

FAQ

Logistics

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Any undergraduate student attending a College or University in Florida is eligible to apply. You must be 18 or older by October 16, 2025.

WHAT IF I'M NOT A BIRDER?

You don't need to be a birder to be a conservation leader. CLI welcomes students from all backgrounds who are passionate about protecting nature, connecting with their communities, and growing as leaders. Whether you're into wildlife, plants, policy, or science—there's a place for you here. You'll definitely be exposed to birding activities and learn about conservation efforts that support birds and the places they need to thrive.

DO I NEED TO PAY TO PARTICIPATE?

No. Participation in the 2025-2026 Cohort is free to students and underwritten by our generous donors. A small stipend is provided to cover expenses for various events or activities that present a financial barrier to participation.

HOW LONG IS THE PROGRAM?

October 2025 – May 2026 is the official length of the Cohort, although summer 2026 opportunities may be offered for those who wish to continue to stay involved through the summer.

HOW MUCH OF A TIME COMMITMENT IS CLI?

CLI is designed to be flexible for a student's busy schedule, and we understand that circumstances vary from person to person. Opportunities vary in date, time, and duration to offer a wide range of options to accommodate busy schedules. We ask that you commit to a minimum of five offered opportunities within your Cohort year. Alumni report that the time commitment generally matches their expectations.

HOW ARE MEMBERS OF THE COHORT SELECTED?

The CLI selection committee, made up of Audubon Florida staff and CLI alumni, reviews applications on a rolling basis using a rubric. After applications close, scores are compared and 25 students are invited to join the Cohort. We consider a range of factors, prioritizing diverse career interests, perspectives, and identities. Most of all, we look for students who are eager to learn, ready to engage, and interested in Audubon's conservation work, even if they're just getting started.

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Assembly

IS TRAVEL REQUIRED?

You are required to attend the Audubon Assembly on October 16-18 in Howey-in-the-Hills, FL (This is in Central Florida in Lake County.) Beyond Assembly, you are expected to participate at the local level with your Audubon mentor and their local chapter. Other optional opportunities across Florida may also be offered for those who are willing and able to travel. Your stipend may offset travel costs. We will do our best to help coordinate and offer carpool options.

WHAT IS THE AUDUBON ASSEMBLY?

Audubon Florida's annual conference, Audubon Assembly, is taking place on October 16-18 in Howey-in-the-Hills, FL. Assembly brings together Audubon leaders, members, and other stakeholders in our network for a time to socialize, learn, and strategize the future of Audubon Florida conservation. The Assembly also functions as the onboarding event for each year's CLI class.

Students will arrive Thursday evening (Oct 16) for dinner and a social with their fellow CLI students. Students will attend a combination of regular Assembly events and CLI-specific sessions on Friday and Saturday. Hotel and food costs are fully covered by the CLI program, and carpool options may be provided.

Please visit audubon.org/florida/assembly for more Audubon Assembly details.

I HAVE A CLASS ON THURSDAYS AND FRIDAYS. CAN I STILL ATTEND THE AUDUBON ASSEMBLY AND BE A PART OF CLI?

Attendance at Audubon Assembly is required. Schools and/or professors will generally accommodate reasonable requests for absence for professional development opportunities. We are happy to provide you with a letter to verify the reason for your absence.

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Experiences

WHAT KINDS OF EXPERIENCES ARE OFFERED TO STUDENTS?

Students are offered a variety of experiences to accommodate different interests, circumstances, and availabilities. Topics include leadership and career development, community science, land management, environmental education, and more. Opportunities include remote online learning, local events, and statewide events.

Past experiences have included:

- Alternative Spring Break with FDEP Aquatic Preserves Team
- Everglades Policy Day in Tallahassee, FL
- Northshore Birding Festival, Apopka, FL
- Volunteer Workdays at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, FL
- Native plant installations
- Environmental education and outreach facilitation
- Volunteering at bird banding stations
- Land restoration and species monitoring projects
- Op-ed Writing Workshops and publishing opportunities

WHAT KIND OF PROJECT IS EXPECTED OF ME?

Over the duration of the program, students are responsible for collaborating with their mentor & local Audubon chapter to fulfill a Collaborative Conservation Project that combines their personal interests and skills.

Projects are flexible and can vary in timespan (1 day event or long-term project). Students are expected to collaborate with their mentor for guidance & support.

Past projects include:

- Research Projects (species monitoring)
- Event Coordination / Planning (native planting, outreach days)
- Social Media Management
- Workshop / Program Facilitation

MORE QUESTIONS?

Visit fl.audubon.org/CLI

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