



Know before you go. Visit the Park Website

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

President and Executive Director Letter

We have come full circle. It was in December, 2021 that Collier County issued the construction permit for the Pole Barn and next month, on the 17th of December, we can hold the Friends Annual Welcome Back Lunch at the Park's new Pole Barn.

This year we are delighted that Nicholas G. Penniman IV and Franklin Adams accepted our invitation to speak about their new book on the history of Southwest Florida's public lands, "*Enjoyment of the Same*." Mr. Penniman was our guest speaker in 2014 to talk about his book "*Nature's Steward*." He also authored "*A Toxic Inconvenience*."

We look forward to seeing our Members on Saturday, December 17 at the Pole Barn!

Cordially,

Tom Maish and Francine Stevens



Tickets still available for most Tours.

Thanks to our fabulous Volunteers, the Friend's tours tickets are for sale now.

You can purchase tickets on Eventbrite at <https://tinyurl.com/4dh6ycms>

- The second monthly **Night Sky Experience** guided by Phil McGuire is on Friday, December 16. Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/5h9t5c9z>.
- **Monthly Moonlit Tours** guided by John Kaiser are nearly sold out; a few tickets are still available for the April tour. <https://tinyurl.com/2s8fryxb>
- **Morning Tram Tours** are guided by John Kaiser. This season we welcome Theresa Fabiano Schuhmacher who will guide a few morning tram tours. <https://tinyurl.com/r6eauerj>
- Virginia Palmer Skok will guide all the **Introduction to Swamp Walks at Six Pipe Slough** starting on Thursday, December 1, then on Wednesdays for the rest of the season. <https://tinyurl.com/ykm3tupd>
- **Volunteer Assisting Guides** are Ted DeGroot, Charlie Egli, Tony Schuhmacher, and Andy Skok.
- **All 2022 Swamp walks at slough locations beyond gate 12 are sold out.** We will try to schedule more swamp walks in 2023.

We applaud our fabulous Volunteers for the generosity of their time, expertise, camaraderie and good cheer, they are the reason for our continued success!





The Night Sky Experiences are not exclusively for photographers. The evening is open to everyone who just wants to spend an evening under the Fakahatchee's starry night sky. Select your date and purchase tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/5h9t5c9z>.

Naturalist Virginia Palmer-Skok leads the Introduction to Swamp Walks

Ginny credits the majority of her knowledge of the Everglades to Mike Owens, longtime career Park Biologist. She's assisted him for more than three years on research projects and swamp walk interpretation. Projects have included slough surveys of endangered orchids, bromeliads, peperomias, butterfly counts, bird counts, hydrology projects, The Lost Orchid Project, Wildlife Blitzes, and her favorite - Ghost Orchid research. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Friends of the Fakahatchee.

As a volunteer to the Everglades Foundation, she has supported the Everglades Literacy Program whose goal is to provide education surrounding the Everglades. Ginny also volunteers at the Naples Botanical Garden and Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo Botanical Gardens where she focuses on her beloved orchids.



Her husband, Andy Skok, frequently assists with swamp walks. Both Andy and Ginny have participated in Sea Turtle rescue on Marco Island, support the National Audubon Society Preserve, and lead nature hikes in Connecticut.



It's always a good time to join the FOF Tours Team. Are you interested in guiding or assisting FOF Tours, but wonder what's involved?

To learn, you can join our tours as a guest and shadow a Guide or Assistant until you feel comfortable taking the lead.

For more information call Francine at 239-695-1023, or visit our Volunteer page.



Sat., December 17, 12:30 - 3:30 pm

Member's Welcome Back Lunch at the new pole barn

Mark your calendar now for our annual welcome back lunch. We will cater an Italian buffet and feature special guests Nick Penniman and Franklin Adams to discuss their new book on the history of Southwest Florida's public lands, *Enjoyment of the Same*.

Purchase Tickets, \$20 per person at <https://tinyurl.com/yak77rdh>

Download full-size flyer at <https://orchidswamp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/WelcomeBackLuncheon.pdf>

News from the Strand

New directional signs to the Fakahatchee

The new signs on CC-92 (San Marco Road) at the intersection with US-41 (left), and at the intersection of CC-951 (Collier Boulevard) and US-41 (right), show directions to the Park. *Photos by Tom Maish.*



Somehow over 120,000 visitors find their way to the Fakahatchee each year despite only one directional sign on US 41. Placing signs along the major highways giving guidance to the Fakahatchee has long been desired. This was one of the Friends' Citizen Support Organization (CSO) Goals in 2022.

Ex-Officio Board member Andrew Tyler and President Tom Maish took on the project. Andrew made computer generated signs showing proposed signs for various locales with the desired language. Andrew's designs were so specific the need for directions to Florida's largest State Park became very apparent.

Tom then researched and contacted the Officials at F.D.O.T. who had jurisdiction for proposed signage along the area roads. That research lead to Troy Norwood, Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE), District 1, who then directed us to Dan Hall, PTOE with Collier County for signs under Collier County jurisdiction. Dan Hall was very familiar with the Fakahatchee having often visited the Park.

Continued >>

>> *New directional signs Continued*

As a result of Dan Hall's work, signs are now in place at the intersection of CC-951 (Collier Boulevard) and US-41. The signs on CC-92 (San Marco Road) at the intersection with US-41 give directions for visitors coming from Marco Island. Neither intersection had signs to the Fakahatchee previously.

The Friends understand signs provided by F.D.O.T. are being fabricated for installation. Stay tuned for the sequel to this major project assisting visitors in locating the Fakahatchee from all directions.

Seen in the Strand

The weather is great for getting out in the Park



Everglades Mink by Will Kingsley.



Green Heron by Olga Ettrichova.



View of the new Boardwalk leading to Green Heron Lake.



Park Manager Allen Murray and Dave Rodgers inspect the new Boardwalk. Boardwalk photos by Francine Stevens.

Donation Strategies by Chris Gair

A sigh of relief...

I'm going to roll up my sleeves a bit here as it relates to the SECURE (*Setting Communities Up for Retirement Enhancement*) ACT and what followed that had a few folks concerned. The "ACT" became law on January 1, 2020 as a major piece of legislation impacting retirement planning.

I've discussed some of the details in previous issues so I won't reiterate those here. As with any piece of tax law from Congress, the IRS responds with Proposed Regulations. The ACT was no exception as the IRS published sixty-four pages of their famous fine print outlining "suggestions" as to just how the ACT should be enforced.

Thankfully, the technique of designating a charitable remainder trust (CRT) as a beneficiary of an IRA was not part of the proposal. I've written previously on this technique that I believe is one of the great "win-win" opportunities in charitable planning so I won't belabor it here. However, in a nutshell, it's a way to capture 100% of your IRA with no income tax while serving family members as well.

So, if you have (or will have) an IRA and would like to help the Friends in your estate plan, please talk with your attorney to learn more. Thanks again for your support of this treasured resource!

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.

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



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!



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:
#fakahatcheestrand, #friendsoffakahatchee,
#fakahatcheestrandpreservestatepark



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!

Richard Aronson, Wilton Manors FL; Danielle Bejar, Fort Lauderdale FL; Zoe Bejar, Fort Lauderdale FL; Bonnie Bonneau Fort Lauderdale FL; Allen Cogar, Pompano Beach FL; Robert Cruttendon, Wilton Manors FL; Vicki Hallock Fort Lauderdale FL; Judith Henzler, Flagstaff AZ; Eilen Horgan, Wilton Manors FL; Bob Mays & Mago Sosa, Wilton Manors FL; Constance McAbe, Fort Lauderdale FL; Kenneth Salzsieder, Fort Lauderdale FL; Sara Singer, Weston FL; Gerry Smith, Fort Lauderdale FL; Thuy & Jeremy Turner, Plantation FL.

Membership total is 369.

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
Tom & Vicki Johnson
John & Polly Kaiser
Tom & Judy Maish
Noel Nation
Nick & Linda Penniman

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

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.