NW Florida Environmental Action Committee (EAC): Bridging the Gap between Students & Professionals

Matt Wegener
EAC: the early days

Brainstorming
Brainstorming

Mission statement
- Bringing like-minded people together
- (stakeholders)
Brainstorming

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Vision for EAC
• Network of leaders to address needs environmental needs
• Region-specific EAC
Brainstorming

Mission statement
  • Bringing like-minded people together
  • (stakeholders)

Vision for EAC
  • Network of leaders to address needs environmental needs
  • Region-specific EAC

Stakeholders
Divergence/Re-framing

- Re-framed the idea for my region of FL
- Citizen science vs. Matt’s army
- Importance of volunteer opportunities
- Volunteer work created my path to success
Better Lucky than Good?

- How about both?
- How do we improve opportunity?
- Experience is a double-edged sword
- Who benefits from experience?
- Doing more with less
Help is on the Way!

- Volunteer opportunities galore
Whose Opportunities?

Pine Meadow Veterinary Clinic

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[Image of a dog]

[Image of a group of people]
Volunteer Networks: Past

- Call the regional office
  - Few coordinators there
  - Too many chances to reach the wrong person
  - Delayed response time

- Result = missed opportunity
Universities have started to adapt

- They benefit from students being prepared
- Masses have spoken (empathic listening)
- Technology/online job boards

Result = getting better but impersonal & glitches
EAC designed to avoid these problems

- Reach the masses yet personal attention
- Network of representatives from every NR field

Volunteer Networks: Future
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alex Almario</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Fish &amp; Wildlife Service</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jeff Vrancken</td>
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<td>FL Forest Service</td>
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<td>David Creamer</td>
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<td>FDACS</td>
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<td>David Cambron</td>
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<td>Sea Grant (Santa Rosa)</td>
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<td>Chris Verlinde</td>
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<td>Sea Grant (Escambia)</td>
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<td>Rick O’Connor</td>
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<td>FWC Saltwater</td>
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<td>Rich Netro</td>
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<td>FWC Wildlife</td>
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<td>Barbra Almario</td>
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<td>Pensacola State College</td>
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<td>Mike Allen</td>
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<td>University West Florida</td>
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<td>Jeff Eble</td>
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<tr>
<td>UF – Milton Campus</td>
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<td>Debbie Miller</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Rep Your Agency!

Academia

Natural Resources

UF

PSC

USFWS

FDACS

Sea Grant
Fly it proudly!
- Fellows are everywhere
- Helped get stakeholder buy-in

Volunteer experience – diverse
- Some have vast experience
- Others are just getting started

Agency interest
- Volunteer coordinator
- Work-swap program
Future Plans

- More academic involvement
- Group maintenance
- Communication avenues
- “Bigger picture” environmental projects
  - Pensacola Bay sea grass restoration
Acknowledgements

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