

THE FLORIDA MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

A Natural History Training Program



Central Region Update

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1. FMNP Newsletter Survey

Tell Us What You Think!

The FMNP Program Office is in the process of identifying ways in which we can improve our communications with instructors, students and supporters. By determining which efforts are effective and which are not, we will be better able to provide you with the information you find most useful. This will also help us to improve the efficiency with which we manage program services and activities.

The first item up for review is the FMNP Newsletter. As you know, our Newsletters are currently published monthly. We are interested in finding out how many of you read the FMNP Newsletter each month, and whether or not a quarterly Newsletter may be more appropriate, among other things.

Tell us what you think! **Please take a moment to answer a few questions about the FMNP Newsletter by completing a brief (5 questions) survey [here](#).** Username: **misc** Password: **fmnp12?** (don't forget the question mark!)

Thank you!

2. Instructor's Corner

FMNP Instructor Uses Needs Assessments to Help Guide FMNP Class Planning

How do you plan for your FMNP classes?

Rosalyn Kilcollins, Coastal Training Program Coordinator for the [Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) and veteran FMNP Instructor, uses a "needs assessment" to assist her in evaluating interest among potential participants for FMNP classes. Prior to scheduling an FMNP course, Rosalyn sends a survey via "SurveyMonkey.com" to potential students to determine their educational needs and preferences. This process identifies whether enough people are interested in the course, the days on which they prefer to have class, and dates the majority of potential students would not be available, among other things.

This process of conducting such assessments has been key to helping the Apalachicola NERR's Coastal Training Program provide FMNP Courses that meet the needs of potential students and keeping class enrollment high. Since many of the Coastal Training Program's students are coastal resource policy-makers, providing them with access to science-based information, such as that presented in the FMNP, is critical to effective natural resource management in the region.

You can view the survey Rosalyn sent prior to scheduling an Upland Habitats course last year [here](#). You can use this as a guide to create your own survey with [SurveyMonkey.com](#) or similar online survey providers. Thanks to Rosalyn for providing this contribution to the FMNP Instructor's Corner.

Biodiversity Hotspot: The Florida Panhandle

Did you know that the Florida Panhandle is considered one of the most biologically diverse areas in the country?

[Biodiversity Hotspot: The Florida Panhandle](#) (BioScience, October 2008, Vol. 58 No. 9) discusses some of the habitats that occur in northwest Florida and the incredible biodiversity contained within them. Some of the factors that have contributed to the high species richness in this region are also described, with commentary from local expert biologists and ecologists. Conservation and restoration efforts, which have been crucial to maintaining the ecological integrity of northwest Florida, are outlined, as are the environmental pressures that threaten to disrupt the area's delicate natural balance.

The article is a great resource for introducing students to the uniqueness of the Florida Panhandle and its ecology. Thanks to Instructor Bryan Fluech for sharing the article with us!

Receive a Free FMNP T-Shirt if We Publish Your Class Activity, Exercise or Tip in Our Newsletter!

FMNP Instructors - Help us provide information that may be useful to other instructors in this section each month. We want to know about any activities, exercises or tips that you have incorporated into your FMNP classes that have enhanced the learning experience of your students. Submissions can be emailed to info@masternaturalist.org. Please include your name, mailing address and t-shirt size (men's or women's). Thank You!

3. Area Programs & Events

6th Annual Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival

What: Mark your calendars for the 6th annual Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival. Each year, vendors line West Indiana Avenue to offer potted wildflowers, a wide range of plants, seeds, garden utensils, yard ornaments, books and more. Joining them will be organizations such as the Florida Wildflower Foundation, garden clubs and local chapters of the Florida Native Plant Society.

Festival-goers will also enjoy free wildflower and gardening presentations at the historic Athens Theatre and hands-on workshops in Chess Park on composting, raised-bed gardening, Florida Friendly landscaping, natural pest control, and herb and flower gardening.

This event provides fun for the whole family with a kid's art zone provided by the Museum of Florida Art, a coloring contest and live music by folk band, Somethin' Else.

A shuttle will run throughout the day between the Wildflower & Garden Festival and the DeLand Outdoor Art Festival at Earl Brown Park.

When: March 24, 2012
9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Where: West Indiana Avenue in Historic Downtown DeLand, FL

Cost: FREE Admission and parking

Website: www.floridawildflowerfestival.com

Advertise your events here!

Do you have an event or program that might be of interest to FMNP instructors or grads?
Send details to us at info@masternaturalist.org.

Announcements must be received no later than the 15th of the month prior to your event.

4. Orange County Freshwater Wetlands Class

April 18-May 23, 2012
Registration closes February 16, 2012
(Course Code: fw12-02)

[Register](#)

Facility Information

UF/IFAS Orange County Extension Office
6021 South Conway Road, Orlando, FL 32812

Instructors Information

Jennifer Ramos
Assistant Instructor: Peggy
Organization: Orange County Extension Service
Phone: 407-254-9224
Fax: 407-850-5125
Email: jennifer.ramos@ocfl.net, Web Site: <http://orange.ifas.ufl.edu/>

5. Osceola County Freshwater Wetlands Class

March 21-May 2, 2012
Registration closes March 14, 2012
(Course Code: fw12-03)

[Register](#)

Facilities Information

UF/IFAS Osceola County Extension Office, Osceola Heritage Park
1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34744

Forever Florida
4755 N. Kenansville Road, St. Cloud, Florida 34773
Phone: 1-866-85-4EVER

Instructors Information

Eleanor Foerste, Faculty, Natural Resources for Osceola County Extension
Kelly Wagner, Director of Education, Forever Florida and
Capt. Ray Robida
Organizations: UF/IFAS Osceola County Extension Service and Forever Florida
Phone: 321-697-3000 (Eleanor); 407-433-5485 (Kelly); 407-288-2471 (Ray)
Email: efoe@osceola.org (Eleanor); education@floridaecosafaris.com (Kelly);
capt_ray@embarqmail.com (Ray)

6. Orange County Upland Habitats Class

February 23-March 29, 2012
Registration closes February 16, 2012
(Course Code: uh12-07)

[Register](#)

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UF/IFAS Orange County Extension Office
6021 South Conway Road, Orlando, FL 32812

Instructor Information

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