

Seahorse Key Marine Laboratory Field Trip

Rules:

- 1) You are expected to behave as responsible and concerned learners. Keep in mind that your personal behavior reflects upon P. K. Yonge as a whole. **ANY** inappropriate behavior on this field trip will result in an immediate referral upon our return, as well as a prohibition from attendance on any further field trips. You are representatives of the school!
- 2) The Seahorse Key staff is dedicated to helping visitors have a safe and successful stay at Seahorse Key. They ask that visitors please interact courteously and observe all rules and suggestions they may be told.
- 3) Outside activities must be confined to the cleared areas surrounding the buildings. No one is permitted to enter other areas of the island without a special use permit from the USFWS. No diving or jumping from the dock, and no swimming at the dock or boat basin.
- 4) Orderliness in personal conduct and living habits are essential for comfort and good public relations. ***Please remember that Seahorse Key is part of a National Wildlife Refuge!***
- 5) Watch for snakes and do not molest them. There is a population of cottonmouths (*Agkistrodon piscivorus*) on the island. They are generally shy and retiring, but occasionally may be seen around the clearing edges, especially at dusk. Though they are generally placid, you must watch that you do not step on one inadvertently.
- 6) For a tour of Seahorse Key and a full review of rules and regulations, please visit the Seahorse Key Marine Laboratory website.

Field Trip Itinerary/Necessary materials:
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- 1) We will first be on the RV Discovery doing dredging activities in the Gulf off of Seahorse Key. Though the UF has created a cumulative list of species encountered in these waters, you will also make your own species list, and will detail each species encountered on index cards (see reverse side of this sheet).
- 2) This trip serves both as a collecting trip and an exploratory trip to investigate both vertebrate and invertebrate organisms of the Gulf. We will be collecting invertebrates and possibly a few fish for each tank. Try to get a Crown Conch (*Melongena corona*), or other small mollusk (no squid!), and/or a hermit crab (*Pagurus spp.*). **DO NOT** collect blue crabs (*Callinectes sapidus*) or stone crabs (*Menippe mercenaria*)! They will eventually destroy the contents of your tank. Adding too many "high maintenance species" early on will probably lead to failure and to death of organisms.
- 3) When we arrive on the island, we will first go to the laboratory so that we may observe (but not handle or break!!) the diverse collection of specimens that have been preserved for study.
- 4) We will then tour the lighthouse (ca. 1854), climbing up to the light for one of the best views of the Gulf (bring cameras!).
- 5) We will return to the dock to eat lunch.
- 6) We will re-board the RV Discovery for our return trip to Cedar Key, then board the bus for our return trip to PKY.

- 7) We will stop at the Island Jiffy either as we arrive at, or as we leave Cedar Key (both, if time permits) for bathroom and snacks. Snacks may NOT be consumed on the boat!!! We will NOT stop before Cedar Key, so utilize the facilities at school before boarding the bus, and do not consume excess fluids while en route!

Materials:

15 3' x 5' index cards (lined on one side); **bring extras in case of accident**
list of marine phyla/species list
pencil
lunch and water
sunscreen and hat

Field Assignment (60 points):

I. Species cards (three points each; 45 points total):

Format fifteen (20) 3' x 5' index cards as follows, leaving room to fill in the blanks:

On the lined side, write:

- Phylum:
- Class (except sponges and annelids):
- Body symmetry
- Description of physical characteristics/structures
- Ecological and/or commercial importance

On the un-lined side, write the common name and make a detailed sketch of the organism (so others can recognize it). You should have a representative of at least one member for each of the phyla on your phylum sheet. Try to get representatives of as many classes as possible.

II. Field Trip Reflection (15 points):

Please write a reflection paper about our trip to Seahorse Key. It should be ONE typed page in length (double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font with one inch margins).

Comment on one or more of the following topics:

- Types of organisms found in different areas
- Diversity of organisms pulled up in the dredge
- Environmental issues that were discussed during the trip
- Comparison and contrast of the Seahorse Key (Cedar Keys) area to beaches/near-shore ecosystems you have visited (with the class or independently)