

Florida Master Naturalist Program



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

IFAS EXTENSION



Steve Bass front right; FMNP Freshwater Wetlands class

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FMNP Update

The Upland Habitats module is progressing as planned, and 1-day workshops are planned for November around the state (see schedule pg. 2). In addition to the new module, other important business will be discussed, so please plan to attend. A new column in our Newsletter is "FMNP Instructor Spotlight," which will provide us an opportunity to feature one of our talented colleagues in each Newsletter.

Marty Main, FMNP Program Leader

FMNP Instructor Spotlight: Steve Bass

Steve Bass is the manager of Gumbo Limbo Environmental Complex, a city of Boca Raton recreation, research and educational facility. The nature center hosts 100,000 visitors yearly and is widely known for its nature programs, exhibits and pristine maritime hammock forest. Steve and 9 other staff members at provide FMNP training. We asked him the following questions about environmental education (EE):

How did you get involved in EE? From the earliest days, I remember being outside; either with my parents and grandparents hunting and fishing, working in the garden or wandering in my favorite places. These experiences were a big part of my childhood. In my church I learned that a worthwhile life includes a larger mission. Mine became sharing the outdoors I loved so much with everyone. I completed a Masters in Plant Ecology, studying prairie remnants in Ohio. Along the way, I learned there were people who taught outdoors all the time.

How many years have you been involved in EE? In 1969 I joined the National Audubon Society as a Teaching Naturalist at Aullwood Audubon Center in Dayton, Ohio. Later I spent two years working in Audubon's Nature Center Planning Division. The very first Earth Day happened the year after I started my career.

What is your most memorable EE moment? When I was a young naturalist in Ohio, I had 25 people show up in a sleet storm for a guided walk on a steep, narrow trail. Three hikers were ladies in their 80s. I began with a little talk about going at your own pace and being careful to avoid falls. Turning, I slipped and fell on the ice. By the time we finished the trip, I had fallen two more times and nobody else had. The low point was when one of the older ladies helped me up. I blamed it on my boots.

What are required readings for EE participants? "Ecosystems of Florida" by Myers and Ewell (for ecology), and "River of Grass" by Marjorie Stoneman Douglas (for inspiration).

What is your vision for Florida's future? While our generation is expending energy preserving natural areas, we are assuming that future generations will appreciate them. If the acres we have saved are the hardware of our movement, what is the software needed to perpetuate them? Those of us in EE need to reexamine our approaches and see where we can provide deeper encounters.

2004 Upland Habitats Module FMNP Instructor Workshops - Locations TBA

SW Florida - November 9th

SE Florida - November 17th

Central Florida - November 16th

Northeast Florida - December 2nd

Northwest Florida - November 30th

Summer Environmental Education and Conservation Events

Florida Dry Prairie Conference, October 5-7, Sebring, FL, www.ces.fau.edu/fdpc/index.php Cost: \$80. The conference will highlight research that has resulted in numerous ecological and botanical studies. Contact: Doreen DiCarlo; Phone: 561-799-8553, E-mail: ddicarlo@ces.fau.edu

National Association for Interpretation, Certified Interpretive Guide Workshop, Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, October 4th-7th, 2004, Naples, Florida. Cost: \$310 for NAI members, \$355 for non-members (includes course materials, 1-year membership in NAI, certification fee). To register, contact Bruce Nolan, at 863-965-7233 or animalbrother@hotmail.com. Register by September 4.

Cary State Forest, 7465 Pavilion Road, Bryceville, Florida, is recruiting FMNP graduates to volunteer for their education programs. If you are interested please contact Dave Holley at: (904) 266-5021

Rookery Bay Extended Coastal Training Program: Ecotour Operator Stewardship Series For ecotour operators and nature guides. Programs are free, and run 6:30-9:00 at Rookery Bay Reserve Learning Center, 300 Tower Rd., Naples. For details and registration: contact Naomi Crews 239-417-6310, ctp@rookerybay.org

The Florida Museum of Natural History will open its McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Environmental Research at 10 a.m on Saturday, Aug. 14. Facility features a 6,400-square-foot Butterfly Rainforest exhibit with waterfalls and walking trails. This screened enclosure will support hundreds of living butterflies. www.flmnh.ufl.edu

Discussion Group- Loblolly Environmental Facility, FREE July 11th, Sunday afternoon, 2-4pm Join us for a reading and discussion group. We will post readings to the webpage and gather once a month to discuss our topic. For more information call 334-2170 or visit www.natureoperations.org.

Gumbo Limbo, Annual North American Butterfly Association Butterfly count. Learn about these winged artistries while helping butterfly experts gather data. Date: Sunday, July 11, Time: 10:00am-1:00pm Free www.gumbolimbo.org

Early Morning Guided Nature Walk, Saturday, July 10, and 31st, 8 am Join Florida Master Naturalist Instructor Debbie Dixon for a leisurely walk through 5 native habitats. Learn the secrets of the pine flatwoods, oak hammocks, marsh, swamp and river and the creatures that call these habitats home. Perfect for all ages. Bring your camera & binoculars! Free with admission- no reservations required. <http://crowleymuseumnaturectr.org>

Nature Walk and Talk- Morningside Nature Center FREE July 31st, 9 am on Saturday A Naturalist Guided Nature Walk will be held the last Saturday morning every month. The walk will run 1-1.5 hours, wear comfortable walking shoes and bring binoculars and field guides. Meet at education office. For more information call 334-2170 or visit www.natureoperations.org.

Eco Garden Conference Saturday, August 7, 2004, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Topics include: Selecting and Maintaining a Florida-friendly Lawn, Using Native Plants to Enhance your Landscape, Hazardous Animals, Insects, and Plants, Ground Covers for Sun and Shade and much more. \$20.00 registration fee includes course materials and lunch. Location: Pinellas County Extension Auditorium, <http://coop.co.pinellas.fl.us/>

Nature Photography, August 14 & August 28, 7am-10am, Crystal Springs Preserve, Zephyrhills, FL Take a guided nature tour around the preserve to find the best places to capture wildlife and nature at its most beautiful. Amateur photography hobbyists will be on hand to help with any technical questions you may have. Capacity: 20 people, Call 813-715-9707 to make your reservations.

19th Annual International Coastal Cleanup (Collier County; www.keepcollierbeautiful.com) For more information and to register large groups contact litternot@earthlink.net or call 239.352.4344.

Featured Web Site: UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants - Images and information about Florida wetland plants. - <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu>

Wild Eye Watch on:

Coyote, (*Canis latrans*), 40"-50", 25-40 lbs.

Identifiers: gray to rust brown coat, long bushy tail; black tip, long rust/yellow legs

Adaptations: long muzzle, keen eyes/ears/nose

Status: increasing; absent in Monroe/Dade Co.

Range: southern Canada to Costa Rica

Reproduction: 2-12 pups, born in dens

Habitat: pine flatwoods, range/prairie, hammocks, marsh

Diet: small mammals, reptiles, insects, fruit, fish, carrion

Sign: narrow, 4-toed clawed track, 16-18" stride

Fun Fact: breeding related to food supply



Larry Richardson, USFWS

Carnivores (Order Carnivora) are mammalian predators with teeth designed for tearing and consuming flesh. However, some carnivores, such as bears and coyotes, are omnivorous and eat both animal and plant material. Coyotes are a relatively new predator to Florida. Following the elimination of wolves throughout most of the continental United States during the last century, coyotes expanded their range into eastern states, including Florida. Coyotes were documented in the Florida Panhandle during the 1970s and expanded their range into south Florida by the 1990's (more information see document: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW146>). Because coyotes arrived in Florida primarily by range expansion as opposed to introduction, they are technically not an exotic species. More information: <http://www.imok.ufl.edu/wild/coyote/>.

Interpretive Tracks

Be a Nature Detective

Many animals go about their business under cover of darkness (if they're nocturnal), or cautiously in the daylight (diurnal). We may not see the animals but, instead, see signs that they have been there - scat, a track in the sand, a clump of hair, chew marks or scratches on a tree trunk, scattered feathers, dropped antlers, small runway trails, nests, or burrows. All of these signs are clues that an animal has eaten or been eaten, fought, died, walked, or lives near where you are hiking. While you walk with your child or nature friends, practice being nature detectives. See how many animal clues you can find and determine what may have happened along the trail.

Think about what kind of animals live in the habitat you are in. Check sandy trails or muddy banks for animal footprints in the morning. Make plaster casts of deep track imprints. Does the track have 4 toes on the front and hind feet? Then the animal is either from the dog, cat or rabbit family. Does the 4-toed print have claw marks? Then the track is probably a coyote, fox or dog. Cats retract their claws when they walk. Does the track have 4 toes on the front and 5 on the hind foot, then the animal is a rodent. Does the track have 5 toes on the front and back? Then the animal is from the beaver, bear, raccoon or weasel family (weasel, badger, mink, skunk, otter) or if one toe is thumb-like, it's an opossum. What if the track has only 2 toes? In Florida, this animal is either a deer (pointed tips) or a hog (rounded tips). Are the tracks far apart as if the animal were running or close together as if it were foraging? Inspect the sand near a gopher tortoise burrow for tracks from the tortoise, mice, snakes or insect inhabitants.

There are many other types of signs you can detect. Look on tree trunks for where a woodpecker has drilled small holes looking for insects or larger holes for a cavity nest. Follow a squirrel's trail of discarded pine cone scales. Examine shrubs and grasses for deer, rabbit or rodent browsing. Search for evidence of caterpillars or a chrysalis. Look for bones and teeth along trails and in scat. Use your sense of smell to locate territory markings from a big cat or an animal with musk glands. Did you find a dead animal? Does it have bite marks? What do you think killed it? Make up a story line using all the facts you can gather.

Good resources: the Stokes Guide to Animal Tracking and Behavior, Peterson's Field Guide to Animal Tracks, Animal Tracks of Florida, Georgia and Alabama by Ian Sheldon, Skulls and Bones by Glen Searfoss.



Lilium catesbaei (Pine Lily or Catesby's Lily) is a showy orange-red flower and state threatened species found mainly in pine flatwoods. Large numbers of plants typically bloom in the year after a fire

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

Current Course Offerings

Freshwater Wetlands Classes:

August 31-October 28 (Indian River County)
October 1-November 5 (Volusia County)
October 5-23 (Pasco County)
October 7-30 (St. Johns County)
October 12-November 13 (Citrus County)
October 30-December 11 (Palm Beach County)

Coastal Systems Classes:

August 20-October 15 (Franklin County)
September 11-October 16 or 23 (Palm Beach Co)
October 4-November 1 (Lee County)
October 15-November 15 (Pinellas County)
October 16-November 20 (Sarasota County)
March 17-April 21, 2005 (Volusia 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"

The **Upland Habitats** module will be released
in 2005.



FMNP Newsletter Staff

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FMNP Graduate Photo Contest Winner

In April we announced a photo contest for FMNP grads that wished to contribute photos for the Upland Habitats video jacket. Congratulations to Maryle Barbe of Bonita Springs. Her photo of two Caracaras (seen below, taken near Labelle, FL) will be included on the video jacket.

Maryle described her experience with the FMNP as very rewarding, especially the group participation. A graduate of both wetlands and coastal modules, she stated that the program improved her presentation skills, which she utilizes on nature tours at Bonita Bay club. On a higher level, Maryle finds she can now impart an intelligent understanding of the environment to her audience and friends.



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

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