

FLORIDA EXTENSION INITIATIVE 3:

ENHANCING AND CONSERVING FLORIDA'S NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

STATEWIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY AND STEWARDSHIP

SITUATION

Pressure on our natural resources varies widely across Florida. Pressures include the loss of natural areas, an increase in urban development, the use of energy and water resources, and growing impacts on marine ecosystems. Florida Extension helps communities respond to all of these challenges. Educational programs teach Floridians about natural resource conservation, public issues, and community resource efficiency. Programs in this area provide in-depth training for volunteers to assist in our educational efforts. Florida Extension must focus on resource conservation and efficiency, community engagement and development, and BMP implementation. By doing so, Floridians will acquire a better understanding of their individual and collective role in the state's effort to enhance and protect natural resources.

UF/IFAS has many excellent educational programs that promote environmental stewardship, and these include both statewide programs (e.g., Florida Master Naturalist Program, Program for Resource Efficient Communities, Sustainable Floridians, Florida Forest Stewardship Program) and many local and regional programs that address specific issues and community needs. The primary need for statewide programming is the development and implementation of a more efficient and consistent approach to measuring the collective statewide impacts of the entire suite of UF/IFAS extension programs that promote environmental stewardship.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Continue to provide high quality educational programs that promote environmental stewardship among diverse audiences and to capture the collective impacts of these programs through consistent, meaningful, and effective evaluation metrics that can be efficiently implemented.

Target Audiences: a diverse range of youth and adult audiences are targeted, including youth in classroom and non-classroom settings and adult programs that include non-professional (lay person) and professional audiences (e.g., educators, tour providers, land managers, biologists, developers, county planners and elected officials, commercial and recreational fishers, etc.).

EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Workshops, presentations/webinars, displays at educational events, classes/courses (direct and distance education approaches).

Youth programs (summer camps, field-based programs, site-based programs, school enrichment etc.).

Development of curricula and other educational materials (fact sheets, displays, etc.).

Demonstration projects (restoration projects, beach clean-ups, fish descending methods, etc.).

Individual and small group consultations.

NEEDS

UF/IFAS Extension has many excellent environmental education programs. The greatest needs include developing consistent and universal metrics for evaluating educational program impacts, for support materials/mechanisms to assist in program development and delivery, and a means to provide impact data to authors of educational materials that are used in other programs. Action Items:

1. Compile/develop online templates for consistent statewide evaluation strategy for environmental education programs (objectives with linked activities and evaluation tools)
2. Evaluate what are other States are doing for evaluation and reporting/recordkeeping? (e.g., explore at Galaxy conference)
3. Develop training materials to help agents learn about limitations, capabilities of registration evaluation tools (e.g., Eventbrite, Qualtrix)
4. Develop an Extension "specialty" directory (agents and specialists and researchers, topics, activities, % extension appointment)
5. Identify local programs that could be expanded into a signature program and develop plan to do so
6. Identify missing environmental literacy and stewardship programs that are needed
7. Searchable Extension Calendar of activities that is user friendly (google, Extension, Eventbrite, facebook?)
8. Searchable resource website (password protected) to obtain and use educational products such as powerpoint presentations, and a means of ensuring creator of those materials receives information for reporting impact and receiving credit?

SUPER ISSUE

- ❖ Resource sustainability and conservation in Florida communities.