



For Immediate Release

**APPLY now for “*Bending the Curve*”
— the FREE High School Edition
of Tropical Audubon Society’s award-winning
Ambassador Program**

MIAMI, Fla. — South Florida High School students who love the natural world can now foster “conservation through community” and earn service hours via the new summer edition of the award-winning *Tropical Audubon Ambassador Program*. The inaugural high school version of the environmental series was launched to help empower a new generation of young leaders to become more engaged, educated and effective environmental advocates.

Scheduled for July 1-20, 2024 and themed “Bending the Curve,” the curriculum is designed to inspire students to activate their “Tropical Audubon Ambassador” education to help halt and reverse biodiversity loss across South Florida.

Learning will be structured with a virtual *Zoom* component for remote flexibility and the ease of engaging online, and with in-person events to enhance networking and provide hands-on experiences. >

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In addition to earning up to 25 service hours, aspiring High School Ambassadors will receive comprehensive advocacy training from environmental experts, will gain a deeper understanding of our region's indigenous wildlife and our cornerstone ecosystems — The Everglades, Biscayne Bay, Pine Rocklands, and Tropical Hardwood Hammocks — learn new skills and network. A field trip to Everglades National Park will bring their studies to life.

Tropical Audubon Society's High School Ambassador Program is FREE thanks to our Conservation Sponsor Everglades National Park and to the financial support of The Miami Foundation, Everglades Foundation, and the Ocean Reef Conservation Association.

Hurry! Applications close on June 14, 2024
[Click HERE To Apply.](#)

The Tropical Audubon Society High School Ambassador Program is open to any incoming or current high school student, or any recent 2024 graduate. Applications are due by June 14 at 5 p.m. Applicants will be notified of selection decisions on June 19.

Curriculum

Program topics will be explored under the wing of TAS Education & Advocacy Director Stephanie Clements, who holds a Ph.D. in Biology. Regional environmental experts will guest-anchor each session.

Subject matter will include:

- How high school students can engage with elected officials, along with an overview of our civic structure at the federal, state, and county levels.
- An introduction to South Florida's ecosystems, with a special emphasis on the Everglades, Biscayne Bay, Pine Rocklands, and Tropical Hardwood Hammocks.
- South Florida's history of development and how to "bend the curve" to ensure a better future for our region.
- How development and policy decisions impact birds, other wildlife, our human communities and water resources.
- How Climate Change impacts South Florida at the local level as an intensifier of our region's existing environmental challenges — from water quality to carbon sequestration — and how we must "bend the curve" to reverse current trends.
- Which local conservation efforts are working well and how to enhance them.>

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Additional program benefits include a monthly virtual action call (to be combined with the adult program in Fall 2024!), a captivating field trip to Shark Valley/Everglades National Park with a tram tour narrated by National Park Service rangers, action alerts on critical conservation issues, an online toolbox of resources, the opportunity to earn up to 25 hours of community service, and leadership development opportunities.

Session Details:

Civics 101: Gain knowledge and skills to participate more fully in public discourse and advocacy campaigns. Learn about Miami-Dade County's government structure, as well as state and federal institutions, and the roles, rights and responsibilities of community members. Learn how to engage with elected officials via letter writing and public comment.

Intro to South Florida Ecosystems: Discover the complexity of our South Florida ecosystems, with a special emphasis on the Everglades, Biscayne Bay, Pine Rocklands and Tropical Hardwood Hammocks. Explore the science behind what makes these ecosystems unique, the factors that threaten their stability, and the economic, cultural and ecological importance of these endangered ecosystems. Learn how to contribute to community science and enhance knowledge of our local biodiversity.

History of Development: Retrace South Florida's development timeline. Discover which development decisions were most impactful, the origins of invasive species, and dive into the water resource power struggle.

Climate Change w/ The CLEO Institute: Discover how Climate Change impacts South Florida at the local level as an intensifier of our region's existing environmental challenges — from water quality to carbon sequestration. Discuss the future of our region in the face of climate change and how to navigate misinformation in the media with a guest lecturer from the The CLEO Institute. Learn about what personal actions to take to help combat climate change, "bending the curve" to slow current trends.

Ecosystem Restoration: Gain knowledge about current protections and restoration efforts taking place in our local ecosystems. Discuss the efforts and policies that are working well, and what needs to be done to protect and restore Miami-Dade County's natural heritage. Learn how to engage in current efforts, and share ideas with others in the community.

Campaigns: Learn how an environmental advocacy campaign works in this introduction to campaign strategy. How to develop a strategy for change, how to involve your community, supporters and detractors, and the power of one's personal story are among the topics to be covered. Meet and learn from current campaign strategists from various local organizations and coalitions. Practice strategies for campaign design, and frame a campaign on an issue of personal importance. >

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To qualify for a Certificate of Program Completion, students are required to complete all 6 virtual Zoom sessions. Attendance at the in-person events is highly encouraged.

Tropical Audubon Society's High School Ambassador Program is designed to complement the TAS Mission and methods: *Conserve and restore South Florida ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats, with outreach centered around education and advocacy.*

Hurry! Applications close on June 14, 2024

Live Zoom Meeting Session Dates & Topics

Mondays & Wednesdays, July 1 – July 17, 6-8 pm

Civics 101	July 1
Intro to South Florida Ecosystems	July 3
History of Development	July 8
Climate Change	July 10
Ecosystem Protection & Restoration	July 15
Campaigns	July 17

In-Person Events,

Saturday mornings, Time TBA

Convene at Tropical Audubon Society, 5530 Sunset Dr, Miami, 33143

Field Trip to Everglades National Park	July 13
Graduation Celebration & Volunteer Day @ TAS	July 20

[Click HERE TO APPLY](#)

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