park staff by purchasing much needed equipment to maintain and preserve the land.

On this Earth Day, a day meant to cherish these natural treasures, please consider donating to the Friends so we can continue preserving and protecting the exquisite and unique beauty of the Fakahatchee. Your donation is an investment in the Western Everglades ecosystem (and our planet) and is fully tax deductible. See you on Janes' Scenic.

To make your donation go to <https://orchidswamp.org/>

Or mail your donation to: FOF, PO Box 35, Everglades City, FL 34139

Cordially,

Tom Maish



Photo by Rita Bauer

Fantastic results for Cigar Orchid



Picture by F. Stevens



Left: Biologist Dennis Giardina inspects the progress of a tagged Cigar Orchid.

Right: a close-up of the tagged orchid.



Picture by F. Stevens

Biologist Mike Owen: "With the continued success of the Orchid restoration project, eventually hundreds of tagged orchids will look like this well-established Cigar Orchid". Photos of Dennis and Mike by Francine Stevens.



Photo of Cigar Orchid bloom by Jay Staton.

News from the Strand

Interpretative Pavilion area taking shape

Photos by Jay Staton.



This 'Big Picture' shot shows the position of the new Interpretive Pavilion in relation to US 41.



A closer view of the walkway and buildings.



Wide view from the opposite direction.



These wonderful additions to our beautiful Park keep leaping closer to completion

Scene in the Strand

Spring in the Fakahatchee



How many baby gators can you count?



Left: Hawk chicks earlier in the season. Right: One of the chicks later in the season.



Biologist Mike Owen with Master Naturalist Gordon Saager observe Frosted Pleurothallis (Stelis gelida).



Juvenile Barred Owls share a branch.



Sibling rivalry or a bit of affection?

Last of five Wayfinding Kiosks now in place

The last of five Wayfinding kiosks throughout the Preserve was completed in April. The five kiosks were made possible thanks in part to a \$46,720 grant from the Collier County Tourist Development Council. An additional \$29,285 was contributed thanks to our FOF members. Our profound gratitude for the generosity of the Council and our FOF members. And of course, thanks to the Park staff who worked to bring it all together. We couldn't have done it without you all!



The completed Wayfinding kiosk with interpretive panels displayed in April. It's adjacent to the Visitor Center and restrooms off Janes Scenic Drive.



Left: The unfinished kiosk in March. Right: Park Ranger Rebecca Thornhill poured concrete around the kiosk in April.

Membership News

More meaningful membership

From education to preservation, networking to artworks, donations of time or funding, there are a myriad of ways to support the mission of the Friends of Fakahatchee. To discover all the different ways to support our mission visit the Support page of our website.

Gift while the gifting is good

by Chris Gair

While volatility is a concern for every investor, many people currently find themselves in the enviable situation of owning highly appreciated securities. If your 2022 New Year's Resolutions include gifting to FOF, let us first say thank you and offer our assurance that it will be put to the best of use.

And from there, consider making your gift in the form of appreciated common stock. This form of gifting during market peaks has proven to be an excellent way to "capture" the value of your shares while receiving a tax advantage as well. It's truly a win-win. If you have appreciated securities that you'd like to donate to the Friends please call the Executive Director at 239-695-1023 and we will make it easy for you to help one Florida's true treasures.

As with all matters financial, please consult your CPA or tax advisor to see if gifting appreciated securities makes sense for you. A word of caution here: If units of a mutual fund (or ETF) are being considered, please provide us with all the details as some funds are not transferable.

Mr. Chris Gair of Fort Myers, now retired after 48 years as a Trust Officer in Southwest Florida, is providing the FOF with thoughts and ideas in the ever-changing world of charitable gif

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.



If you haven't yet opened your free AmazonSmile account, please take a few minutes to do so. Visit <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

"Matching Gift" programs

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!

Membership News



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/>)

Become a Friend of the Fakahatchee!
<https://orchidswamp.org/support/memberships/>

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!

David Marshall, Miami FL; Kyle McKenzie, Naples FL; Bob Sirna, Rochester MI; William Jones, Sarasota FL.
 Membership total is 389.

Continued thanks to our Lifetime Members:

Lifetime Preservers

Bruce & Janet Bunch

Lifetime Protectors

Kit & La Raw Maran
 Dr. Michael Rohovsky

Lifetime Family Members

Jan Bachrach
 Eric & Laura Foht
 Richard & Sue Jagels
 John & Pauly Kaiser
 Tom & Judy Maish
 Noel Nation
 Nick & Linda Penniman
 Jim & Peggy Phillips
 Van & Jane Sayler
 Glen & Laura Stacell

Lifetime Individual Members

Karen J. Berkley
 Rita Bleasdale
 Warner Blow
 Elsie Caldwell
 John Elting
 Carolyn Ginther
 Peter Haffenreffer
 Don Harmon
 Greg Hauze
 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
 Zach Lombardo
 Virginia Palmer Skok
 Mark Perro

Ex-Officio

Bruce Bunch
 John Elting
 Dennis Giardina
 Glen Stacell
 Andrew Tyler

Francine Stevens
 (Executive Director)

Board of Directors meeting schedule

April 24, 2022
 May 22, 2022
 June 19, 2022
 July 17, 2022
 Sept. 18, 2022
 Oct. 16, 2022
 Nov. 20, 2022
 Dec 17, 2022

2023

Jan. 15, 2023
 Feb. 19, 2023
 March 18, 2023

Meetings are scheduled for 10:30 AM

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