

Dear fellow Master Naturalist,

It's hard to believe the Florida Master Naturalist Program is in its 18th year.

From our humble beginnings in 2001, when just a handful of pilot courses were taught, we now have roughly 170 instructors across the state offering 8 different courses; annually awarding more than 1,000 graduate certificates; and now launching a new restoration series and youth program.

But my greatest source of pride comes from your achievements and those of fellow Master Naturalists. Across the state, Master Naturalists are using their training to build nature trails, advocate for resource conservation, lead volunteer groups managing preserves, author books, and teach others about Florida's precious natural resources. It is a great joy to see the impacts you are making in your communities and to hear how FMNP was critical to your success.

I am reaching out today to humbly ask for your help to ensure the continued growth and success of the Florida Master Naturalist Program.

For nearly two decades, FMNP was sustained with state and university resources, in addition to the course fees. However, these resources are becoming less dependable as funding for higher education is spread thin.

While funding for FMNP is not at immediate risk, securing funds to create a permanent endowment helps ensure the long-term sustainability for future Master Naturalists. Your support sends a powerful message to state and university leaders about the benefits of FMNP.

There are many ways to financially support the long-term growth and viability of FMNP, including cash, appreciated securities (such as stock), real estate, and life insurance. Gifts to FMNP can also be part of an estate plan, which benefits FMNP today even though funds may not be received for many years. There are tax benefits to supporting FMNP as a charitable organization.

To learn more about how you may create an enduring legacy in support of FMNP, please email me at: MMain@ufl.edu. I would love to hear from you!

Since our founding in 2001, Florida has grown by 4 million people and continues to grow by nearly 1,000 people per day. This rate of growth makes our collective work even more vital. The more people we can educate about Florida's natural resources, the better equipped we will be to protect them for future generations to enjoy. I hope you'll join me in supporting FMNP.

Sincerely,

