

Fort Wilderness

Marine Biology in the Keys

My name is Michael Lane and I am the Director of Science Education at Fort Wilderness Ministries. During the 1980's I began a program that allows high school students in the Midwest to experience a special dream of studying Marine Biology on site in the semi-tropical water of the Florida Keys. As a former Biology teacher, past instructor and curriculum developer at the John G. Shedd Aquarium in Chicago and a resident of the Bahamas, I can give students a solid foundation in marine science.

Picture this: The temperature is a balmy 85 degrees and a light breeze comes off the ocean. You don your dive mask and your fins. Then comes the signal from your group leader to jump in and begin observing and collecting marine life. Through your dive mask you see a kaleidoscope of living colors in the form of fish and marine invertebrates. Off in the distance a barracuda swims by, curious of the expedition.

Sounds like a Discovery Channel video? Well, this is an average day for those enrolled in the Fort Wilderness Marine Biology Program.

Each Easter season for the past 19 years I load up a chartered bus with around 40 students and adults to travel to the only coral reefs you can actually drive to in the U.S. Once there, we move into a hotel and convert it into a biology research station for 8 days. Lead by national and state award winning biologist Michael Lane, you will be taken on a learning experience of a lifetime. Sharing his expertise with that of other instructors, you will encounter hands on laboratories that have only been a dream in your past. During the 8 days on site, you will spend one day at the famous Dolphin Research Center, just a short distance from where we stay.

Besides those experiences, you will be placed in a group that carries a habitat name such as Coral Reefs, Mangroves, Grass flats, etc. Together with other members in your group you will participate in responsible collecting, snorkeling, chemical analysis of water samples, excursions to habitats, lectures on the beach and many other activities. And this is just an average day!

One of the habitats we study is a coral reef five miles off shore called the Coffin Patch. We travel there by use of our boat and there, participants get to see up close a hundreds of varieties of colorful fish, corals, and invertebrates.

I am in the process right now of forming this year's class and I would like to include you too. Whether you want to see if marine biology is a career for you, if you are just wanting a great hands-on learning experience, or if you want to experience a closer look at God's creation, this trip is for you. I am looking for students that want a challenge, are willing to learn, and want to experience God's ocean world first-hand while deepening their relationship with God. For further information, you can contact me at Fort Wilderness at 800-338-3678 or 715-277-5095. You can also email me at Michaellane@FortWilderness.com. So come along for the best leaning experience of your life. Room fills up fast, so don't wait.

Fort Wilderness Marine Biology 2008

Application Form:

Student's Name _____ Birthdate: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number (_____) - _____ - _____ E-mail _____

Parent or Guardian Names: _____

Parent or Guardian Employment: _____

Church Affiliation (if any): _____

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Academic Records: **Present Class:** Fr So Jr Sr

High School Name: _____

School Address: _____

What is your present class ranking? _____/_____ GPA: _____

What are your vocational plans? _____

Where do you intend to attend college? _____

Have you ever been to the Florida Keys before? Yes No

Medical Information:

Who is your family doctor? _____ Phone: _____

Do you have allergies or other medical concerns? Yes No

If yes, please list and describe them below. Include any medications you are using.

Please give one other person besides a parent or guardian who might be contacted in case of emergency:

_____ Phone: _____

Since most of our work involves being in the semi-tropical sunlight, please circle the appropriate number below to indicate your level of sensitivity. (1= low - 10 high)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

General Information:

Since we are in the ocean everyday for many hours, how would you rate your swimming ability? (Note: Every year we have some people who can't swim.)

Excellent Very Good Good Poor Can't Swim

Are you a certified scuba diver? Yes No

If yes, which organization and year did you receive your certification? _____

NOTE: To scuba dive in this program, you must already be a certified diver, otherwise you will snorkel all excursions. We do not instruct scuba.

Below, circle the items that you own:

Mask Regulator BC Wet Suit Tank Snorkel Fins Weight Belt

I urge you, if accepted to purchase you own mask, fins and snorkel, but I can supply you with these from my community supply. If you need fins, please state the size of your foot:

Males: under 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
Females: under 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

We supply all accepted students with a program T-shirt. Please state your size:

S M L XL XXL XXXL

Are you involved in any sports or academic programs at your school? Yes No
If yes, please state them below:

Will you miss any school or extra-curricular activities while enrolled in this marine biology course? Yes No

If yes, please state what you will miss:

The dates for the trip this year are March 19th (p.m.) – March 30th.

We will be leaving Fort Wilderness at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 19th. Please be at the McNaughton exit off Route 47 (our staging site) by 6:15 p.m. We should arrive back at the staging area around 8:00 pm on Sunday, March 30th. Upon our return students will be given their final grade, (a final exam will be given on site in Florida). **Students living far from Fort Wilderness can meet our bus enroute at a site established by myself.**

With this application, please send

- a **personal letter** explaining your intent and purpose for attending.
- a \$250 dollar nonrefundable **deposit** payable to *Fort Wilderness*. (Your deposit will be refunded if you are not accepted.)
- a **recent photograph**
- a **recent transcript**.

Mail the material mentioned above to:

Michael Lane
Marine Biology
Fort Wilderness
PO Box 715
McNaughton, WI 54543

The deposit will **ONLY** be refunded if the applicant is **NOT** accepted. The total cost for the program this year is \$1200. This price includes all fees, snorkeling at Coffin Patch Reef, classes and tours at the Dolphin Research Center, books, meals on site, housing, transportation, and instructional materials. It does not cover restaurant stops to and from the work site, scuba diving expenses (if applicable), or an optional excursion to a seafood restaurant. The final payment of all fees is due by **March 5th**. If you are accepted and then do not attend, a refund will be made, minus the deposit and an additional \$250 administration fee. If you are accepted and fail to attend from the final payment date to departure date, only a \$250 refund can be made as all money has been invested in your trip and the establishments will not refund us.

Register by December 14th and save \$100. The early bird registration is \$1,100 if you register before Dec. 14th.

Due to limited space at the research site, **early application is strongly advised.** No decision on acceptance can be made until **all credentials** are completed.

If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to call Michael Lane at 800-338-3678 or 715-277-5095 or email him at Michaellane@FortWilderness.com. He will try to answer any and all of your questions.

Registration Deadline is February 15th, 2008.

Most schools have counted the Marine Biology course as one semester credit in biological sciences. If you are interested in this credit, you should check into this with the counseling department at your school. Those high schools that do not count this course as credit usually have no reservation at placing the information on your high school transcript as a proof to your college choice that you have indeed participated in this program. In many cases, colleges seem to count this as more important for scholarships than credit. It shows extra-participation outside of the school.

Fort Wilderness is known as the “*Stronghold of Christian Adventure.*” For the last 5 decades. The Fort has been a place where people have been able to come and relax and develop a closer relationship with God and nature. A year-round Christian camp, the Fort is dedicated to providing people with the very best adventures while presenting the Gospel to all. Fort’s goal through this Marine Biology program is to provide young people with the academics and at the same time allowing those who choose to develop a closer walk with God. If you are interested in learning about the field of Marine Biology by studying it on site and you are interested in learning more about Jesus Christ, or if you simply want a real challenge in your life, please join us in the Florida Keys.

This Marine Biology course demands a lot of cooperation from each of the participants. This is a fun course but it requires a lot of work. **This is not a vacation.** The majority of the work is performed out in the ocean, which makes it more fun than a classroom. Because of the situation of being on site in a hotel-dorm setting and not in a classical classroom setting, certain rules and regulations are set by me and the other instructors and you are expected to follow them completely. For instance, students in this course are not to be in possession of any tobacco products of any kind nor are they to be in possession of any alcoholic beverages of any kind! For 19 years I have been taking students to the Florida Keys to study marine biology and never has a student had to be disciplined for such examples as stated above. In fact, every year I have received letters or other comments from places we visit, commending us on the mature behavior of our students! I am very proud of this and I expect this to continue. Thus I ask you for your fullest cooperation. Please sign below if you accept these terms.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____