



Stockton College, Forsythe Wildlife Refuge Offering Volunteer Master Naturalist Program

Classroom and Field-Based Components to Cover Wildlife, Natural
Resources, Ecology, Environmental Management

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Galloway Township, NJ- Covering roughly 1.1 million acres and spanning portions of seven New Jersey counties, the Pinelands National Reserve (PNR) is home to more than 1,200 plant, mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian and fish species. New Jersey's unique environment and natural diversity offer vast educational opportunities.

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, in partnership with the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge and other regional environmental organizations, is offering a 40-hour Volunteer Master Naturalist (VMN) certificate program to train nature and wildlife enthusiasts.

"The certificate program, which is based on a national model currently offered in 20 states, develops volunteer citizen stewards of natural resources through science-based conservation, education and service programs," explained Dr. Cynthia Sosnowski, associate dean of the School of Graduate and Continuing Studies.

The program, which runs from Wednesday, April 6, 2011, through Wednesday, May 18, 2011, will take place on Wednesday evenings, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., and Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The ten workshops will be held primarily at the Oceanville site of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. Field trips will explore regions of the Pinelands and Forsythe.

Dr. Cynthia Sosnowski and Brian Braudis, Deputy Project Leader at Forsythe, envisioned the program. Five years ago the development began, and Sosnowski recruited Barry Keefe, a

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This year, Barry Keefe will lead the fourth Volunteer Master Naturalist cohort. Keefe's personal record of community service is widespread. He strives to reach children from urban areas to help set in motion their discovery and exploration of New Jersey's extensive natural world. He launched a two-year outreach program with a primary school in Pleasantville for students in the after-school program, and he has led Friday evening campfires for families in the spring and fall months at Forsythe.

Keefe's volunteerism has taken him as far as Alaska, where in June of 2009, he spent the entire