

# Encouraging Youth Participation in Florida State Parks

Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute  
Fellowship Practicum

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# Situation

- Florida State Parks: 174 state parks, historic sites, and trails
- Protect habitat and promote recreation
- 27 annual million visitors (July 2013-June 2014)
- \$2 billion direct economic impact
- To encourage additional use, we suggested a series of short, educational cartoons

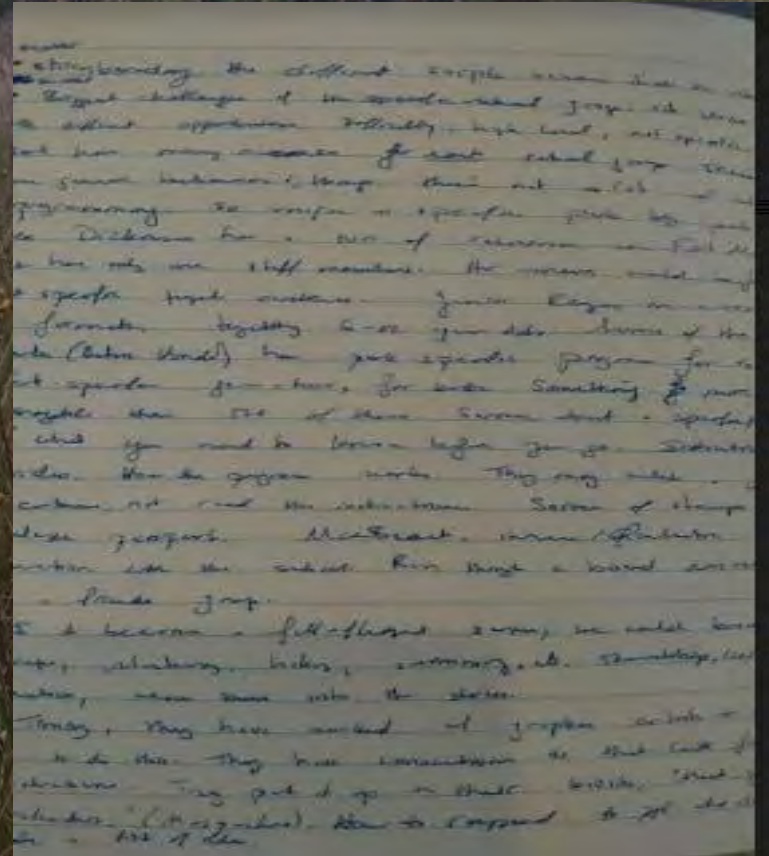
# Stakeholders

- Florida State Park Communications Staff (5)
- Henderson Beach State Park Staff (3)
- Florida Teachers (3)



# Techniques

- Two focus groups were conducted (phone & in person)
- Individual interviews/surveys with Florida teachers



# Outcomes

- Different stakeholder groups had different ideas of what would be best

Ex: State-level staff wanted cartoons that would connect multiple parks (Junior Rangers, rules);

- Local staff preferred focusing on local park issues (sea turtles, dune ecosystems), and suggested different cartoon styles

# Outcomes

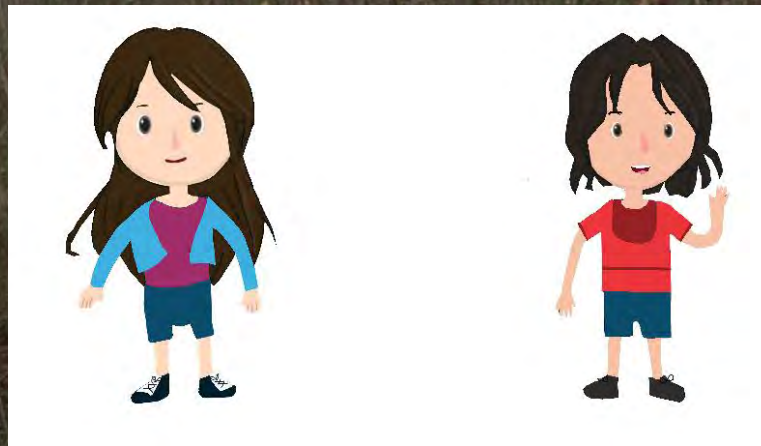
- State-wide themes with park examples
- The target age should be 9-12 years old
- Cartoons to be limited to 5 minutes
- Diversity should be included; all students feel welcome and inspired to participate.



The image shows a Florida State Parks Junior Ranger badge. At the top, it lists categories: CORE / NATURAL / CULTURAL / RECREATION / SERVICE. The badge features the Florida State Parks logo on the left, which includes a silhouette of a hat and the text 'Florida State Parks' and 'JUNIOR RANGER'. The main title of the badge is 'BIRDS AND BILLS'. Below the title, there are fields for 'Name \_\_\_\_\_', 'Date \_\_\_\_\_', and 'Park \_\_\_\_\_'. On the right side of the badge, there is a small circular logo with the text 'FLORIDA State Parks' and 'We Did Florida'.

# Outcomes

- Sample script on Junior Rangers at Henderson Beach State Park (Appendix A).



# Lessons learned



- FL State Park staff's ideas for cartoon content different than anticipated
  - Sometimes you have to throw out the agenda
  - Harder to lead a focus group in a phone conversation
- Teacher input is important because they are most familiar with student interest, behaviors, and abilities



# Next steps

- Creating full scripts with backgrounds
- Reengaging with FL State Park staff for potential contract together
- Researching funding opportunities
- Enlisting a designer

# Appendix A

Sample script for Junior Rangers cartoon, set at Henderson Beach State Park in Destin, FL

"JUNIOR RANGERS IN FLORIDA STATE PARKS"

By

Erika Zambello and Maddie Southard

FADE IN:

JUNIOR RANGERS AT HENDERSON BEACH STATE PARK

Francesca and Sam are Junior Rangers, and they want to participate in Junior Ranger activities within Henderson Beach State Park in the Florida Panhandle. Henderson Beach State Park is famous for its long beach along the Gulf of Mexico, but also for its dune habitat and nature trail.

PARK RANGER

Good morning, welcome to Henderson Beach State Park!

FRANCESCA

Good morning! We are looking for Junior Ranger packets.

SAM

So we can get a stamp in our passport!

[shows passport to the Park Ranger, flipping to some of the most recent stamps)

PARK RANGER

To get your stamp you must complete six activities at the park. What do you want to do?

[Sam and Francesca sit at a picnic table under one of the picnic pavilions. You can see the beach to one side and the hill-like dunes and dune vegetation on the other side.]

SAM

Hmmmmmm, there are a lot to choose from.

[Zoom on one of the activity sheets]

FRANCESCA

What about "birds and bills?" We like birds.

[She shows off her binoculars]

SAM

Perfect! Let's start on the sand.

[Sam and Francesca walk down the boardwalk to the beach. Waves are crashing, people are swimming and laying on beach towels. Brown Pelicans are flying in the air, Royal Terns are flying in the air, Sanderlings and Willets are walking at the surf line]

FRANCESCA

[Reading directions]

When you look at a bird, notice how the shape of its bill is designed. This makes it easier for the bird to find its particular type of food and is called adaptation. Other parts of the bird, like their legs, feet, and wings are also adapted to help them survive. Record the details of a bird you saw today, then draw the bird in the environment below.

[Show a copy of the worksheet]

SAM

Let's choose that one!

[Points to a Brown Pelican floating in the water]

FRANCESCA

What is the size of the bird?

[While they're talking, zoom in on the different types of the bird they are talking about]

SAM

Big!

FRANCESCA

What color is the bird?

SAM

Brown!

FRANCESCA

What is the shape of the bird's beak?

[While they're talking, zoom in on the different types of the bird they are talking about]

SAM

Big!

FRANCESCA

What color is the bird?

SAM

Brown!

FRANCESCA

What is the shape of the bird's beak?

SAM

Long and with a big pouch. For catching fish!

FRANCESCA

What is the bird doing?

SAM

Hmmmm, this one is floating on the top of the water. But other ones are flying in the air and diving after fish.

[Cartoon shows a pelican dive]

Here, I can help you draw it!

[The two girls sketch on the worksheet, while the Park Ranger comes up to them]

PARK RANGER

Good job girls! You have finished the Birds & Bills activity. One down, five more to go!

[Fades into a montage of the girls doing activities, including walking on the nature trail, etc]

PARK RANGER

You have finished all six activities, and  
have earned the Henderson Beach State Park  
stamp.

[he stamps each of their passports]

One step closer to finishing them all!

[the girls high-five each other]

Fades out to a slide with more information on the Junior  
Rangers program, then the Florida State Parks logo.

FADE OUT:

THE END