



THE FLORIDA MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

A Natural History Training Program

Southwest Region Newsletter

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FMNP Welcomes Kate Hellgren

New Program Coordinator Brings Experience and Enthusiasm

We are excited to introduce you to our new Program Coordinator, Mrs. Kate Hellgren.

Kate spent her childhood (outdoors) in coastal Maine. She acquired a B.A. in Biological Sciences from Mount Holyoke College and an M.S. in Wildlife Sciences from Virginia Tech. In addition to her academic credentials, Kate has held coordinator positions (primarily in Environmental Education) at Texas A & M University, Oklahoma State University and Southern Illinois University. She and her husband Eric have two adult children, Tess and Luke. Her favorite hobby is exploring our natural world.

According to Kate, "this opportunity with the FMNP allows me to follow my passion of helping connect people with our wondrous planet. I am very privileged to work with people who desire to enhance and share their knowledge to increase eco-literacy and environmental health. I look forward to meeting many of you at our upcoming conference and encourage you to contact me (I should have a UF email address by the time you read this!) if ever you have any questions or concerns about the FMNP."

Welcome to the FMNP Kate! We are delighted to have you on board!



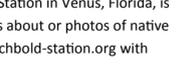
2014 FMNP Conference

Early Registration Deadline Has Been Extended!

The deadline to register for the 2014 FMNP Conference at the early reduced rate of \$225 has been extended to **February 28!** Register today to take part in this exciting, educational, and fun-filled event!



With the exception of the instructor lessons workshop, Friday workshops will be available to all attendees. Additional Friday programming is also currently being added, and a tentative detailed program agenda for the entire conference will be announced soon.



Exhibitor applications are due **February 7!** Do not miss this opportunity to showcase your organization among the statewide FMNP community. If you know of any organizations that may be interested in exhibiting, please help spread the word. For more information and to submit an online exhibitor application, click here.

We want your input! Dr. Mark Deyrup, Senior Research Biologist at the Archbold Biological Station in Venus, Florida, is scheduled to present on Florida's native bees and their natural history. If you have questions about or photos of native bees that you would like addressed in this presentation, please email them to MDeyrup@archbold-station.org with subject line "FMNP Bees".

Stay tuned to the conference website for up-to-date information, and be on the lookout for the detailed program agenda announcement with the list of scheduled topics and presenters. We hope to see you in March!

Congratulations Advanced Florida Master Naturalists!

Graduates Share their Experiences and Thoughts on Program

We are happy to report that 18 students have become Advanced Florida Master Naturalists since September 2013. We congratulate these graduates on their remarkable achievement and applaud their dedication and commitment to learning about Florida's ecology.

Below we share some of the sentiments expressed by our recently-graduated Advanced Florida Master Naturalists in response to these three questions: 1. *What did you like best about your experience with the FMNP?* 2. *What do you plan to do with the knowledge you gained from the Program?* 3. *Anything additional you'd like to add?*

"I was able to learn new methods to understand and learn about Florida's environment. By taking classes at various centers, I was able to visit parks and nature preserves that I might have never visited." - *Sil Crespo, AFMN, November 2013*

"I enjoyed all aspects of the program; Wildlife Monitoring would be my favorite. John [Pipoly] and Kristen [Hoss] are top-notch instructors." "As a business owner, I look forward to educating my clients and practicing what I've learned in the program and also continuing to do volunteer work with schools and kids in need." "Let's try to get more modules/topics incorporated." - *Ludwig Sabillon, AFMN, December 2013*

"Meeting like-minded people and learning all about our environment." "I'm a Florida Trail Activity Leader volunteer and I take people on hikes. With the knowledge I gained I can explain to them what we see and why things are the way they are." "What is next? There is much more to learn." - *Ester Muram, AFMN, December 2013*



"Taking these classes opened a door for me that I never believed would be open. I always wanted to be a person who could study nature and have enough knowledge to make some difference in preserving the natural world around us. Now, in retirement, that has happened. I expect to keep on learning, of course, and I hope to find a "volunteer home" where I can pass on what I have learned to others." - *Melinda Munger, AFMN, December 2013*



"What I liked best was meeting all of the instructors, students, speakers... everyone! So many like-minded people that I now have a connection with. I had planned to utilize my new-found knowledge by sharing it with others, and as a result of the program and everything I've learned from it, I am now the manager of a nature center and sharing my knowledge everyday with everyone that comes through the nature center." - *Becky Weeks, AFMN, December 2013*



Congratulations to all of our Advanced Florida Master Naturalists!

Rescued Sea Turtles Released

FWC and Partners Release Dozens of Sea Turtles Rescued from Cold in Northwest Florida Waters

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and several partners returned approximately 50 sea turtles to the Gulf of Mexico on January 14, 2014 after the animals were rescued the previous week from cold water temperatures.



"It is very satisfying to be able to release these turtles following the exhaustive effort put in by rescuers last week," said Dr. Allen Foley, FWC sea turtle biologist. "Our staff, partners and volunteers spent many hours braving cold conditions to search for and rescue these cold-stunned turtles."

The sea turtles were rescued between January 7 and January 9, when water temperatures dipped below 50 degrees, causing cold-stunning. Cold-stunned turtles may float listlessly in the water or wash ashore, largely unable to move. In this state, they are susceptible to further effects from the weather, and to attacks by gulls that often involve eye injuries. Many of these turtles would die without human intervention.

Most of the turtles were found in St. Joseph Bay, while others were rescued near Crooked Island and in Big Lagoon in Escambia County. The affected sea turtles were mainly green turtles, but a few were Kemp's ridleys. Both species are endangered. The rescued turtles were all taken to Gulf World Marine Park in Panama City to allow them to recover from exposure to the unusually low water temperatures.

A water-temperature-monitoring buoy in St. Joseph Bay allows biologists to predict when sea turtle cold-stunning may occur. Thanks to this, responders were ready with a plan of action for this event. There is no forecast of cold-stunning conditions returning to the area in the near future.

The turtles were tagged before their release to allow researchers to individually identify them if any are encountered again in the future. Biologists chose to release the turtles into the Gulf at Cape Palms Park on Cape San Blas because the water is warmer and turtles released in the area in the past have returned to St. Joseph Bay, which is a known feeding area.

The public is asked to report any stranded, injured or dead sea turtles to the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922) or #FWC or *FWC on a cell phone. Florida residents can help support sea turtle research and response efforts by purchasing a sea turtle license plate at BuyaPlate.com or through their local tax collector.

For more information about Florida's sea turtles, visit MyFWC.com/Research or MyFWC.com/SeaTurtle.

Florida Master Naturalist Arliss Ryan

Graduate Shares her FMNP Experience

If you love nature and being outdoors, living in a northern clime can put a real damper on the fun during the wintertime. So when my husband and I moved to St. Augustine from Newport, RI, in 2003, it was like stepping through a magic door into a world of warmth and sunshine. Already an avid birder, I wanted to learn about everything, from the wildflowers to the live oak trees to the spiders and butterflies.

I signed up for the Florida Master Naturalist Program and began volunteering with environmental organizations. I lead monthly bird walks at Anastasia and Fort Mose Historic State Parks, assist with the surveying of the Anastasia Island beach mouse, and scan the sea for whales with the North Atlantic Right Whale Survey project based at Marineland. It was in my FMNP classes that I first learned about the beach mouse and the right whale, both endangered species that depend on our Florida coast and offshore waters for habitat.

As a Florida Master Naturalist, teacher and writer, I'm especially concerned about education. Providing opportunities for people of all ages to experience and learn about the environment is the first step in protecting it. I'm delighted to have first-time birders and families with children on my bird walks and have written for environmental agencies. My latest novel, Sanctuary, features a group of environmentalists and eccentric birders who are trying to save a rundown estate by turning it into a nature preserve. The pure pleasure of reading aside, fiction can inspire curiosity about issues like land preservation that previously may not have been on someone's radar.

Often when I'm out birding or hiking, the FMNP pins on my hat lead to questions about the program, and I'm happy to fill people in. Whether you're a newcomer to Florida as I was or a longtime resident, it's a great way to learn more about our beautiful environment.

Article courtesy of [Arliss Ryan](http://Arliss.Ryan).

Local News & Events

Birder Job Opportunity in Southwest Florida

Company: State Events
Position: Part-time Group Leader Assistant (Independent Contractor)
Compensation: \$95.00 per day (average 5-6 hrs. per day)

Description:

- * Knowledge of Florida West Coast Birds
- * Florida Master Naturalist is a plus
- * Assist our Group Leaders with groups of 15 - 24 participants
- * Seasonal Programs (Jan - April)
- * Experience working with people
- * Strong communication skills
- * Valid drivers license and ability to drive 15-passenger van
- * CPR and first aid certification (company will reimburse expenses to obtain)
- * Ability to manage multiple tasks, develop solutions to problems, and establish and maintain effective relationships with other staff and participants

For more information or to apply, please contact Alberto Melendez at (407) 949-2929 or algarcia860@yahoo.com.

Friends of Barefoot Beach Preserve Programs

2014 Naturalists Walks & Talks

Beachcombing & Shelling – Barefoot Beach Preserve: Mondays and Fridays at 10 a.m.

Exploring Coastal Habitats – Barefoot Beach Preserve: Wednesdays at 9 a.m.

Guided Nature Walk - Barefoot Beach Preserve: Saturdays at 9 a.m.

2014 Lecture Series

10:00 a.m. — 11:00 a.m.

Meet at the Learning Center at Barefoot Beach Preserve. Program Cost: Free (There is an entrance fee into the park for those who do not have a current Collier County park permit.) Directions: Turn south off Bonita Beach Drive onto Barefoot Beach Blvd., go about 1 ½ miles to park entrance. Park in the first parking area on the right and meet at the Learning Center.

February 8 Bats of Florida - Allyson Webb

February 15 Climate Change in Big Cypress - Lisa Andrews

February 22 Snakes Of Florida, Including Pythons - Mike Knight

March 1 Butterflies - Christine Cook

March 8 Theory of Everything - Jack Berninger

March 15 Catching & Eating Blue Crabs - Eric Prevatt (to be confirmed)

March 22 Naples Zoo and Gardens Past, Present & Future - Jack Mulvena

March 29 Beer Worms, Square Grouper & Indians Maureen Sullivan-Hartung

April 5 Exploring Barefoot Beach Natural Environment - Gary Schmelz

Walk at Barefoot Beach to follow lecture

April 12 Everglades Wonder Gardens - Photographer John Brady

April 19 FL Black Bear - Lisa Osterberg

For details of these events and other information, please visit www.friendsofbarefootbeach.org.

Calusa Heritage Day 2014

The 9th Annual Calusa Heritage Day 2014 will be held on Saturday, March 15 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Calusa Heritage Trail, Randell Research Center on Pine Island with many popular activities returning alongside new ones.

Admission is \$5 for children are free; Randell Center members also are free. Parking, including handicapped parking, is available on site. Free water is available throughout the day; participants are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle. Food provided by Pine Island-based Little Lillie's Island Deli and Mel Meo's fish wagon will be available for purchase.

For additional information please call (239) 283-2062 or (239) 283-2157 or visit www.flmnh.ufl.edu/rrc/. Randell Research Center is dedicated to archaeology, history, ecology and preserving the Calusa legacy.

DeSoto County Freshwater Wetlands Class

March 15 - April 19, 2014

Registration closes at 9:00am on March 10, 2014
[Course Code: fw14-02](http://www.ufl.edu/extension/courses/fw14-02)

Facility Information

DeSoto County Extension Office
2150 NE Roan St, Arcadia, FL 34266

Instructors Information

Jerry Waters & Linda Waters
Organization: DeSoto County Extension Service
Phone: 863-993-4846
Fax: 863-993-4849
Email: Indwtrs@gmail.com
Web site: <http://desoto.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Charlotte County Upland Habitats Class

March 7 - April 11, 2014

Registration closes at 9:00am on March 3, 2014
[Course Code: uh14-07](http://www.ufl.edu/extension/courses/uh14-07)

Classroom Facility Information

Charlotte County Eastport Environmental Campus: Training Room
25550 Harborview Rd., Suite 3, Port Charlotte, FL 33980

Instructors Information

Betty Staugler
Assistant: Jamie Reynolds
Organization: UF/IFAS Extension Charlotte County & Florida Sea Grant
Phone: 941-764-4346
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www.MasterNaturalist.org