

Florida Master Naturalist Program



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

EXTENSION

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences



First Graduating Coastal Class, UF Whitney Lab/Jose Nunez

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The FMNP Graduate Survey

Congratulations! The FMNP has produced astounding results! During 2001-2002, 37 wetlands classes were taught, producing 507 FMNP wetlands naturalists. Student evaluations revealed that 89% rated the course as excellent or above average, and 93% indicated they intend to take additional FMNP modules. Since January 2003, 30-plus FMNP wetland and new coastal courses have been scheduled!

Surveys of FMNP graduates (graduated by 30 June 2002, 58% response rate) revealed a diverse clientele, including ecotourism guides (7%), park rangers and naturalists (12%), natural areas managers and biologists (7%), teachers (9%), volunteers (41%), and interested citizens (44%) (many respondents indicated multiple categories). The diversity of expertise among students is one of the strengths of the FMNP. Take advantage of the expertise within your classes to raise the level of the educational experience through discussion, personal stories, and other means.

Many FMNP graduates reported direct personal benefits, including new employment (6%), new volunteer positions (12%), pay raises or promotions (3%), and increased responsibility in environmental education programs (30%). Six percent (70% of teachers) received continuing education credit for the FMNP. FMNP graduates (95%) also indicated that participation in the FMNP motivated them to continue learning through personal study (90%), presentations (62%), other educational programs (50%), and formal coursework leading toward a college degree (7%).

FMNP graduates are getting involved: 98% reported their desire to volunteer had increased, and 38% increased volunteer activity since FMNP training. The FMNP provides useful information: graduates utilized information from the FMNP during work (41%) and volunteer activities (75%), and 94% added new information/programs as the result of FMNP training. Finally, the FMNP influenced graduates to more closely evaluate/monitor personal actions such as lawn care (70%) and to more closely monitor state and local issues and political candidates (80%).

Congratulations again to both FMNP Instructors and Graduates. Together we can make a difference!

Marty

Dr. Martin B. Main
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Photo by Maryle Barbe



Rookery Bay Instructor Dave Graff explains Batfish biology.

FMNH Instructor Patti Anderson (right) with wetland class.

New Job/Volunteer Opportunity Web Page at www.MasterNaturalist.org

To assist FMNP graduates in finding job/volunteer opportunities in environmental education, restoration, and other natural resource-related activities, we've created a new page on the FMNP Web site that advertises job and volunteer opportunities by region.

So, if you have job/volunteer opportunities you wish to advertise and you have a Web site that lists those opportunities, send us your Web link, and we'll include it on the new FMNP job/volunteer opportunities Web page (just follow the instructions on the Job/Volunteer Opps hot link). We will also post links to job/volunteer Web sites from other appropriate groups, so spread the word. Let's encourage FMNP graduates to look at this new service and find opportunities to contribute!

Note: we can only link to your Web site - we cannot post individual opportunities.

At a minimum, information needed on your job/volunteer opportunities Web site must include:

- A description of the job/volunteer opportunity, and
- Your organizational contact/application information.

The FMNP Program Office withholds the right to refuse requests to link to this Web site.

All link requests should be sent by email to info@masternaturalist.org.

Featured Web Site: Florida Springs information--www.FloridaSprings.org

Send us your favorite environmental education Web sites, and we will post them here.

Coastal Poster available for purchase: World Wildlife Fund Marine Biodiversity Poster -

is available for \$5.95 from Acorn Naturalists at: www.AcornNaturalists.com

Interested in becoming an FMNP Instructor?

FMNP Instructor Workshops are required for all new instructors and existing, certified instructors who want to teach a new module. There is no fee for attending Instructor Workshops, but prospective instructors must submit an instructor application (available on the FMNP web site) and receive approval to attend. Instructor workshops are 2 days long with an optional field trip on the second day. More information about Instructor benefits, qualifications, and responsibilities can be found on the Master Naturalist Website: www.MasterNaturalist.org under the "Information" link.

Wild Eye Watch on:

Florida Fox Squirrel, *Sciurus niger* 18-28"

Identifiers: gray/black or brown/black bodies

- black face mask with a white nose and white ears

Status: 4 subspecies in Florida, 2 listed species

Range: Eastern USA

Reproduction: 2-4 young, tree leaf nest

Habitat: mixed forest, hammocks, pine flatwoods

Diet: fruits, nuts, fungi, bulbs, insects, eggs

Sign: barks, chatters, debris from feeding perch



© Lee County Env. Ed. Dept.

Found throughout most of the state (except in Keys). Fox squirrels are Florida's largest tree squirrels. Some fox squirrel populations have declined due to overhunting, destruction of mature forests, and the suppression of natural fires. The subspecies known as Sherman's fox squirrel (*S. n. shermani*) occurs from north central Florida to the north border of Lake Okeechobee and is currently listed as a species of special concern in Florida. The race southwest of Lake Okeechobee, known as the Big Cypress or Mangrove fox squirrel (*S. n. avicennia*, see picture), is listed as threatened in Florida. Panhandle populations of fox squirrels include the Carolina fox squirrel (*S. n. niger*), found primarily in the Carolinas, and the Bachman's fox squirrel (*S. n. bachmanii*), found primarily in Alabama and Mississippi.

Interpretive Tracks

Good Teaching: Top Ten Tips

1. Passion - teaching can begin with student motivation but should be done in a relevant, meaningful, memorable manner that conveys passion about the subject.
2. Substance - students are "top consumers" of knowledge. Keep up with the latest news in the subject area by reading, listening, and interacting with peers to stay on top of the game.
3. Development - good teaching is about listening, questioning, and respecting student differences. Elicit responses and develop communication skills.
4. Flexibility - have an agenda but be flexible. React and adjust to immediate student needs or changing discussions.
5. Style - be entertaining, recognize student talents and weaknesses, and bring your class to life by promoting discussions and interaction.
6. Humor - use humor as appropriate to help create a more relaxed and more enjoyable learning environment.
7. Preparation - a prepared instructor is a good instructor. And vice versa.
8. Support - good teaching is reinforced by a supportive organization with a strong vision and educational mission. Likewise, support for the efforts of students will both motivate and build confidence among pupils.
9. Teamwork - building alliances promotes stronger teaching and greater learning opportunities and may lead to future opportunities.
10. Rewards - there are many rewards from teaching. Perhaps the greatest reward is making a difference in a student's life and encouraging him/her to do the same for others.

Adapted from "The Teaching Professor," www.magnapubs.com



Flatwoods Pawpaw (*Asimina reticulata*)

Small shrub in the Custard Apple family

Butterfly larval food: Zebra Swallowtail

Fruit eaten by: raccoons, foxes, coyotes, opossums, and gopher tortoises

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

Current Course Offerings

Freshwater Wetlands Classes:

April 20-May 28, 2003 (Hendry County)

May 5-16, 2003 (Collier County)

June 16-27, 2003 (Lake County)

Coastal Systems Classes:

April 24-May 29, 2003 (Polk County)

May 3-June 7, 2003 (Palm Beach County)

May 6-June 26, 2003 (Indian River County)

June 6-July 11, 2003 (Palm Beach County)

June 12-21, 2003 (Duval County)

July 7-11, 2003 (Lee County)

July 14-19, 2003 (Citrus County)

Go to www.MasterNaturalist.org
Click on "Course Offerings" for **locations** and **time**
schedules. After you have chosen your course, follow
the prompts to **register online**.

For program details: Click on "Information"



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FMNP Graduate Testimonials

We're touching the lives of many FMNP graduates, and they are touching the lives of many more. We've included a few testimonials, something we hope to do in each Newsletter.

"I believe that the experience I had in the class opened my eyes to how much I love and enjoy nature - and that I wanted to learn more. The people in the course were very intelligent and had beautiful spirits. It was the best class I ever took!"

"I have 10 grandchildren, who regularly visit me in Florida. Rather than taking them to tourist attractions, we go out into the wild where there are truly new worlds to explore. The FMNP has added immeasurably. Just this August, I took 2 grandsons to Big Cypress, which we saw with newly opened eyes."

"The FMNP has inspired me to know more, experience more, and to do more for our precious environment. I see things now, that untrained eyes didn't allow me to. It is incredibly wondrous and exciting...Thank You!"

"As a retired biology teacher of 30 years the FMNP helped me to look at the natural world with a new perspective; one that will allow me new challenges. My participation in the FMNP has also helped me to reorganize my knowledge of the basic principles of the ecological world into a more practical form."

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)

FMNP Coastal Module funding provided by:

-Florida Sea Grant, University of Florida, IFAS
-Florida Marine Research Institute,
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
-Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute

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