

COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN

LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT (LOWRP)

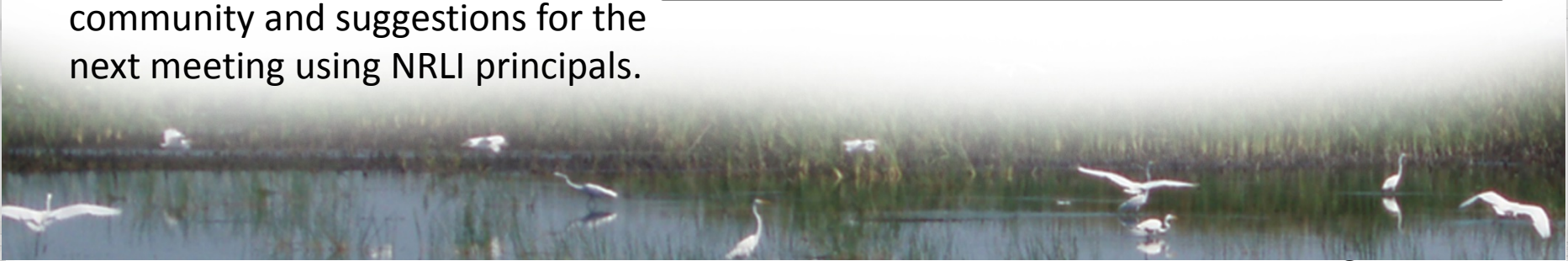
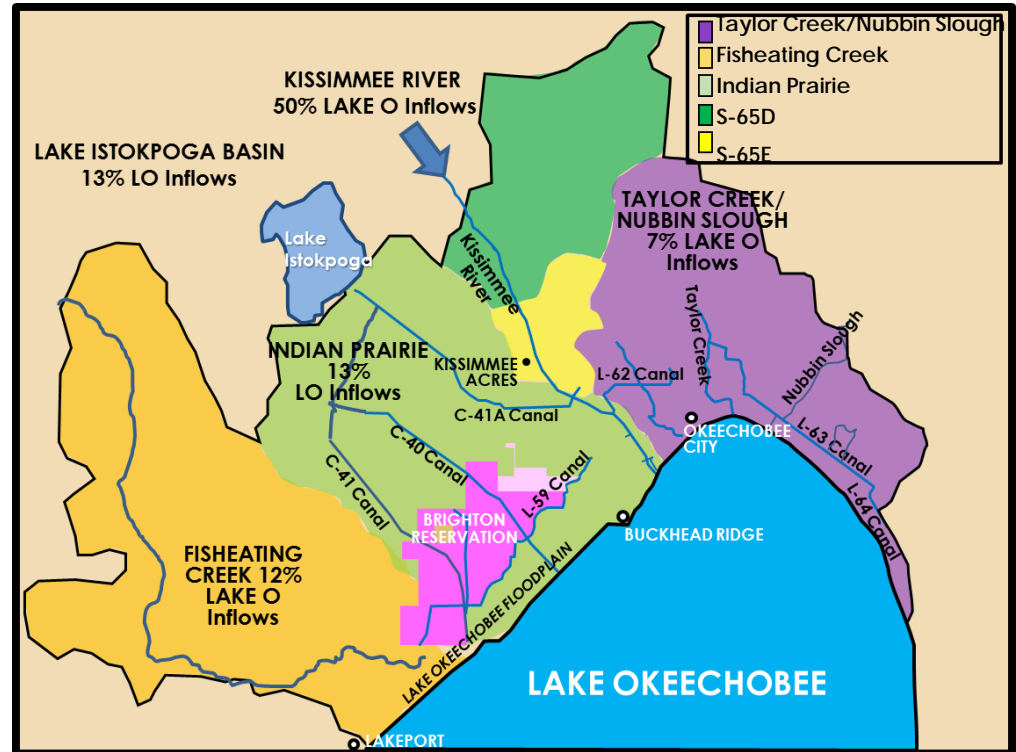
INTEGRATED PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Identifying a More Productive Communication Strategy for the Army
Corps of Engineers Regarding the Lake Okeechobee Watershed
Restoration Project



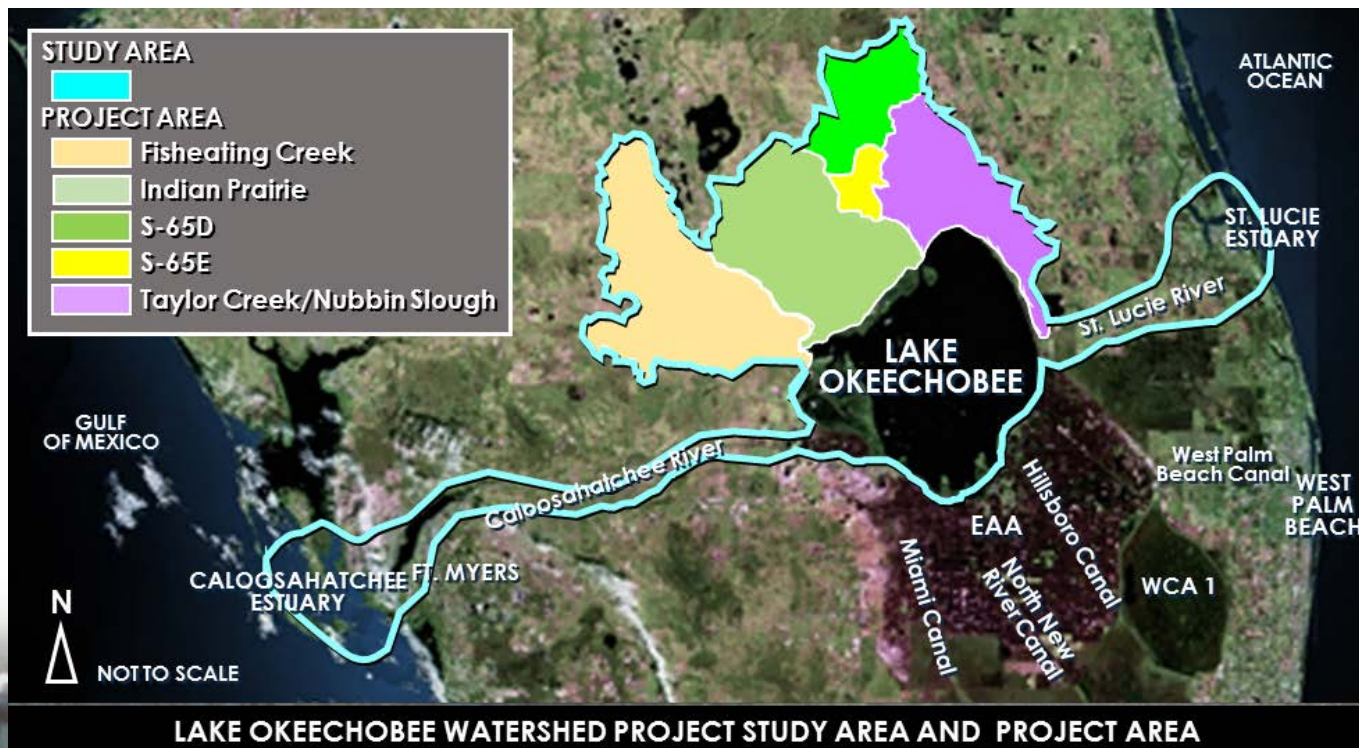
PRACTICUM OVERVIEW

- The Corps has hosted several workshops with communities and government to government consultations with the STOF to discuss the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project and obtain feedback.
- Local communities and the Seminole Tribe of Florida have expressed concerns regarding the siting of project features near their lands for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project
- This practicum essentially proposes a “re-do” of a contentious meeting between the Corps and the STOF community and suggestions for the next meeting using NRLI principals.



Stakeholders

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- South Florida Water Management District
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Miccosukee Tribe of Florida
- Politicians
- Local communities and landowners
- Agricultural interest groups
- Natural resource agencies
- Estuary stakeholders
- Environmental Groups
- Scientific communities



Practicum Objectives

- 1st priority: Engage tribal communities in a manner that encourages more open and honest dialogue
- 2nd priority: Prepare for our NEPA scoping 'Road Show' and consider lessons learned from our previous NEPA scoping meetings



Identifying Mistakes From Previous Seminole Tribe Community Meeting and NEPA Scoping

- USACE did not anticipate such a large turn-out of angry people at each meeting
- Room setup and managing attendance
 - We had Col and lots of USACE representatives to show respect but it ended up creating an intimidating atmosphere
 - We were in a room with stadium seating and a podium. Tribal members were in the stadium at a far distance and had to shout
- No one on one interaction- large group mentality created an 'us against them' feeling
- No icebreakers or introductions because the group was too large
- Cultural misunderstandings- 'burial resources' example
- USACE did not spend time acknowledging concerns and went to far into technical detail



NRLI LESSONS LEARNED FOR NEXT INTERACTION

- Identify an ally on the inside
- Do your research to understand cultural differences
- Small groups, group rotation
- Empathic listening
- Flip charts- maybe
- Drawing people out



Lessons Learned

- You can't build trust in a single meeting
- Give people time to vent frustrations
- Manage expectations
- Showing emotions isn't always bad
- Limit 'us against them' mentality
- If possible, limit group sizes and USACE representatives
- Expect to make mistakes, and be willing to apologize and ask for direction from the tribes for how to proceed or do things differently next time.

