



Conservation Science 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.

Conservation Science Course Overview

This course is designed to educate people in the concepts, language, and science related to conservation needs, planning, and action. People that complete this course will better understand the complexities of conservation, which will make them both better educators and participants in local conservation efforts. This course will cover concepts such as species diversity, measuring biodiversity, the processes that generate and maintain biodiversity, types of ecosystem services, ecological processes, habitat fragmentation, effects of human activities on ecosystems, the history of conservation in North America, and strategies for conservation planning.

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: Biological Diversity, Ecosystem Integrity, and Conservation Strategies for Sustainable Ecosystems. 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, Conservation Science 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.