



Education and Exhibits Update: October 24, 2018

### **Fall Activities**

1. This fall, Director of Education Dr. Zack Jud has written and submitted 3 grant proposals totaling \$40,000 (plus \$1,000 in fishing equipment). Additional grant proposals to support educational programming in FY 2019 will be submitted in the upcoming weeks.
2. After reviewing more than 70 applications from around the country, we are excited to introduce Miss Yasmeen Fadlallah as FOS's newest Education Specialist. Yasmeen comes to us from the South Carolina Aquarium, where she spent the last 15 months working as an Education Interpreter. At the South Carolina Aquarium, Yasmeen led educational programming that was quite similar to what we offer at FOS. Yasmeen holds a B.S. in Marine Biology from the College of Charleston and is currently working on a M.A. in Teaching Biological Sciences through Miami University of Ohio. The addition of Yasmeen to our team will give the Education Department better staff coverage on weekends, while allowing us to conduct additional field trips, Virtual Field Trips, and educational outreach in our community.
3. Education Specialist Shannon Dack celebrated her 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary at FOS in September.
4. Education Specialist Nicole Harper attended a meeting of all K-5<sup>th</sup> science lead teachers for the entire St. Lucie County School District to promote educational opportunities offered by FOS.
5. Nicole has been redesigning our field trip curricula to better align with grade-specific educational standards. We will be debuting the new 3<sup>rd</sup> grade curriculum this fall, with additional grades to follow. By strengthening our alignment with state educational standards, we hope to increase field trip participation.
6. Our annual Ais on the Lagoon Community Paddle and Breakfast was held on September 30. Participants paddled across the Indian River Lagoon for breakfast on the Coastal Center's shoreline. After breakfast, guests enjoyed a historical presentation by Indian Riverkeeper Marty Baum, and a brief talk about ongoing water quality issues by FOS Executive Director Mark Perry.
7. The Virtual Field Trip program has kicked off for the 2018-2019 school year. In October, we have conducted 11 Virtual Field Trips, reaching 6 US states and 3 foreign countries. These "virtual visits" to the Coastal Center provide a great learning opportunity for students who are otherwise unable to visit in person. A limited number of Virtual Field Trips are provided free of charge through our Skype in the Classroom website thanks to a grant from the Marmot Foundation. Additional Virtual Field Trip dates are available through the FOS website for a fee.
8. Microsoft's Skype in the Classroom team invited FOS to lead a special Virtual Field Trip for the California State Park System. This gave us an opportunity to showcase our style of distance learning to other Virtual Field Trip facilitators.
9. In honor of International Sawfish Day, the Education Department invited the Florida Museum of Natural History's Florida Program for Shark Research to the Coastal Center to host a sawfish-themed outreach table.

10. We have installed a **new temporary exhibit in the Visitor's Center** showcasing sea turtle-safe lighting options. This exhibit is provided to FOS free of charge by the Sea Turtle Conservancy.
11. We have hung an **exact casting of Ana Belle's shell** at the Sea Turtle Pavilion so guests can see and feel his boat propeller scars.
12. Yasmeen and Nicole have developed **new set of resource binders for Coastal Center volunteers**. The binders will be updated with new science-related articles each week to encourage ongoing learning among our volunteers.
13. Yasmeen and Zack provided educational programming for members of our community at FOS's annual **Rally for the River** event.
14. Zack was invited to speak with **Senator Marco Rubio** on behalf of FOS during a private meeting held at the St. Lucie Lock and Dam. The meeting was attended by a small number of participants from the Army Corps of Engineers, the South Florida Water Management District, and Martin County.
15. Zack was invited to speak about Florida's ongoing water crisis on behalf of FOS during **Congressman Brian Mast's** press conference announcing the "Stop Harmful Discharges Act."
16. Zack met with a **graduate-level landscape architecture class from Florida International University** to discuss the use of created wetlands to treat runoff.
17. The Education Department has developed protocols and signage related to the **ongoing red tide event** that has been affecting the Coastal Center for the last 3 weeks. We have alerted guests to the possibility of experiencing wind-borne red tide-related symptoms while visiting the Coastal Center. When symptoms have become severe, we have been forced to temporarily close all outdoor exhibits. The health and safety of our guests, volunteers, staff, and animals are our highest priority.
18. The Education Department helped to develop **service animal policy text** for the FOS website, and a service animal handout for the Admissions Desk. We have continued to see an increase in the number of guests with non-service animal pets attempting to enter the Coastal Center. Our goal is to utilize as many tools as possible to minimize pet-related conflicts at the Coastal Center.
19. During our annual **September closed week**, Education Department staff worked to clean, repaint, and repair exhibits and signage throughout the Coastal Center and nature trails.
20. Zack spoke about various environmental issues on behalf of FOS for **10 television news interviews**, 4 newspaper and magazine articles, a television show, and a short documentary.

### **Summer Activities**

21. During June and July, the Education Department held 19 guided **sea turtle nesting walks** for the public. A total of 423 guests attended this year's walks. Participants viewed a nesting sea turtle on 13 of 19 nights.
22. Florida Oceanographic's popular **marine science summer camp** programs, designed and led by Shannon (our Camp Director), had another successful year in 2018. Over the course of 8 weeks, 113 campers participated in our Coastal Discovery Camps (ages 5-11) and Specialty Immersion Experiences (ages 12-16). A grant

from the Marmot Foundation allowed us to provide 2 partial, need-based summer camp scholarships. This grant also allowed us to hire two full-time camp counselors for the summer. Summer camps are the Education Department's largest income generator, and each year, we work to maximize this program's profitability.

23. The 2017-2018 FOS **Virtual Field Trip Program** wrapped up over the summer. Last year, we conducted 42 Virtual Field Trips reaching 1,200 middle school, high school, and college students from 15 US states and 7 foreign countries, including **India, South Africa, Spain, Austria, and Bosnia & Herzegovina**.
24. This year's FOS **Youth Fishing Tournament** wrapped up over the summer. Young anglers landed 502 fish during the tournament, and walked away with more than \$600 in donated prizes.
25. FOS provided **free educational Coastal Center field trips** to 87 K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students from Hope Rural School, a school serving socioeconomically disadvantaged children from Indiantown, in rural Martin County. These trips were supported through the generosity of a private donor.
26. Summertime is the Education Department's busy season for **self-guided field trip visits**. This year, 2,281 children and chaperones from 76 different groups visited the Coastal Center on self-guided field trips – up from 1,308 last year!
27. Nicole conducted two **educational outreach programs** this summer at the Blake Library – one focused on sea turtle biology and conservation, the other focused on shark biology and conservation. These community outreach programs simultaneously educate children and parents, drive future attendance to the Coastal Center, and generate income for FOS.
28. The Education Department developed ocean-themed **"Story Express Kits"** that are now in circulation at seven Martin County libraries. Each kit includes books, games, songs, and puppets designed to expose preschoolers to the ocean while simultaneously developing counting and reading skills.
29. Nicole scheduled and hosted a unique educational opportunity for FOS volunteers. Using Skype, we were able to connect directly with **Jacques Cousteau's granddaughter** to discuss global environmental issues.
30. Zack represented FOS at the July meeting of the **Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program's Citizens Advisory Committee**.
31. Zack spoke on behalf of FOS at a **Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting** about proposed roadside lighting on Hutchinson Island.
32. The Education Department hosted **two full-time college interns** this summer. Grant support allowed us to provide both interns with a small stipend to assist with living expenses during their internship. When possible, we believe that offering small internship stipends makes us more attractive to highly qualified out-of-town applicants. These interns are a critical part of summer programming in the Education Department, as Shannon's role as Camp Director pulls her away from her normal day-to-day duties. Education Department staff also served as mentors for participants in the **TEAM Ocean** high school volunteering program.