



The 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 and Executive Director Letter

We are changing the Friends' e-mail correspondence address to office@fofinc.org

On November 11 we informed the membership that the Friends e-mail address FOF_90@hotmail had been compromised. The imposter sent over 400 e-mails asking the recipients for a favor. As a result, we have decided to change the Friends' e-mail address.

We look forward to seeing you on December 16 at the Members Welcome Back Lunch to celebrate the Friends 25th Anniversary. To

raise funds on this special occasion, we will have special 25th

Anniversary edition hats and T-Shirts, the Orchids of the Fakahatchee book authored by Eric & Rita Bauer, and more.

Instructions on how to buy your tickets on Eventbrite are included on this newsletter.

Cordially,

Glen Stacell and Francine Stevens



Friends of Fakahatchee
Member's Welcome Back Lunch
At the new pole barn
Sat. Dec. 16 12:30 - 3:30 pm
Tickets \$25 @ orchidswamp.org
Questions? Call 239.695.1023

Enjoy a delicious Italian buffet catered by Palumbo's Pizzeria!



Members' Welcome Back Lunch Tickets now on sale

Mark your calendar now to join us at the pole barn on Saturday, December 16, 12:30 - 3:30 pm for the 25th Anniversary Members' Welcome Back Lunch. Like last year, we will again enjoy a delicious catered Italian buffet by Palumbo's Pizzeria. In addition, we will be selling 25th Anniversary edition hats and T-Shirts, the Orchids of the Fakahatchee book authored by Eric & Rita Bauer, and other items.

Purchase Tickets, \$25 per person at <https://tinyurl.com/FOF-members>

Download a full-size flyer at <https://orchidswamp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/25thAnniversary.pdf>

Tickets still on sale for 2023-2024 Tours

Thanks to our fabulous Volunteers, the Friends Tours program is scheduled. To view the complete schedule of all tours October through mid-April 2024 – and to purchase tickets – please visit this link to reach the FOF Eventbrite page: <https://tinyurl.com/FOFtours>. You can also go directly to the FOF Eventbrite page for each tour by using the links below.

Remember! Tickets go fast – and they make terrific gifts!

Did you know we can organize a group tram tour for you? For a group of 12 or more please call the Friends office at 239-695-1023



The season began with the first Night Sky Tour on Saturday, October 7 – <https://tinyurl.com/night-sky-tour>. Photo by Elizabeth Williams.



Moonlit Tram Tour are SOLD OUT! Photo by Glen Stacell.



Friday Morning Tram Tours begin on December 1 – <https://tinyurl.com/tram-tour> Photo by Francine Stevens.



Advance Swamp Walk Saturday Tours start January 20 – <https://tinyurl.com/swamp-walk> Photo by Andy Skok.

FOF at November Naples Zoo Panther Festival

Debbie and Tom Trotta created this lovely display board to represent the FOF at the November Naples Zoo Panther Festival. **Well done and thank you!**



News from the Strand

Training for new volunteers who answered the call

On November 4, with an interpretive narrative handbook in hand, trainees embarked on the tram for a casual training session conducted by Glen Stacell, who came out of retirement for the day. Glen is a retired teacher in general science, biology, earth science, physical science and environmental science.

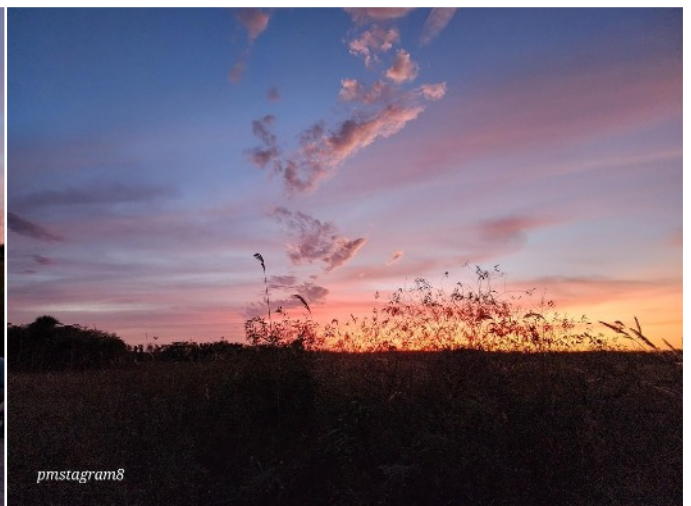
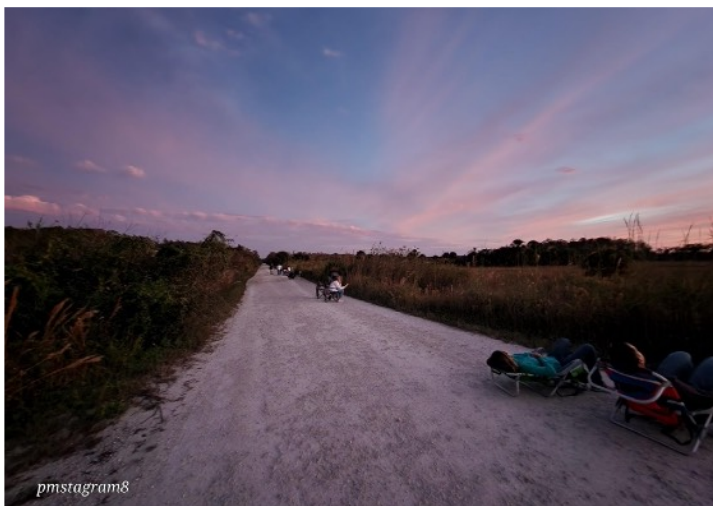


President Glen Stacell (center), extends a very special thanks to everyone who answered the call to help guide the Friends tram tour. From left to right: Tom Maish, Dick Brewer, Ted DeGroot, Glen Stacell, Carol Spangnolo, Norma Gordon, and Jason Brookes. Photo by Francine Stevens.



Glen Stacell with a box turtle who wanted to join the class. Photo by Dick Brewer.

Sky clears for Night Sky Tour



One never knows! An overcast afternoon did not bode well for the Night Sky Session on November 4, but the clouds dissipated just in time for a very pleasant evening! Photos by Phil McGuire.

Volunteers needed for new Visitor Center



We are seeking dedicated volunteers to provide services at the newly renovated Visitor Center off Janes Scenic Drive. Volunteers will be responsible for informing visitors on how to best enjoy their experience in the Park. They will also manage selling merchandise for the Friends of Fakahatchee, raising funds to support the Park, keeping track of the inventory and completing daily paperwork.

Please note that **each volunteer is not required to do all the above**; we can accomplish all this by teaming up volunteers.

Volunteers will be trained (by the Friends) on how to operate the point-of-sale device for credit card sales of the merchandise. *They will also have the opportunity to attend regular outings in the park to gain helpful knowledge to inform visitors.*

Our new Visitor Center offers a professional yet relaxing atmosphere, and having fun while volunteering is expected!

Interested individuals can contact Volunteer Manager Alex Gobel at: Alex.Gobel@FloridaDEP.gov, Office Phone: (239)-961-1925.

Calling all Volunteers!



Alex Gobel welcomes your call or e-mail regarding volunteer opportunities for many kinds of help!

Projects such as clearing trails, wildlife and plant surveys, equipment maintenance and more are always in need of volunteers. Park Staff will provide you with the training to conduct surveys and/or operate equipment safely to work in the field.

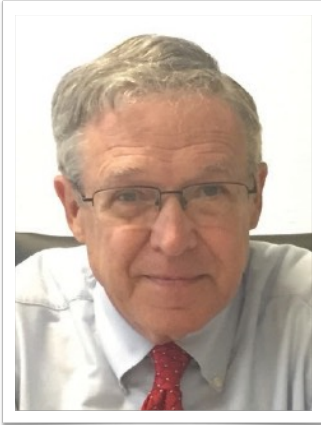
Work such as greeting and orienting visitors – and in the near future volunteering at the new Boardwalk site – are needed and can be enjoyed by anyone who prefers less strenuous tasks.



You can contact Alex by e-mail at Alex.gobel@floridadep.gov or you can phone him at 239-359-4927.

Donation Strategies by Chris Fair

The importance of Basis.



Ask someone from Europe or Asia what is the most difficult language to learn and chances are English will be the answer hands down. One reason of course is that in English, the same word can have different meanings.

A good example is the word basis. In the world of finance, you cannot have a conversation about investments, financial planning – or for us, gifting to Friends – without an analysis of basis. Simply put, basis is what you have paid for an asset. So, if you sell something for more than your basis you have incurred a capital gain to be reported on your income tax return. The same of course if you receive

less than your basis, you have incurred a loss.

An easy concept yes, but in planning and practice it is anything but. Consider mutual funds where you are reinvesting dividends and capital gains. Your basis changes with every transaction. Or your favorite stocks where you have accumulated shares with separate purchases over many years. Your basis is different for each purchase.

If you are considering a gift of securities, the rule to follow is never gift something valued at less than your basis. Simply sell the security to take a tax loss and gift the cash proceeds. With accumulated shares, you can divide the holding into tax lots and select the most advantageous or simply average your basis given your total investment divided by the number of shares.

If you have inherited shares of stock, or anything else for that matter, your basis in the vast majority of cases is the date of death value of the holding. This is known as receiving a step up in basis which greatly simplifies decision making.

For real estate investment properties, basis becomes very complicated due to things like depreciation expense and capital improvements.

So, know your basis before you give. And be ready to do some research with your investment and tax advisor to insure the best result.

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 financial matters, 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

Members make a difference!

No new members.

We have 355 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:
[#fakahatcheestrland](#), [#friendsoffakahatchee](#),
[#fakahatcheestrlandpreservestatepark](#)

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

Dec 16, 2023
January 21, 2024
February 18, 2024
March 23, 2024

Meetings are scheduled
for 10:30 AM

Contact the Friends of
Fakahatchee at office@fofinc.org
or call 239-695-1023.



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 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/>.

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