



ECKERD COLLEGE

OFFICE OF SERVICE-LEARNING

To Whom It May Concern,

The Eckerd College Marine Science Club, in collaboration with the Office of Service Learning, is hosting our first annual Marine Science Festival on Thursday, April 6th from 10-2 at our campus in St. Petersburg, Florida. The purpose of this festival is to educate local middle school and high school students on the importance of both, science and the marine environment, in addition to raising money for the non-profit organization, Now and Neverglades.

Now and Neverglades is a grassroots organization dedicated to cleaning up Lake Okeechobee, which once fed the Florida Everglades and Bay. Today, Lake Okeechobee no longer flows freely into the Everglades due to the placement of the Everglades Agricultural Area, an area owned primarily by subsidized sugar companies, which sits right where the River of Grass used to be. Lake Okeechobee has become the dumping ground for these facilities, who add massive amounts of agricultural fertilizer to the waters and consequently create excessive nutrient pollution.

For the festival, we are inviting representatives from across the St. Pete/Tampa/Sarasota area to showcase their organizations. Each organization will have a booth where they may display prominent work, accomplishments, and exciting material in their field to the students. The festival itself will be self-guided with food trucks on one end of the field and a small stage on the other. The food trucks will be there to accommodate the lunchtime hour, and we have asked them to donate 10-15% of their sales to Now and Neverglades.

As a part of Eckerd's commitment to community outreach, local middle school and high school students are the target audience of the festival, along with Eckerd students. We hope to inspire more students to dedicate their lives to the conservation of our world's waterways, by allowing them to interact and learn from active members in the scientific community. Additionally, we plan to charge a \$5 entrance fee at the festival to help raise more funding for the Now and Neverglades organization.

We hope that you will join us, at our Marine Science Festival, and help us educate the youth of St. Petersburg! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Shannon Walsh (phone: 502-294-4256 email: swalsh@eckerd.edu) or Trisha Schranck (phone: 314-686-8876 email: tfschran@eckerd.edu) and they would be more than happy to answer questions you may have.

Thank you!