



BREVARD *County*

Parks & Recreation
Central Mainland

Public Information Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Florida Master Naturalist Training Offered

ROCKLEDGE, Fla. - Registration is now open for the Coastal Systems Module of the Florida Master Naturalist Program, an environmental education extension program being offered in partnership with the University of Florida-Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. The Florida Master Naturalist Program offers students the opportunity to learn more about Florida's natural world and environmental history.

This Coastal Systems course is being taught at Riverwalk - A Family Park, 5355 U.S. Highway 1, Rockledge. Registration is open until April 1, and the course will be held on Saturdays for two months, beginning April 10. Visit www.MasterNaturalist.org and click on "Course Schedules" for specific class times. Registration forms are available at the Riverwalk Nature Center or online at www.MasterNaturalist.org.

The cost is \$225, which includes 40 contact hours of instruction and a comprehensive student reference workbook. Completion of the 40-hour program will result in registration in the UF-FMNP Coastal Systems Naturalist database. Certified teachers attending the course may be able to receive 40 hours of in-service credit.

Training for the Coastal Systems Module includes classroom instruction, field trips, and practical interpretive experience related to the general ecology, habitats, vegetation types, wildlife, and conservation issues of coastal systems in Florida, which include prairie, scrub, forests, rangeland and urban green space. In addition, the program develops naturalist interpretation skills, and discusses environmental ethics.

(more)

The FMNP is not a degree-seeking program; it is appropriate for both the novice and the highly skilled environmental professional. Volunteers and staff members of nature centers, preserves, sanctuaries, and other environmental education facilities; ecotourism operators and guides; teachers seeking opportunities for environmental educational contact hours; and anyone who has an enthusiastic interest in learning more about Florida's environment is encouraged to participate.

Brandon Smith, the principal instructor, has been teaching environmental education for Brevard County Parks and Recreation for over seven years and now oversees Riverwalk - A Family Park, a 6.37-acre nature preserve and center.

For more information on this and other programs, call the nature center at (321) 433-4490 or email riverwalk@brevardparks.com.

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