



Managing Use and Protection of Unique Water Resources

Welcome to Ocala

The Ocala session was one of a kind for NRLI class XIII. Fellows and Project Team members stayed in cabins at the beautiful FWC Ocala Conservation Center with no internet access, meals were prepared as a group, and the Fellows all bonded powerfully. The rainy days and misty nights didn't stop the group from enjoying the outside scenery and completing the full agenda which had been carefully designed to match the unique setting.

Silver Springs is one of Florida's threatened water resources. During this session, Fellows explored different management options proposed for springs protection and recovery. This exploration included learning how humans utilized the springs in the past, how silver springs is used at present, and plans for how it will be used and managed in the future. Important parts of the discussion included the challenges posed by developmental impacts and the increased demands placed on the Floridian Aquifer.

Before the session, several articles describing the history, threats, water uses, and challenges faced by the freshwater springs were assigned as readings. This additional background enabled Fellows to enter into the stakeholder panel discussion ready to be engaged.

The curriculum in Ocala focused on dealing with difficult dynamics, stakeholder engagement and Scenarios Planning. During this session, Fellows welcomed the participation of visiting alumni which enhanced the quality of the overall session. A special thanks to Allen Martin, class XII, for his dedication and commitment to organizing the Ocala session.



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Objectives

- Address causes of/strategies for dealing with difficult stakeholders
- Carry out a scenarios planning exercise and examine its utility for multi-stakeholder planning and collaboration.
- Visit Silver Springs and speak with stakeholders about use and protection issues

Day One : Dealing with Difficult Dynamics

Day 1 in Ocala began with lunch, followed by a **Looking Back – Looking Forward** discussion, led by Jon Dain and designed to help Fellows reflect on previous NRLI sessions. Thanks again to Fellow Holly Edmond for preparing excellent maps of the area. Holly has consistently prepared maps for the group, which have proven to be valuable tools in understanding the areas we have visited throughout the Class XIII.

During the first Silver Springs session, Fellows jumped into learning valuable concepts and skills associated with the session title, **Dealing with Difficult Dynamics**. The session, led by Joy Hazell and Jon Dain, focused on what is known about groups and the way they operate. Issues addressed included how to deal with group communication problems when facilitating meetings and the impact of differing communication styles and behaviors on the people attending those meetings.

In small groups, Fellows practiced supportive measures and attitudes to help overcome patterns of frustration, lack of participation, and conflicting interests in group settings. A role play developed around the “Lost in the Jungle” scenario (a lost group with a severely injured member must reach consensus on what to take with them as they seek help) illuminated the difference between “Task” (help the group accomplish a task) and “Maintenance” (help maintain group relationships so the whole is greater than the sum of its parts) functions. Both “functions” are vital to effective and sustainable group decision-making. The role play also allowed for initial exploration of challenging individual behaviors like “blocking,” joking around, reluctance to participate, and dominating conversations.

The groups also worked through “**Group Interventions for Communication Styles**” from Kaner (2007, page 142) and gleaned ideas for handling difficult personalities and behaviors beyond those mentioned previously. As a facilitator, it is important to work with the group to do things like setting ground rules; making sure that everyone's contributions are taken into account; and observing which roles are absent and try to fill them. Examples of whole-group interventions include acknowledging outside distractions, switching to structured go-arounds, and stepping out of content discussions to talk about decision-making process issues. Many additional suggestions came out of the small group exercises including using a “parking lot” for off-topic items to be discussed later, paraphrasing group member comments to check for accuracy or understanding, stacking, and asking to hear from others when a particular group member is dominating.



Jon Dain—Looking Back, Looking Forward



Paul Monaghan & Joy Hazell getting ready to prepare lunch.

After discussing how to handle meeting interruptions, the group discussed some of the **Common Reasons why People Become Difficult** during a meeting. As a facilitator, it is particularly important to be able to recognize difficult behaviors as well as uncover the root cause of the behavior in order to better address the situation. It is important to remember that it is usually not a difficult person, but rather a difficult problem or issue not being addressed that leads to such dynamics. Reasons people become difficult include emotional discomfort or pain, fear of losing something important, recalling past frustrations, and threats to basic needs.

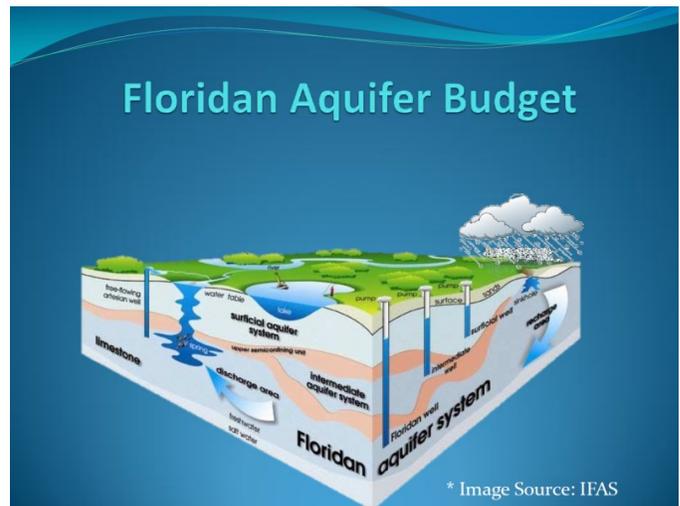
Context Speaker: Dr. Robert Knight, Florida Springs Institute

Dr. Robert Knight, an environmental scientist, Director of the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute, and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Environmental Engineering Sciences at the University of Florida, set the stage for our session with his presentation on "**Silver Spring: Florida's Original Tourist Attraction**". He provided an overview of the Floridan Aquifer system and the dynamics and ecology of Florida's springs. He stressed the importance of healthy springs and stressed the seriousness of the many challenges facing all of Florida's springs today.

Dr. Knight also discussed problems associated aquifer withdrawals requested by Adena Springs Ranch. Adena Ranch has proposed to withdraw a very large amount of water from the aquifer for its cattle grazing operation. Joining in the discussion was NRLI Alumnae Debra Segal (NRLI Class X) who provided literature on the Floridan Springs and photographer John Moran's museum exhibition "**Springs Eternal: Florida's Fragile Fountains of Youth Project**".

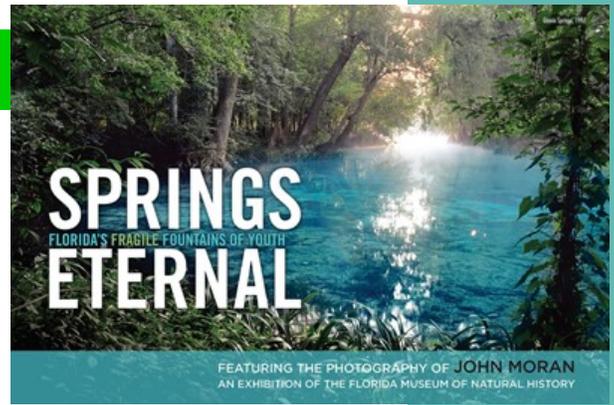


Context Speaker Robert Knight of the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute



Fellow Discussions: Water Issues

The last activity of the afternoon was led by Paul Monaghan. Paul broke the Fellows into 2 small groups to discuss the lessons learned thus far in NRLI as related to water issues. One group was facilitated by fellow Gina Ralph and the other by fellow Bob Buschbacher. Each group was asked to reflect on a water issue we had studied, the techniques used to address the issue, and the perceived advantages or disadvantages of the approaches used. After working through the issues, Fellows regrouped to exchange ideas and reflect on the varying perspectives they were exposed to.



<http://springseternalproject.org/>

It was useful to consider which NRLI skills were applied in each region, which water issues were addressed, and how the NRLI skills are or would be beneficial to managing these natural resource conflicts. Examples of water issues discussed included the tri-state water wars, water quality, and water quantity. Fellows identified which regions had established a dynamic stakeholder working group, which had not, and how having or not having a working group impacted progress in the addressing the water issue at hand.

Day One Special Event: Low Country Boil

The highlight of the first day was the delicious *Low Country Boil*, prepared by the project team led by alumni Allen Martin and Alex Gulde (Class XII Alumni) and their colleague Kristen Sommers, all three from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. A good time was had by all!



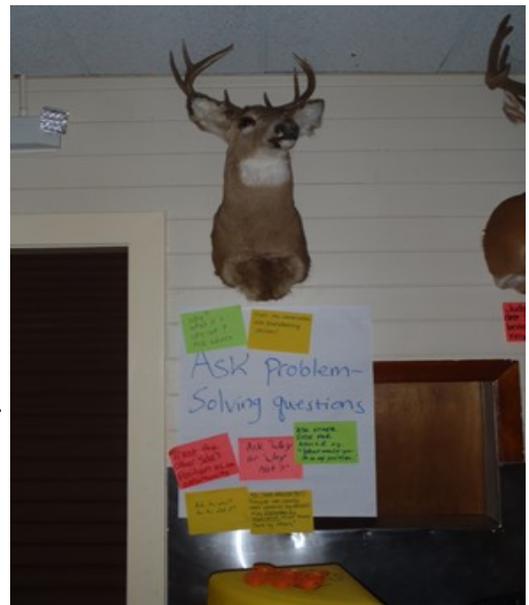
Reading Discussion

After dinner on Thursday evening, fellow Jessica Ireland led the reading discussion. For the first time during this session, Fellows had been assigned additional "Ocala context" reading resources. This addition was suggested by the Fellows at the previous NRLI session in Okeechobee and helped to better prepare the group to understand the context of the region. The group also discussed an article from *New York Times* (2004), *Payback Time: Why Revenge Tastes so Sweet* and Chapters 6 & 7 of *The Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making*.

Decision Making

To review the final reading from William Ury's *Getting Past No* (the chapter "*Don't Reject*" - 1993), Jessica introduced a new activity where post it notes were placed around the room and Fellows were asked to reflect on each of the key principles from the chapter over the next two days. The group reviewed these comments on Saturday during the debrief.

Following the reading discussion Fellows met independently to discuss end of the year awards voting processes.



Practicum

Following a great breakfast prepared by the team, Paul Monaghan provided some instruction on the Practicum Report. Fellows broke into three teams to work on an activity called **Broken Squares**. Each team of Fellows was provided pieces of paper of various shapes and sizes. The objective was to see which team could use all of their pieces to formulate five evenly sized squares *without talking or signaling with each other*. With many rules to follow, Fellows worked harmoniously to complete the task. Class XIII finished the activity in NRLI record time and discussed how activity related to communication styles.



Stakeholder Panel Discussion

After a group exchange of ideas in preparation for the **Stakeholder Panel**, the Fellows joined moderator Matthew Corby in greeting a diverse panel to talk about Silver Springs. The Stakeholder Panel included (from left), **Richard Hamann**, an attorney on the staff of the University of Florida Levin College of Law with extensive experience working with natural resource and water issues; **Peggy Goldberg**, a USCG Licensed Captain, Master Scuba Trainer, Cave Diver and photographer; Kristen Sommers who is from FWC and has background experience on issues related to the Rhesus monkeys that live along the Silver River; **Casey Fitzgerald**, Director of the Springs Protection Initiative at the St. Johns River Water Management District who has been involved in natural resource protection and management for over 30 years; and Jeff Halcomb from the local Marion County Utilities company.

formative discussion about a wide range of issues related to Silver Springs. The panelists were all highly engaged and clearly care very much about the future of Silver Springs.



After individual introductions, Matt Corby led off with an introductory question and what followed was an engaging and in-

Fieldtrip

This session field trip was a boat tour in the Silver River and the Headwaters Springs, which began with a quick historical presentation by Scott Mitchell, Director of the Silver River Museum. NRLI alumni Michael (MJ) Carnevale and Shannon McGhee also participated in the field trip.



Day Two Special Event: Free Time

After the boat trip, the class was given a well-deserved 2 hour break to enjoy the area. Some Fellows stayed back to explore the Silver River Museum, with a special behind the scenes tour given by the museum Director while other Fellows decided to return to the Camp to work on practicum projects, read, or join a Florida Scrub-Jay search in the nearby forest led by Fellow and Scrub-Jay expert Craig Faulhaber. Those willing to follow Craig were rewarded with an exciting observation of a pair of Florida scrub jays flying by. The subsequent search for endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in the majestic pine forest made the trip worthwhile! (See two photos below).

An amazingly delicious lasagna, prepared by Candy Kaswinkel, was served for dinner. Following dinner, Allen Martin and Alex Gulde gave the current NRLI class an overview of the NRLI Alumni Association and invited us to join. To end another perfect NRLI day, the group gathered around a bonfire.



Day 3 Overview and Training Session

A special breakfast prepared by Jon Dain and Paul Monaghan made for a pleasant start to a rainy Saturday morning.



Right after breakfast, Joy Hazell and Bruce Delaney led the group in an activity called **Blue World / Green World** that made Fellows work creatively using their planning, listening, and collaboration skills. Using two imaginary scenarios, one positive and one negative, condition groups of Fellows visualized possible futures for Silver Springs in the year 2024. To do this, Fellows brainstormed, and created a timeline of events leading up to a technique called “backcasting”. The groups produced dynamic scenarios that dealt with three very different situations, two positive and one negative. Outcomes were presented during an imaginary “Friends of Silver Springs” jamboree in the form of I skits that creatively demonstrated the different futures imagined by each group.



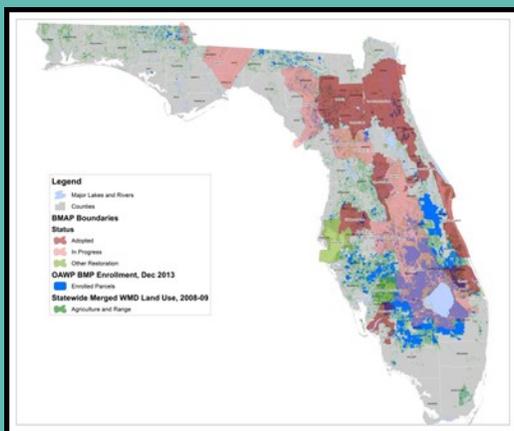
Session Wrap-Up/Debrief and Feedback Panel

Debrief

Fellow Maria Sgambati led a discussion summarizing the activities and NRLI principles learned over the past 3 days using small groups and a careful reflection on what have been covered.

Feedback Panel

In the final activity for session six in Ocala, it was clear that Fellows Chelsey Campbell Crandall, Jaime Jerrels, and Chandra Bowden had worked hard on getting feedback from NRLI Fellows over three days. Among the notable comments was that the unique “cabin” and “camp” atmosphere had allowed Fellows and the Project Team to spend more quality time together. The relaxed atmosphere lead to bonding, friendships, and memories that we all will cherish. Overall, NRLI Fellows enjoyed this session thoroughly!



Maps prepared by Fellow Holly Edmond