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Spring 2010 Seminars

Florida's Fragile Environment: Hurricanes, Heat and Humidity (Oh my)

A. Quinton White, Jr., Ph.D.

Professor of Biology and Marine Science

Executive Director, Marine Science Research Institute

Florida is often called the Sunshine State, but water has also played a major role in her past development. The peninsular of Florida, with its almost 11,000 miles of shoreline, is surrounded by water. The Florida environment has significant rainfall every year (generally) and extensive wetlands. Link the sunshine generated HEAT with all the water, and you get HUMIDITY. The location of Florida also makes it a target for HURRICANES. Hurricanes are also water and heat dependent. So how does Florida's so-called fragile environment cope with the hurricanes, heat and humidity? What are the benefits of hurricanes? How does the movement of the sun, moon and earth influence all three factors? What are the dominate weather patterns, how do hurricanes form, and how will coastal Florida be impacted by climate change? This seminar will explore these and other questions about Florida's 3 H's.

Quinton White has been studying the St. Johns River for over three decades. He received his Ph.D. in 1976 from the University of South Carolina at the Baruch Institute of Marine Biology and Coastal Research. He has a MS degree from the University of Virginia. He is a former Professor of the Year at JU. His research has taken him to China, the Galapagos Islands, the Bahamas and down to 1500 feet below the ocean. He continues to do research on the St. Johns River including work on manatees and nutrient impacts.