

UF/IFAS Extension

Comings & Goings

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Meet Your Specialist	2
Extension Leader has Ideas That Can Help Transform Pasco	3
Sustainable Seafood Series.....	4
Eating Healthier, One Bite at a Time.....	4
Talk Science With Me	5
4-H Citrus Tree Project Cultivates Future Leaders	6
The Pulse of the Sector	7
Dedication to Diabetic Diet Deters Dialysis.....	8
Local Ag Producers	8
Teaming up!	8
Helping Small Farmers Maintain Better Pastures	9
Help Grow Florida's 4-H Program.....	10
Healthy Lifestyle with 4-H	10
Beef Cattle Nutrition	10
Internationalizing Extension.....	11
Pesticide Training Helps People, Economy and Environment	12
Florida-Friendly Landscaping™	12
Carinata Offers New Possibilities	13
Protecting the Lake.....	14
Hiring a Landscape Contractor Can Be a Daunting Task.....	14
Nature Nurtures 4-H Youth	15
Festival Celebrates Community's Commercial Fishing Heritage	15
Driving Force.....	16
Arrivals/New Positions/Departures/Retirement	16

UF/IFAS Extension *Comings and Goings* is a monthly newsletter distributed by the Office of the Dean for Extension via e-mail and on the UF/IFAS Extension web site at <http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu>.

If you have any suggestions or would like to submit your own recognition or short article of interest, please send them to Valkyrie Shah.

Please feel free to also forward any questions or comments about this periodical to Valkyrie Shah at valkyrieshah@ufl.edu.

Ideas That Can Help Transform Pasco (Pg 3)

Dr. Payne - Pasco County can remake itself as an agritourism destination where visitors flock to U-pick farms, shop for locally produced olive oil, and get a close-up look at where their milk and ice cream come from.

Sustainable Seafood Series (Pg 4)

Joy Hazel - Southwest Florida used to have hundreds of fishing families producing food for local and overseas markets; today we have a handful of commercial fishermen. Meanwhile, 91% of the seafood eaten in the U.S. is imported from other countries.

Eating Healthier, One Bite at a Time (Pg 4)

Kristen Poppell - As part of the healthy living initiative, Nassau County 4-H agents often participate in the Youth Understanding MyPlate (YUM) school enrichment program.

Talk Science With Me (Pg 5)

Kathryn Stofer - A new UF/IFAS Extension public engagement program called "talk science with me" is designed to bring researchers out into their local communities to meet with people and discuss scientific issues in a relaxed, informal setting.

4-H Citrus Tree Project (Pg 6)

Gary England - If Florida's citrus industry is to continue to grow beyond the current crisis of citrus greening, it will need experienced and knowledgeable leaders in the future.

The Pulse of the Sector (Pg 7)

Jennifer Jones - Home to more than 62,000 nonprofit organizations, Florida has one of the largest nonprofit sectors in the country.

Dedication to Diabetic Diet Deters Dialysis (Pg 8)

Betsy Crisp - Diabetes affects 29.1 million Americans (9.3% of the population).

Local Ag Producers (Pg 8)

Crystal Snodgrass, Christa Kriby, Martha Glenn - Commercial agriculture is second only to tourism as Manatee County's leading industry. As new Best Management Practices (BMPs) develop and water regulations change, producers are often unaware of these changes.

Teaming up! (Pg 8)

Heidi Copeland - Each year, many of us turn to tax preparation services to help us save on taxes or even see a return.

Small Farmers Maintain Better Pastures (Pg 9)

Megan Mann - Michael H., a small farm owner in Lake County, had recently purchased an old citrus grove with the intention of turning it into productive pasture.

Help Grow Florida's 4-H Program (Pg 10)

Jean Hink - By helping to expand communication and encourage teamwork, volunteers inspire more people to join in and help promote the Florida 4-H program.

Leading a Healthy Lifestyle with 4-H (Pg 10)

Brian Estevez - Kelsey is a true 4-H success story.

Beef Cattle Nutrition (Pg 10)

Ed Jennings - In 2012 a commercial beef producer in West-Central Florida approached his local Extension agent with concerns over the production levels of his beef cow herd.

Internationalizing Extension (Pg 11)

Pamela Fletcher - In March 2016, Dr. Pamela Fletcher, the UF/IFAS Florida Sea Grant Regional Extension Coordinator at NOAA/AOML, led a week-long marine life conservation trip in Nicaragua with nine University of Florida student volunteers.

Pesticide Training (Pg 12)

Juanita Popenoe - A Lake County employee in the Mosquito Control division has a pre-requisite for his job to obtain a Public Health pesticide applicator license within a certain time of being hired.

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (Pg 12)

Ralph Mitchell - Tom Becker, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Program Assistant with the Charlotte County Extension Service, conducts the annual FFL training for all Master Gardener Trainees.

Carinata Offers New Possibilities (Pg 13)

Patrick Troy - Florida farmers have always been experimenters in planting a wide variety of crops, from the days of the Timucuan Indians to the booming citrus, cattle, and tobacco industries that began flourishing in the 19th century.

Protecting the Lake (Pg 14)

Brooke Moffis - Lisa is a resident in Lake County that lives near the waterfront of Lake Harris. In her words, she wants to "work hard for her yard and community to be a responsible one for the lake."

Hiring a Landscape Contractor (Pg 14)

Michelle Atkinson - Hiring a landscape professional can be a challenge, especially for homeowner association (HOA) board members who very often only evaluate the landscape bids on price.

Nature Nurtures 4-H Youth (Pg 15)

Rachel Slocumb - The summer of 2015 this agent started actively doing programming that involved the use of teaching animals, specifically reptiles and amphibians.

Commercial Fishing Heritage (Pg 15)

Angela Collins - Cortez village represents one of the last working waterfronts on Florida's Gulf coast that is dedicated to commercial fishing.

Driving Force (Pg 16)

Whitney Elmore - Pasco County faces one of most complex transportation dilemmas in the state of Florida.

MEET YOUR SPECIALIST



Stephen Enloe,
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I came to the University of Florida from Auburn University and Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, where I served for the last seven years as an invasive plant extension

specialist. My specialties are upland invasive plant ecology and management, as well as aquatic invasive plant management. I also take special interest in natural and protected areas in Florida.

In 2002 I received my Ph.D. from the University of California in Plant Biology.

I have been involved with invasive plant research and extension for the past 18 years. I have conducted research throughout the western and southeastern United States, including California, Colorado, Wyoming, Alabama, and now Florida. Over the last seven years, my main focus has been cogongrass, Chinese privet, Chinese tallowtree, Japanese climbing fern and kudzu. I have also worked in the area of bioenergy with an emphasis on preventing potential bioenergy species from becoming the next big invader.

In my recent move to the University of Florida, I replaced Dr. Ken Langeland. Similar to his appointment, my focus is now divided between upland and aquatic invasive plant issues. I am excited to be wading into the area of aquatics and hope to bring a fresh approach that will help address the monumental task of aquatic plant management in Florida. I currently have projects on torpedograss and creeping water primrose.

In terms of upland research, I currently have projects on cogongrass, Chinese tallowtree, leadtree, tungoil tree, Old World climbing fern, Brazilian peppertree, bishopwood and several other species. Florida has an incredible array of upland invasive plant problems, and I am excited for the opportunity to be here.

On a personal note, I am married to a soil scientist (Heather Enloe) and we have three children, Samuel (5), Ava (2), and Gabriel (4 months). We are very happy to be here in Florida and are excited about the future!



Justin Renkema,
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I came to the University of Florida from the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario, Canada. There I was a post-doctoral fellow in the School of Environmental Sciences from 2012 to 2015. I

worked with a team of researchers and provincial extension agents on improving methods for monitoring and managing spotted wing drosophila, a recent invasive fly pest of berries and other small fruits. We evaluated natural products as potential repellents and oviposition deterrents, having success with some plant essential oils. I specialize in developing and improving integrated pest management strategies in small fruit crops. In Florida, this means working closely with the strawberry and blueberry industry to find novel solutions to control pests such as thrips, mites, sap beetles, seed bugs, worms and spotted wing drosophila. I take a special interest in biological control and conservation or establishment of non-crop habitat in and around fields for improving biodiversity of pest predators and parasitoids. Beneficial organisms provide agriculture with important ecosystem services, and finding ways to increase the levels of such services will provide growers with new tools for sustainable and economically-viable crop production. I look forward to discussions with small fruit growers, extension personnel, and industry representatives on how to implement conservation biological control in the Florida context and integrate biological control with current chemical and other pest control practices.

I graduated from Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada in 2011 with a PhD in Biology, specializing in applied entomology and crop protection. My dissertation examined the effect of mulches in highbush blueberries on the pest blueberry maggot and on beneficials, particularly ground-dwelling predators such as ground and rove beetles.

At UF, I am based at the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center (GCREC) in Balm, southeast of Tampa. I am excited to be part of IFAS and an excellent group of researchers and staff at the center dedicated to strawberry production. Evaluating new products for pest management and bringing results and knowledge to practitioners through innovative technologies will be an important part of my appointment (70% research 30% extension). I look forward to many successful years in Florida helping to improve crop protection strategies in small fruit crops.

EXTENSION LEADER HAS IDEAS THAT CAN HELP TRANSFORM PASCO

Written by Dr. Payne and published as a guest columnist in the Tampa Bay Times



(Left) Jack Payne, Senior Vice President of UF/IFAS



(Right) Whitney Elmore, Pasco County Extension director and Urban Horticulture Extension Agent

Pasco County can remake itself as an agritourism destination where visitors flock to U-pick farms, shop for locally produced olive oil, and get a close-up look at where their milk and ice cream come from.

It can reimagine its transportation to integrate improved roads, bike paths and pedestrian walkways in a carefully considered plan for moving people from A to B. Pasco's eastside "food deserts" could recede beneath the success of a community garden that makes fresh produce available to folks who currently are reliant on convenience stores for much of their diet.

It's an ambitious agenda, and it's just dreams right now. But part of the reason UF/IFAS has such success in building communities is that we help communities believe in themselves.

It happened in the story we call "Clamelot" – how IFAS Extension work contributed to the economic revival of Cedar Key into a clam farming capital. It happened in Live Oak, where IFAS Extension brought together and inspired local leaders to invest in remaking their community after the devastation wrought by Tropical Storm Debby in 2010.

About a year and a half ago, Whitney Elmore gave up her tenured professor post at a university in Georgia to become the urban horticulture Extension agent in Dade City. She's responsible for lots of day-to-day programming, but as Pasco County Extension director she's also dreamer-in-chief for nearly half a million residents.

Here's why you should believe in Whitney's ideas:

- Whitney is already taking concrete steps to put her vision into practice. This summer she'll host the county's first cottage industry expo to help spark agritourism. She's gone to the county transportation director to connect

her with UF experts in that field. And she's building relationships with civic organizations that can help make the community garden a reality.

- She knows that achievement starts with big ideas. She has a character trait common to achievers – her fear of failure is overcome by her fear of failing to try.
- She has few of the inhibitions that prevent people from taking action. She asks for the resources she needs – and doesn't mind asking again if she doesn't get a yes the first time. She doesn't worry if her plans sound far-fetched. She even proudly displays in her office a photo of herself with Donny Osmond.

The long, proud history of UF/IFAS Extension as a friend of the farmer can sometimes obscure our great work building modern communities. We'll always stay true to our agricultural roots, but the communities we serve range well beyond ranches and groves.

Florida needs to grow crops, yes, but it needs to grow its communities.

I'd argue that UF/IFAS Extension will get you the biggest bang for your buck on that front. Just consider what Whitney is already doing in a 65-year-old warren of cramped offices and a staff that is still at recession levels. She's essentially performing two full-time jobs – one teaching about plant husbandry and the other doing the planning and administration functions of a community leader.

One last thing makes Whitney's ideas a good bet. The Pasco County Commission — which itself knows a thing or two about stretching a dollar – backs Whitney and is seeking ways to help her do more to help Pasco.

We're hopeful that a year from now we'll be inviting the community to a new Extension home in a renovated county building where we can better accommodate classes and even host some of the strategy meetings that Whitney sometimes can't get to off site.

And in five years, we hope that Pasco will look much more like it looks inside Whitney's head right now.

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD SERIES DOCUMENTS SOUTHWEST FLORIDA TREASURES

Joy Hazel, Sea Grant/Marine Science EA III, Lee Cty



The movie poster features a third generation Pine Island commercial fishermen, Mike Dooley.



150 people attended the first public screening of the documentary.



Photos provided by pearl brands, Inc.

Southwest Florida used to have hundreds of fishing families producing food for local and overseas markets; today we have a handful of commercial fishermen. Meanwhile, 91% of the seafood eaten in the U.S. is imported from other countries. U.S. seafood producers face competition from these imports as working waterfronts are converted to other land uses, increasing fisheries and environmental regulations raise the costs of doing business while limiting catch, and U.S. citizens' preferences lean toward less expensive imported seafood. In Southwest Florida, public television station WGCU is partnering with UF/IFAS Extension Lee County, Florida Sea Grant, West Coast Inland Navigation District, and pearl brands, Inc. to create "Sustainable Seafood", a series of documentary films about local seafood products and their history, culture and environmental importance. The first of the one-hour films, "Pink Gold Rush", highlighted the Fort Myers Beach pink shrimp fleet. The episode was a huge success, reaching the highest sustained ratings for a local show in WGCU history and spreading to more than 37 stations nationwide. The story of the shrimp fleet caught the attention of tourism officials, restaurateurs and community groups. The creators hosted film screenings and expert panels at multiple events, winning the People's Choice Award at the Fort Myers Beach Film Festival and the Regional Edward R. Murrow Award for Best Documentary. Restaurants have reported switching to Gulf pink shrimp as a result of increasing consumer demand.

The second documentary in the series, "Mullet: A Tale of Two Fish", premiered to an audience of 150 people at the Fishers of Men Lutheran Church on Pine Island May 11, 2016. The episode charts the long and storied history of Southwest Florida's most underappreciated fish, including its importance as a food source for Native Americans, Spanish explorers and early Florida pioneers. The program also explores the rise and fall of Florida's commercial mullet fishing industry in the 20th century. The television premier was aired on May 16 to an audience of 10,000. With its companion website, Facebook page and blog highlighting Southwest Florida's sustainable local seafood products, we hope to continue to raising awareness and appreciation of our region's natural and nutritional resources. For more information on the latest documentary visit: <http://taleoftwofish.com/>.

EATING HEALTHIER, ONE BITE AT A TIME

Kristen Poppell, 4-H YD EA I, Nassau Cty



FBCA Students showing off their "Fiver Friends" after completing their "Good on Grains" lesson

As part of the healthy living initiative, Nassau County 4-H agents often participate in the Youth Understanding MyPlate (YUM) school enrichment program.

Currently, there are 59 kindergarten through second grade students participating in the YUM program at Fernandina

Beach Christian Academy. The YUM program covers healthy eating, as well as the importance of physical activity. Each week the students learn about a specific food group. As part of these lessons, students practice identifying foods that fall into the specific food group, participate in a physical activity, read a story related to that week's topic, and enjoy a healthy snack. During the mid-point of this series

of lessons, two teachers at FBCA, who also have children enrolled at the school, shared their experiences.

The first teacher wished that her daughter was participating in the YUM program because of the positive impact the program was having on her students. This teacher indicated that her students were eager to complete their YUM worksheets and had been discussing the topics on their own in the classroom. The second teacher had both of her children in the program – one in second grade and one in kindergarten – and both of them were talking about the program at home! When they sat down for meals with their family, they would check to see if their plates had all of the food groups represented and if not, try to figure out what was missing.

Although this impact has only been demonstrated over the short term, it is reassuring to know that students are applying this important knowledge to their everyday lives. This small step is one avenue toward creating healthier communities.

TALK SCIENCE WITH ME

Kathryn Stofer, Agriscience and STEM Edu Asst. Prof., AEC



Photos provided by Sarah Edison.

A new UF/IFAS Extension public engagement program called “talk science with me” is designed to bring researchers out into their local communities to meet with people and discuss scientific issues in a relaxed, informal setting. There are any number of reasons why many people don’t come to extension events, from time and transportation constraints to disinterest or insecurity about coming to an unfamiliar venue such as campus or a county office.

Extension has a long tradition of going to venues such as farmers’ markets and county fairs; “talk science with me” builds on that model and other successful models for science outreach, such as the Florida Museum of Natural History’s Science Café series. Science Cafés take scientific talks out of the university and into community restaurants and other venues. However, Science Cafés are often lecture-style events with question-and-answer sessions posed to a speaker, rather than true forums for discussion amongst the entire group of attendees. In some cases, the venue may not be able to accommodate as many people as want to attend. Moreover, lectures and other public outreach events may be intimidating to scientists who have not had much experience re-working their presentations into products more accessible to non-specialist audiences.

So “talk science with me” goes further, setting up pairs of researchers in bars, coffee shops, libraries, and even laundromats with the goal of striking up casual conversations about agriscience with people gathered in spaces where they are comfortable. Casual conversations are more equitable than the more one-way model of a lecture and Q&A, and make it easier for people to share their knowledge about their communities and help scientists understand the concerns that they might be able to help with.

In Alachua County, the program has run as a pilot for the past year, with four quarterly events occurring at up to ten venues over the course of a weekend. Typically we host five venues in Gainesville itself, and one each in the surrounding smaller towns of Hawthorne, Micanopy, Archer, and Melrose.

The program allows scientists who haven’t had a lot of experience with the public and those looking for a change of pace to reach new folks who may not even know to look for UF/IFAS Extension programs or other outreach events. “Topics have ranged from the work both scientists and citizens do day-to-day, to specific questions related to community issues such as the development of east Gainesville, or philosophical conversations about

what science is and what it means for something to be “proven.”

The pilot program was generously funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation to the Florida Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence (COSEE-FL), who contracted Katie Stofer to create and test the program. Now she wants to share it with other counties and help agents develop programs in their own communities, with tweaks and changes that reflect particular community needs. All together, Katie has plans for venue selection, advertising, and scientist recruitment and development, as well as documenting and evaluating the events.

This summer and fall, Katie will be working with Cindy Sanders from Alachua County, Jim DeValerio from Bradford County, and Savannah Barry from Levy County. If you’d like to be a part of the materials and program development in your area, please contact Katie at (352) 273-3690 or stofer@ufl.edu. To read more about the program and share it with others, visit <http://talksciwithme.wordpress.com>, follow and like us on <http://www.facebook.com/talksciencewithme>, or follow @talksciwithme. If you are a researcher interested in participating in Alachua County in July, email Katie or watch for the email announcement on the IFAS-CAMPUS-ALL email list.

4-H CITRUS TREE PROJECT CULTIVATES FUTURE LEADERS

Gary England, Fruit Crops EA III, Lake Cty



Mr. Robert Lommerse received awards during the 2016 Central Florida 4 H Citrus Tree Project Blue Ribbon Judging and Auction.

If Florida's citrus industry is to continue to grow beyond the current crisis of citrus greening, it will need experienced and knowledgeable leaders in the future. While the research, education and extension divisions of UF/IFAS have been fully engaged in finding answers to the problem of greening disease and routing them to stakeholders, Florida 4-H, extension's youth development program, has been assisting the industry by cultivating its next generation of leaders and problem-solvers.

The Central Florida 4 H Citrus Tree Project has been in operation in various formats and under the direction of several UF/IFAS citrus extension agents over the years. Throughout all of these iterations, the project has had one underlying goal: identifying and encouraging youth who will one day be involved in the Florida citrus industry as trained employees and leaders.

Participants in the project purchase a citrus tree and five-gallon pot in the spring; using information learned in project workshops and gained in their own research, over the course of a year they grow a citrus tree that meets the specifications required at a pre-judging event in early spring. Those trees judged to meet blue ribbon status by industry judging are eligible to compete for best tree by age group as well as for overall Grand and Reserve-Grand Champions. After judging, all trees are eligible to be auctioned off to the highest bidder.

Underlying but very significant aspects of the project include keeping a record book containing all activities in the project, as well as skills learned about citrus, its pests, the importance of the citrus industry to the economy of Florida and the potential for related career choices. Citrus skills are enhanced by participation in project workshops, field days and research of resources provided on the project website.

Coinciding with pre-Judging in early spring, project books are collected for judging by age groups, as are skills through a rigorous test of sample identification, citrus knowledge and relating impacts of the citrus industry on the Florida economy. Results of these competitions are a significant portion of determining the recipient of the Jim Yates Memorial Horticulturalist Award.

An additional activity in the project is the John Jackson 4-H Scholarship, managed through the state 4-H office and granted to deserving scholastic Junior and Senior participants who plan pursue post-secondary education.

Since this agent became the coordinator of the project, there have been several outstanding participants who consistently demonstrated exemplary performance in growing their citrus trees, excelling in the project books and citrus skills activities. One of the most outstanding participants in the project during this time frame is Mr. Robert Lommerse from Seminole County.

As a participant in the 4-H Citrus Tree Project for several years, Robert has proven to be an exemplary participant. Some of his achievements include being awarded first place in age group for the skills and project book, as well as growing multiple Reserve Grand Champion citrus trees. He was also selected as the 2015 recipient of the John Jackson Scholarship.

In addition to his exemplary performance in the project, Robert has served as a mentor to newer participants in the project. His guidance and example as a participant has helped to foster success for numerous participants from his home county and he has had the opportunity to expand his reach as a mentor by holding county and state-wide officer positions..

Robert has expressed a desire to go above and beyond the citrus project in learning about the industry. His goals include learning about citrus propagation and experimenting with thermotherapy as a potential treatment for HLB-infected trees. I was thrilled to learn that he has chosen to attend Florida Southern College to further his education in citrus.

The agent has provided a letter of support for Mr. Lommerse to attain the Freshman & Transfer Student Scholarship for Students in Citrus and Horticultural Science. Students such as Mr. Lommerse will be a benefit to their eventual employers as well as the citrus industry as a whole in being sustainable in the HLB era.

THE PULSE OF THE SECTOR:

Nonprofits in North Central Florida

Jennifer Jones, Nonprofit Leadership and Management Asst. Prof., FYCS



THE PULSE OF THE SECTOR: Nonprofit Organizations in North Central Florida

UF/IFAS
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Home to more than 62,000 nonprofit organizations, Florida has one of the largest nonprofit sectors in the country. Nonprofit organizations often work closely with other public sector organizations, including public institutions of higher education like UF and, in particular, UF/IFAS Extension.

In April, we released a report about the nonprofit sector in North Central

Florida. This report was co-sponsored by UF/IFAS Extension and UF/IFAS Research. You can read the report here:

<http://fyics.ifas.ufl.edu/research-nonprofit/>

Nonprofit Organizations: The Pulse of the Community

When we understand the nonprofit sector, we understand a lot about a community. The financial and organizational health of the sector, as this report suggests, is related to the economic and social health of the community. A strong, vibrant nonprofit sector contributes to a strong, vibrant local economy by, for example:

- Providing childcare and afterschool programs that allow parents to go to work each day;
- Organizing cultural and religious activities that help businesses attract and retain talented employees;
- Offering sports and leisure activities that provide opportunities for adults to exercise and develop sportsmanship; and
- Acting to preserve our environment for generations to come.

North Central Florida, in particular, is a region of great beauty and great contrasts. It is the home of several large universities and the intellectual and social resources attracted by such institutions. It is also home to some of Florida's poorest counties, counties with some of the lowest health indicators in the state.

What We Learned

It was our intention to present an accurate, nuanced overview of the nonprofit sector in North Central Florida. This was accomplished by presenting the number and type of nonprofit organizations, the type of funding sources, and the overall revenue, expenses and assets. We also looked at how the

number of organizations in the area has changed over the past 15 years and at how organizations fared during the Great Recession of 2007-09. In all this, a few key findings emerged:

Nonprofit organizations are an economic asset to North Central Florida.

- Nonprofit organizations employ more than 34,000 people and contribute more than \$1.6 billion in wages to the regional economy.
- Nonprofit organizations attract more than \$36 million in federal grant dollars and \$37 million in private foundation funding from outside the region.

There is great disparity across the region.

- The average nonprofit expenditure per capita is \$556 in rural counties and \$6,569 in urban counties.
- The type of nonprofits located in the area varies by county, and some rural counties have two or fewer local organizations that offer educational services, health services, or arts and cultural outlets.
- 90% of federal grant dollars awarded in the region were allocated to organizations with headquarters in Leon County.

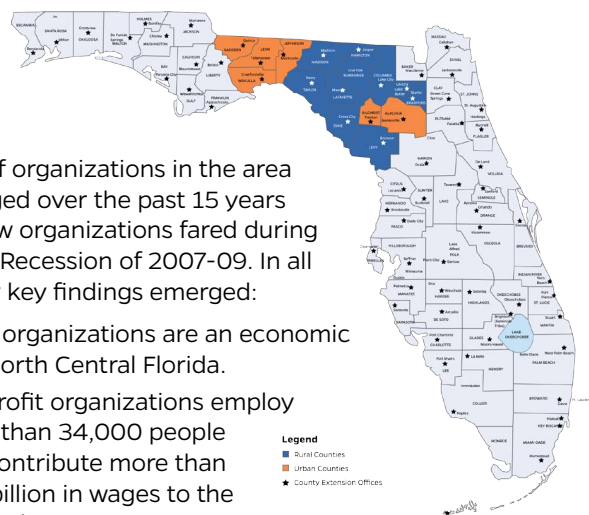
There are a number of unique strengths upon which future efforts can build.

- Religious organizations can be found in every county and, in many counties, make up a greater percentage of the nonprofit sector than is the average nationally. UF/IFAS and nonprofit leaders can and should build upon the social and cultural capital of the region's religious institutions.
- The average nonprofit expenditures per capita are higher in North Central Florida (\$4,787) than in Florida as a whole (\$3,228). This is likely influenced by the many organizations located in Leon and Alachua counties, areas that are both saturated with intellectual and social capital upon which nonprofit sector leaders can draw.

How UF/IFAS Extension Can Use These Data

UF/IFAS Extension faculty and staff can use these data to identify potential gaps in service and nonprofit organizations with which to partner. These data can also be used in grant proposals and, in particular, make a compelling argument for funding in rural areas.

For more information, please contact author Jennifer A. Jones, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Nonprofit Leadership and Management in the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences at jenniferajones@ufl.edu. Please share the report website: <http://fyics.ifas.ufl.edu/research-nonprofit/>



DEDICATION TO DIABETIC DIET DETERS DIALYSIS

Betsy Crisp, FCS EA IV, Pasco Cty

Diabetes affects 29.1 million Americans (9.3% of the population). An estimated 21 million of these individuals have been diagnosed and 8.1 million (27.8%) are not aware that they have diabetes. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S. and the leading cause of kidney failure, non-traumatic lower limb amputations, and new cases of blindness among adults. The estimated cost of diabetes in the U.S. was \$245 billion in 2012, including \$176 billion in direct medical costs ([CDC, 2014](#)).

A local resident, a 69-year old male, was diagnosed with diabetes. His doctor told him that he was in stage-three kidney failure due to his disease, and may require dialysis very soon; the doctor recommended that he visit a dietician to learn how to follow a proper diet for his condition. However, the patient soon became frustrated trying to understand how to count carbs and eat the right amount of foods. After a second visit to the dietician didn't make the instructions any clearer, he asked his friend and neighbor, who happened to be a Family Nutrition Program (FNP) assistant, for help. She referred him to her supervisor (Family and Consumer Sciences agent and Licensed Dietitian). Having just returned from a state in-service training provided by UF that included all the latest research, the agent was able to provide information that was easy for him to understand and follow. A few days later he reported that he felt so much better because he was now able to clearly understand what to do and take control of his diabetes!

When he went back to the doctor after three months, he was told that he was doing better and his condition seemed to have stabilized so that he would not need to start a three-days-a-week dialysis treatment at a center ultimately saving him approximately \$88,000 in treatment, or an eventual kidney transplant at a cost of \$33,000.

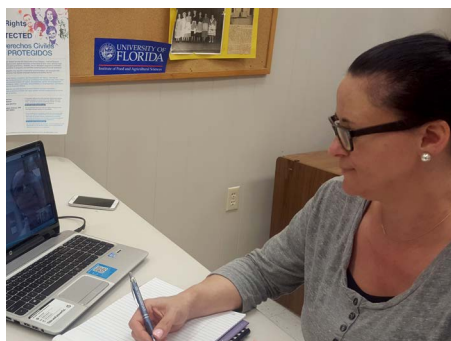
LOCAL AG PRODUCERS: FEEDING THEIR BRAINS AND BELLIES!

Crystal Snodgrass, Ag Nat Res EA II, Manatee Cty
Christa Kriby, Livestock EA III, Manatee Cty
Martha Glenn, Comm Hort EA I, Manatee Cty

Commercial agriculture is second only to tourism as Manatee County's leading industry. As new Best Management Practices (BMPs) develop and water regulations change, producers are often unaware of these changes. Currently, BMP enrollment is voluntary, but as restrictions tighten it may become mandatory. On October 6, 2015 Manatee County commercial agriculture Extension agents partnered with the Manatee County Farm Bureau to host a "Producer Appreciation Breakfast." Livestock, vegetable, and ornamental producers were invited to an early morning program where bacon, pancakes and all the fixin's were served. While they enjoyed their breakfast, PowerPoint presentations were viewed on topics including: new BMP manuals, potential new Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) areas in Manatee County that will require some producers to become mandatory BMP enrollees, how new regulations will affect producers, how UF/IFAS Extension can help, and the Farm Bureau's County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship (CARES) program (a voluntary program promoting environmental responsibility among producers and consumers). In response to a post-program evaluation, 93% (27 out of 29) reported gaining new information on BMP topics potentially leading to increased grower participation in the BMP and CARES programs and reduced nutrient load in Manatee County waterways. 100% claimed that UF/IFAS Extension Manatee County was currently meeting their educational needs and that its' agents are "always eager to assist."

TEAMING UP! FREE INCOME TAX PREPARATION AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Heidi Copeland, FCS EA II, Leon Cty



VITA via Skype

Each year, many of us turn to tax preparation services to help us save on taxes or even see a return. But these services often come at a price. In its annual survey, the National Society of Accountants (NSA) reported the average fees its members charged to prepare 2014 tax returns ran from \$159-\$273, with rapid refunds costing even more!

Many rural residents, however, have nowhere to turn when it comes to filing

yearly taxes. That's why at the end of the 2011 tax season, a senior consultant from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) asked for support from UF/IFAS Extension to lead a multi-county pilot providing Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) to rural North Florida residents via Skype, a video chat application.

As a result of this initial conversation, a virtual VITA site was set up at the Leon County Extension office.

(Teaming up! continued)

Family and Consumer Sciences Extension (FCS) Agent Heidi Copeland, along with a program assistant, coordinate the Leon County Skype site. In 2015, seven rural Florida counties (Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Hamilton, Jefferson, Liberty, Taylor) participated in this initial endeavor. In 2016, the program grew to include more Florida counties (Columbia, Bradford/Union, and Okaloosa/Walton) and even four counties in South Georgia (Early, Lanier, Sumter, and Tift.).

To accommodate this rather unique way of preparing taxes, rural county residents make an appointment at their local county extension office. During the first part of the appointment, participants fill out an IRS questionnaire and produce all the pertinent tax documents. These documents are uploaded and printed at the Skype site. An FCS-trained volunteer prepares the individuals' tax return based on the intake information, as well as from the face-to-face Skype

interview with the tax payer. Then, with signed permission of the participant, the volunteer electronically files the tax return.

In 2015, 152 rural North Florida residents filed their 2014 taxes free of charge through the VITA program. Using the NSA survey's figure of \$159 per simple 1040 return, results in a total savings to participants of \$8,268. (Not to mention the volunteer's service value of \$23.07 per hour). Even more significantly, 100% of 152 participants served were introduced to the importance of financial record-keeping as well as financial management education.

Highlights of the 2016 VITA season include:

- 210 completed tax returns
- \$118,883 in refunds to tax payers, of which \$63,293 was Earned Income Credit (EIC)
- \$13,671 of Education Credit applied to individual income taxes

- A few participants were able to benefit from the Savers Credit, a tax credit that allows SAVERS to obtain a tax credits
- 3 returns filed in Spanish
- 210 HAPPY customers!

This UF/IFAS Extension partnership with the Internal Revenue Service helps many individuals who often are overlooked and underserved become tax compliant. And in many cases they receive a refund! All FREE of charge. Moreover, this program enlightens participants about the importance financial responsibility and the need to start an emergency savings account.

As one happy participant exclaimed "... my outcome was not exactly what I hoped for, but I appreciate being educated about recording information for taxes so that next year I will, hopefully, have an even better outcome!" Without the VITA program, the taxpayer may have had to pay for tax preparation, in addition to owning taxes.

HELPING SMALL FARMERS MAINTAIN BETTER PASTURES

Megan Mann, 4-H YD EA II, Lake Cty

Proper maintenance of pasture will provide a good stand without harming the environment.

Michael H., a small farm owner in Lake County, had recently purchased an old citrus grove with the intention of turning it into productive pasture. He was challenged both by the sandy nature of the soil and by the presence of several

invasive weeds which had proved difficult to control. In March of 2015 he contacted UF/IFAS Extension Lake County for help. The livestock agent scheduled a farm visit and spent time walking the pastures with him, taking soil samples, and developing a grazing and nutrient management plan.

Prior to consulting with Extension, the client had been purchasing fertilizer and lime without the benefit of a soil test. As a result he had been spreading excess phosphorous and lime. Excess phosphorous application is a contributing factor to non-point source pollution of Florida waterways.

Working with the agent, Michael amended his intended fertilizer plan to eliminate both phosphorous and lime, thus preventing unnecessary runoff and maintaining his soil pH in a range that was acceptable to the Bahia grass that he was growing. The agent also helped him to develop a three-bin compost system on his farm so that stall waste could be composted prior to land application, which will result in improved soil conditions and minimize any potential negative environmental impact associated with animal manure. Finally, the agent made herbicide recommendations to help control and eliminate the weed burden on his pastures and developed a grazing and mowing plan that would favor the production of grass over the continued proliferation of weeds.

Small farms, like the one owned by Michael H., have the potential to be productive, sustainable, environmentally friendly, and economically viable when managed using best management practices. By following UF/IFAS recommendations, small farmers can maximize their profit while minimizing their environmental impact. Furthermore, as a result of their proximity to more urban areas, small farms, when managed correctly, have the potential to serve as examples of well managed agribusinesses and improve the quality of life in their communities. In 2015, the UF/IFAS Extension Lake County livestock agent made a total of 64 on farm consultations, similar to Michael H's.

PASCO COUNTY 4-H LEADERS JUMP ON BOARD TO HELP GROW FLORIDA'S 4-H PROGRAM

Jean Hink, 4-H YD EA IV, Pasco Cty

By helping to expand communication and encourage teamwork, volunteers inspire more people to join in and help promote the Florida 4-H program. As the Pasco county 4-H program worked on strengthening its 4-H volunteer organization, several of the volunteers felt that the best new direction to offer help and support would be through social media. The volunteers felt that Pasco 4-H would benefit from a Facebook group that was dedicated to supporting and helping each other as fellow leaders.

With several experienced 4-H volunteer leaders monitoring the site, they helped to answer questions for the 4-H office. It was nice to watch all the interactions taking place, and the Pasco volunteer leaders soon realized they were all here to support each other and help one another grow in the program.

Beginning with a few leaders adding their comments, soon most volunteers were answering and giving their experienced advice. This direction has helped to build a sense of belonging, and now volunteers have gone to other 4-H clubs to help teach different aspects of the 4-H program. They soon added an extension to the group for all the county members, parents, volunteers and leaders to network together. Now clubs are able to invite other members to participate in activities that would not have had a chance prior to this networking connection. And so it grew from a small group of leaders to a fully interactive group with one thing in common, a "Clover Connection".

As some of these leaders heard about the new vision for 4-H, they thought that the progress made in Pasco County 4-H could be focused upward with this same vision throughout Florida, providing even higher quality programming for all the 4-H members.

They looked at the success of the Pasco 4-H Clover Connection, and started working with Dr. Bryan Terry to create a statewide 4-H network group on Facebook, dedicated to help promote our 4-H programming, network knowledge, work together and share 4-H resources to help improve communication, answer questions, share ideas with each other on the club level for all the Florida volunteers. The ultimate goal is to help at the volunteer level up to the top at the state level so we can truly grow 4-H. Want to get connected? Network with others on the new support group for 4-H volunteers on Facebook. Give it a try! Florida Volunteers, Our Clover Connection:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FloridaCloverConnection/>

FOLLOWING UF/IFAS BEEF CATTLE NUTRITION RECOMMENDATIONS MAKES MORE MONEY FOR RANCHERS

Ed Jennings, Livestock EA IV, Pasco Cty

In 2012 a commercial beef producer in West-Central Florida approached his local Extension agent with concerns over the production levels of his beef cow herd. Upon field inspection, it was suspected that the cattle could be suffering from a mineral deficiency despite being provided a complete mineral supplement. The agent enlisted the help of Dr. John Arthington, UF/IFAS Range Cattle REC and Dr. Matt Hersom, UF/IFAS Animal Science Department. It was determined that the mineral balance in the forage grown on this ranch was a bit unusual and therefore the customary mineral supplements were not meeting all the needs of the cattle. After correcting the mineral needs of the cattle and making minor improvements of some other production practices that were discovered during this work, calf weaning weights increased from 590 to 712 pounds. Under current market prices for calves, this 20% increase results in approximately \$24,000 of additional income for the ranch. This rancher has been sharing his story with other producers, which helps them be more productive on their operations and builds good will and confidence in the UF/IFAS Extension program.

LEADING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE WITH 4-H

Brian Estevez,
4-H YD EA II,
Suwannee Cty



Kelsey has utilized her experiences in 4-H to lead others and develop a healthy lifestyle.

Kelsey is a true 4-H success story. She always had her eyes glued to the floor when she started coming to 4-H club meetings in 2011. She never said more than a few words and let her mother do all of the talking. She also had social anxiety around other club members. However, Kelsey enjoyed 4-H and the activities that she was participating in. She started making friends in her two 4-H clubs and together, they pushed each other to participate in more 4-H activities, speeches, and events. Kelsey soon started competing in speaking events and attending state events such as 4-H University, Executive Boards, and 4-H Legislature.

Kelsey embodies the "Learn by Doing" spirit. She sets an excellent example to younger 4-H youth in Suwannee County. She works hard and is helpful, not so that she can get recognition, but because she cares about the project and the people with which she works. Today Kelsey serves as the Suwannee County 4-H Council President and represents 4-H as a liaison to a multitude of organizations around the county. Kelsey has also used the knowledge that she has learned through 4-H to change her behavior in the area of healthy living. She now exercises regularly and has run in five races, several of which were sponsored by 4-H. As a result of all of her experiences in 4-H, Kelsey is a dynamic speaker who encourages youth to take advantage and get involved in all aspects of 4-H, an enthusiastic leader who leads by example, and an advocate for a healthy living lifestyle.

INTERNATIONALIZING EXTENSION

Pamela Fletcher, Regional Extension Coordinator, FL Sea Grant College



(Left) University of Florida student volunteers monitor mangroves. (Right) University of Florida student volunteers maintain Nature Reserve signs (map).

In March 2016, Dr. Pamela Fletcher, the UF/IFAS Florida Sea Grant Regional Extension Coordinator at NOAA/AOML, led a week-long marine life conservation trip in Nicaragua with nine University of Florida student volunteers. The students chose to spend their spring break volunteering to promote marine life conservation at a nature reserve on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua. Volunteers come from varied academic backgrounds, but all actively participate in mangrove reforestation and monitoring, sea turtle conservation activities, and community engagement. Since 2012, students from UF have reforested mangroves lost from storms and harvesting. Over 33,000 mangroves have been planted in cooperation with nature reserve staff, local youth groups, university staff and faculty, an ecotourism cooperative, and the Sutiava indigenous community. Volunteers contribute to conservation outreach in partnership with students from the local university, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua building awareness of natural resource conservation. Students also repair and maintain buildings on the nature reserve property as part of an alternative livelihoods eco-tourism project. For the past three years, the US Embassy in Managua has participated in the plantings, sharing their Foreign Service experiences with the students and learning about UF's Alternative Breaks program. This year, Laura F. Dogu, US Ambassador to Nicaragua hosted the group at her home as a send-off to the week-long program. Ambassador Dogu provided an overview of the Department of State, the mission in Managua, and stories about her experience working for the department. Throughout the week-long program, student volunteers learn about marine life conservation, leadership, service, and get to experience the culture of Nicaragua. They grow academically, personally, and professionally as noted in their testimonials. You can view video and images from the project at YouTube <http://youtu.be/9eZaiwhOOY> (Source: Alex Wagner and Michael Zahradnic) and google images <http://goo.gl/eAxoNM> (source: US Embassy in Nicaragua).

What do student volunteers have to say about the 2016 trip?

It is difficult to describe my FAB experience in Nicaragua in just a few sentences because every part of it was amazing, from learning about a new culture to meeting a several incredible people. Marine ecology and conservation is personally important to me and it was very interesting to see

how the restoration of one species can affect a community biologically, culturally, and politically. The trip was an unforgettable experience for me and has definitely altered my perception on service for the better.

As a second year veteran on the Marine Life Trip, one of the most rewarding experiences for me has been seeing the development of the community. When I first started the

project, it seemed that the tourism within the area was small, but it was growing. Now, it seems that the area is booming compared to last year, and I attribute this not only to the hard work of all the community members, but also to Don Marvin and his staff. Another incredible experience has been seeing the actual mangrove restoration itself. It is fantastic to come back after a year and see the work that your past group put in is finally producing mangroves. I always think of this trip in the context of the mangrove seed because I believe it relates so closely with my experience and this trip. I had no idea coming into FAB that I was going to be a site leader for the next two years on the Marine Life Trip and meet two of my cos [co-leaders] that would become close friends. I didn't realize that this trip would help me grow into a better person and discover a new passion for Latin American Studies. Going back to the area where we planted the mangrove seeds last year, I feel that I have grown over the past 2 years from the experiences given to me by the trip and by the people of Nicaragua. After two years all I can say is thank you to FAB for giving me this opportunity to give back to a community that has given me so much.

We could not have asked for better site coordinators, and over the past two years, you have helped me grow and experience a part of the world that I never imagined visiting before spring 2015. You have opened my eyes and established more core memories over a span of two weeks than all of my other spring breaks combined. You will always hold a special place in my heart, and I hope to continue to stay in contact and create more amazing memories together. Thank you for the best spring breaks that a college student could possibly ask for. Without you, this would not have been possible.

What do past participants have to say about their trip?

I had always been really interested in marine life conservation and this experience has taught me so much and enabled me to get a chance to pursue that passion.

This trip has not only helped me grow as a leader, but also learn so much about a new culture and experience things I never thought I would.

Even though the service was challenging, I never stopped having fun.

PESTICIDE TRAINING HELPS PEOPLE, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

Juanita Popenoe, Comm Hort EA III, Lake Cty



Pesticide exam takers are often very nervous about taking an exam. Good preparation in an Extension review class provides the extra confidence needed to succeed.

A Lake County employee in the Mosquito Control division has a pre-requisite for his job to obtain a Public Health pesticide applicator license within a certain time of being hired. This is not an exam that the agents typically provide reviews on, so

he studied at home with the materials provided by the Lake County Extension office. He took the exam three times and failed every time. He was getting desperate, because if he did not get the license he would lose his job. He asked the agent for help and she provided a personal review for him, going over the questions that confused him the most. On his fourth attempt he passed and attributed it to the review he received from the agent.

This man is just one example of the many people who must have a pesticide applicator license to retain their job. The pressure to do well on an exam makes it difficult for people who are often not good exam-takers. The agent promises people who take a review class that if they do not pass after the review, she will give them a personal review to ensure they pass. In 2015, her training provided a 31% greater chance of passing than taking the exam without review.

Beyond the value of retaining jobs because the client has an applicator license, research in Washington State estimated the

annual value of certified applicator training programs ranged from \$6,787 (initial certification) to \$13,366 (recertification) per trainee (Young D, Ramsay CA. What is the value of extension training for certified pesticide applicators? Journal of Pesticide Safety Education; 2011. 13: 14-23). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics - Occupational Employment Statistics and Wages program, the average hourly wage in 2014 for farm workers and laborers was \$9.10, while for pesticide handlers, sprayers and applicators it was \$15.37. Assuming an average of 2,000 hours is worked yearly, the average wage differential represents \$12,540 greater annual income for licensed pesticide applicators compared to regular non-licensed workers. The value to Lake County of the 144 agricultural license exam takers and 33 limited license exam takers who passed their exams and now hold a license is estimated to be \$2,219,580.

In addition, the licensed pesticide applicators will be more responsible in applying pesticides with the concomitant improvement to the environment. In surveys of license holders obtaining continuing education units with Extension, 66% said they calibrated their equipment more frequently as a result of the training; 90% said they were more aware of the importance of keeping pesticides out of bodies of water; 90% said they learned about pesticide resistance and how to rotate pesticides if resistance is suspected; 90% claimed they were better able to read, interpret and follow pesticide labels as a result of the class; and 97% were able to describe several integrated pest management tactics that would reduce pesticide use. These practices are emphasized in training because they are documented to minimize environmental impacts of pesticide use.

FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™ TRAINING A SUCCESS!

Ralph Mitchell, Hort CED III, Charlotte Cty



2016 Master Gardener Trainees, as well as veteran MG's, take a stroll through Master Gardener, Gay Sorensen's ('02) spectacular Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ yard.

Tom Becker, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Program Assistant with the Charlotte County Extension Service, conducts the annual FFL training for all Master Gardener Trainees. Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ is a key overarching concept that guides not only horticultural decision-making, but also recommendations to the public. Trainees are given an approximate three-hour classroom training, immediately followed by a site visit for assessment at a local Master Gardener veteran's yard. To document the knowledge increase in 14 Master Gardener trainees, a standard pre-test was administered. After the classroom session and site visit showing minimal environmental impacts to a canal in Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park, a post-test was conducted to determine Master Gardener trainees' understanding of the FFL concepts and practices. The resulting pre-test scores averaged 76%, and a significant increase was documented when trainees were re-tested later that same day, with an average of 92%. The greatest gain in knowledge and understanding were noted in three areas: (1) selecting plants specific for their location, (2) properly applying fertilizer and (3) maintaining their landscapes in order to reduce stormwater runoff. To cap off a successful training, one trainee said, "This training was exactly what I needed to move forward with installing my own Florida yard." (Ralph E. Mitchell, CED, Charlotte County, shadowed@ufl.edu)

CARINATA OFFERS NEW POSSIBILITIES

Patrick Troy, Row Crops RSA III, SVAEC



Carinata research in north Florida seeks to revive the discussion about viable biofuels.

Florida farmers have always been experimenters in planting a wide variety of crops, from the days of the Timucuan Indians to the booming citrus, cattle, and tobacco industries that began flourishing in the 19th century.

The University of Florida's land-grant mission considers new crop choices as a way to meet the needs of farmers today. One such crop being researched for its potential in North Florida is an oilseed crop called *Brassica carinata* (similar to canola). With a higher energy output (in BTUs) per gallon than refined gasoline, it can be processed into clean-burning biofuels for commercial jets. Moreover, by-products from processing yield a high-protein seed meal that is valuable for animal feed. Holland and other European countries have made commitments to alternative fuels in an effort to reduce their carbon footprint. Commercial production is expanding in north Florida, southern Alabama and Georgia for these jet fuel markets. To address yield improvements and variety selection for local growers, agronomic and variety testing is underway at four University of Florida research locations, including UF/IFAS Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center near Live Oak.

Carinata's research history in Florida is only a few years old, but results so far are promising. Agronomic trials to best determine its range of temperatures, fertility needs, insect pressures, and optimal harvest started in 2010, testing Canadian summer-grown varieties. Initially, the first introduced cultivars were susceptible to heavy frost, especially

if planted in late winter. As such, breeders began a wider search for winter-hardiness and higher yield. The two experiments in Live Oak include a commercial planting and 24 new varieties, selected for our local climate and sandy soils. One of the greatest potential side benefits may be in carinata's soil-building properties. As many fields are left fallow in winter, carinata can create soil organic matter and structure with its extensive rooting system while scavenging previous crop nutrients otherwise lost to leaching. Touted also as a potential non-chemical biofumigant, early signs are that resident nematode and fungal pathogens can be reduced. Likewise, as we learn more about optimal production, early forecasts suggest carinata has the potential for net returns of over \$100/acre. Economic analysis at the end of the season will scrutinize agronomic inputs to create specific crop budgets for northern Florida profitability. Although it may

take six months to mature (from seeding in November to harvest in May), one of the questions UF is looking to answer is, "Can we really produce two cash crops in one season?"

We really need cover crops that benefit the ecosystem, as sandy soils can be a particular challenge throughout the Suwannee Valley region. Farmers are being asked to be more efficient with inputs of nitrogen to protect our waterways. Some are reviving historic rotations. Oats, rye and bahiagrass are not new, but underutilized. When planted in longer and strategic sequential plantings with cover crops, row crops (of cotton, corn or peanut) have proven to be sustainable. Certainly more winter options would help improve the soil, and pull farmers through the current poor pricing situation.

What are other viable choices? What can build soil fertility and carry-forward to the next crop? Aside from the carinata, UF/IFAS plans to conduct wider cover-cropping trials on local farms. Hopefully, successful experiments along with constant feedback from innovative farmers will help everyone remain profitable.

To get a firsthand look at carinata and its economics, come out to one of our field days: April 12th or for our harvest in late May (date TBD). You can also check the SVAEC website (www.svaec.ifas.ufl.edu) or call to schedule an appointment: UF/IFAS Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center, 7580 County Road 136, Live Oak, FL 32060, Phone: 386-362-1725 X112. UF/IFAS Extension Suwannee County is an Equal Opportunity Institution.

PROTECTING THE LAKE

Brooke Moffis, Res Hort EA II, Lake Cty



Teaching the use of catch cans can significantly reduce water consumption and fertilizer runoff into nearby lakes.

Lisa is a resident in Lake County that lives near the waterfront of Lake Harris. In her words, she wants to “work hard for her yard and community to be a responsible one for the lake.” In 2015 she attended the Turf and Groundcovers Program during Saturday in the Gardens. She said she enjoyed the use of photos and examples with the discussion of responsible turf practices and turf and groundcover selection and care.

Within four months of attending the program, Lisa calibrated her irrigation system using the catch-can test and replaced high-volume irrigation with low-volume micro-irrigation. She also no longer fertilizes in the winter, uses a slow-release fertilizer and reads fertilizer labels more carefully.

As a result of attending the Saturday in the Gardens Turf and Groundcovers Program, Lisa now stays at least ten feet away from water bodies and storm drains when fertilizing.

Lisa is just one of the participants who adopt Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) principles after attending residential horticulture programs. Homeowners who practice FFL irrigation and fertilization principles positively impact the health of our water bodies by watering efficiently and decreasing nonpoint source pollution. Nonpoint source pollution can lead to increased nitrogen and phosphorus levels and therefore reduce the quality of our water by leading to algal blooms and fish kills.

Residents like Lisa who change their yard maintenance behaviors will positively impact surface and groundwater resources, so they can be utilized by future generations for drinking water, tourism, fishing and other recreational activities.

HIRING A LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR CAN BE A DAUNTING TASK

Michelle Atkinson, Env Hort EA I, Manatee Cty

Hiring a landscape professional can be a challenge, especially for homeowner association (HOA) board members who very often only evaluate the landscape bids on price. These folks soon realize you get what you pay for and the lowest priced landscape contract may end up costing you more in the long run.

UF/IFAS Extension Manatee County has teamed up with the Landscape Management Association, landscape contractors, and landscape suppliers to offer a workshop titled “Tips for Hiring a Landscape Contractor”. The workshop is offered to landscape committees, HOA board members and community managers. An overview is given and a checklist provided of landscape professional trainings, certificates, requirements and insurance, along with some best management practices for the landscape. The audience is encouraged to use the checklist to interview landscape professionals, which will prompt them to ask about credentials and management practices.

The participants especially enjoy the panel discussion where the UF/IFAS environmental horticulture agent moderates a discussion among local landscape contractors using questions from the audience. Among the audiences (n=112) 79% have found the panel to be very helpful and 64% now feel very comfortable about hiring a landscape professional. Participants at the workshop commented that they felt they can trust the information given by the landscape professionals on the panel, since not only are their competitors sitting beside them but a UF/IFAS Extension agent is leading the discussion.

NATURE NURTURES 4-H YOUTH

Rachel Slocumb, 4-H YD EA I, Lake Cty

Encouraging children to interact with nature improves their self-confidence.



The summer of 2015 this agent started actively doing programming that involved the use of teaching animals, specifically reptiles and amphibians. One of the first programs took place at 4-H University, an annual youth leadership event for 9th through 12th grade 4-H members. The agent offered two

learning opportunities — a short 45

minute session, and an all-day 6 hour session. One participant lucky enough to attend both sessions was Ashley. Nature-loving and fearless were not exactly words to describe Ashley, in fact she was quite the opposite. During the short session youth held a snake—a six-foot-long corn snake to be exact. Ashley was less than impressed, but through some positive reinforcement and encouragement, by the end of that session she would at least touch the snake's tail. The next day Ashley was in my all-day session. The program involved many activities that showed carrying capacity and symbiosis, but also incorporated more species. Ashley was thrilled. The additional species added were salamanders, a glass lizard, and a leopard gecko. As the session went on Ashley seemed to be gearing up for seeing that snake again. Much to my surprise and enjoyment, Ashley actually held the snake. She didn't hold it by herself, but she held it with the agent's help.

Fast forward two months. The agent was presenting at a district 4-H meeting, with the snake. It was exciting to see that Ashley in attendance. She expressed enthusiasm about each animal presented, and was even telling the youth next to her about each animal that was being exhibited, and helped others answer questions. Near the end of the session it was time for the snake. Not only was Ashley excited to see it, but she was excited to hold it. She held the snake all by herself, which in itself was a victory. But that is not where the evening ended. After the program Ashley came up to the agent and told her that she was using the information she had learned to help her succeed in her high school biology class, and was excited to say that she knew more about reptiles than her teacher. This gain in knowledge has helped her in not only conquering some of her fears, but making strides in her high school classes as well.

Through the environmental education programming I have offered over the past year, Ashley may have been one of this agent's biggest successes, but she is one of many. Participation in environmental education programming has been shown to increase healthy living and show an overall gain in secure and positive identity (Strife S, Downey L. Childhood development and access to nature: A new direction for environmental inequality research. *Organization & Environment*; 2009. 22(1): 99-122). Ashley shows these gains in leaps and bounds and has shown the level of enthusiasm that can be gained when one conquers their fears.

FESTIVAL CELEBRATES COMMUNITY'S COMMERCIAL FISHING HERITAGE

Angela Collins, Marine Science EA II, Manatee Cty



Dr. Angela Collins gets hands-on during one of her 'dock talks' at the 2016 Cortez Fishing Festival.

Cortez village represents one of the last

working waterfronts on Florida's Gulf coast that is dedicated to commercial fishing. Each year, tough and ingenious Cortezians join together to celebrate and share the history and proud heritage of their community at the Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival. This two-day event held in February allows festival-goers to enjoy live music, clog dancing, boat rides, marine life exhibits, nautical arts & crafts, beautiful waterfront vistas – and of course, plenty of delicious local

seafood. Cortez has been a center of commercial fishing since the Spanish colonial era, and prior to that, Native Americans depended upon the region for its abundant marine life. This little village has withstood the test of time, surviving hurricanes, red tides and storms of regulations, habitat degradation and economic upheavals. The annual festival showcases the pioneering spirit of the industrious locals who carry on the community's legacy.

This year's festival marked its 34th anniversary, and attendance was at an all-time high. Thousands of out of towners and locals alike flooded the village, and University of Florida IFAS Extension/Florida Sea Grant was proud to be part of the action. "Dock Talks" were performed by local agents throughout the two-day festival,

allowing visitors a glimpse into the biology of marine fishes, and providing the opportunity to get up close and personal with several of the local seafood species.

All of the proceeds from the festival support the maintenance and restoration of the FISH Preserve, a community-driven project to preserve a 95+ acre plot of mangrove wetlands immediately east of Cortez village. This preserve, purchased by the Florida Institute of Saltwater Heritage (F.I.S.H.), represents one of the last few undeveloped shorelines in the region and provides critical habitat for many of the fish species upon which Cortez depends. The effort to protect this land in the face of expanding coastal development demonstrates the perseverance of one determined little village.

DRIVING FORCE: UF/IFAS Extension Behind Transportation Planning Partnership in Pasco

Whitney Elmore, Res Hort/Com Res Dev CED III, Pasco Cty

Pasco County faces one of most complex transportation dilemmas in the state of Florida. With dramatic increases in the population expected over the next 30 years and an already heavily burdened system of existing roads and corridors, Pasco is bursting at the seams, especially in the SR 54/56 transit corridor. The introduction of multi-use community planning adds another level of complexity around intersections, where more pedestrians and bicycles are frequently encountered by a large volume of cars. In addition, the anticipation of autonomous vehicles (i.e., self-driving cars) dictates the use of innovative approaches when redesigning existing roadways and the creation of new infrastructure. At the 2015 South Central District Gateway Meeting, Pasco County administrator Michele Baker outlined critical issues where UF/IFAS might be able to expand its outreach within Pasco County government.

This included transportation and infrastructure redesign and development. Acting on this information, Dean Place connected with members of the UF Transportation Institute, making connections outside of the traditional UF/IFAS partners, which is essential in keeping Extension relevant in a rapidly urbanizing county. Utilizing a potential \$12,000,000 FDOT grant opportunity to open the door to a partnership, the Pasco CED hosted a meeting between specialists from the UF Transportation Institute and staff from the Pasco Planning and Development/Transportation Department in April 2016. This meeting prompted the commitment to work together to solve pressing issues in Pasco and development of a significant partnership with potential to grow into a win-win for both institutions as well as the citizens of the Tampa Bay Region.

ARRIVALS

We would like to welcome the following new faculty:

Deanna Wagner-Thompson, Livestock EA I, Desoto Cty

Tatiana Sanchez-Rodriguez, Comm Hort EA II, Alachua Cty

Charles Barrett, Water Res RSA II, District II

Jennifer Hagen, FCS EA I, Lee Cty

Laurie Osgood, FCS EA I, Gadsden Cty

NEW POSITIONS

We would like to congratulate the following faculty members on their new position:

Daniel Fenneman, Ag/Nat Res CED II, Madison Cty
(From Ag/Nat Res EA II)

David Nistler, Ag/Nat Res CED II, Union Cty
(From Clay Cty, Livestock EA II)

Deborah Nistler, 4-H CED III, Bradford Cty
(From 4-H EA III)

Anita Neal, DED EA IV, District V
(From St. Lucie Cty, Hort CED IV)

DEPARTURES

We would like to wish the following agents the best of luck in their future endeavors:

Stacie Amolsch, 4-H EA I, Duval Cty

Elena Toro, Ag/Nat Res EA II, Suwannee Cty

Geovanne Ijpkemeule, Com Hort EA II, Sarasota Cty

RETIREMENT



We would like to wish the following agents the best of luck in their future endeavors:

Pat Hogue, Livestock CED II, Okeechobee Cty