Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute
Class XV (2015-2016)

The Need

We are all dependent on Florida's natural resources. Decisions about natural resources involve complex sets of issues and stakeholders. Expensive and time consuming disputes often emerge over issues such as endangered species, land use, coastal and marine resources, and water quality and quantity. Effective leadership in managing such issues requires a specialized set of skills, tools, and strategies to build trust and promote collaboration among competing interests. In recognition of this, the Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute (NRLI) was founded in 1998 to bring together professionals in sectors that impact or are impacted by natural resource issues to develop the skills required to work towards collaborative solutions.

Vision

NRLI seeks to impact decision making in Florida by creating a network of professionals prepared to effectively address natural resource issues through conflict management and collaborative leadership.

The Institute

NRLI is an eight month professional development program. Each intensive three-day session is held in a different part of the state and focuses on a specific and contentious natural resource issue. Sessions include:

- immersion in the issue/topic through first-hand experience with the resource;
- engagement with stakeholders from diverse institutions/organizations and perspectives; and
- experiential training in skills, concepts, tools, and strategies related to collaborative decision making, conflict management, communication, and negotiation.

To assure that the skills learned in NRLI go beyond the classroom, a practicum is built into the program. Each fellow develops a project that allows them to apply skills and concepts learned in NRLI to actual conflict, decision making, or leadership situations in their organizations or communities.

Fellows

Each NRLI class is composed of approximately 18 Fellows representing a broad array of natural resource professions. The program has trained over 240 people from 93 organizations and all parts of the state. Fellows represent the following sectors:

- Federal government, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- State government, including the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services, and Water Management Districts
- Local government
- Non-governmental organizations
- Community organizations
- Agriculture
- Engineering, law, and consulting
- Academia
- Extension

Impact

In 2013, a survey of alumni from NRLI classes I-XIII was conducted to measure program impact. Results indicated that organizational and career advancement was directly linked to participation in NRLI (84% of respondents).

In addition, between eighty and ninety percent of respondents reported that NRLI helped them develop new skills in conflict management and collaborative leadership including the following:

- Assuming a leadership role in collaborative group decision making.
- Designing and facilitating collaborative group decision making.
- Engaging diverse stakeholders in collaborative group decision making processes.
- Increasing stakeholder understanding and acceptance of collaborative group decision-making processes.
- Negotiating and collaborating outside their organization.
- Negotiating and collaborating inside their organization.
- Designing and running effective meetings.
- Communicating natural resource issues.

"NRLI showed me that resolution is possible if constituents from different sides of the issue work together to solve the complicated issues and make decisions for the betterment of Florida and its citizens as a whole."

--Deborah Burr, NRLI Class IV

"NRLI has allowed me to see and understand issues from a variety of perspectives; to not just listen to clients, but to hear the "why" behind their thoughts and ideas; to know that consensus is a process and unanimity is a goal."

--Lara Miller, NRLI Class XIII

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Schedule

Dates	Topic	Location
August 6-8, 2015	Space coast in transition	Titusville
September 10-12, 2015	Threats to a productive estuary	Apalachicola
October 8-10, 2015	Aquifer withdrawal & springs health	Silver Springs
November 5-7, 2015	Wildland urban interface	Jacksonville
January 7-9, 2016	Sea level rise	Key Largo
February 4-6, 2016	Endangered species & recreation	Crystal River
March 10-12, 2016	Agriculture south of Lake Okeechobee	Clewiston
April 7-9, 2016	Graduation & practicum presentations	Gainesville

How to Apply

Applications for Class XV are currently being accepted. To apply, please complete the Class XV Application (available at http://nrli.ifas.ufl.edu/pdfs/Application_NRLI_ClassXV_2015-16.pdf) and submit your completed application along with a resume/CV to:

Jessica Ireland, NRLI Program Coordinator
E-mail: jjtireland@ufl.edu
Phone: (352) 294-7643
Fax: (352) 392-3646
Mail: University of Florida, PO Box 110240, Gainesville, FL 32611-0240

Class size is limited; applicants are encouraged to apply early. The project team will periodically review applications and notify applicants of their status. There is no application fee.

If accepted, the registration fee is $4,100 per Fellow. This fee covers meals, lodging, field trips, and instructional materials associated with the eight three-day sessions. Participation in the eight three-day sessions and completion of associated assignments is mandatory.