



Friends of Fakahatchee, Inc.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____

- Individual (\$20)
 Family (\$30)
 Patron (\$100)
 Benefactor (\$500)
 Lifetime Individual (\$1,000)
 Lifetime Family (\$1,500)
 Protector of the Ghost Orchid (\$2,500)
 Preserver of the Fakahatchee (\$5,000)
 Business Patron (\$200)
 Business Benefactor (\$500)
 Extra Donation (\$ _____)
 Youth (\$10) under 18 (birth date: month ___ day ___ year ____)

Please make check payable to "FOF" and send to
 FOF Membership, P.O.Box 35, Everglades City, FL, 34139

NAME _____

STREET / P.O.BOX: _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONES _____

EMAIL _____

ALTERNATE ADDRESS

STREET / P.O.BOX: _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONES _____

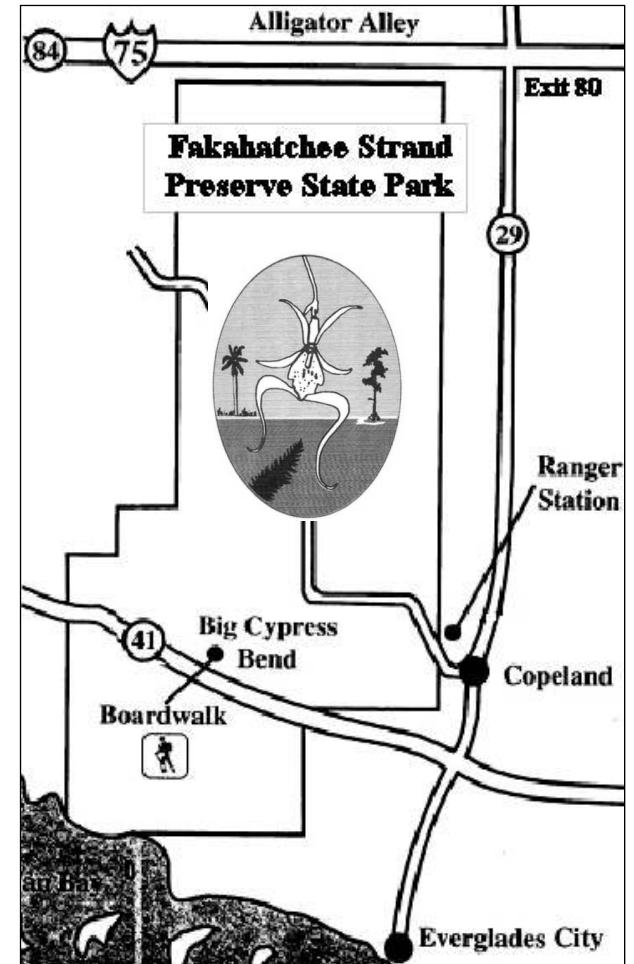
MONTHS AT ALTERNATE ADDRESS:

- JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN
 JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Memberships are renewable annually during the quarter in which you join, except for Lifetime categories. Members must be at least 18 years old to vote. Youth members turning 18 must upgrade to another membership level.

One vote in meetings and elections is assigned to each membership of whatever category, except for Youth. If members of a family want to vote separately, they should consider joining separately.

Email addresses are used for official business only. The list is kept confidential and never shared.



Friends of Fakahatchee

Striving to Preserve this Unique Ecology
"Home of the Ghost Orchid"

P. O. Box 35, Everglades City, FL, 34139
 reservations: (239) 695-1023

www.orchidswamp.org

Friends of Fakahatchee, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for profit corporation registered in the State of Florida

ECOLOGY

The **Fakahatchee Strand** is approximately 20 miles long and 3 to 5 miles wide. It is the main drainage slough of the southwestern Big Cypress Swamp; the *largest and most unusual of the strands*. The **cypress & mixed hardwood** swamp is a unique feature.

The natural values of the Fakahatchee are arguably greater than those of any other comparably-sized area in Florida. It contains the largest stand of **royal palms** and the largest concentration and variety of **orchids** in North America, as well as other species of plants that are extremely rare.

The wildlife of the Strand is equally rare. Endangered or threatened species include **Florida Panther, Black Bear, Everglades Mink, Wood Stork and Bald Eagle**.

The **Boardwalk** at Big Cypress Bend on US-41 (Tamiami Trail) is our window into the Fakahatchee. This pristine swamp forest was saved from logging in the late 1960 by Naples philanthropist Lester Norris who built the first boardwalk for the public. Volunteers from the Friends often greet visitors and lead tours. Ongoing renovation is carried out by them on behalf of the Park and there are plans for expansion, including improved parking and visitor amenities.

At the **East River Canoe/Kayak Launch** (south of US-41) you can paddle through the mangrove wilderness into Fakahatchee Bay. The platform and facilities were funded partly by the Friends.

HISTORY

The Fakahatchee was purchased in the early 1900s by logging interests but never used. In 1922 Henry Ford, after camping nearby with Thomas Edison, offered to buy it for the State but no parks system existed then. By 1943 the land was owned by Lee Tidewater Cypress Company. Logging of the difficult terrain was deemed worthwhile to support the World War II effort with impenetrable cypress to build PT boats and the decks of aircraft carriers.

A town was constructed by the company and the main logging rail line constructed on what is now Janes Scenic Drive. Spurs (our East Main, West Main, etc) led out to virgin timber. The logs were loaded onto freight cars and transported to the mill in Perry, northern Florida.

Logging stopped in 1957 when all the easily-accessible trees had been felled. Gulf American Corporation developed Golden Gates Estates to the west and then bought the logged-over land in the Fakahatchee which it promoted as Remuda Ranch Grants.

By this time, Miami attorney Mel Finn had discovered the wealth of orchids and other rare plants in the Fakahatchee. He lobbied to save the strand. Jane Parks from Naples mobilized the Women's Club and collected 176 feet of signatures for the cause. After advice from Nathaniel Pryor Reed, Franklin Adams, and others, the State bought 24,568 acres in 1974 under the Environmentally Endangered Lands Act. Further acquisitions followed and continue to this day as GAC owners sell or donate their remote lots.

The Preserve was converted in name to a State Park in 2000 but its approximately 80,000 acres is considered by many to be a unique ecology worth maintaining and preserving.

For more history and old photos, see our website www.orchidswamp.org.

Friends of Fakahatchee, Inc.

The **Friends of Fakahatchee** was founded in 1998 to help maintain and protect this natural legacy. The Friends organization is a Florida not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that relies on membership fees and private donations to pursue activities on behalf of the Preserve.

As a Citizens' Support Organization, the Friends work closely with the Park Service in order to **accomplish** the following:

- greet visitors at the Boardwalk, repair and maintain the Boardwalk
- volunteer to help clear trails and remove exotics, fund prescribed burns and other essential park maintenance
- distribute information to the general public and participate in community events
- solicit support (financial and moral) for preservation of the Strand

As a member of the Friends, you will be able to **join in numerous activities**:

- swamp walks led by a ranger/naturalist
- coastal cruises to Fakahatchee Island
- wildlife watching opportunities
- tram surveys, other volunteer work
- membership dinners, talks, picnics
- members' meetings and specialist committees (eg, Education, Events, Finance)

MISSION STATEMENT

The Friends of Fakahatchee strive to preserve this ecologically unique area and to educate the public about its importance.