

Apple Snail Adoption Program (ASAP) Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership

West Palm Beach, Florida



(a) Pine Jog Resident Scientist w/Student



Lisa Morse

(b) Apple Snail Hatching

Florida Atlantic University's (FAU) Pine Jog Environmental Education Center will implement the Apple Snail Adoption Program (ASAP) with at least 500 students and 40 teachers and community representatives in South Florida. ASAP will focus on propagating and restoring native Florida Apple Snail populations and the removal of invasive exotic snails in two locations: the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (ARMLNWR) and the Grassy Waters Everglades Preserve. Students will also learn to identify and remove invasive plant material. ASAP will create lessons to engage students in their classes, raise Florida Apple Snails in the classroom and provide field learning experiences centered on wetland restoration activities in the designated wetland areas.

This partnership will promote environmental stewardship, conservation, restoration and education targeting the following outcomes:

- The creation of a set of 7 lesson plans based on the Florida Apple Snail to explore the consequences of introducing invasive and exotic species into natural systems, the interconnectedness of all living things and the importance of protecting natural

resources, especially fresh water. These lesson plans will also introduce the understanding of the food chain and food webs and the impact of anthropogenic activities on them, the intrinsic rewards of giving back to nature as opposed to taking from nature, and the introduction of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) associated with restoration science to younger students, particularly urban youth from historically underserved populations.

- The restoration of wetlands designed to enhance water quality, remove invasive species and support native Florida Apple Snail populations.
- The propagation of Florida Apple Snails in local classrooms throughout South Florida.
- Quality field experiences to release snails, restore wetlands, assist in water sampling, and participate in species population counts (i.e. Bird Counts).
- Within 5 years, expand the ASAP program to 10 Florida counties involving at least 5,000 students and 40 teachers.

Partners

Partners include, Pine Jog Environmental Education Center in the College of Education of Florida Atlantic University, Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Grassy Waters Everglades Preserve, local schools, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation Department, and the Institute for Regional Conservation.



For more information, contact:
National Wildlife Refuge System
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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