

FIU Nature Preserve (NP)

Volunteers - Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who is allowed to attend a volunteer day?

A: Anyone.

All regularly scheduled volunteer days are open to any FIU students/faculty/staff or community members/visitors; you do not need to be an FIU student to attend. All participants are required to sign a release form in order to participate; anyone under the age of 18 must have a parent/legal guardian sign on their behalf. Release forms can be requested in advance by emailing GoGreen@fiu.edu. Anyone under the age of 16 must have a parent/legal guardian present with them throughout the entire event. Special group events may or may not be open to public attendance.

Q: Where do the volunteer days meet?

A: NP East Entrance.

All regularly scheduled volunteer days meet at the scheduled date/time on the Modesto Maidique Campus (MMC), across the street from the Recreation Center, at the NP East Entrance, regardless of rain, etc. The easiest way to access the East Entrance is by walking through the Parkview West residence hall plaza. Please see the DIRECTIONS and MAP located on the NP Website. Look for the large, blue "FIU Nature Preserve & Jogging Path" sign alongside the road as well as the large welcome sign at the east trailhead. Parking is available in the Panther Parking Garage. Visitors can park on the ground floor at a metered space. Special group events may or may not meet at the east entrance.

Q: How long is each volunteer day?

A: 2 Hours.

All regularly scheduled volunteer days are two hours long. The Naturalist has the ability to turn away anyone who arrives more than 10 minutes late. We do not cancel events due to rain. Special group events may or may not be two hours in length.

Q: How can I volunteer with my group/club/greek organization/nonprofit organization?

A: By attending a regularly scheduled volunteer day or requesting one just for your group.

Any group is welcome to attend any regularly scheduled volunteer day, we simply ask for larger groups (10+ people) to inform us when they plan to attend one, so we can staff the event accordingly. If none of the regularly scheduled volunteer days works for your group, you can submit an Event/Project Request Form to hold a volunteer day just for your group.

Q: Is there storage space for my personal belongings while volunteering?

A: Yes.

We have storage space where everyone can store their personal belongings during the volunteer day so that the items will stay clean and dry. Please do not bring any valuables to the event. All you will need are sneakers and a water bottle.

Q: What will we do, during a volunteer day?

A: Every volunteer day has a different topic.

All regularly scheduled volunteer days are different. Each volunteer day is topic specific, focusing on a certain aspect of the Preserve. Since, we never know how many people to expect or what ages and/or skills those people will have, we cannot definitively say what we will be doing on any given day. In general, we focus on Natural Resource Management (visitor experience, recreation management, facility/equipment maintenance), Biological Science (plant identification, wildlife surveys, invasive species management), and Environmental Education (hands-on interactive ways to teach and apply the scientific method, interpretation). Special group events can be coordinated to work on specific projects (i.e. butterfly garden installation, honorary tree planting) of their choice.

Q: What if I can't make it to any of the regularly scheduled volunteer days, is there another way for me to gain community service hours/credit?

A: Yes.

Yes, a special group event can be requested to do volunteer work. For any volunteer day request, we require a minimum of at least 5 people and at least 7 days advance notice. To request an event, you must submit an Event/Project Request Form (found on the NP website); please see Event/Project Policies for more information regarding special events. We will work with your group/club/organization if you wish to focus on something specific (i.e. teambuilding activities, butterfly garden installation, tree planting, restoring endangered habitat, children's event, etc.) but there may be costs involved. We can usually accommodate most special event requests as long as we are given plenty of notice beforehand.

Q: How do I get credit for volunteering?

A: By signing the "Attendance Sheet" (not the waivers)

Anyone interested in getting class credit for volunteering must participate during the entire event, signing the waivers at the beginning of the event and the attendance sheet at the end of the event. The volunteer writes on the attendance sheet the name of the professor who they would like a copy of the attendance sheet emailed to for proof of service, along with course code, their name and their panther ID. At the end of each semester, all the attendance sheets from the entire semester are sent as one .pdf, to every professor whose name has been listed on any attendance sheet that semester. Usually, students are only allowed to get credit for one class per volunteer day, unless approved beforehand by both professors. We only provide the service activity and proof of service, professors/club leaders are responsible for assigning credit to the individuals. Ultimately, your professors are the one's that must be able to read your name, panther id, their name, and class code in order to give students credit – so write legibly. Anyone is welcome to bring their own community service log with them to the event to have signed, but they must also still sign the NP attendance sheet. Any clubs/greek organizations can enter their club name or letters and email a request for a copy of that day's attendance sheet. Any orgsync request links should be directed to GoGreen@fiu.edu for approval.

Q: Can I request the volunteer day attendance sheet?

A: Yes.

Any attendance(s) sheet can be requested at any time by a professor anytime during the semester. Additionally, any student who has volunteered and wants a personal record of their attendance can also request a copy of the attendance sheet for those days that they volunteered. Please send email requests to GoGreen@fiu.edu and make sure to include your name and the EXACT DATE in which you volunteered. Please do not ask for permission and/or try to take photographs of the day's attendance sheet before it has been reviewed and approved by NP staff – simply send us a request and the approved version will be emailed to you.