Southwest Region Newsletter

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Happy Holidays From the FMNP

Wishing You Peace and Relaxation this Holiday Season

As the weather has finally begun to change here in SW Florida, I've been thinking about how fortunate we are as residents of our beautiful state to be able to enjoy the outdoors and all they have to offer throughout the year. Many of us will have some extra time off from work (or other activities) over the next two months. While much of this time may be occupied with holiday preparations and festivities, I'd like to encourage each of you to try to spend at least some of that time on the trail, in the woods or on the water. The winter season in Florida is nothing short of spectacular and we can all use a little of the unique peace and relaxation that only nature can bring.

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for a Wonderful New Year!

Sincerely,

Heather, Marty, Shelby and Sylvia

2014 FMNP Conference

Conference Registration Now Open

The annual Florida Master Naturalist Program Conference is returning in 2014 after a 5-year hiatus. FMNP graduates, current students, certified Master Naturalists and instructors are welcome to attend and take part in this opportunity to meet with others from around the state. The conference will feature workshops, field trips, presentations and plenty of opportunities to network with friends both old and new.

The conference will take place in Cape Canaveral on March 28-30, 2014. For additional information and/or to register, please visit http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/2014_conference.aspx .

FMNP Newsletter Article Submissions

Instructors, Graduates and Cooperators Encouraged to Submit Articles

We would like to remind everyone that we welcome article submissions for our bi-monthly newsletter. Do you have an interesting accomplishment, educational event announcement or job opportunity to share? Article submissions must be received by the 15th of the month prior to the month the newsletter will be published to be considered. We accept a variety of articles, and especially welcome FMNP-related information. The first newsletter of 2014 will be published in February. Submissions and/or questions can be sent to info@masternaturalist.org.

Forest Health Diagnostic Forum

Expert Advice on Pests and Diseases on Your Trees – For Free!

Do you have a pest or disease in your trees? Leaves or needles wilting, and you do not know why? Sawdust falling out of the bark, and you do not know what to do? There is help! Ask your question(s) at the new Forest Health Diagnostics Forum. You can access the Forum at http://sfrc.ufl.edu/treehealth/forum/. The Forum is managed by five forest health specialists at the University of Florida and the Florida Forest Service. It serves as a quick and accurate forest pest and disease diagnostic tool for Florida residents. The Forum is free to use, logging in is easy, and answers to your question are provided almost instantly.

Tired of looking for the right specialist to identify your tree problem? The Forum has many advantages:

- Get help fast, and from multiple experts – your question goes instantly to five specialists.
- Someone has probably already asked your question – just look up our answers!
- Your question and our answers will stay there for others to see.
- Get answer notifications to your email inbox.

Bookmark the site now, and tell your friends, too!

Florida Environmental Literacy Plan

Call for Public Review and Feedback

The goal of the Florida Environmental Literacy Plan (FLEP) is an increasingly environmentally literate population brought about through high quality environmental education. To achieve environmental literacy through environmental education, the FELP relies heavily on a strategy that includes three elements:

1. Build on existing mandates and missions of the key players;

2. Promote continuity, coordination, and where appropriate, consolidation, to better measure and aggregate results at the state level; and

3. Recognize the value in small, practical and no or low-cost steps that yield measurable results in the near term.

Your can review the Plan and provide feedback by completing the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/flenvironmentalliteracyplanreview by January 31, 2014. Please share this site with others you feel would have an opinion on creating a more environmentally literate citizenry.

Local News & Events

Festival in the Woods at Picayune Strand

You are invited to the Festival in the Woods at Picayune Strand to help celebrate the unique ecology of Picayune Strand State Forest in Collier County. The Festival will take place on Saturday, January 25, 2014 from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm. **Free admission, parking and lunch!**

The Festival will feature:

- Guided hikes on the Sabal Palm Trail (part of the Great Florida Birding Trail)*
- Wildlife presentations by local biologists*
- Guided bicycle tours*
- Native plant giveaways
- Children's activities
- Local environmental exhibitors and vendors, including organic products produced right on the Forest (produce and honey)

**Space is limited for these activities, please register in advance. Participation will be on a first come, first served basis, space permitting, on day of event.*

For more information, please view the Festival announcement here (scroll to page 2 for the Festival schedule) http://www.freshfromflorida.com/content/download/32310/790410/Festival_In_the_woods_Picayune.pdf.

To register for an activity, please contact Heather Ferrand at heather.ferrand@freshfromflorida.com or (239) 690-3500, ext. 104. Please include the name of the activity and the desired time slot in your registration request.

We also have several **volunteer opportunities** available to assist with the Festival. Please contact Heather for more information. Thank you!

Lee County Freshwater Wetlands Class

January 17- February 21, 2014

Registration closes at 9:00am on January 13, 2014
(Course Code: fw14-06)

Facility Information:
Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve: Interpretive Center
7751 Penzance Blvd., Fort Myers, FL 33966

Instructor Information:
Joy Hazell, Sea Grant Extension Agent and
Roy Beckford, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent
Organization: UF/IFAS Lee County Extension
Phone: 239-707-1267
Email: jhazell@ufl.edu
Web site: http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu

Lee County Coastal Systems Class

January 2-30, 2014

Registration closes at 9:00am on December 24, 2013
(Course Code: cs14-04)

Facility Information:
Ostego Bay Foundation Marine Science Center: Bonita Fish Co. Building
718 Fisherman's Wharf Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

Instructor Information:
Joanne Semmer
Assistant: Connie Langmann
Organization: Ostego Bay Foundation Marine Science Center
Phone: 239-765-8101
Fax: 239-463-0865
Email: info@ostegobay.org
Website: http://www.ostegobay.org

Contact

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