

THE FLORIDA MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

A Natural History Training Program



Northwest Region Update

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1. Steven Gaul Memorial Scholarship

FMNP Honors Instructor Steven Gaul with Memorial Scholarship

It is with great sadness that the FMNP has had to say goodbye to longtime colleague and friend Steve Gaul, who passed away unexpectedly in August of this year. Steve joined the FMNP as an instructor in the Northeast Region in 2007. In addition to his role as instructor, Steve served as the UF/IFAS Natural Resources and Agriculture Extension Agent in Nassau County for the past six years and was an active member of the Florida Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals (FANREP).

To honor the memory of Steve Gaul, the FMNP and FANREP have created The Steven Gaul FMNP/FANREP Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship embodies Steve's passion for educating others about Florida's ecosystems by providing a Florida educator the opportunity to participate in the FMNP and expand his/her appreciation and knowledge of our state's natural environments. Scholarships will cover the cost of one FMNP core module or Special Topics course of the recipient's choice. In addition to the scholarship provided by the FMNP, a memorial scholarship fund is open for those who would like to contribute and will be used to award additional scholarships. If you wish to donate, you can do so securely online at <https://www.uff.ufl.edu/onlinegiving/FundDetail.asp?FundCode=003287&AppealCode=SA1K>. Please be sure to indicate the gift is in memory of Steven Gaul in the Memorial/Honorary Information tab. Donations are tax deductible.

Educators employed in public or private K-12 institutions and NGOs are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants should write a one-page essay (500 words or less) explaining why they are interested in the Florida Master Naturalist Program, how they plan to use the information they learn, and how they would benefit from this opportunity. Applicants should email their essay to Bryan Fluech at Fluech@ufl.edu and include their full name, mailing address, employer, email address, and telephone number. Please put "Steven Gaul Memorial Fund" in the subject line.



2. FMNP Webstore

Bring a Little Happy to Your Favorite Master Naturalist's Holidays with a Gift from the FMNP Webstore



Not sure what to get your favorite Master Naturalist for the holidays? The FMNP Webstore offers a wide variety of items including FMNP apparel and gear and reference materials. A portion of the proceeds from every sale directly supports the FMNP. Visit the Webstore at <http://fmnp-store.myshopify.com/>.

3. Audubon Shorebird Stewardship Program Looking for Volunteers

Are you looking for a great opportunity to volunteer some of your time to help the beautiful shorebirds that call Northwest Florida home? If so, the Audubon Shorebird Stewardship Program might be just for you.

In the FL Panhandle we have many wonderful and interesting birds that call our area beaches home. However, nearly all of these magnificent creatures are in a state of decline and many are in serious trouble. Loss of habitat, disasters like the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and other factors threaten many of our shoreline bird species.

Many of the birds we love to see and hear at the beach nest right on the sand, laying perfectly camouflaged eggs that can be easily overlooked. These eggs and chicks rely on mom and dad to protect them from predators, storms and the hot Florida sunshine. Often people or their pets unknowingly flush the parents off the nests. It then takes only moments for the hot sun or an opportunistic predator to harm or kill the chicks or eggs.

But there is hope. Shorebird Stewards have been making great strides across the state to help protect these birds during the nesting season when they are most vulnerable. The Shorebird Stewardship Program is now being implemented in the Florida Panhandle. Now is your chance to make a real difference by volunteering some of your time to help these birds. The main function of the Steward is to educate and protect. Stewards work a two to four-hour shift near a posted

Black Skimmers

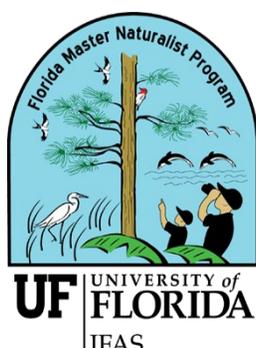


nesting site. They explain to beachgoers why that area of the beach is closed and teach them a little bit about the birds (all training will be provided). Stewards can even allow the public a chance to view the birds on the nests from a safe distance with a spotting scope. Other tasks stewards can help with include posting nesting areas, monitoring nests, assisting with shorebird surveys, and participating in beach cleanups.

If you are interested in becoming a Shorebird Steward, please contact Alan Knothe at (850) 200-6279 or aknothe@audubon.org to request a volunteer application form or to learn more about the program.



Sandwich Terns



Contact

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