



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

Annual Organizational Meeting lines up 2023 FOF Leadership



The Annual Organizational meeting took place at the Park's office on March 18th as announced in the February newsletter. The Officers elected by the Board are Glen Stacel President, Virginia Palmer Skok Vice President, Tom Trotta Secretary and Phil McGuire Treasurer. Directors serving on the Board are Wally Baldwin, Rudi Ettrich, Eric Foht, John Kaiser and Debra Taylor.

Tom Trotta, John Kaiser, Phil McGuire, Rudi Ettrich, Glen Stacel, Virginia Palmer Skok, Wally Baldwin, and Francine Stevens. Not pictured are Debra Taylor and Eric Foht. Photo by Allen Murray.

"Pure Florida Nature at The Fak"



FOF Vice President Virginia Palmer Skok penned a wonderfully informative article – with some great photos – which was recently published by the Coastal Breeze News. An excerpt follows.

"Just a short drive from Marco Island and downtown Naples is a beautiful paradise which many refer to as the Orchid Capital of North America, the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. For a three-dollar fee there are wonderful opportunities for birders, bikers, photographers, hikers, butterfly watchers, animal lovers and plant and flower aficionados."

The subtropics and tropics converge here with a unique landscape and some plant and animal species that cannot be found anywhere else in the United States. The Fakahatchee is the largest strand swamp in the world and is part of the Big Cypress Swamp Region. A swamp is a wetland where there is at least forty percent tree coverage. The name "Fakahatchee" is generally thought to be a Miccosukee Indian word meaning..."

To read this article in its entirety, please visit the Coastal Breeze News website at <https://tinyurl.com/pure-florida-nature>.

News from the Strand

Visitor Center gets new shingle roof and fascia



The new shingle roof and fascia are done. A complete electrical rewiring is scheduled to begin soon. Photos by Francine Stevens.

Farewell to resident volunteers Bill & Sharron Jinright

Resident Volunteers Bill & Sharron Jinright did a fabulous job greeting and orienting visitors. We marked their last day volunteering in the park with this photo. We appreciate their efforts and look forward to their return next season. Photo by Francine Stevens.



Just a few tickets remain...

A Big Bravo to Bruce Bunch, Chair of Public Relations! His press release promoting the Friends 10th Anniversary tram tour program generated a wave of tickets sales and phone calls to the Friends' office. Only a few tickets are left for the last Night Sky of the season on April 22. Last chance for Night Sky tickets here: <https://tinyurl.com/night-sky-experience>.

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



You never know what you're going to see at a Night Sky event! March attendees were treated to a view of a SpaceX rocket streaming across the sky following its launch. SpaceX photo by Phil McGuire.



The Night Sky Experience is not exclusively for photographers. The event is open to everyone who just wants to spend an evening under the Fakahatchee's starry night sky.



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

SECURE 2.0/part 2.

This is the second of two offerings on the latest tax law impacting retirement planning that includes important provisions for charitable giving. SECURE 2.0 (Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement), was part of the 1.7 trillion dollars Omnibus Federal Spending Bill for fiscal 2023. Typically, it is complex with over ninety provisions. But among them, this new bill provides for more tax-efficient retirement savings and charitable planning opportunities.

As briefly mentioned in the last Ghost Writer, an individual 70 ½ or older can contribute up to \$100,000 directly to a charity from their IRA. Note that the 70 ½ age requirement is younger than the current age 73 when IRA distributions must start. Going forward, the new law will index the \$100,000 to inflation. Remember, ANY qualified amounts paid directly to a charity from an IRA NEVER appear on your income tax return; that's a true tax planning plus.

Also, just as making your annual contribution to FRIENDS from your IRA (referred to as a Qualified Charitable Distribution or QCD), counts toward your minimum distribution, you can now make a one-time \$50,000 to a charitable gift annuity (CGA), or a charitable remainder trust (CRT). This allows individuals to receive an income benefit for life with the remainder to charity after their passing.

Our tax laws are very complex. Your planning requires ongoing professional guidance to navigate these and future changes. Our leadership is capable, experienced and dedicated to working with you and your advisors to meet your goals. And to all of our donors, we cannot thank you enough!

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 information: <https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/>

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

Membership News

Board Members

President – Glen Stacell
Vice Pres. – Virginia Palmer Skok
Secretary – Tom Trotta
Treasurer – Phil McGuire

Wally Baldwin
Rudi Ettrich
Eric Foht
John Kaiser
Debra Tayler

Ex-Officio

Bruce Bunch
Dennis Giardina
Tom Maish

Executive Director

Francine Stevens

Board of Directors meeting schedule

April 16, 2023
May 21, 2023
June 18, 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: Rene Chavez, Michelle Demita, Barb Glinski, Bridget Goldsmith, The Katcha family, Life Family members.

We are grateful for our 372 members.

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/>)

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