

# FLORIDA MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

| FALL 2018 NEWSLETTER |



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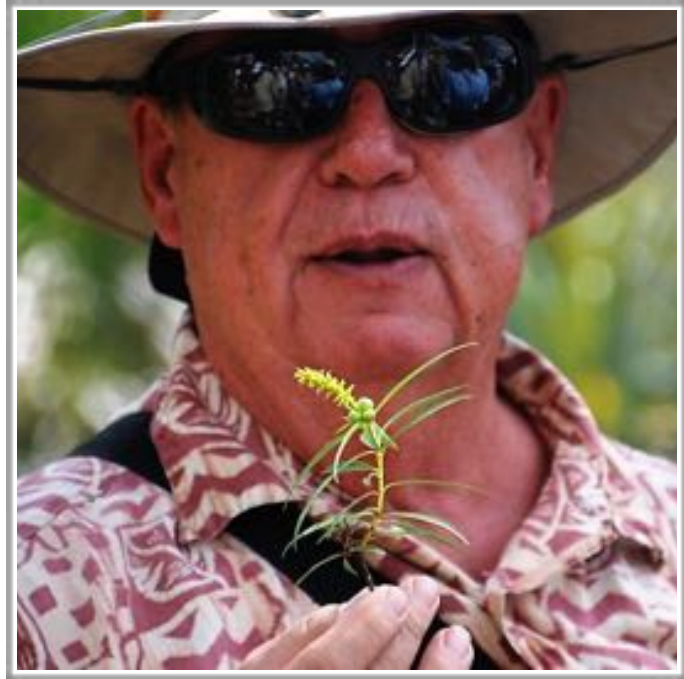
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## A Tribute to Steve Bass

By  
**Dr. Martin Main**

Colleagues and friends, I’m writing this tribute to Steve Bass, a remarkable individual, friend and pivotal force in the success of the Florida Master Naturalist Program.

I join Steve’s wife Val, children Shannon and John, and his many friends and former students in grieving his passing and in celebrating a life well lived. A beautiful obituary prepared by Steve’s family details his many accomplishments and passions and can be found at “Steve Bass Memorial” on Facebook



or Steve's hometown newspaper - <https://www.poncacitynews.com/articles/stephen-chandler-bass/>.

I write here to commemorate Steve as a superb naturalist and educator who shared his gifts with patience, humor, and humility. He was a natural leader and an important voice in Florida's environmental education community. When I first met Steve in 1998 at a Visit Florida workshop, he was managing the Gumbo Limbo Nature Center in Boca Raton. I came to the meeting to propose the FMNP as a strategy both to teach about Florida's ecology from a statewide perspective and to help unify Florida's environmental education organizations through the FMNP instructor

network. My ideas were met with a great deal of resistance and suspicion by some. Steve, however, listened to what I said and spoke out in favor of giving this concept a try, and his opinion convinced many other organizations to contribute ideas, attend the FMNP development and instructor training workshops, and



*Steve teaching the Florida Master Naturalist Program*

eventually offer FMNP courses. I believe Steve's leadership and encouragement helped us overcome those initial obstacles and transform the FMNP from concept to reality. I spoke to Steve about this on many occasions, and in his typical unassuming way he assured me that his role was a minor one, but we both knew that wasn't true.

Steve led by example and was a superb FMNP instructor. He taught one of the very first FMNP courses in 2001 and continued teaching FMNP courses into his retirement, as well as providing mentoring and guest lectures for FMNP colleagues as recently as 2017. Steve was also an important confidante, contributing encouragement and suggestions for programmatic improvements and new courses. The Environmental Interpretation course was inspired by Steve

and includes many of his ideas. In 2014 we recognized Steve's contributions to the FMNP with a Distinguished Instructor Career Service Award, a gesture I know Steve appreciated.

I am establishing an FMNP scholarship in tribute to Steve and in acknowledgement of his many contributions to the FMNP. We'll provide more details about the scholarship in the FMNP Newsletter, Facebook, and Instructor updates. His family has also established the Steve Bass Memorial Account to help preserve, protect, and maintain the beauty and natural open spaces of Palm Beach County. Donations to the account should be made out to the Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners, with Steve Bass Memorial Account in the memo, and sent to Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management, 2300 Jog Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33411.

Steve Bass lived life fully and with passion, humility, humor, and class. He dedicated his life to doing something he believed important, which was to share the secrets of nature and inspire a conservation ethic among others. We will all miss Steve, and I certainly won't forget him or what he's done for me, the FMNP, and for environmental awareness in Florida. Rest in peace my friend.





## Congratulations to our FMNP photo contest winners!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the FMNP 2018 photo contest. We received over 70 entries across the 4 categories: Uplands, Coastal, Freshwater, and People (Interpretation/Recreation). There were SO MANY amazing photos, it was very difficult to select the finalists; 4 of which will be framed on Dr. Marty Main's office wall. The top finalist in each category will receive a \$25 gift certificate to the FMNP Store.

**Freshwater** \$25 Winner: Liz Malyszek (below); finalists (on bottom, from left to right): Django Connolly, Carolyn Babb, and Mary White.



**People \$25 Winner:** Craig Weyandt (below); finalists (on bottom, from left to right): Kelly Del Valle, Lisa Mickey, Esther Muram.





**Coastal \$25 Winner:** Cheryl Jovel (below); finalists (on bottom, from left to right): Linda Moreau, Jackie Pope, and Liz Malyszek.



**Uplands** \$25 Winner: Paul Bennett (below); finalists (on bottom; from left to right): Sevag Mehterian, Paula Tedrow, and Ingrid Polz.



# Thank you, Dave Graff

By  
Renee Wilson and Shelly Johnson

Dave Graff first joined the staff at Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in 2002 as an education specialist. His primary responsibility has been leading boat-based, marine science education programs for Collier County area high schools, colleges and universities, Florida Master Naturalists, and other groups. His passion for sharing the secrets of nature spans all ages, from “K” (kindergarten) to “gray.”

In 2003, Dave started teaching the Florida Master Naturalist Program at the Reserve. He instructed the Coastal Systems Module over 20 times. Dave was also served on the FMNP Advisory Board as the SW Regional Representative. As a board member, Dave was a dedicated representative, providing thoughtful, earnest, and valuable feedback. With reluctance, Dave recently resigned from his job at the



*Dave Graff (left) teaches Florida Master Naturalists in Collier County about mangroves*

Reserve and moved to the northeastern US to be closer to family. While we anticipate the Florida Master Naturalist Program will continue at Rookery Bay Reserve, we will certainly miss Dave; he has been instrumental in perpetuating the FMNP at the Reserve and in motivating FMNP Graduates.

Coworker and fellow FMNP Instructor, Renee Wilson, emphasized, “Dave’s understanding of the marine environment, his enthusiasm and appreciation for the natural world, together with his witty sense of humor, has made him an inspiration to his students and colleagues. He is a great educator and often uses his amazing photography to teach others about all kinds of wildlife. His photos especially shine a spotlight on some of the Reserve’s flora and fauna. From thornbugs and neck crabs, to volvox and unidentified spinning plankters, Dave constantly encourages others to appreciate beauty where it might not have been seen before.”



Master Naturalist Graduates also noted that Dave is an amazing, inspirational, and patient educator. Graduate Richard Ginevan said, “Dave has been my go to person for answers about nature at Rookery Bay Reserve. He has always been a kind and patient listener and would respond with a thoughtful and wise answer. He has helped me become a better nature interpreter. Thank you, Dave.” Another FMNP Graduate, Jeanne Taylor, said, “I was so inspired by Dave and his passion for our Estuarine environment, that I wanted to learn EVERYTHING. No matter what question I had, including unusual questions from our visitors, Dave had the answer.”

It is also apparent how much Dave cares about marine life. Jeanne Taylor shares, “He named the volunteers who fed the fish in our aquariums, of which I was one, "Fish Heads". He instructed us, in great detail, how to feed each individual creature so that it would thrive. His caring was exhibited to the nth degree one day while on a trawling trip. Dave was extra careful with the marine life that we captured in our nets. So, when I saw the obvious



*Dave Graff (center) carefully sorting through captured marine life to share with Florida Master Naturalists*

distress on his face and asked him what was wrong, he explained that one anchovy had not survived – ONE ANCHOVY! THAT is how much Dave cares.”

Thank you, Dave, for all you’ve done for the FMNP and for Florida. We wish you good luck in your new adventure and sincerely hope you can extend your amazing skills as an educator and share your passion for nature to all you meet in the future! One anonymous comment best sums it all up, “Our instructors were amazing, especially Dave Graff..”

# Volusia County Rotary Clubs help get teachers involved!

By  
Trey Hannah



*Eight teachers in Volusia County complete the FMNP Coastal Module with scholarships from the local Rotary Clubs*

In June, eight teachers from Volusia County were awarded partial scholarships from four local Rotary Clubs to participate in the FMNP Coastal Systems Module. The participants all plan to use the information they learned in their K-12 classrooms this upcoming year!

Course participants produced wonderful projects, including a children’s story about a curious gopher tortoise in the coastal dunes (currently being published for use in schools), a board game to help students connect

important species to the challenges that species face, a digital coastal ecology storybook, a Sway presentation about coastal systems, and even a Jeopardy game to be used in the classroom.

The participants praised the FMNP saying, “It was a wonderful way to receive in depth knowledge about the importance of coastal ecosystems while having a great time!” The participants, instructors, and FMNP Office also want to send out a big “THANK YOU” to the four rotary clubs that contributed to the scholarships: Rotary Club of Debarry-Deltona-Orange City, Rotary Club of Downtown DeLand, Rotary Club of DeLand, and Rotary Club of DeLand Breakfast.



*The teachers learn about coastal systems in Florida while on a kayak field trip*

# Florida Master Naturalists team with Florida State Parks

By  
**Kim Munshower and Wayne Douchkoff**

Finding wonder and beauty in Florida's natural places resonates with every Florida Master Naturalist. As we share our passion for the earth, we hope to see the echoes of conservation and stewardship in the lives of those we touch. The exciting Volunteer Paddlesport Program in our award-winning state park system gives Master Naturalists the opportunity to help others rediscover the awe and wonder in nature by assisting with public guided paddle trips at your local state park. The Paddlesport Program also seeks to fill much needed trip leader positions by providing training through the American Canoe Association (ACA) at Lake Louisa State Park.



*Paddlers attend a Certified Kayak Trip Leader Course with the American Canoe Association at Lake Louisa State Park*

'Nature deficit disorder', a phrase coined by Richard Louv in his book *Last Child in the Woods*, labels the growing problem of our disconnectedness from nature. What people, particularly children, don't experience or explore, they will not love and protect. Not only does the environment suffer, our health suffers too. Current studies have linked the lack of outdoor time with rising obesity, attention deficit disorders and increased depression among youth. The Florida DEP Paddlesport Program seeks to turn this trend around by providing experiences that inspire connections to the outdoors with everyone, especially families with children. This is the mission behind the Volunteer Paddlesport Program's desire to provide trained, passionate



volunteers to lead on-the-water nature tours within local state parks and public lands. These guided trips highlight natural, cultural and historical resources and points-of-interest our diverse waterways.

To become a volunteer trip leader, paddlers attend a rigorous three day Certified Kayak Trip Leader Course with the ACA. This course focuses on risk assessment and group management, an excellent path for creating future generations of safe paddlers. Seventy-four volunteers, including 10 Master Naturalists, have successfully completed the course. Five state parks have public paddle programs with another twenty parks waiting for you!

To attend this ACA training, you don't have to be an expert paddler, but some experience is helpful. The next training takes place Oct 30, 6 pm through noon on Nov 2, at Lake Louisa State Park near Orlando. The course is offered at a reduced rate of \$140 per person including free lodging.

If you don't want to take the kayak training but want to participate as a naturalist during guided paddles, we would love to hear from you too! We can pair you with a trained kayak volunteer while you share your interpretive skills on the tours.

For more info, contact [Kim Munshower](#) or [Wayne Douchkoff](#) To register for the next course, contact [Doug Alderson](#).

## Your Water is Our Water

By

**Megan Ellis and Shelly Johnson**

*Sunlight glistens on freshly watered grass in Mark's front yard. He applies pesticide to his flower beds along the garage to stop the neighborhood wood ants from moving in. Across the street, Mae is working quickly to fertilize her herb garden before the afternoon storm rolls in. Her old dog sniffs about before leaving a "present" near the mailbox. Mae finishes with the garden and rushes into the house just as she hears the first rumble. A red truck drives by as Mark walks up the stairs to his porch. A plastic bag, caught by a downdraft, floats out of the truck and slides across the pavement. Its contents, about a dozen cigarette butts, are strewn across the road and rocking from the wind. Thunder crackles and a wall of rain creeps up the street, catching and carrying everything left behind in a stream that flows to a storm drain, then into a creek.*

Everything we do affects water quality. From accidentally misreading a label on a pesticide, to simply trying to get a job done before it rains, to unintentionally littering, our actions as individuals can add up in the environment and their consequences grow. Florida's



*A great blue heron takes refuge in a freshwater wetland in south Florida;  
photo by Megan Ellis*

geology is complex and all water in Florida is connected, making water a challenging resource to manage. This means that toxins going down a storm drain 200 miles away could affect the water in your kitchen sink or your local creek.

A healthy ecosystem has a built-in mechanism to keep water clean in Florida: wetlands! Freshwater wetlands are composed of native plants and soils that can filter water from storm drains in cities and run-off in agricultural areas. Wetlands hold water during the dry season

and ease flooding in the wet season, becoming refuges for numerous plant and animal species. But what happens when our wetlands are altered or destroyed?

The effects of wetland degradation can be observed in current-day Florida. Over the last 150 years, many freshwater ecosystems across the state have been channeled, dammed, and drained. These alterations occurred because policy makers were focused on protecting the livelihoods of early Floridians, with an aim to shelter people from torrential floods and save crops from extreme drought. Altering wetlands was thought to be the best approach to regulating water across Florida at the time.

Today, we know there are environmental consequences to altering wetlands; many wetlands no longer exist to clean and filter our water. Large-scale restoration efforts are ongoing throughout Florida (most notably the Everglades Restoration Project). With a growing human population, increasing pressure on water demand, and fewer natural mechanisms to protect water quality, Floridians should be vigilant about water use in their own home, city, and county.

You can help protect Florida's water resources by reducing the *amount* of water you use. Consider limiting showers to 15 minutes, turning off the faucet when you brush your teeth, and using flow-reducing nozzles on hoses and showerheads. Follow your local regulations for lawn watering and only water your lawn if it has not recently rained and there is no rain in the forecast. Also consider native Florida Friendly Landscaping that requires less water altogether.

To protect water *quality*, it is important to consider toxins and trash that might ultimately flow into surface water or ground water and contaminate drinking water. Be careful to follow guidelines on labels for pesticides and herbicides. Some labels will strictly state that a product should not be used within a certain amount of time before rain (it may be written as "rainfastness"). If you cannot find this on your label, do not use the product if rain is forecast within 24 hours of your intended spray time.

There are also opportunities to volunteer in most communities. Consider organizing a local trash pickup event to reduce large pollutants from your local waterways. OR join a local effort to label storm drains and raise awareness about stormwater pollution. If you're interested in water quality monitoring project, check out Florida's LAKEWATCH. Remember, all of Florida's waterways will thank you!



*Example of stenciling to raise awareness of stormwater pollution; photo from City of Fulton*



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# FMNP CHAPTER CHATTER:

## Space Coast Friends Chapter

By  
**Mark Prynoski, Space Coast Regional Chapter President**



*Out for a morning hike on the Sebastian Inlet State Park Hammock Trail*

The Space Coast Regional Chapter’s June outing was a full day of fun and learning. About 25 of us began with a morning hike at the Sebastian Inlet State Park Hammock Trail which weaves through a spectacular maritime forest. Because the temperate climate zone transitions to the subtropical in Brevard County, we were treated to lots of flora more common in South Florida. The mosquitos, however, were more than a little distracting.

The sunny morning gave way to thunder showers. Fortunately, by that time we were all seated in a nearby restaurant enjoying a lunch of fried oysters and lobster rolls.

After lunch came the main event of the day – a tour of the Hubbs-Seaworld Research Institute. The facility is located at Melbourne Beach inside the Archie Carr Wildlife Refuge. Earlier in the year, Megan Stolen (Hubbs research scientist and principal investigator) gave us a presentation on the research she is doing on local river otters and invited us to tour her lab. The

main focus of the facility is on whale and dolphin stranding. Not only did we get a full tour of the lab, but we got to have some hands-on fun: identifying photos of individual dolphins by their dorsal fin markings, picking otoliths (fish inner ear bones) out of dolphin stomach contents, identifying specific whale skulls by skull and tooth diagnostics, and identifying fishing gear that was recovered from entangled animals.

All in all, a perfect day for naturalists.



*Space Coast Chapter members tour the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute*

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## NEWS FROM THE FMNP OFFICE: Become a FMNP County Volunteer Liaison

The Florida Master Naturalist Program State Office is recruiting YOU for a new volunteer opportunity to assist the FMNP, natural resource entities in your county, and all FMNP Graduates interested in volunteering!

The **purpose** of this position is to identify volunteer and community science opportunities within your county with organizations whose primary mission is focused on natural resource education, conservation, or restoration of Florida's natural habitats.



The FMNP "County Volunteer Liaisons" will benefit the FMNP by being the primary point of contact in each county responsible for responding to volunteer requests from natural resource organizations and volunteer inquiries from FMNP Graduates. This will play a

vital role in ensuring that Graduates have an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills and natural resource organizations have the volunteer force they seek.

**Criteria for County Volunteer Liaison position:** The volunteer who takes on the responsibility of Liaison for their county should:

- Possess an active and sincere interest in identifying and expanding opportunities for FMNP Graduates to apply their knowledge and skills.
- Strive to engage with FMNP Graduates wanting to volunteer on environmental projects within their county.
- Be a FMNP Graduate (they may be affiliated with a FMNP Friends Chapter, but this is not required). FMNP Instructors are also eligible, if they believe they have the extra time to devote to this volunteer duty.
- Live and/or work for most of the year in the County they are serving.
- Be willing to maintain a cooperative and strong working relationship with the FMNP State Office, all local FMNP Lead Instructors, and the leadership of all active FMNP Friends Chapters within their county.
- Be willing to cooperate and coordinate with all neighboring County Volunteer Liaisons for projects that span across county boundaries, including statewide projects.

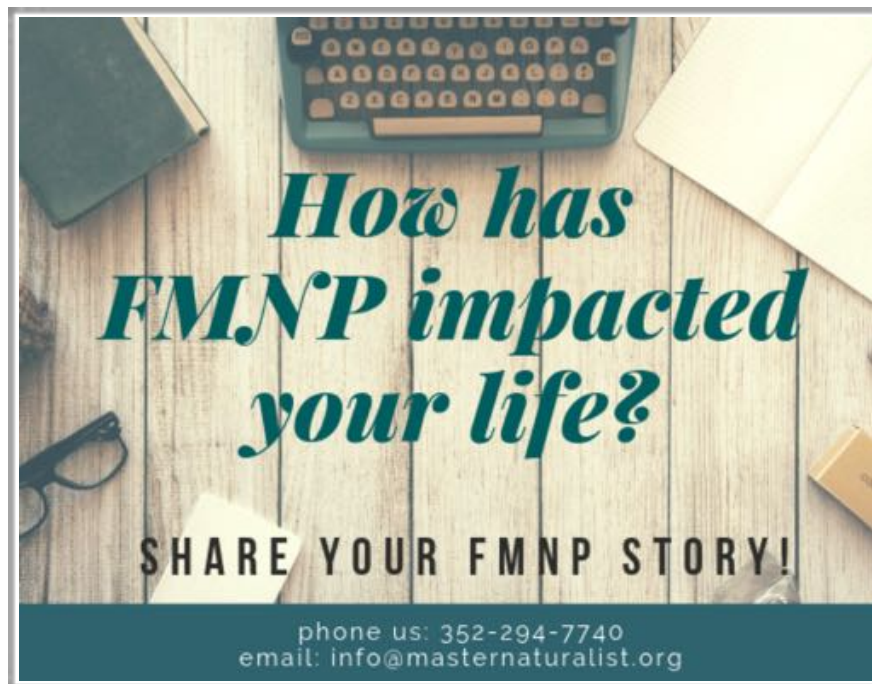
**Application** instructions and complete **Guidelines for FMNP County Volunteer Liaison** can be found on the [FMNP Volunteer Opportunities](#) page. Please contact the FMNP Statewide Coordinator, [Shelly Johnson](#) with additional questions.



## **THANK YOU** for participating in the **FMNP Annual Survey**

Many of you recently received an invitation to participate in an annual survey of the Florida Master Naturalist Program. **THANK YOU** to those who responded! We greatly value your time and appreciate your participation. The information we receive will assist us in improving the FMNP!

If you did not have a chance to respond, or if you have anything else to share, it's not too late to submit your story! This is an ongoing project. Please **WRITE YOUR STORY** and [submit it here](#).



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## **OPPORTUNITIES:** **NEW Volunteer Opportunity –** **“talk nature with me”**

The FMNP is excited to announce a new opportunity for Florida Master Naturalists to share the wonders of Florida's natural resources with their local community.

“*talk nature with me*” is a NEW spinoff of a UF/IFAS Extension program run by Dr. Katie Stofer in Alachua County called *talk science with me*. Since 2015, *talk science with me*, has sent pairs of scientists into community spaces (such as libraries, coffeehouses, bars, and laundromats) to have casual spontaneous conversations with community members. *talk science with me* is held at 8 locations in Alachua County 3-4 times per year, visiting both urban and rural locations with the aim of meeting people where they are (this gives us a unique opportunity to reach a new audience).

The *talk nature with me* program will replicate the *talk science with me* model with Master Naturalists throughout counties in Florida. We are looking for FMNP Graduates who want to help us bring *talk nature with me* to their county! Volunteers are needed initially to help set-up and coordinate the program within each county. With our assistance, coordinators will identify 5-10 venues (depending on population density of your county), advertise the events, and assist in recruiting Master Naturalists or other natural resources professionals to serve as the ‘naturalists’ who participate in the events.

If you are interested in potentially volunteering as a *talk nature with me* coordinator OR if you are interested in being a *talk nature with me* naturalist once we get the program rolling, please fill out [interest form](#) to submit your contact information.



Scientists Shelly Johnson (left) and Savanna Barry (right) host a *talk science with me* night in March 2016 at Mustang Grill in Archer, FL.

## Upcoming Courses:



## Come Be Social!

Don't forget to check out our Facebook and Instagram pages! As a follower, you will be able to communicate with the FMNP staff and other environmental enthusiasts. We share events, news, and photos from all across the state and FMNP courses. We encourage you to post and tag us throughout your own FMNP journey and to use the hashtags #FloridaMasterNaturalistProgram and #FMNP to find other posts. Click below to follow!

Follow us on:



@OfficialFMNP

## Sign up for the Listserv!

Stay up to date on FMNP news by signing up for our listserv! We only send out a few emails a year (including our newsletters). [Sign up here.](#)

***Don't forget to share our newsletter!***