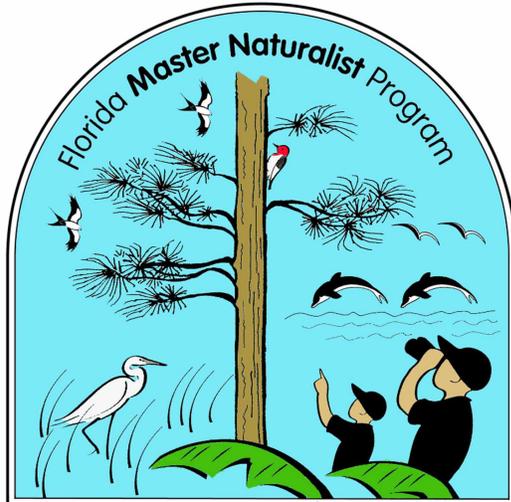


# Florida Master Naturalist Program



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Program Update .....	1
Instructor Information.....	2
Wild Eye .....	3
Interpretive Tracks .....	3
Class Information .....	4
Contacts .....	4

## Master Naturalist Program Completes Successful First Year

Dear Friends:

Best wishes for a happy new year! As we begin 2002, it's appropriate to look back on 2001. Thanks to many of you, the program's first year was a resounding success.

Highlights from 2001 included 4 FMNP Instructor Workshops that certified 74 persons to offer the Freshwater Wetlands module in south and central Florida. FMNP Instructors represented 47 educational organizations, including 10 University of Florida cooperative extension service offices. In turn, 11 Freshwater Wetlands courses were taught and 181 persons were certified as Master Naturalists across south Florida. We are in the process of reviewing comments from these courses and will soon share this information with you.

We have great expectations for 2002. Freshwater Wetlands courses will be offered for the first time throughout central Florida. Many south Florida Instructors have scheduled their second round of courses. We are planning north Florida workshops and development of the Coastal Systems module is underway, with Instructor workshops planned for Fall 2002.

Thank you again for your assistance in forging a successful partnership with UF/IFAS and creating this new and exciting environmental education program. We look forward to a successful 2002!

Sincerely,

*Marty*

Dr. Martin B. Main  
FMNP Program Director



FMNP Freshwater Wetlands graduates celebrate at the Environmental Learning Center, Vero Beach.

## FMNP Central Instructor Workshop Attendees:

*Thirt-eight Instructors were certified in November 2001.*

### **Alachua Co. Extension -**

Mickey MacDonald, Lorraine S. Williams

**Aquatic Wonders Tours, Inc. -** Ray Robida

**Brevard Co. Parks & Recreation. -**

V. Paige Divers, Brandon Smith

**Camp Bayou Learning Ctr. -** Dolly Cummings

**Central Florida Zoo -** Sandi Linn, Terri Beigel

**City of Apopka -** Mark D. Miller

**City of Gainesville -** Angela Yau

**Crones Cradle -** Jeri Baldwin

**FL. Fish & Wildlife C. C. -** Jonie Ellis

**Glades Botanical Garden -** Phillip Fenner

**Hawk's Eye Journeys -** Lee Solomon

**IGFA -** Glenda Kelley, Gretel McCausland

**Indian River Co. Extension -** Liberta Scotto

**Lake Co. Extension -** Charles Feduna

**Manatee Resource Mgt. -** Peter Quasius

**Marion Co. Public Schools -** James Buckner

**Nonie's Ark Animal Encounters -** Nonie Maines

**Orange Co. Extension -** Teresa Watkins

**Pandion Systems -**

Susan Marynowski, Christine Denny

**Pinellas Co. Extension-**

Cindy Peacock, Michael Pettay, Andy B. Wilson,

Bob Albanese

**Polk Co. Extension -** John Brenneman

**Riverwoods Field Lab -** Alana Edwards

**Seminole Co. Extension -** Eleanor C. Foerste

**Silver River Museum -**

Michella Millington, Guy Marwick

**Silver River State Park/DEP -** Art Carton

**St. Johns Co. Parks & Rec. -** Beverly Fleming

**St. Lucie Co. Extension -**

Ken Gioeli, Edward Skvarch Jr.

**UF- Entomology Dept. -** Robert Zimmerman



## FMNP Videos Now on Sale

Videos included in the FMNP Freshwater Wetlands Module curriculum are for sale. The set of four videos-Florida's Marshes, Florida's Swamps, Florida's Permanent Wetlands, and Wetlands in the Human Landscape-is available for \$50 by calling 1-800-226-1764 or online at <http://ifasbooks.ufl.edu>

### **Interested in becoming an FMNP Instructor?**

Read "Thinking of becoming a FMNP Instructor" by clicking the "Instructor Information" link at [www.masternaturalist.org](http://www.masternaturalist.org). To attend an Instructor Workshop, fill out and submit the on-line Instructor Application. You will be notified with further information.

## Wild Eye Watch on:

### Florida Softshell (*Apalone ferox*)

**Body:** brown, males 6-13", females 10-20"

**Characteristics:** skin covered, oval carapace

**Range:** South Carolina to Florida, southern Alabama

**Habitat:** lakes, ponds, canals, sand or mud bottom

**Diet:** invertebrates, aquatic plants, frogs, molluscs

**Fun Facts:** favored species for turtle soup market; speedy swimmers; dangerous to handle.

Three species of softshell turtles (*Apalone* sp) occur in Florida - the Florida, Gulf Coast spiny, and Gulf Coast smooth. The carapace of softshell turtles is covered by thickened skin and softshells are more vulnerable to injury than hard-shelled turtles. Softshells are among the fastest swimming turtles, which enables them to pursue prey and escape predators. Their powerful legs and jaws, sharp claws, and long necks make them dangerous to handle. Softshelled turtles are important both in the pet and food trade and are harvested in Florida for local and export turtle soup markets. The Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission regulates turtle harvest, which is closed for softshell turtles and their eggs during May 1 through July 31.



©Photo by Ginger Allen, University of Florida

## Interpretive Tracks

FMNP Instructor Rich Wilson of the Environmental Learning Center in Vero Beach uses "Naturalist Bingo" as an interpretive way for students to learn vocabulary words and get to know each other! During the initial class, a syllabus is presented with a list of 21 vocabulary terms, the number of students in the class. The students are asked to review the list and acquire a working definition for each term by the next class.

During the following class, each student is given a score card and two small bags of M&M chocolate candies to use as cover chips. Rich used Pavilion Deluxe Bingo, complete with a professional type bingo cage (Bingo games are available at toy stores for about \$15.00). The caller (FMNP Instructor) rolls the cage and removes the call. A student's name is now drawn from a cup, along with a vocabulary term from a second cup (have your students take turns drawing the names and terms). In order for the call to be announced, the term must be defined accurately. There is a tremendous amount of class participation in the form of questions and discussion, which results in a "universal" working definition agreed upon by the majority. By the time you have defined all the terms, somebody will have called "BINGO"! A small prize is certainly in order.

The benefit of "Naturalist Bingo" is that a collateral foundation is built from the group's interaction. The students are now on the same page with respect to course terminology. Plus, apprehensions are thrown aside as levity draws personalities to the surface. The ice is broken, and the class is ready to move forward together. Thanks, Rich, for a great suggestion to get the class rolling!



Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

Found along wetland edges, it gets its name from the button-like balls of flowers and fruits. The white flowers are a nectar source for bees, moths and butterflies. Red fruits are eaten by wildlife.

©Drawing by Ann Murray, Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, University of Florida, Gainesville

## Current Course Offerings

January 12-February 16, 2002 (Collier County)  
January 22-February 14, 2002 (Collier County)  
January 23-February 27, 2002 (Polk County)  
January 26-March 3, 2002 (Highlands County)  
February 5-March 23, 2002 (Dade County)  
February 9-23, 2002 (St. Lucie County)  
February 19-March 23, 2002 (Broward County)  
February 23-April 6, 2002 (Collier County)  
March 9-April 20, 2002 (Hillsborough County)  
April 3-May 8, 2002 (Seminole County)  
May 6-17, 2002 (Collier County)

Class sites, schedules, and registration information is available from the main FMNP web site.

[www.masternaturalist.org](http://www.masternaturalist.org)

### Click on "Course Offerings" for:

Locations and time schedules. After you have chosen your course, follow the prompts to register online.

### Click on "Information" for:

*Thinking of becoming a Florida Master Naturalist?  
FMNP-Freshwater Wetlands Course Description*



Training classes in Coastal Systems and Upland Habitats will be offered in 2002.

## FMNP Newsletter Staff

Editor: Dr. Martin Main  
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Contributing Editor: Julie Carson  
Web Coordinator: Buddy Walker



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## Video Notes

By Dr. Marty Main, FMNP Program Director

The Wetlands in the Human Landscape video has generated much discussion during Instructor Workshops and, undoubtedly, is generating much discussion with students as well. A few comments on content and direction of the video, which focuses on restoration of the Everglades as a case study, are in order.

Everglades restoration is the focus of the video because it is the largest and most complex attempt at wetland ecosystem restoration ever undertaken, and because the root causes of degradation in the Everglades are essentially a case study for wetlands degradation everywhere. These causes include drainage, agricultural and urban runoff, invasive non-native species, land use practices and development that cause habitat loss and fragmentation.

The video generates controversy in that no groups are portrayed as villains. The objectives are to portray how perceptions, past and present, led to land use decisions that caused degradation of the Everglades, what is being done to repair the damage, and where we need to go in the future.

Knowing that we all require food, water, and shelter requires we recognize that these needs create impacts on natural systems. Society's challenge for the future is to devise ways to satisfy basic human needs while protecting natural resources - both for the ecological functions needed to sustain our existence and for maintaining the connection to nature and wild things that many of us need to make our lives whole.

## FMNP Wetlands Module funding provided by:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,  
Advisory Council on Environmental Education (ACEE)

Southwest Florida Council on Environment Education, Inc.  
(SWFCEE)

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