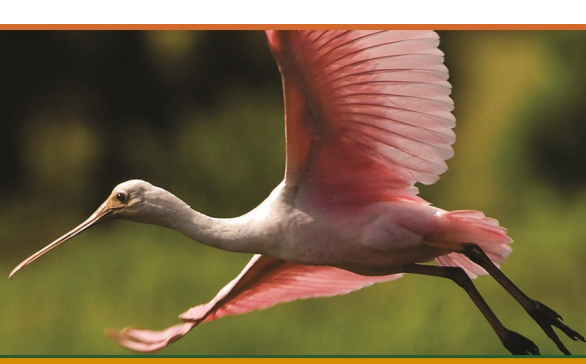


THE FLORIDA MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

A Natural History Training Program



Central West Region Update

In This Issue:

1. FMNP Newsletter to be Published Bimonthly
2. Letter from Dr. Main - Reporting Your FMNP Credentials
3. Indian River Lagoon Bull Shark Nursery
4. Instructor's Corner - Tree Height Measurement Exercise
5. Area Programs & Events
6. Sarasota County Upland Habitats Class

1. FMNP Newsletter

Transitioning to Bimonthly Publication

In order to continue to serve the needs of our readers while also managing our tasks most efficiently, we have decided to begin publishing the FMNP newsletter on a bimonthly basis (odd-numbered months). Feedback gathered from the short survey we included in the February newsletter indicated that the majority of readers are most interested in learning about local events and volunteer opportunities. A number of others also indicated that they would like to see more articles about ecological/environmental topics. Accordingly, we will be including more of these types of information in future issues of the newsletter. Thank you to all of you who took the time to respond to our brief survey.

2. Letter from Dr. Main - Your FMNP Credentials

Dear FMNP Graduates,

Recently, I have received some comments and questions regarding whether it is appropriate to refer to oneself as a Florida Master Naturalist if that individual has not completed all three core modules (Coastal, Uplands, and Wetlands). Technically speaking, an individual must complete all three core modules to become a certified Florida Master Naturalist. However, it is also true that a person who completes a single core module is a graduate of the FMNP and can rightfully describe themselves as a master naturalist, although they should clarify their accomplishment on resumes and other public announcements, such as a Florida Coastal Master Naturalist, or a Florida Coastal and Wetlands Master Naturalist. This does not always happen of course (for one reason it is a bit wordy to do so).

In addition to highlighting the accomplishments of FMNP graduates, this is the reason we established an online FMNP Graduate Database and the Master Naturalist Honor Role on the FMNP website. The FMNP Graduate Database lists all graduates and their classes completed. The Honor Role only lists certified Florida Master Naturalists who have completed all three core modules. These links enable potential employers, school districts that need to check CEU credits, and other interested individuals to confirm which courses have been completed by FMNP graduates.

We are now also offering Special Topics courses that are shorter and focused on specific subjects, such as methods for monitoring wildlife. Persons who complete Special Topics courses will also be listed in the FMNP Graduate Database, but it would be inappropriate for them to describe themselves as Florida Master Naturalists unless they also take the FMNP core modules.

So, should we get overly worked up about it if we see someone referred to in a newspaper article as a Florida Master Naturalist who has not completed all three core modules? I don't think so. I think the more important issue is that we recognize all FMNP graduates as united in a common effort to learn about Florida's natural world and to share their knowledge and passion for nature with others. In so doing we are promoting environmental literacy and a stronger conservation ethic that will help ensure Florida's natural treasures are available for future generations to enjoy. In that regard we are not just Florida Master Naturalists, we are kindred spirits as well.

3. Indian River Lagoon Bull Shark Nursery

Lagoon Critical to East Coast Bull Shark Populations

"Scientists studying the Indian River Lagoon, long considered one of the world's richest ecosystems, say new findings show the lagoon is a critical nursery for one of the ocean's top predators."

You can read the remainder of this article, "Researchers say Indian River Lagoon bull shark nursery critical," by Dinah Voyles Pulver of The Daytona Beach News-Journal [here](#).

4. Instructor's Corner

FMNP Instructor Teaches Students How to Measure Tree Heights Using Multiple Methods

Brandon Smith, FMNP Instructor and Environmental Program Coordinator for the [Riverwalk Nature Center](#) in Brevard County, has students complete the activity described below to acquaint themselves with several of the methods commonly used to measure tree heights.

Brandon states, "I have my uplands students measure tree height utilizing different methods. They use a Merritt Hypsometer, clinometer (both homemade and professional), and their own shadow to measure the height of a tree. I have them break into groups and each group member uses a different method to measure a tree. If time allows, they can measure a second tree with each person trying a new measurement method. We then compare the measurements to see how much variation each method gives and discuss [their] pros and cons. [The number of] groups will depend on the amount of equipment you have." The data sheet that Brandon uses to collect the data can be accessed [here](#).

Brandon used the following resources to make the equipment:

- Merritt Hypsometer - instructions can be found at <http://bit.ly/Ab6eGE> below the table of contents. You can include a Biltmore Stick scale (for measuring tree diameter) on the opposite side of the cruiser stick from the hypsometer scale (instructions available on the same page).
- Cardboard clinometer - instructions can be found at <http://www.subtangent.com/math/resources/clinometer.pdf>. Brandon recommends using McDonald's straws as they have a larger diameter than other straws, which makes them easier to see through (they are also free!). The tangent table that Brandon made to place on the other side of the clinometer so you only need a basic calculator in the field can be accessed [here](#).
- Shadow ratio method-instructions can be found at Project Learning Tree http://www.learnoutside.org/images/PLT_Activity_67_HowBigIsYourTree_7-30.pdf.

Thank you Brandon for sharing this activity!

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!

5. Area Programs & Events

Florida FWC Requests Assistance With Coyote Diet Study

Coyotes needed!

Florida coyote carcasses are needed for a diet study being conducted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the University of Florida. The stomach contents of the carcasses will be evaluated.

FWC investigators will take or collect road-killed, hunted, trapped or otherwise euthanized coyotes, with special interest in coyotes collected from urban settings. For coyote collection, please report the location of road-killed coyotes or contact information for coyote trappers to FWC biologists:

Gretchen Hochnedel (863)660-8028 or
Danny Caudill (352)955-2081 x111

In many counties, Animal Services may be willing to collect and temporarily store coyote carcasses for this project. If carcasses are being removed from the place of death, please record a detailed description of the location, cause of death (if known) and time. Thank you for contributing to this important research.

Chinsegut Birding and Wildlife Festival, and Arts in the Woods

Where: Chinsegut Conservation Center
23212 Lake Lindsey Rd.
Brooksville, FL
(352) 754-6722

When: Saturday, March 24, 2012
9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

Activities: Early morning hikes (burrowing owl hikes at 7:30 a.m.)
Sparrow drive
Live animals
K-9 demonstration
Hands-on youth activities
Nature art show
Exhibits and presentations throughout the day
Food vendors

Partner Hotels: Mention the Chinsegut Birding and Wildlife Festival at the Hampton Inn (352) 796-1000 and the Quality Inn (352) 796-9481 to receive reduced rates. For additional lodging information, please visit naturallyhernando.org.

Come on over on Friday and stay the weekend!

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.

6. Sarasota County Upland Habitats Class

[Sarasota County](#)
[May 26-June 23, 2012](#)
[Registration closes May 18, 2012](#)
[\(Course Code: uh12-10\)](#)

[Register](#)

Facility Information

UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension
Twin Lakes Park: Green Room
6700 Clark Road, Sarasota, FL 34241

Colonial Oaks Park: Room A
5300 Colonial Oaks Boulevard, Sarasota, FL 34232

Instructor Information

Robert Kluson, AG/NR Extension Agent III
Organization: Sarasota County Extension Service
Phone: 941.232.3090
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