

Habitat Evaluation Course Description

Program Mission & Overview

The mission of the Florida Master Naturalist Program (**FMNP**) is to promote awareness, understanding, and respect of Florida's natural world among Florida's citizens and visitors.

FMNP participants will increase their knowledge of Florida's natural systems, of the plants and animals that depend upon those systems, and of the role of humankind in shaping our past, of determining our future, and as stewards of the land.

The objective of the Florida Master Naturalist Program is to prepare persons to share their knowledge with others, to act in a positive manner, to help others feel a greater connection to the land/sea and to help others to develop their own personal environmental ethics. We hope to initiate what is for many a life-long process of learning, of observation, and of sharing with others.

Habitat Evaluation Course Overview

This course is designed to provide training in principles and commonly used techniques for evaluating wildlife habitat. People that complete this course will better understand the reasons for evaluating wildlife habitat at different scales and the methodologies used to do so. This course includes both classroom instruction and hands-on experience and will better equip students to participate in data collection for habitat evaluation projects. This course will cover large-scale habitat evaluation, local-scale habitat evaluation, and water quality monitoring.

The total training consists of **24 contact hours**, the scheduling of which will vary among different instructors. Classroom learning includes 3 presentations with associated discussions and assignments related to: Large-Scale Habitat Assessment, Local-Scale Habitat Assessment and Evaluating Water Quality. Outside of the classroom (virtual or in-person), participants will engage in hands-on field activities related to the course units.

As a **Land Steward** course, Habitat Evaluation will provide participants with additional knowledge and skills to make them more effective educators, citizen scientists, and informed participants when engaging in conservation issues. The knowledge and skills each participant gains from these Land Steward courses will ultimately improve their ability to contribute to environmental education, scientific data collection, and conservation planning

efforts. (There is no requirement to have taken any of the FMNP Core Courses to enroll in a Land Steward class.)

What will Florida Master Naturalist Program graduates receive?

At the end of the course, student will receive their Certification of Course Completion and be included in the online FMNP Graduate Database. Upon course completion, graduates will also receive the FMNP embroidered patch and course-specific lapel pin.

Graduates who complete the four Land Steward classes (Conservation Science, Environmental Interpretation, Habitat Evaluation, Wildlife Monitoring) are considered a Florida Master Naturalist Land Steward. Graduates who complete all seven courses (3 Core Courses and 4 Land Steward courses) are considered Advanced Florida Master Naturalists.

Note: The FMNP course manual (covering course-specific ecological systems, habitats, plant and animal life, naturalist interpretation, outreach planning, and additional resources and sources of information) becomes the property of the graduate.