

**Florida Master Naturalist
Instructor Bios, 2012-13**

Wren Underwood

Wren Underwood is a biologist and environmental educator who has been wandering and working in the wilds of Florida for more than 20 years. After completing her degree in Biological Science at Florida Atlantic University, Wren's professional work began in the consulting world, followed by stints with both the South Florida Water Management District and the St. Johns River Water Management District. These employments brought experience in environmental audits, ecosystem restoration and water quality monitoring.

Wren has always enjoyed teaching others and eventually left the scientific community to become a classroom science teacher. Combining field experience and teaching abilities Wren now enjoys a career in environmental education where she shares her passion for Florida's rich environmental wonders. Most recently, Wren worked at the Oxbow Eco-Center in Port Saint Lucie as head of educational programming. Currently, she is working as a freelance biologist, tour guide and environmental educator in the Treasure Coast.

Wren is involved in several environmental education programs and organizations including the Indian River Lagoon Envirothon, the Treasure Coast Environmental Education Council and the Florida Master Naturalist Program, where she is both an instructor and co-facilitator for the East-Central Chapter.

Ken Gioeli

Since 1993, Ken Gioeli has served as the University of Florida's Natural Resources Extension Agent for St Lucie County. Ken specializes in natural resource management which includes conservation of water resources and wildlife habitat. He also provides training and licensing opportunities for pesticide applicators. In addition, he is the east central Florida Master Naturalist co-facilitator.

Ken earned his University of Florida Master's degree in agricultural education and communications and a graduate certificate in Environmental education. He graduated with a 4.0 GPA. Ken studied vampire bat biology through the Organization for Tropical Studies - a partnership between Duke University and the University of Costa Rica. His bachelor's degree is from the University of Central Florida in Secondary Science Education specializing in Biology. Ken also has a liberal arts degree from Indian River State College and diploma from Ft Pierce Central High School.

Ken is well-known for his work with bat acoustics and exclusion, rain barrels, and invasive species management. In 1998, he supervised the bat exclusion from the NY Mets Stadium in St Lucie. He also is well-known for his work with invasive plant biological control and has helped successfully introduce agents to help manage Melaleuca and tropical soda apple. Finally, Ken conducts rain barrel workshops designed to teach the public how to construct and install their own rain barrel.

In 2011, Ken taught 11,477 students how to manage natural resources.

Amanda Thompson

Florida Master Naturalist Amanda Thompson is an environmental educator who has spent the last 10 years working in many beautiful natural areas, moving her way from Toronto Canada, to Maryland and finally landing in Florida. Currently Amanda works as the Education Coordinator for the Oxbow Eco-Center developing and presenting many different educational programs for groups of all ages. In the past she worked as a zookeeper at the Palm Beach Zoo working with avian and reptile exhibits such as the Roseate Spoonbills, Bald Eagles, Aldabra Tortoises and the Komodo Dragon. Thompson received her B.A in Anthropology from the University of Guelph in Ontario Canada. In 2010 Amanda completed her three Florida Master Naturalist modules, earning her certification. The Master Naturalist program has increased Amanda's love of Florida's wild areas and allowed for her to teach about nature's "wow" factor.

Lesley Vincent-Ryder

Lesley Vincent-Ryder is the Education Coordinator for the Manatee Observation and Education Center. Joining the team in April 2006, she develops, coordinates, and facilitates educational programs including summer camps and adult workshops. Before coming to the Manatee Center she worked at the Palm Beach Zoo, was marine science educator for over three years at The South Florida Science Museum, and taught Biology and Environmental Science for the Palm Beach County School District. Lesley obtained her Bachelor's of Science degree in Biology with a concentration in Marine Sciences from Palm Beach Atlantic College. She completed all three modules and graduated as a Florida Master Naturalist in 2010. Since then, her love of nature and passion for environmental education have been the draw to continue working with and learning from the Florida Master Naturalist Program!

Patricia Norris

Florida Master Naturalist Patricia Norris has been living in Florida and enjoying Florida's bountiful natural offerings since the age of 12. Beginning with an interest in Birding, Patricia has developed an interest in learning about, and eventually teaching about Florida's many species of plants and animals as well as the ecosystems in which they reside. She has been leading nature hikes as a Naturalist for the St Lucie County Environmental Resources Department since 2008 and recently has been approved as an Assistant Instructor for the FMNP.

One of Patricia's favorite projects involves using trail cameras and digital cameras to document the wonders of nature, and has a very extensive educational page on Facebook where she shares Trailcam photos, digital photos, and video clips. Accompanying each photo and video are very detailed (usually!) educational information about the animals or plants depicted. The page may be found at www.Facebook.com/SLCNatureCam. Be sure to "LIKE" the page so you will get notification of new material! Included is a wealth of photos of bobcats, wild turkeys, deer, raccoons, birds, butterflies, dragonflies, calling frogs, and much more!