

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GHOST ORCHID WALKS

Call Preserve Office at (239) 695-4593
to add your name to the call back list
for reservations in June and July

June 23 - 24 - Interpretative Workshop On Creating Displays

Oscar Scherer State Park in Osprey

Aug. 27 Planet Mars at its Closest Day to Earth in 60,000 yrs

See website in August for details of Everglades
Astronomical Society's "star party"

Board / Membership Meeting

Friday, October 10, 5:30 pm
Community Church Annex - Everglades City

State CSO Meeting

November 13-15, Gainesville, FL

Swamp Walks

Oct. 7 and 28; Nov. 4, 15, and 25; Dec. 2, 20 and 30
all starting at 10:00 am (**For reservations call
Preserve Office 239-695-4593**) Limited to groups
of 15; Fee: \$15 per person and \$10 for FOF members.

Guided Canoe Trips

Nov. 1, and 22, Dec. 6 and 27, starting at 9:00 am
(**Reservations Required call 239-695-4593**)
Equipment provided. Limited to groups of 12. Fee:
\$25 per person and \$20 for FOF members

Membership News

Membership Secretary Marya Repko reports that there are 250 names on our membership list, over 150 of which are fully paid up. Enclosed with this copy of the *Ghost Writer* is a letter asking for confirmation of the details she has now. When members send the letter back to FOF, Marya will issue cards that allow members to get discounts on swamp walks and canoe trips. She is also working on water-proof cards in the future.

We are hoping to save on postage and paper by sending the *Ghost Writer* by e-mail and urge members to give their e-mail addresses for this purpose.

There were 50 (yes, fifty!) new members since the beginning of 2003, more than half of whom signed up in February. The most recent to join are:

Francisco Blanco, Miami
Frank Denninger, Hialeah
Norine & Joe Dillon, Naples
Betty Ford & John Staursky, Naples
Charles J Williams, Orlando

Welcome and thank you to all new members!

M Join Fakahatchee biologist Mike Owen on a special swamp walk to see the rare ghost orchid in bloom, tentatively scheduled for June 14 and/or the following weekend June 21. A Saturday in July will also be scheduled. Call the Preserve Office (239) 695-4593 to be listed for a call back on exact dates and time. There is a charge of \$15 for non-members and \$10 for members.

Mike reports that there are been a few sightings this past month of the ever elusive Everglades mink on Janes Scenic Drive, one three miles north of the Copeland fire tower just before four o'clock in the afternoon. A beautiful animal with a chocolate brown velvet coat! **MO's** full column will be back with the next Newsletter in the fall *so stay tuned*.

Questionnaire Results

Thank you for your responses to last month's questionnaire. You expressed the benefits of your membership of learning more about the plants, getting into nature and receiving updates on the swamp walks. Activities you would like to see are more frequent swamp walks, canoe trips, activities with other groups and more events with members, including overnight backpacking trips. There were many suggestions on ways to improve the information sent to members and ways to support the Friends and the Park. We are taking all of this information seriously and will try to act on all of your recommendations for improvement. We appreciate your feedback — *and* need your continued support! Tell your friends about us, invite them to the Fakahatchee for a visit and to join the *Friends*. Volunteers are always welcome — just call the Preserve Office or Patty Huff at (239) 695-2397; email at snookcity@hotmail.com

**Remember to visit our website
www.friendsoffakahatchee.org**

The *Ghost Writer* Newsletter and information on upcoming events will be posted on the website so stay in touch or print out extra copies for your friends!!

**For information on Festivals and Events
at all the Florida State Parks
Call (850) 245-2157**

or
Visit website: www.FloridaStateParks.org

THANKS !

Thanks again to Jan Brock of Glades Realty for her generous contribution of providing postage for the mailing of this month's newsletter.

IN THE FAKAHATCHEE

BY
ALLISON NIST

Wild things move to sounds we do not hear

Perhaps more than anything
it is the pattern of the light,
and the way it dances in the clearing.
Pop ash and pond apple,
unwitting hosts to impromptu
mazurkas playing themselves out
along their branches,
rhythms created
by sun's luminescent glow
as it filters through the canopy
of the Fakahatchee Strand.

Bouncing brightly off the waters
moving silently underneath,
it is this dance of light — just this—
that reveals to us
the passage of its flow.

Bromeliads, epiphytes,
strange and glorious ferns—
their leaves settle to the bottom
of this watery tea-stained quilt,
brown-tinged yet crystal clear.
An insulating wetness, moisture
cooling through Florida's summers,
yet warming the air in winter,
waterbath to the finicky orchids
and righteous royal palms, our natives
of the Fakahatchee.

Why do we care more
for the flower than the thing itself?
The intrepid orchids thread their way
along the length of branches
eye-level above the swamp,
roots like linguini sprouting
in dense profusion beyond arm's reach.
They flower not for us, but for themselves
and in their time

(Composed after a swamp walk in the
Fakahatchee with Guide John Elting)
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The History of Logging in the Big Cypress and Fakahatchee Strand

Franklin Adams, reporting on the Historical Committee, stated that he has completed the review of Cesar Becerra's collection of videos, tapes and films of the C.J. Jones Lumber Mill & Railroad. These items are now at Florida International University and are available to FOF for research, loan or duplication. Franklin is continuing his research and will interview the family of Randolph Swain, a former Copeland logging boss who now lives in Perry, Florida. He reported that there are photos, articles and gospel songs by the railroad workers; also interviews with the "old timers". Perhaps a book could be written about this interesting history in our Fakahatchee.

Volunteers Needed

We would like to add a few **new Swamp Guides** for our walks through the Fakahatchee. Those who feel they have the qualifications and background necessary, please contact John Elting at (239) 395-3760.

Let us know if you would like to help with scheduling **Special Events** (including membership outings to various parks around South Florida) or with our **Ghost Writer Newsletter**. Contact Patty Huff at (239) 695-2397 or email snookcity@hotmail.com

News and Updates

Panther Refuge and I-75 Center

Layne Hamilton with the Panther Refuge was our guest at the June 6 meeting in Everglades City. She stated that Ken Alvarez and George Fogg have submitted a conceptual drawing for the environmental center at I-75 and SR29. The project is estimated to be completed by 2010 at a cost of \$3 million for a 5,000 square foot facility. There will need to be impact assessments for the environment and endangered species, especially because there are plans for a concession trail across Jones Grade to East Main. A committee of Patty Huff, Franklin Adams and Frank Denninger agreed to research applicable public use rule and regulations of State Preserve land and work together with Layne Hamilton. Anyone else interested in serving on this committee, please contact Patty Huff at (239) 695-2397 or email snookcity@hotmail.com

Update on Poaching in the Preserve

On June 2, a trail hiker was able to foil an orchid poaching attempt in the K2 area. While eating lunch, the hiker met up with two men coming off the trail. As one talked to him, the other dropped a bundle of plants, then both fled. The hiker was able to retrieve the orchids, and they were returned to the swamp. At the June 6 meeting Officer Shelby Williams with the Special Enforcement Area of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission spoke to us and recommended that any violation of poaching plants or wildlife be reported immediately to FWC at 1-888-330-7370 or 1-888-404-3922. Be observant while hiking and, if possible, get a car registration number. Together we can stop illegal poaching!

What We Are

The Friends of Fakahatchee is a Citizen Support Organization of the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, an entity of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The Preserve comprises over 80,000 acres of land of the Big Cypress Swamp and is about 15 miles long and five miles wide, bordering US 41, I-75 and SR 29. The Fakahatchee Strand is the largest cypress strand in the world and its slough is the deepest in the greater Everglades.

Our address is: Friends of Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, Inc., P.O. Box 548, Copeland, FL 34137

Phone: (239) 695-4593 Fax: (239) 695-4947 Visit our Website at: friendsoffakahatchee.org

Who We Are

Officers: President, Patty Huff, Everglades City; Treasurer, Jack Horner, Fort Myers; Secretary, Kerrie Chobot, Everglades City; **Board of Directors:** Franklin Adams, Everglades City; Jan Brock, Ochopee; Nancy Fessenden, Naples; Betty Foster,