

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Program Policy

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge offers Environmental Education Programs FREE for groups that have educational curriculum requirements that can be met by our outdoor classrooms.

Programs are designed to accommodate from 15 to 60 students. Students will be divided into smaller groups so they can get the most from their experiences at St. Marks NWR. Each program may include a game, lesson and hands-on activity. To obtain a list of the Florida Sunshine State Standard correlations, and pre-visit and post-visit activities, please go to our website at <http://www.fws.gov/saintmarks>.

Unless otherwise noted in education brochure, schools/organizations are expected to provide one adult chaperone for each 15 students attending our educational programs. Chaperones will actively participate in the presentation of the programs under the supervision of the Refuge educational staff, and should come dressed appropriately for the program requested.

Due to the high demand for our programs, we ask that you book your program at least 2 weeks in advance. Programs must be scheduled and confirmed by refuge staff. During the school year programs may be scheduled Tues. –Fri., starting no earlier than 10:00 am and finishing by 1:30 pm. The third Friday of each month, August –April, will be reserved for home school groups. Participants must call to reserve their spot by the second Friday of that month. Minimum number of participants for the program to take place will be 15 with a maximum number of 60.

In order to continue to offer free programming for schools/organizations, we now require that groups complete and return pre and post visit assessments. Groups that do not provide this information may not be rescheduled in the future. Assessments can be found on the website or sent directly to the group from the education specialist.

Due to reduced refuge staffing during the summer, programs will be scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays only and will take place between the hours of 9:00 am and 2:30 pm. Final program and date availability will be determined by refuge staff. Weekend programs are limited and may be self-guided with materials checked out by the group's leaders.

Due to the popularity of our programs and the availability of staff, organizations that charge for their services (i.e. summer camps, and/or day camps), may schedule 1 program per month. If this does not meet their needs, refuge staff will work to train said organization's facilitators to perform the program they require. There will be no entrance fee charged for that organization to bring their group to the refuge for the self-guided environmental education program. To insure the best program experience for everyone, self guided programs still must register with the refuge so there will be no logistical problems of multiple programs taking place at the same time and place.

Refuge materials may be checked out if they are not already in use by a previously scheduled program. In cases where items are checked out, it is the responsibility of that organization to return those items in the same condition they were checked out. If any items are broken or damaged it will be the organizations responsibility to repair or replace said items.

****Policy subject to change as required by staffing and logistical needs.***