



Agriculture & Water Quality: Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) in Jackson Blue Springs and Suwannee River Basins

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

Director's Corner Jonathan Dain

Reaching Out

I was out of state traveling last week. It was an interesting trip, particularly in terms of post-election timing. In airports and on campuses, at hotels and in communities, people were clearly wary as they mingled in hotel breakfast rooms, airport terminals, and other public spaces. There were furtive glances and downcast eyes as if people were thinking, "I wonder who he voted for?" "Is she a good person or a bad person?" "Is it o.k. to be openly happy?" "Is it o.k. to be openly upset?". Signs and posted comments in three different states depicted despair or elation, pain or joy. Division. There was nothing in between.

I have now voted in 10 presidential elections and recognize that all have been preceded and followed by a certain level of polarization; this year is different. In places where nobody knew me, I felt an undercurrent of tension and exhaustion. As I read assignments from graduate students in a class I teach on communication and leadership, I was met with tormented postings about upcoming Thanksgiving dinners and family gatherings. "I don't know what to do." Us vs. them; them vs. us. We have forgotten what we have in common.

NRLI is about engaging diverse perspectives in managing and protecting natural resources for the benefit of all, now and in the future. Important decisions will be made in the coming years that will have a significant impact on our natural environment and, by extension, economic and cultural resources. Our children and grandchildren will soon be among 9 billion others on the planet, all requiring fresh water, sufficient food, clean air, and a safe place to live. Few of these needs will be fulfilled if we do not make the effort to "work across the aisle" and to engage a broad array of citizens, businesses, and institutions. We cannot and will not meet our responsibility to "tend to the garden" if we do not consider the needs of rural and urban, old and young, rich and poor, black, white, brown, and everything in between; the entire spectrum of our population. Behind these terms that divide us are regular people like you and me, individuals and groups making decisions and doing the best they can. We all want to feel safe; we all want to be respected; we all want to feel that things are fair.

The exaggerated schisms being experienced right now are pulling us apart like two sides of a suddenly active fault. History tells us that extreme division does not lead to wise decisions. That is why we need to engage the ideas of as many as possible in decision-making as we fight passionately for what we believe and to seek common ground, even with those we may dislike. Our country's founders recognized the need to encourage negotiation and balance power. They passionately argued and together created a system of checks and balances that would help us weave together a plan for the many.

So what does this have to do with NRLI? With you? Here in Florida, NRLI alumni are uniquely poised to help thaw the chilling climate of polarization. We come from many different communities and many different points of view. But we all know that those whose ideas and lives are different from ours have much to offer that can make our own ideas and communities better. We know because we spent 8 intense months getting to know people we might have ordinarily ignored or mistrusted. We learned how to build relationships and bridge differences, to uncover the common interests; rarely has there been a greater need for such skills.

This is a call to step up, to use your positions, skills, and contacts to push for and practice inclusive decision-making regardless of ideology. Fight for what you believe in by reaching out. It is more effective to shake a hand than to push one away.



Photos from the Session 3 field trip: a tour of Cindale Farms dairy and J&G Farms. Photos by Jonathan Dain.

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Natural Resources Focus: BMAPs in Jackson Blue Springs & Suwannee River Basins

Fellows and Project Team members traveled to Marianna, Florida for the third session of NRLI Class XVI, which focused on agriculture & water quality. We were in the area to learn about Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) in Jackson Blue Springs and Suwannee River Basins and the perspectives of stakeholders impacted by the process and the rules.

Hugh Thomas, Senior Project Manager at Suwannee River Water Management District, was the guest speaker for the session. A NRLI alumnus of Class XI, Hugh has been involved in Suwannee watershed management issues for many years and has worked on numerous water-use-related collaborative projects and initiatives. He manages a small cattle operation and previously worked for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). Hugh's NRLI background and diverse professional life and work experiences greatly enriched his presentation.

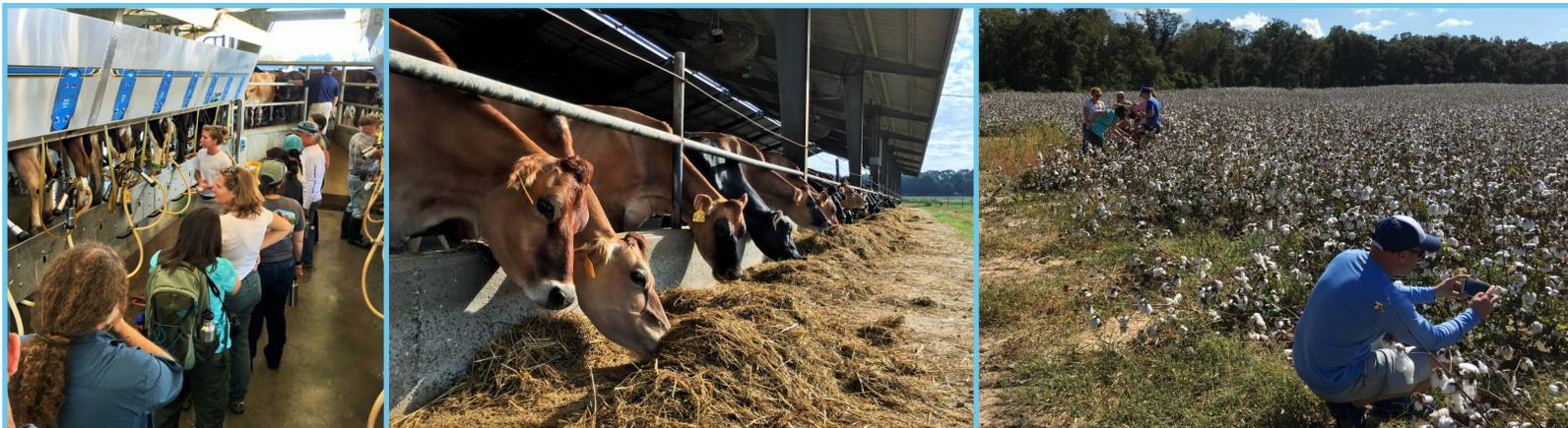
A key component of NRLI is experiencing the natural resources and learning about the range of perspectives that exist among those who use and depend on these resources. To this end, the group toured two agricultural operations in the Marianna area, one inside and one outside the local BMAP boundaries. Brad Austin (NRLI alumnus, Class XV) and Meghan Austin, co-owners of Cindale Farms, led a tour of their dairy operation, including hay-trailer visits to calf pens, milking barns, and feeding stalls. At each stop, the group saw a different component of the business; some Fellows even milked cows. Brad and Meghan explained the multiple best management practices (BMPs) being implemented on their farm and were honest about the joys as well as the complex challenges and strategies involved in milk production. Following the tour of the dairy, Fellows visited J&G Farms and were provided an overview of row crop

operations by owner Jeff Pittman. After explaining how his farming practices have evolved with new technologies that allow for precision water, soil, and nutrient management, Mr. Pittman took the group to observe a nearby cotton harvest. He too spoke of BMPs and of managing an agricultural operation in a constantly changing and sometimes unpredictable environment. After the tours, the field trip ended with lunch at Blue Springs, the focus of the local BMAP. After eating under a canopy next to the springhead, Fellows took advantage of expertise within their group, hearing from those whose work in agencies, organizations, and businesses linked to agriculture and water quality.

Field trips are generally followed by an opportunity to hear from a variety of stakeholders. As part of each monthly session, we invite individuals who represent a range of viewpoints and have first-hand knowledge of the topic to take part in a panel discussion. Joining us for a conversation about agriculture, water quality, and the BMAP process for Jackson Blue Springs were

- ◆ Terry Hansen, Environmental Consultant, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- ◆ David Cambron, Environmental Specialist III, Office of Agricultural Water Policy, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- ◆ Leigh Carraway, Owner, Arrowhead Campsites/RV Park
- ◆ Brad Austin, Co-Owner/Operator, Cindale Farms LLC
- ◆ Jeff Pittman, Owner, J&G Farms

For more detail on the third session, please read the Fellows' article written by Class XVI Fellows Meredith Moreno and Jason Mathis (page 4).



From left: Fellows observe and participate in milking at Cindale Farms; cows feeding; cotton field at J&G Farms. Photos by Jon Dain.

Curriculum Focus:

Values, Perceptions, and Applying Principled Negotiation Practices

Objectives

By the end of the session Fellows will have:

1. Learned about principled, interests-based negotiation.
2. Practiced applying principled negotiation techniques.
3. Explored the implications of value systems, perceptions, and “mind-bugs” in conflict and natural resource management.
4. Explored the issue: agriculture and water quality—BMAPs; heard from Jackson Blue Springs and Suwannee River Basin stakeholders.

Introduction to Negotiation

NRLI Project Team member Jon Dain led an introduction to negotiation session on Wednesday afternoon. The session began with a brainstorming discussion to explore how Fellows perceive negotiation and to identify the characteristics of a good negotiator. Following the brainstorming, Fellows engaged in small group discussions of successful negotiations they had been involved in while identifying what made these negotiations effective.

Jon then introduced Fellows to the concept of “principled, interests-based negotiation.” This process was developed at the Harvard Negotiation Project and employs four standards:

- ◆ Separate the people from the problem
- ◆ Focus on interests, not positions
- ◆ Invent options for mutual gain (“expand the pie”)
- ◆ Insist on objective (measurable, verifiable) criteria

In this type of negotiation, participants are engaged in solving problems, and the goal is to reach a “wise outcome” in an efficient and amicable manner that preserves relationships for future negotiations (Fisher and Ury 2011).

Fellows also learned about the concept of BATNA (best alternative to negotiated agreement). In a negotiation, the goal is to produce an outcome that is better than the results you would get if you did not negotiate, so the BATNA is a standard by which any proposed agreement should be measured.

Negotiation Role Play

To put concepts into practice, Fellows participated in a negotiation role play in which two parties, Fulford and Jones, are negotiating a bitter dispute over the maintenance of a shared roadway that traverses both of their properties. Fellows divided into groups of three, with one Fellow playing the role of Fulford, one of Jones, and the third acting as a mediator whose role was to facilitate civil and productive dialogue between the parties. Following the role play, Jon led a debrief of the activity, asking Fellows to consider the results of their negotiation; the application of the 4 pillars of principled negotiation; the concept of BATNA; and their use of the triangle of needs and interests when seeking agreement.

Other Roots of Conflict

On Friday morning, Wendy-Lin Bartels led an activity to introduce the concepts of “*mainstream and margins.*” Fellows were asked to stand in a circle, face outward, and close their eyes. Project Team members stuck a small sticker on each person’s forehead. They were then invited to open their eyes and form groups without talking. Once Fellows had arranged themselves into small groups, Wendy-Lin debriefed the activity to highlight specific patterns of behavior and other reactions. The activity is designed to illuminate what it means to belong to a group and how it feels to be excluded from the mainstream. Discussions focused on implications for agencies and organizations who engage with diverse groups of stakeholders as well as for professionals who find themselves in facilitation roles. As social beings, we tend to be attracted to people with whom we have something in common—to those who are similar to us. As a result, we may over-value their perspectives and miss, downplay, or dismiss the input of people or groups who are in the margins. In conflict management, such an approach can threaten our ability to listen effectively to all stakeholder perspectives, making it difficult to identify underlying interests, needs, and concerns, and ultimately reducing the probability of finding satisfactory solutions.

To underscore this initial activity and discussion topic, Jon Dain then distributed forms to each Fellow on which they were instructed to identify people they trusted beyond their family. They subsequently examined patterns related to the characteristics of those people they selected. Discussions progressed to a final activity in which Fellows wrote down and shared three things they deeply value. To close the session, Jon presented Fellows with a list of select stakeholders the group interacted with in the first two sessions. In groups, they discussed their initial reactions to those individuals and how those reactions might have been affected by the “mindbugs” highlighted in the previous three activities: belonging, trust, and values.

Alumni Engagement

We’d like to recognize the contributions and involvement of NRLI alumni in the Marianna/Jackson Blue Springs session. Allen Scheffer, Class XIV, and Brad Austin, Class XV, were instrumental in the planning of the session, from helping us organize the field trip, to identifying and contacting stakeholders, to getting the group fed. Thank you, Allen and Brad, for all that you did to help us plan and run the session; we surely couldn’t have done it without you!

In addition, Brad and his wife Meghan and daughter Emma hosted us for a tour of their dairy, Cindale Farms; Brad also participated in the stakeholder panel, and Brad, Meghan, and Emma were very generous in welcoming us into their home for dinner on Thursday. Hugh Thomas, Class XI, was the guest speaker at the session and joined us for activities on Wednesday. Finally, Deborah Burr, Class IV, and Tom Ostertag, Class IX, joined the group for the field trip and stakeholder panel.

Session 3 Fellows' Article

Meredith Moreno & Jason Mathis (Class XVI Fellows)

Each month, we ask Fellows to reflect on the session in their own words. This article describes the key takeaways from the point of view of Fellows Meredith Moreno & Jason Mathis.

The third session of NRLI Class XVI took place in Marianna, Florida and focused on agriculture and water quality in the Jackson Blue Springs and Suwannee River Basins. This session provided the Fellows with an opportunity to learn from stakeholders as we examined the values, perceptions, and applied negotiation practices that are present in this complex issue.

Our session began with a Project Team-led discussion on negotiation. Specifically, the Fellows were asked to define the characteristics of a good negotiator. The initial response of most Fellows viewed negotiation in terms of winning and losing and invoked negative connotations. However, once the group considered the "Four Pillars of Negotiation," it was understood that through focusing on interests and not positions and by separating emotions from the problem there is an opportunity for mutual gain through negotiation.

The guest speaker for Session 3 was Hugh Thomas, Senior Project Manager with the Suwannee River Water Management District. Hugh's presentation helped outline points of contention between stakeholders in the Jackson County Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP). Jackson County has a long history of production agriculture and the farmers, ranchers, and dairy producers in the area are now being asked to comply with strict regulations that target nutrient loading through the establishment of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

Small dairy producers Brad and Meghan Austin and larger row-crop producer Jeff Pittman set the stage for the conflict as we toured their operations and learned about the Best Management Practices (BMPs) they are implementing to be in compliance with the new regulations. While both producers agreed that regulations are necessary to ensure safe products leave their farms, both producers feel that over regulation could eventually drive them out of business. Through their involvement with regulatory agencies, these producers have developed a perception that they are the "low hanging fruit" in the fight against nutrient stewardship and that the blame directed at homeowners and producers is not balanced.

The producers on our tour also pointed to a dysfunctional relationship between Florida and Georgia and the establishment of blame on contaminated water running south. To protect their businesses, both producers have played an important role in building relationships between agriculture and different involved agencies, and they have served on various committees to "negotiate" practical and economically efficient practices that could be implemented to ensure that the water that leaves their property is in better shape than when it came on their property. BMPs are the result of an interest-based negotiation between UF/IFAS, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of Agricultural Water Policy, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and producers that has resulted in scientifically sound, field-tested

practices that have shown the ability to improve water quality and preserve water quantity.

After the tour we traveled to Jackson Blue Springs for lunch and a chance to visit the environmental issue at the heart of the Jackson County BMAP. During lunch, the NRLI Fellows that are members of the agricultural community, including representatives from FDACS and the Florida Farm Bureau Federation (FFBF), provided those of us with less experience in agriculture with their personal insight into the issues. It was explained how FDACS works with farmers to enroll them in BMAPs by providing cost-sharing opportunities, and those Fellows who are farmers or work directly with farmers shared their perspective on an overabundance of regulation. The Fellows agreed that more regulations do not necessarily equate to "smart regulations;" however, it is a necessity to insure water quality.

The stakeholder panel included farmers Brad Austin and Jeff Pittman, Terry Hansen from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), David Cambron from FDACS, and Leigh Carraway, a resident of the Millpond and the owner of a campground and RV park. During the panel, a level of trust between the stakeholders was perceived that has not been observed in earlier sessions. Although the initial interaction between FDEP, FDACS, and the community was contentious, all parties seemed to work collaboratively to ensure that the best science was utilized in the BMAP and that these policies were adopted. A conclusion from Session 3 was that the farmers are walking a thin line between compliance with water quality regulations and the ability to stay in business. While the farmers are doing their part to reduce nutrient loading, there is a lack of oversight on the septic systems that leach into the watershed. It is the responsibility of the entire community to ensure the future of Jackson Blue Springs.



Photos by Jon Dain.

Patrick Walsh

Training Academy Captain, Division of Law Enforcement, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Patrick was born in Clearwater, Florida, where his love for the outdoors began. Growing up the son of a commercial fisherman, Patrick has always loved being on the water and working with his hands. He served in the United States Navy aboard the USS Sand Lance (SSN-

660), a fast attack submarine, for nearly 5 years. During his tour of duty, Patrick had the opportunity to travel the world to include playing football at the North Pole and snowboarding in the Chilean Andes. He graduated from the University of South Florida with a Bachelor's degree in Natural Science. After a short time at an education sales company, Patrick began his career with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as a law enforcement officer, patrolling the Everglades and Florida's Paradise Coast. He has previously served as an officer, investigator, training coordinator, and field supervisor. As the Training Academy Captain, his current duties require him to lead a great team of Lieutenants, who hire and train the future of Florida's conservation law enforcement.

Patrick's wife, 7 year old son and 5 year old daughter are his focus outside of work. Patrick coaches his son's many sports activities and loves watching his daughter's ballet recitals. He also enjoys woodworking, camping, and saltwater fishing. Patrick looks forward to future endeavors with his family, enjoying Florida's precious natural resources together.

Amy Castaneda

Water Quality Technician, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida



Amy Castaneda holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resource Conservation from the University of Florida. She is the Water Quality Manager for the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida where she has worked for the last ten years. She is

responsible for the water quality monitoring program on Tribal lands in the Everglades. As part of her daily responsibilities she tests the water quality on the Federal Reservation and Water Conservation Area 3A. She is very active in the Tribal community and acts as a liaison between the Tribal elders and the environmental offices. She coordinates the Spring and Fall Everglades Studies, two community outreach programs that occur annually. Amy also sits on the Science Coordination Group under the Task Force representing the Tribe on Everglades restoration issues.

Amy was born in Miami, Florida and grew up traveling throughout the state. She fell in love with the natural wonders of Florida and was fascinated with the outdoors. Today, she tries to instill that love for nature in her three children; Abby (10), Matthew (8), and Addison (6). When Amy is not playing in the Everglades or being mom, she enjoys any water related activity; paddleboarding, snorkeling, or kayaking. She also has a love for photography, dance, and cooking.



Looking Forward

Class XVI Sessions 3-8		
Dates	Topic	Location
November 16-18, 2016	Everglades restoration in progress	Naples
January 15-17, 2017	Protection & use of marine resources	Key West
February 15-17, 2017	Recreation & the endangered Florida manatee	Crystal River
March 15-17, 2017	Responding to sea level rise	St. Augustine
April 6-7, 2017	Graduation & practicum presentations	Gainesville



Class XVII (2017-2018)

We are now accepting applications for NRII Class XVII (2017-2018). For details, including a schedule and application instructions, go to <http://nrli.ifas.ufl.edu/apply.shtml>.

Class XVI Fellows

Savanna Barry, Regional Specialized Sea Grant Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Nature Coast Biological Station

Tyler Beck, Snail Kite Conservation Coordinator, Species Conservation Planning Section, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Amy Castaneda, Water Quality Technician, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida

Walter Cheatham, Wildlife Biologist, Ostego Bay Environmental, Inc.

Houston Cypress, President & Artistic Director, Otter Vision, Inc.; Co-Founder, Love the Everglades Movement

Courtney Davis, Florida Vegetable Sales Representative, Speedling, Inc.

Sarah Funck, Nonnative Fish and Wildlife Program Coordinator, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Margaret Guyette, Water Resource Data Manager, St. Johns River Water Management District

Katie Hallas, Environmental Administrator, Office of Agricultural Water Policy, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Basil Iannone, Assistant Professor, University of Florida School of Forest Resources and Conservation/Program for Resource Efficient Communities/Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology

Scott Kihei, Law Enforcement Captain, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Audrey Kuipers, Program Manager, Okeechobee Soil and Water Conservation District

Jason Mathis, County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship (CARES) Program Coordinator, Florida Farm Bureau Federation

Meredith Moreno, Archaeologist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Maddie Southard, Program Manager, Florida Wildlife Corridor

Jessica Stempien, Environmental Administrator, Office of Agricultural Water Policy, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Phillip Stokes, Education Specialist, UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education

Donald Voss, Founder/Long-term Strategies, One Florida Foundation, Inc.

Patrick Walsh, Law Enforcement Academy Captain, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Matthew Wegener, Biological Scientist II, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Erika Zambello, Marine Economic and Tourism Development Resource Coordinator, Okaloosa County Tourism and Development Department

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NATURAL RESOURCES
LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

NRLI Project Team

Jonathan Dain
Jessica Ireland
Wendy-Lin Bartels
Paul Monaghan

Contact us:

Jessica Ireland
NRLI Program Coordinator
P.O. Box 110410
Gainesville, FL 32611-0240
Phone: 342-294-7643
E-mail: jjtireland@ufl.edu



Website: <http://nrli.ifas.ufl.edu>

