

Florida Master Naturalist Program



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

IFAS EXTENSION

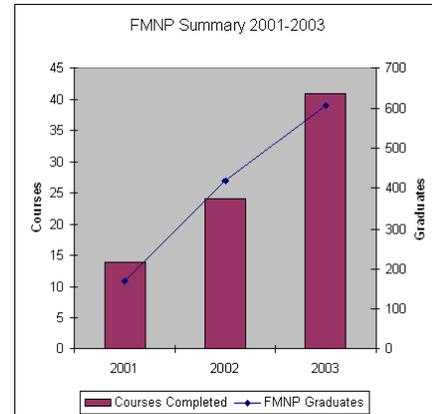


Searching for Ant Lions, E.L.C. Vero Beach class

Program Update	1
Education/Conservation Events	2
Wild Eye	3
Interpretive Tracks	3
Class Information	4
Contacts	4

FMNP 2004 - Goals

The new year is upon us and the FMNP office is planning, making resolutions, and contemplating the future. First, let's look at the FMNP status and progress since our first classes during 2001:



A picture says a thousand words. But educating individuals is only one of our goals. The FMNP is an action-oriented program. Our ultimate objective is to provide individuals with tools so that they may contribute to the education of others.

Many FMNP grads are contributing through volunteer service. Many more would like to do so. During 2004, we want to encourage action, monitor contributions, and reward accomplishments.

The FMNP Job/Volunteer Opportunities web page is a good place to start. The site provides info and links to organizations throughout Florida that have volunteer opportunities for FMNP graduates. This is a great resource; pass the word on to others. We also want to monitor volunteer service by FMNP graduates and have created a Volunteer Tracking system on the FMNP web site to do so. This new site allows FMNP volunteers to log volunteer hours, which will enable us to measure impacts and reward individuals and FMNP regions (Instructors) with community service awards. We'll be mailing/e-mailing all FMNP graduates with passwords and information on how to use the new Volunteer Tracking system during January. Let's tell others what we're doing!

Marty

Dr. Martin B. Main
FMNP Program Director
UF Associate Professor and Ecologist
Southwest Florida Research and Education Center

Winter Environmental Education and Conservation Events

Submit educational events or conservation project needs by e-mail to info@masternaturalist.org

Advanced FMNP Graduate Opportunity: Be a Florida Grasshopper Sparrow Research Assistant. Join biologists conducting the Grasshopper sparrow's decline research at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park and learn about one of our nation's most endangered species. This cryptic, ground-nesting bird is now found only in a few locations in central Florida. The Preserve has the largest parcel of dry prairie (prime grasshopper sparrow habitat) in the United States. If you have yet to discover this wonderful natural gem in central Florida, this is a great opportunity!

What: Participants will flush birds into mist nets by dragging a 100-foot rope through the undergrowth. Biologists will demonstrate how to remove, measure, and band sparrows while they collect project data.

Who: Open to 20 Florida Master Naturalist graduates.

How: Wear sturdy shoes or boots and long pants. Strenuous activity includes moving quickly through uneven and uncleared terrain (e.g., palmetto) with the rope. Bring your own lunch, plenty of water, hat, sunscreen, and bug spray.

When: 8 am to noon. Picnic afterwards; park hiking, bicycle riding, and horseback riding available afterwards.

Where: Meet at campground located 5 miles inside the park entrance gate. **Directions:** www.floridastateparks.org

Reservation Contact: info@masternaturalist.org, Ginger Allen, 239-658-3400

Central Florida Park Service "Want to be a Volunteer Day"

FMNP graduates are needed to assist in implementing natural resource management and education goals.

Information provided at: **Paynes Prairie** visitor center, **February 7th, 10 am – noon**

Lunch provided; optional hike depending on weather and interest of participants

RSVP: **Joni Ellis** 352-955-2135, Joni.L.Ellis@dep.state.fl.us, <http://www.floridastateparks.org/paynesprairie/default.asp>

***Basic Wilderness First Aid:** 8- to 10-hr wilderness first-aid training for short trips and/or low-risk leaders.

Topics: heat emergencies, hypothermia, sunburn, lightning, hazardous animals and plants, bites and stings, assessing and treating injuries/medical emergencies using basic first-aid skills and practicing mock simulations.

Course date: Sat., March 20, 8 am - 5 pm at Univ. of FL, Student Health Care Center, CPR/ First Aid Office, Gainesville.

Contact: Jon Duff (352) 392-1161 x4283, or www.health.ufl.edu/shcc, click on the CPR Alligator.

***Wilderness First Aid:** Intensive 16- to 20-hr course for more serious wilderness activities and long or remote trip leaders. **Topics:** same as above but more details, more skills practice, and role playing wilderness accident scenarios.

Course dates: February 7 & 8, 9 am – 5 pm both days or April 3 & 4, 9 am – 5 pm both days

*These skills will be very helpful in preparing you to handle wilderness trip emergencies. Those who successfully complete either course receive a 3-year certificate from the American Safety & Health Institute.

The **Conservancy of SW Florida's** Annual Signature Event with National Geographic's underwater photographer,

David Doubilet. Dive into the marvels of the deep blue seas. For tickets or information, call (239) 591-1348

Where: **Naples Beach Hotel**, Thursday, February 19, 2004, 7 pm, as David presents his award-winning underwater photos from all corners of the world and addresses the need for a conservation ethic to protect coral reefs, the jewels of the sea. The proceeds from the event will support programs to protect Southwest Florida's natural environment.

The Conservancy of SW Florida's **Naples Nature Center Winter Lecture Series**, 7 pm, www.conservancy.org/

Cost: (each lecture) \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members. (Series) \$35 members, \$45 non-members.

February 25, Dr. Tom Crisman: Learning To Live With Less: The Global Challenge

March 3, Dr. Meg Lowman: Rainforests at The Crossroads

March 10, Billy Causey: Naples & The Keys - Neighbors in Conservation

March 17, David Ceilley: Science On Film: Monitoring Wildlife

Florida Botanical Gardens **2004 Garden Fest**, Saturday, **January 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** at 12175 125th St. N. Largo. Pinellas County staff and master gardeners offer hands-on demonstration program for participants to learn how to arrange plants in the yard in an artistic style, plant a butterfly garden, grow herbs, vegetables, flowers, and get expert advice on how to prune and pot plants. The Florida Botanical Gardens is a public garden and part of the Pinewood Cultural Park campus, and home to the UF, IFAS/ Pinellas County Extension, Gulf Coast Museum of Art, and Heritage Village. For more information contact the **Pinellas County Extension Office** at (727) 582-2200 or go to www.flbg.org.

Featured Web Site:

USDA Plants Database - <http://plants.usda.gov> - Searchable plant database with pictures, and ranges.

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

Educational Aids: Butterfly Identification Cards (2 sets)

Over 40 species of butterflies and caterpillars in each laminated full-color identification deck, perfect for use in the field, or in the classroom. Available for purchase at- www.ifasbooks.ufl.edu

Wild Eye Watch on:

White M Hairstreak, *Parrhasius m-album* 1-2"

Identifiers: upperside iridescent blue, underside gray brown; white/black lines forming an "M"

Adaptations: tailed, orange/red hind-wing spot

Status: somewhat common

Reproduction: 3-4 broods per year

Habitat: pine/oak or hardwood forests

Host plants: oaks **Nectar plants:** viburnum, sumac, sourwood, milkweed, lantana, dogwood, and goldenrod



©Ginger Allen, UF

There are 22 "hairstreaks," named for the finely streaked markings and hair-like tails, that occur in Florida. The White M Hairstreak is encountered on small flowering plants along the edges of hardwood forests. The iridescent blue back is only seen as an erratic flash when the butterfly is flying. The drab gray hind wings are folded up when feeding or at rest to cover the blue. Many animals have chemical, behavioral, or physical predator avoidance tactics. The White M has 2 such devices. Near the rear of the hind wings is a single, bright-red patch that mimics an eye, along with two small, hair-like tails that resemble antennae. Thus, predators aim their attack for the back of the butterfly and not the vulnerable head area, which hopefully results in a small mouthful of wing. In Florida, the first new brood flights of the year appear in late February or early March.

Interpretive Tracks

Coloration in Nature

As naturalists, we are constantly increasing our knowledge of different species, habitat processes, and conservation issues. But there are many interesting things to discuss in nature. In fact, there is everything to discuss, such as color.

Coloration occurs in nature for many reasons. For example, coloration can be important in attracting mates, which is a strategy used by brightly colored male birds. Coloration may be used to signal potential adversaries and defend territories, as exemplified by the brightly colored dewlaps of green and brown anoles. Color can be defensive and used to warn potential predators (aposematic coloration). The bright, orange-red velvet ant and the bold white stripe of a skunk are good examples. Coloration is used for camouflage to hide from predators and to ambush prey and sometimes to mimic other things or species. The caterpillar of the giant swallowtail looks like bird droppings, and the wings of many moths and butterflies possess eyespots. Coloration may also attract seed dispersers (why are ripe berries red?) or pollinators (showy flowers often lack scent).

What about iridescence? Have you wondered why iridescence occurs in nature?

ir-i-des-cent (ir'î-dès'ent) adjective

1. Producing a display of lustrous, rainbow-like colors
2. Brilliant, lustrous, or colorful in effect or appearance

Iridescence increases visibility, sometimes to great distances. Studies have found some iridescent butterflies to be visible at half a mile away! Iridescence is more common in terrestrial than aquatic species and is produced from light interacting with structures (e.g., cells, feathers) that are arranged in alternating layers of high and low refractive index. In simple terms, iridescence is produced by light reflecting from intricately layered structures, whereas cryptic coloration is produced from more continuous layering.

Color is an important component of the natural world and provides a great deal to discuss. So, on your next trip out, consider color as an informative and entertaining component of your interpretive program.



Southern Blue Flag (*Iris virginica*)

Aquatic monocot. Sword-shaped leaves grow fan-like from rhizome roots up to 4 feet tall. Large flowers in shades of blue, pink, or white.

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

Current Course Offerings

Freshwater Wetlands Classes:

January 15-March 13 (Alachua County)
January 31-March 13 (Hillsborough County)
February 2-April 2 (Suwannee County)
February 26-April 8 (Collier County)
May 1-26 (Glades County)

Coastal Systems Classes:

January 5-February 12 (Citrus County)
January 6-February 17 (Collier County)
January 6-March 23 (Alachua County)
January 13-February 3 (Lee County)
January 15-February 19 (Polk County)
January 16-February 27 (Walton County)
January 20-February 21 (Santa Rosa County)
January 20-March 25 (Indian River County)
January 28-February 18 (Flagler/St. Johns County)
February 19-March 25 (Highlands County)
February 20-March 26 (Volusia County)
February 28-April 3 (Palm Beach County)
March 2-April 13 (Collier County)
April 13-June 8 (Dade 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"



FMNP Newsletter Staff

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



I'm going to miss my FMNP class

By Belinda Chase, Freshwater Wetlands Naturalist

It was with mixed feelings that I drove away from Sarasota's Crowley Museum. In one way, I was looking forward to an extra hour in my day to run errands; in another way, I was sad to be leaving something that has meant a lot to me over the last six weeks. What a diverse group of people we were - from all walks of life, from north and south, varied in age, education, and vocation. But with 2 things in common: a love of nature and the desire to learn more about it. Jean Blackburn said it best in one of our earlier classes. When Debbie Dixon asked if we were overwhelmed with the information, Jean called out: "We are sponges!!"

We absorbed names, characteristics, and terms. Under the skilled leadership of Debbie Dixon, we investigated swamps, marshes, prairies, and hammocks. We were led unaware into knee-deep swamp water and across feral hog rootings. What an adventure!! And what troopers we all were! Given a little more time, who knows where we might have gone.

We were also tossed back into the school-day routine of reference books, outlines, and internet searches for our group presentations. Despite some nervousness and stage fright, we all presented with grace and dignity, learning plenty of new things. The last afternoon, everyone spoke about the class, and we all expressed praise for the whole experience and gratitude for the new friendships and knowledge we had gained. And now we look forward to a possible class reunion in the future, where we will once again become sponges and absorb - but this time salt water instead of fresh, in a Coastal class.

FMNP Wetlands Module funding provided by:

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

Florida Master Naturalist Program

Director: Dr. Martin Main, Associate Professor
Coordinator: Ginger Allen, Senior Biologist

Southwest Florida Research & Education Center
2686 State Road 29 North
Immokalee, FL 34142-9515
Phone: 239-658-3400; Fax: 239-658-3469
E-Mail: info@masternaturalist.org
Web: www.MasterNaturalist.org
www.MasterNaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu