



Education Department Update: November 16, 2020

1. The Education Department was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Andrew and Robin Hunt Philanthropic Fund at The Community Foundation Martin St. Lucie. This grant will provide operational funding to support educational programming during the upcoming year.
2. During November, the Education Department will host four early-morning guided nature trail walks, before the Coastal Center opens to the public. Space in these fee-based walks is limited. Registration is available at: <https://www.floridaocean.org/events>
3. In honor of Halloween, Education Specialist Shannon Dack led a spider-themed nature walk on October 30th.
4. Shannon and Education Specialist Yasmeen Fadlallah are currently training two new cohorts of volunteer Exhibit Guides to assist with informal educational programming at the invertebrate touch tank. These are the first new cohorts of volunteer trainees since March. This month, two new volunteers have completed their training and have been promoted to Exhibit Guide status. At the present time, 32 of our active volunteer Exhibit Guides have taken a temporary leave of absence due to COVID-19.
5. Director of Education Dr. Zack Jud conducted two live virtual college lectures this month for students enrolled in a herpetology course at Mississippi State University and an oceanography course at Bentley University. For one of the lectures, Zack designed a new presentation (“Florida’s invasive reptiles and amphibians”), which will be added to our catalog of available programs. FOS charges \$125 for each of these virtual lectures.
6. The Education Department facilitated the first Coastal Center birthday party since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Birthday parties are available at the Coastal Center for a fee of \$200.
7. We have made the decision to utilize a virtual format for the 2021 Coastal Lecture Series. Lectures will be streamed live using Zoom on Tuesday evenings, January through March. If you have speaker recommendations, please contact Zack directly.
8. The Education Department is excited to welcome a part-time Coastal Center intern for the winter of 2021. Amanda Marker is a senior at Florida Atlantic University’s Wilkes Honors College, where she is majoring in Marine Biology. Amanda will be joining our team at the end of December. Intern support will be particularly critical this year, as the Education Department has an unfilled staff position as well as a COVID-related volunteer shortage.
9. Zack published a peer-reviewed scientific paper in the research journal *Foodwebs* titled “Changes in motile benthic faunal community structure following large-scale oyster reef restoration in a subtropical estuary.” This publication stems from research conducted from 2007 to 2012 as part of a Martin County oyster restoration project on the Loxahatchee River. Scientific publication strengthens FOS’s position as a science-focused organization. The article can be found at:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352249620300379>