



Know before you go. Visit the Park Website

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

The Park Office has a new phone number: 239-961-1925

Authors team up for Welcome Back Lunch

By Bruce Bunch, Chair of Public Relations

Florida environmental icons Nick Penniman and Franklin Adams have been featured speakers at a number of Friends of Fakahatchee gatherings. This year at the Welcome Back Lunch on December 17, they teamed up for the first time to discuss their new book about the history of public lands in Florida titled *Enjoyment of the Same*.

Penniman is the author of four books about Florida's environment. He said while researching for the current book, "I kept hearing about Franklin Adams. We got together and I found that Franklin had lived through what I was researching. So, I asked him to work on the book with me." It turned out, Penniman said, that they had actually been in the same Florida Master Naturalist class years earlier.

Penniman explained the title of the book was taken directly from the 1916 federal act that created national parks. (The National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 states in part that its "... purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.")

Adams, recipient of many environmental honors and historian for the Friends of Fakahatchee, is recognized as the Guardian of the Everglades. He told the group that despite the constant struggle to preserve the Everglades, he was grateful for the progress that had been since the days of unchecked development – when what became the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve was a "wild and crazy" place.

"I don't know what I would do if I didn't have this place," he said. He noted that "with covid, many people came to the Everglades for the first time to get away and be restored. That's a good thing that will continue."

After taking questions, Penniman and Adams did a brisk business in signed copies of their book. The pair donated proceeds from the sales to the Friends of Fakahatchee.



Florida environmental icons Nick Penniman and Franklin Adams enthralled FOF members at the Welcome Back Lunch. Photo by Phil McGuire.

60 FOF members attend Welcome Back Lunch

President Tom Maish congratulated the Friends for a successful year in their mission to support the Park. The event was held under the new \$100,000 pole barn, which was only one of many projects Tom cited as the Friends' fundraising successes.



President Tom Maish greets members under the new pole barn. Photo by Phil McGuire.



Park Manager Allen Murray praised the efforts of the Friends. Photo by Phil McGuire.

Park Manager Allen Murray praised the CSO for supporting the park in his welcome remarks. He also announced that hurricane Ian damaged the original Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk to the point of making it unsafe for visitors. It will remain closed until a complete reconstruction is done. The newly constructed boardwalk at the new Interpretive Pavilion was not impacted by the hurricane, however the opening date has been moved to later in 2023.



Many thanks to Rita Bauer & Theresa Fabiano for their help with serving 60 hungry guests! Photo by Phil McGuire.



The new pole barn provided a spacious place for the members to enjoy the speakers. Photo by Phil McGuire.

President's Annual Appeal Letter



Friend of Fakahatchee Inc
P.O. Box 35
Everglades City, FL
34139

Dear Friend,

We at the Friends of the Fakahatchee know how difficult the past year has been; rising inflation and living costs, a still present global pandemic, and for residents of South Western Florida, a devastating brush with Hurricane Ian.

While the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park certainly fared better than many of our other beloved Florida Parks, considerable damage has been done. Janes' Scenic flooded heavily, and is still being cleared of debris and our cherished Old Boardwalk is closed indefinitely as the damage is assessed. It is unlikely to be re-opened without several extensive repairs, many of which will potentially need FOF funding assistance. Fortunately, all staff and residents are ok and all structures and residences remain intact, with minor damages, including the FOF funded Pole Barn construction and Visitor's Center renovation.

Through all these challenges, the works of the Friends continues. We've completed some and are engaged in other major initiatives that will support park staff and its visitors for years to come. Our volunteers' work with park staff and biologists has led to accessible trails and flourishing of many of the park's native species, including the recently rehabilitated Cigar Orchid, now thriving in the midst of the Fakahatchee. And our various tours and educational initiatives, including our new Star Gazing experience, have created unique and fun ways for the citizens of our local communities to enjoy the exquisite beauty of the Fakahatchee.

We cannot do any of this without your support. We are fully member and donor funded and your donation is fully tax-deductible. I encourage you to take a look at the FOF Progress report included in this mail and see the exciting things happening at Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. And if you do find yourself in a position where you can help, we would humbly accept.

If you have any questions about Friends of Fakahatchee or its projects, please contact me at 239-992-5963 or Francine Stevens, FOF Executive Director at 239-695-1023.

Sincerely,

Tom Maish

President
Friends of Fakahatchee

P.S. I encourage you to explore your options with an attorney, financial advisor, or estate planner for the types of gifts that may have tax benefits for you all while supporting FOF's mission of supporting Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park.

*The Friends of Fakahatchee Inc is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit Citizen Support Organization that provides financial and volunteer support to preserve the unique ecology and cultural heritage of Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park and educates the public about its importance.
Tax ID: #59-3511352*

**DONATE TO THE FOF ANNUAL FUND VIA PAYPAL
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/FOF-DONATE](https://tinyurl.com/fof-donate)**

Progress Report

PROJECT:	STATUS:	
Pole Barn	COMPLETED! Mission accomplished; protecting the park's precious equipment necessary for maintenance.	
Visitor's Center Renovation	IN PROGRESS! Work is 40% done and completion is set for end of 2022. Further work needed on interior – furnishings, stock and exhibits.	
Cigar Orchid Preservation and Orchid Inventory	IN PROGRESS! Park biologists and volunteers continue their work surveying the Orchid population, putting special focus on the re-habilitated Cigar Orchid- back in its Native Fakahatchee!	
Tours & Education	IN PROGRESS! 2022-2023 season will be another productive year for FOF led tours, including the return of Swamp Walks, tram tours and new Night Sky stargazing experience.	
Old Boardwalk Repairs due to Hurricane IAN	UNDER EVALUATION! The damage caused by the hurricane to the Old Boardwalk is still unclear. Extensive repairs needed before re-opening date can be announced.	

News from the Strand

Beautiful day for the Board's first boardwalk visit



Park Manager Allen Murray invited the Friends Board of Directors to hold their meeting at the new Interpretive Pavilion. He led the Board on their first visit to the newly constructed boardwalk that leads to Green Heron Lake. The Board was impressed with the new site and – although disappointed that the opening is moved to later in 2023 – everyone agreed the anticipation will be well worth the wait.

Photo by Phil McGuire



FOF Board's first visit to new boardwalk. Left to right: President Tom Maish, Eric Foht, Secretary Glen Stacell, Virginia Palmer Skok, Park Manager Allen Murray, Vice President John Kaiser, Tom DesFosses, Treasurer Phil McGuire, Executive Director Francine Stevens. Photo by Laura Adams.

Seen in the Strand

It's a great season for getting out in the Park



Karla Alvaro (center), the curator of USF Herbarium in Tampa joins Park Biologist Mike Owen (right) and Virginia Palmer Skok (left) on a research slough survey for endangered vascular plants. Photo by Andy Skok.



Does he think we can't see him? Alligator at Green Heron Lake. Photo by Phil McGuire.



An Everglades Mink invites a Yellow Rat Snake for dinner. Photo by Rudy Wilms.



Painted bunting shows its true colors. Photo by Theresa Fabiano.

Tickets still available for most Tours

The Friend's fabulous Tours tickets are still available, thanks to our fabulous volunteers.

You can purchase tickets on Eventbrite at

<https://tinyurl.com/4dh6ycms>

- Sign up for monthly **Night Sky Experience** tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/5h9t5c9z>.
- A few tickets are still available for the **April Moonlit Tour**. <https://tinyurl.com/2s8fryxb>
- **Morning Tram Tours** are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/r6eauerj>
- Click below for tickets to the **Introduction to Swamp Walks at Six Pipe Slough**. <https://tinyurl.com/ykm3tupd>

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>.



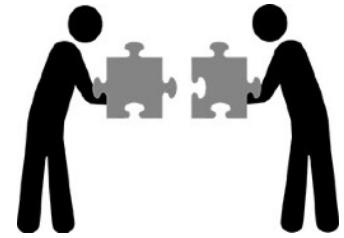
It's always a good time to join the FOF Tours Team. Are you interested in guiding or assisting FOF Tours, but wonder what's involved?

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 at <https://orchidswamp.org/support/how-to-volunteer/>.

Kudos from Executive Director

In closing another year of the Ghost Writer newsletter I extend my sincere appreciation to Cindy Liberton and Suzanne Blakeman for their creative expertise. Connecting the stories and pictures they receive from me in order to publish the Ghost Writer is like assembling pieces of a puzzle to create a big picture. Cindy and Suzanne are indispensable!



Donation Strategies by Chris Gair

There's a great adage in baseball that says, "When you're working together you never have to shake."

And that's just how Friends works with the state of Florida. It's a great team with a common vision to not only preserve the unique ecology of the Fakahatchee but to create a memorable experience for all who visit.

Highly trained individuals bring a wealth of experience to an extremely fragile and complex environment. By working together, long-term planning for the Preserve – for everything from water flow to protecting endangered species and more – assures the future of this treasured resource. State parks nationwide can learn a lot from the collaboration between the Friends and the Park Service.

What this means to our donors is giving with confidence. Your support of Friends has a proven history of successful stewardship. And we are always glad to share our plans for the future. So, give us a call to learn more and we know you'll be impressed.

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.

Volunteer your time and talents!
<https://orchidswamp.org/support/how-to-volunteer/>

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!

Jeff Combs, Naples FL; Roger and Dorothy Clough, Sarasota FL; Barb Glinski, Naples FL; Dale Greenwalt, Naples FL; Todd Lewis, Naples FL; Rosemarie Scott, Marco Island FL.

Membership total is 379.

Continued thanks to our Lifetime Members:

Lifetime Preservers

Bruce & Janet Bunch

Lifetime Protectors

Roger and Dorothy Clough
Kit & La Raw Maran
Dr. Michael Rohovsky

Lifetime Family Members

Jan Bachrach
Eric and Laura Foht
Dale Greenwalt
Richard & Sue Jagels
Tom & Vicki Johnson
John and Polly Kaiser
Tom & Judy Maish
Noel Nation
Nick and 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

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.