

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge
Environmental Education Homeschool Program Information and Policy
2019-2020

- Education programs are free to homeschool groups, however, if you sign up and don't show up without calling prior to the program to cancel you will not be allowed to sign up for future programs, no exceptions will be made.
- Programs are scheduled for a single Friday in each month; August – May.
- Homeschool program participants must sign up each child with refuge education ranger (email address lori_nicholson@fws.gov).
- For each child that is signed up we require email and phone number for the parent/guardian so appropriate materials and info can be sent directly to them. (They may come with another adult, but I want to be able to communicate with each parent/guardian.)
- **All programs require a minimum of 15 students, age appropriate for the program scheduled that month. Siblings are welcome to tour the refuge, away from the program, or in the visitor center with another adult. This allows the participants to get the most out of their program.**
- Program registration will close one week prior to the scheduled program.
- In the event that the minimum number of participants has not signed up one week prior to the program an email will be sent out to see if anyone else wants to register, if not the program will be cancelled.
- Programs are limited to a maximum of 50; therefore, registration will be processed on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Refuge programs are correlated to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards.
- Pre and post visit activities available upon request (prior to one week before the program).
- On-site programs will start at 10 am and conclude at approx. noon. We will start on time; regardless of how many are present at 10 am. Please plan accordingly so you can arrive prior to program start time.
- At least 1 adult (Chaperone) per 10 participants are expected to stay with their groups the entire time of the program.
- Chaperones are expected to **actively participate** in the presentation of the programs under the supervision of the Refuge educational staff; this includes getting in the water for the coastal explorer and freshwater ecosystem programs. ***If adults do not go in the water, neither will the kids.***
- Chaperones and parents are expected to come dressed appropriately for the program requested (*i.e.: no high heels or other open toe shoes are allowed, this is a safety issue, students with open toe shoes will not be allowed on the trails or in the water*).
- **Students and chaperones must wear closed toe shoes to participate in programs.**

For those programs that are listed K-12, we will allow the younger siblings to attend, however, if they disrupt the program they will be asked to leave that area. For children that do not meet the minimum age level for the grade listed for the program we ask that you follow the policy as stated above.

For all programs that are grade specific, we will go with Florida's law on what age a child must be to enter Kindergarten to base the minimum age for each program.

Florida law (Section 1003.21(1)(a)2, Florida Statutes) specifies that children who have attained the age of five years on or before September 1 of the school year are eligible for admission to public kindergarten during that school year based on rules prescribed by the school board. Students are eligible for kindergarten attendance provided they meet the age requirement.

2019-2020 Homeschool Program Schedule (please sign up for programs only that are age appropriate for your child). If a minimum age is stated below, I ask that you adhere to it. On the programs that are geared toward a certain age group but say all ages welcome, that program will be designed for the specific age group mentioned, however if a younger or older sibling wants to come they may, but if they are disruptive they will be asked to leave the program area.

August 30, 2019 - Coastal Explorer (second – 12th grade); *Minimum age of 7*

September 20, 2019 -Adaptable Animals (K-3rd grade); all ages welcome

October 18, 2019 -Butterfly Encounter (K-4th grade); all ages welcome

November 15, 2019 -Magnificent Mammals (K-12th grade); all ages welcome

January 17, 2020 – Feathered Friends (K-12th grade); all ages welcome

February 21, 2020 – Reptiles and Amphibians (K-12th grade); all ages welcome

March 27, 2020 – Insect Safari (K-3rd grade); all ages welcome

April 17, 2020 – Freshwater Ecosystems (2nd – 6th grade); *Minimum age of 7*

May 15, 2020 – Earth Scientist (4th – 12th grade); *Minimum age of 9*

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