



Old Boardwalk is Closed!

Know before you go. Visit the State Park's website.

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

Have a question before you visit the park?

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

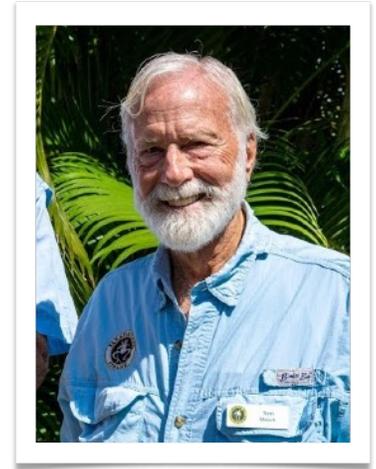
President Tom Maish announces his retirement

When there were no candidates for President the last election, I was asked to serve again. At that time our Boardwalk Vision was scheduled to be completed in 2022 and I was looking forward to see this project the Friends had been advocated since 2006 come to fruition during my term. With the exception of the grand opening, one the most important Friends' goals has been accomplished, therefore I have decided to step aside.

It has been a pleasure working with the smart, dedicated Board Members and I want to especially recognize the Boardwalk Vision Committee who carried the Boardwalk Expansion Vision with me through so many years.

I will still be working with the Friends in a different capacity since the Fak-a-Habit is ingrained in me.

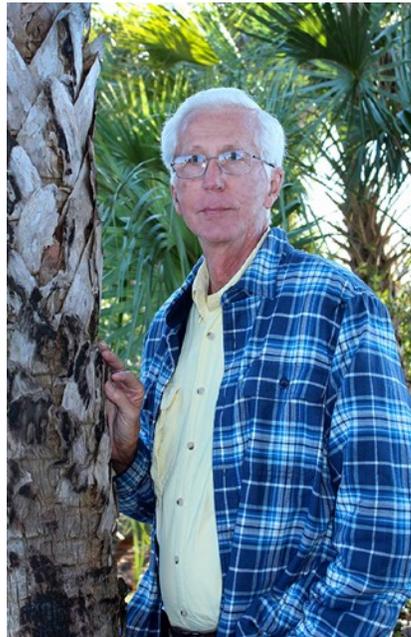
All the best, Tom Maish



Board of Directors update to the membership

At the January Board meeting, the Board – who elects the Officers – elected Glen Stacell to fill the President's position vacated by Tom Maish. Virginia Palmer Skok was elected as Secretary, replacing Glen who had held the Secretary position since 2021.

In other news, reflecting on how financial support is essential for the survival of a not-for-profit, Treasurer Phil McGuire summarized a successful 2022 with respect to the Friends' mission to support the park. Close to \$108,000.00 was allocated for park support. The Friends' capacity to raise funds is achievable thanks to the dedication of the FOF tours volunteers and to our members' generosity.

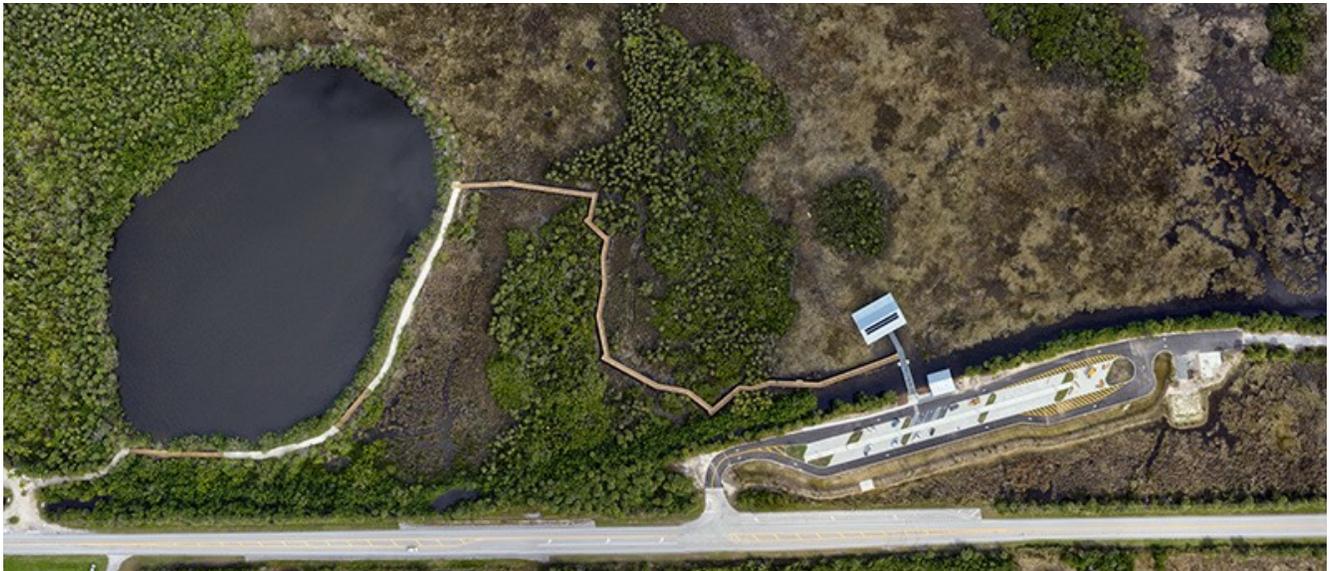


News from the Strand



Laura Adams takes new position at Oscar Scherer
Congratulations to Fakahatchee Park Service Specialist Laura Adams who has been promoted to Assistant Park Manager at Oscar Scherer State Park. We will miss her and wish her well. Photo by Phil McGuire.

Aerial view of new boardwalk and Interpretive Pavilion



Jay Staton photographed this impressive aerial view of the new boardwalk and Interpretive Pavilion.

Tram Tour 10th anniversary in local papers

Bravo to Bruce Bunch, Chair of FOF Public Relations, for his creative press releases. His recent "Fakahatchee Tram Tour Celebrates 10th Anniversary" was picked up by numerous local papers and increased the tours tickets sales, hence more revenue to support the park!

Well done!

Seen in the Strand

Larry's first exciting swamp walk



Larry was all smiles to see his first native orchid in the Fakahatchee.

Recent visitor Larry Harlan wrote to us about his memorable experience. He said, "I really enjoyed my first swamp walk experience with Rita and Sam. Rita's love of orchids is contagious and even though I know little or nothing about them, I will come back to see more orchids in bloom."



Close up of Dingy Flowered Star Orchid (*Epidendrum amphistomum*).



Larry greatly enjoyed his first swamp walk.



Tom Mulrooney, Sam Peters, and Rita Bauer.



Sam Peters, Tom Mulrooney, Joe Woolston in the background, and Larry Harlan.



Swamp Walk Guide Rita Bauer.

How many alligators do you see?

Phil McGuire captured this photo of alligators warming up in the sun on a cold January day.



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>.

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



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/>.

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.

"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!



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

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

Membership News

Board Members

President – Glen Stacell
Vice President – John Kaiser
Treasurer – Phil McGuire
Secretary – Virginia Palmer Skok

Eric Foht
Zach Lombardo
Virginia Palmer Skok
Mark Perro
Tom Trotta

Ex-Officio

Bruce Bunch
John Elting
Dennis Giardina
Andrew Tyler

Francine Stevens
(Executive Director)

Board of Directors meeting schedule

Feb. 19, 2023
March 18, 2023
April 16, 2023

Meetings are scheduled
for 10:30 AM

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

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

Members make a difference!

Welcome new members: Lynn Kathryn Messner and Mark Levitan.

Membership total is 384.

We continue to be thankful for our many Lifetime Members. Due to the ever growing length of the list, the Board has decided it need not be repeated in every issue of the Ghost Writer. We will continue to welcome each new Member in the Ghost Writer.

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

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



**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/>)