

GAINESVILLE

April 14-16, 2011

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: PRACTICUM PRESENTATIONS AND GRADUATION



Graduation of the Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute, Class X was held in Gainesville on April 14-16, 2011. Fellows presented results of their practica at the Hampton Inn-Downtown and graduation ceremonies were held at the Restaurant Ti Amo! in Gainesville. Graduation was well attended by leaders from UF IFAS, the IFAS Food and Resources Economics Department, NRLI program staff, and NRLI Alumni representing all previous NRLI classes. The alumni were pleased to have the opportunity to visit with Drs. Roy Carriker and Burl Long; previous directors of NRLI. The current Director, Dr. Laila Racevskis, presented the Honorary Director's Award, while Bryan Fluech, current NRLI Alumni Association President, presented the Alumni of the Year and the Natural Resources Leadership Awards. Dr. Burl Long presented the 5rd Annual Burl Long Award. Congratulations to all sixteen NRLI Class X graduates and to the award recipients!

The graduates of Class X are now part of a network of 186 natural resource professionals in local government, state, and federal agencies, agriculture, private industry, and academia throughout the State of Florida who maintain contact through the NRLI Alumni Association.

Practicum Presentations

A significant element of each NRLI Class Graduation session is the presentation of the Fellows' Practica. The Fellows assume certain responsibilities when they are accepted into NRLI. Along with committing to participate in each of the seven working sessions, each Fellow agrees to work on a Practicum during his or her time in NRLI. Their Practicum can be a collaborative effort with other Fellows or they can work on it alone. The Practicum should be related to a natural resource issue and have a real-world outcome. Below is a list of practica presented by this year's Fellows. More about each presentation can be found at <http://nrli.ifas.ufl.edu/practicaX.shtml>.



Tom Abbott presents his practicum which he sub-titled "People are a Natural Resource, too." Tom looked at the impacts that community gardens would have on lower income communities.

Kat Diersen presents her practicum during the Thursday session.

Brooke Saari and Lisa Krinsky collaborated to work on their practicum which focused on assessing the impact of seafood consumption from the Gulf oil spill in different regions of the state.

"Community Gardens: A Model for Natural Resource Awareness" By Thomas Abbott, USDA-ARS

"Dysfunctional Stormwater Ponds" By Michelle Atkinson, UF/IFAS Extension, Manatee County, Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program

"Protecting Archaeological Resources on Restoration Lands" By Eric Bush, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District

"Advancing Restoration in the IRL (Indian River Lagoon)" By J. Leslie Corcelli, JLC Services

"Ag-Venture: From Pencils to Pitchforks", Joshua Craft, Florida Farm Bureau and Luke Langford, Cypress Cattle and Produce Company

"Protecting Panther Habitat" By Craig Diamond, Florida Department of Community Affairs

"Private Property, Regulation, and Shorebird Habitat on Fort Myers Beach" By Katherine Diersen, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

"Wakulla County Youth as Climate Change Ambassadors" By Sherri Kraeft, UF IFAS Extension, Wakulla County 4-H

"One Year Later ... A Region Assessment of Seafood Consumption Patterns After the Gulf Oil Spill" By Lsa Krinsky, UF/IFAS Sea Grant Extension, Miami-Dade County and Brooke Saari, UF/IFAS Sea Grant Extension, Okaloosa and Walton Counties

"Deer Depradation Dilemma in the Panhandle" By Holly Ober, UF/IFAS Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, North Florida Research and Education Center

"Ther Permitting Dilemma: Groundwater Recharge Wetlands for Treated Wastewater Disposal" By Debra Segal, Wetland Solutions, Inc. and Nicole Wulff, US Forest Service

"Involving The Public In The Drafting of the Altha Tract Management Plan" By John Valenta, Northwest Florida Water Management District and Micah Thorning, US Forest Service

The Graduates



Thomas Abbott, USDA-ARS Michelle Atkinson, UF IFAS Extension

Dr. Jack Payne, UF Vice President for Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and Millie Ferrer-Chancy, UF/IFAS Dean for Extension presents the graduates with their certificates.



Eric Bush, US Army Corp of Engineers Leslie Corcelli, JLS Services



Joshua Craft, Florida Farm Bureau Craig Diamond, DCA Katherine Diersen, FL FWC



Sherri Kraeft, UF IFAS Extension Lisa Krinsky, UF IFAS Sea Grant Luke Langford, Cypruss Cattle Co.



Holly Ober, UF North Florida REC Brooke Saari, UF IFAS Sea Grant Debra Segal, Wetland Solutions, Inc.



Micah Thorning, US Forestry Service John Valenta, NFWFMD Nicole Wulff, US Forestry Service

Our Distinguished Speakers



Dr. Jack Payne, Senior Vice President for Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at the University of Florida/IFAS, welcomed Fellows, Alumni and guests on behalf of UF/IFAS. Dr. Payne said he believes that is not enough to right, but all stakeholders need to be involved in the discussion and that is value of programs like NRLI.



Dr. Millie Chancy-Ferrer, Dean for Extension, provided words of congratulations the graduates on behalf of UF/IFAS Extension. With more than 20 Extension graduates, NRLI is viewed as a premier Extension program and the contacts made by Extension folks through NRLI aids in helping them to better perform the Extension mission to the benefit of Florida.



Representing the Florida Sea Grant, **Dr. Mike Spranger**, Assistant Director for Florida Sea Grant and Assistant Dean for Environmental and Natural Resources Programs for UF/IFAS Extension, added his congratulations. With a total of 9 Sea Grant Agents graduating from the program, Dr. Spranger spoke on the benefits that NRLI provides to those who participate in the training. He also emphasized the need for more NRLI type training for Natural Resource Professionals because of the 'wicked' resource issues facing the state of Florida.

Class Speaker



Dr. Rod Clouser, Assistant Chair of the Food and Resource Economics Department, provided welcoming remarks on behalf of the Food and Resource Economics Department (FRED) at UF. FRED serves as the home department for NRLI and helps to support its mission.

Eric Bush, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, was chosen by the members of this year's class to serve as Class Speaker. He shared memories and impressions of the NRLI year on behalf of Class X.



and the Award goes to ...

Outstanding Achievement Award

The NRLI Leadership Award is given annually by the NRLI Alumni Association to a person who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and service to resolving natural resource issues in the State of Florida. This year the award was given posthumously to **Robert “Bob” Tietz**. Bob, who passed away June 7, 2010, was the County Biologist with the Pasco County Environmental Lands Program where he was instrumental in establishing the county’s environmental lands management program. Bob was a member of NRLI Class VI. Receiving the award for Bob was his wife Carol, and sons David and Jonathan.



Burl Long Award

J. Leslie Corcelli was elected by her fellow classmates for the distinction of being this year’s Burl Long Award recipient. Always having a heart for natural resources, Leslie decided to return to school to pursue a degree in Biology .

The Burl Long Award is given to a Fellow in the current class who is considered to have learned and changed the most as a result of their NRLI experience. The award was established in 2007 to honor one of the founding directors of the program.

Alumni Award

This year’s Alumni Award was presented to **Teresa Watkins** an alumna of NRLI Class VII. Teresa is a recognized leader on water conservation principles and biodiverse landscapes. She is the Florida Water Star Certifier/Technical Advisory Committee member for the SJRWMD, the environmental landscaping consultant for Green Builder Vision House for 2008 and 2011 at the International Builders Show in Orlando. She also hosts Central Florida’s weekly call-in radio show, “In Your Backyard” on WLBE 890AM which highlights environmental issues and landscaping advice across the state.



Director’s Award

Since 2007, each year the NRLI Director presents an Alumnus with the Honorary Director’s Award to recognize outstanding service to the NRLI program over the past year. This year’s recipient was **Charles Shinn**, NRLI Class VIII and the Assistant Director of Government and Community Affairs at the Florida Farm Bureau. Charles was instrumental in the planning and implementation of several NRLI sessions during the past several years in the dealing with agriculture in the Everglades.





Pictured above L-R: Poe Springs and run; Fritzi Olson with Current Problems and Jim Myles, from Alachua County Environmental Protection Agency talk about the history of Poe Springs and the restoration process; Bryan Fluech leads the NRLI Alumni Annula meeting while Eric Bush and John Valenta look on.

On Saturday, the Project Team and Alumni traveled to Poe Springs in High Springs as the site for the Annual Alumni Fieldtrip and Meeting. Poe Springs is a county owned park along the Santa Fe River and has been the focus of a recent restoration and bank stabilization project which was being coordinated by the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department (ACEPD). Conducting the fieldtrip were Bob Knight with Wetland Solutions, Inc.; Fritzi Olson, Current Problems and Jim Myles with the ACEPD. Mr. Knight gave us an overview of the history of the spring and Ms. Olson and Mr. Myles talked about the restoration process.

After a tour of the park to see the vegetation that was planted to stabilize the banks, the Alumni held its Annual meeting. The graduating class was welcomed and were informed that NRLI alum is now approaching 180 individuals with many great networking opportunities. They were encouraged to become official members of the Association. Eric Bush and Craig Diamond from the current class were nominated and approved as new board members joining 10 others on the board. After the meeting was adjourned, the Alumni met at the Great Outdoors in High Springs for a wonderful lunch and good fellowship.

NRLI PROJECT TEAM

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2010-2011 NRLI CLASS X FELLOWS

Thomas Abbott
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 Joshua Craft
 Craig Diamond
 Katherine Diersen
 Sherri Kraeft
 Lisa Krinsky

Luke Langford
 Holly Ober
 Brooke Saari
 Debra Segal
 Micah Thorning
 John Valenta
 Nichole Wulff

This report forms part of a series written by current NRLI Fellows. Reports represent and are a product of the experiential learning process that is a highlight of the NRLI program and have not been formally peer reviewed.

