

Climate Smart Floridians program - community action on climate change

University of Florida Sea Grant and Extension agents, specialists and researchers developed the Climate Smart Floridians program to complement existing educational programs such as the Sustainable Living and Leadership Series and CIVIC programs. This program is specifically aimed at educating participants on individual actions to reduce climate change impacts and covers how climate change will impact Florida. Climate Smart Floridians is a model for providing citizens research-based information about climate change and engaging them as ambassadors to help reduce household expenses and greenhouse gas emissions. It addresses how climate change relates to topics such as landscaping, water resources, transportation, home energy, food, and waste. This program has resulted in critical decision-making skills about the impacts of individual choices on climate change. Individuals are encouraged to increase use of alternative transportation, changes in daily habits around consumption and waste, and implement home energy efficiency improvements. The subject of global climate change can be overwhelming to the individual and this program is intended to answer the question “What can I do?”. This presentation will describe how the program has been offered in Florida communities, results and evaluations from these programs, and how you can adapt the program for your state and community.



Holly Abeels

Holly Abeels is a Florida Sea Grant Extension Agent with the University of Florida IFAS Extension in Brevard County. As an extension agent, she brings science-based information to the community in areas of natural resources, sustainability, climate change, and water quality and conservation. Her Extension programs include teaching the Florida Master Naturalist Program, working with communities to address climate change and sea level rise, and working with volunteers on projects like the Florida Horseshoe Crab Watch.