



President and Executive Director Letter

The season's interpretive tours started in October 2021 with a Moon Tour and ended with a Moon Tour on April 16. At the beginning of the tour season we were still dealing with Covid, but having made decent progress with vaccination, our Volunteers answered the call and conducted 48 tours.

To provide social distancing we limited the number of guests on the tram to 12 (instead of 20). Swamp Walks were very much in demand, all Moon Tours sold out within a few weeks, and the new Night Sky Experience did so as well. Thanks to the flexibility and dedication of our Guides we were able to provide private tours outside of the schedule posted on EventBrite.

BRAVO to the Volunteers who made the tours program a success once again: Eric & Rita Bauer, Dave Boesche, Tom DesFosses, Ted DeGroot, Charlie Egli, Eric Foht, John Kaiser, Ted Lock, Tom Maish, Phil McGuire, Gordon Saager, Glen Stacell, Tony & Theresa Schuhmacher, Andy Skok & Virginia Palmer Skok.

Cordially,

Tom Maish and Francine Stevens



Cigar Orchid restoration update

Photos by Charlie Egli (except as noted)

Cigar Orchids were re-introduced in the Fakahatchee 12 years ago. April's weeklong survey continues to show encouraging results. Tiny seedlings that had been carefully attached with strings have established healthy root systems. The Friends of Fakahatchee continue to support the Orchid Restoration Project led by Park Biologist Mike Owen and FWC Biologist Dennis Giardina.

These Cigar Orchids have all grown into vigorous plants supported by healthy root systems.

continued page 2 >>





Left: Dr. Edwin Everham was determined to get the job done. (Photo by Virginia Palmer Skok). Right: Dr. Hong Lui and Park Biologist Mike Owen.



Left: FWC Biologist Dennis Giardina, Dr. Edwin Everham, and Tom Maish. Right: Ginny Palmer Skok, Dr. Haydee Borrero, and Dr. Hong Liu.

News from the Strand

Continuing progress on Interpretative Pavilion

Photos by Dave Corban, the architect who designed the Pavilion.



Phenomenal view from inside the interpretive Pavilion.



A Webnet guardrail was installed to provide visitors with an unobstructed view.

New loop trail cleared by Alligator Amblers

In April The Alligator Amblers chapter of the Florida Trails Association cleared a new interpretive trail next to the Visitor Center at the entrance of the park. Our sincere thanks for all your dedicated - and sweaty - work!



"We had a good crew today cutting the new interpretive trail. We knocked off the project in two hours, but we sure felt the high humidity and warm air. Luckily everyone had plenty of water," commented Paul Bisset. Photo by Paul Bisset.



Francine Stevens, Glen Stacell, and Tom DesFosses check out the new loop trail. Photo by Phil McGuire.

Scene in the Strand

Bears!

by Theresa & Tony Schuhmacher

Tony and I had been enjoying another terrific day in the Fakahatchee, then this happened!

"A large black animal is crossing the road behind us," I said as I watched it cross. We quickly jumped out of the vehicle and began scanning with binoculars. I was busy sizing up what I was now confirming was a large black bear, when I hear: "It's a raccoon," as a second animal crossed.

"There's another one. These raccoons walk funny," Tony stated. I look to see the raccoons with the funky walk at the same moment he moves to see the original "raccoon" and immediately we both exclaim, "Baby bears!!!"

Mama bear crossed the road first and appeared to sit on a mound of dirt and brush while waiting patiently for her cubs to follow. Once the cubs crossed, Mama bear continued to rest, as the cubs played at her feet. Then, just a few moments later, Mama bear stood, the cubs immediately followed, and they crossed the road heading the same direction from whence they came.

A mother black bear is one of the most ferocious protectors on earth, and she will stop at nothing to keep her cubs safe. Never approach a black bear with cubs. Always keep a distance of at least 100 yards between yourself and the bear. Never allow yourself to get in-between the mother bear and her cubs. A mother bear who detects any threat to her cubs is likely to attack.

Theresa and Tony were also fortunate to catch a glimpse of this majestic raptor.



Birds!

Photos by Phil McGuire



Great Crested Flycatcher catches his breath.



Barred Owl looking over her shoulder.



Great Blue Heron snags a tasty meal.

Donation Strategies by Chris Gair

The Reasons we give...

In helping my former trust clients with their charitable giving over many years, one thing became abundantly clear: **people give out of a true desire to help**. With so much published material emphasizing the tax impact of giving, we should never lose sight of the fact that even in our diverse society, we are a generous lot. At the Friends of Fakahatchee, we understand that generosity. We take our donors' gifts seriously and it is with great pride we display how your gifts are used.

However, we also remind our donors that tax laws governing charitable gifts are very complex. In future editions of the Ghost Writer, we'll explore the basics of gifting techniques while stressing the importance of getting professional guidance for your specific situation. Please make sure you know precisely how your gift will impact your tax liability. I suggest having your tax advisor estimate what this year's taxes will look like with a pro forma tax return. That way you can estimate the results of the many gifting options available before you commit.

The one option I really like and will continue to stress is gifting from your IRA when you are required to take annual distributions. That is the one technique that is certainly popular with our donor base, and seems to help the most folks.

Regardless of the method you choose, the Friends have the hands-on knowledge, experience, and commitment to make every dollar of your gift count.

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

As with all matters financial, always consult with your attorney or tax advisor.



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. Follow this link for more information: <https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/>

“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!

**To Donate via the Friend's website, visit
www.Orchidswamp.org**



Visit the Fakahatchee via FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM

Follow us!

<https://www.facebook.com/orchidswamp>
<https://www.instagram.com/friendsoffakahatchee/>

Share your pictures and stories about your
visit to the Fakahatchee.

E-mail your shots to connect@orchidswamp.org

Add hashtags to show up in existing collections:
#fakahatcheestrans, #friendsoffakahatchee,
#fakahatcheestranspreservestatepark

Members make a difference.

Welcome to new members!

Mary Aronin, Life Member, Marco Island FL; Kevin Bowden, Life Member, Nashville TN; Mina Doener, Fairbanks AK; Richard Mizer, Life Member, Columbus OH; Charles & Patsy Schladand, Jeffersonville IN.

*Special thanks to our new Lifetime Members: Mary Aronin, Mina Doener, and Richard Mizer
Membership total is 365.*

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 & Polly Kaiser
Tom & Judy Maish
Noel Nation
Nick & Linda Penniman
Jim & Peggy Phillips
Van & Jane Saylor
Glen & Laura Stacell

Lifetime Individual Members

Mary Aronin
Karen J. Berkley
Rita Bleasdale
Warner Blow
Elsie Caldwell
Mina Doener
John Elting
Carolyn Ginther
Peter Haffenreffer
Don Harmon
Greg Hauze
Susan Hauze
Terry Heaps
Patty Huff
Richard Mizer
James Nici
Randy Parks
Wendy Becker Payton
Mark Perro
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

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.



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/>.

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