

## SOCIAL MEDIA SPOT



### KEY STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL ONLINE DE- LIBERATION AND COL- LABORATION

“In the United States a growing interest among leaders at all levels of government in employing online tools for deliberation and collaboration. These tools certainly do not offer all the benefits of face to face dialogue, and substantial sectors of any given community face significant obstacles to interacting online. However, online dialogue can greatly enhance participatory democracy when used well and in conjunction with other engagement methodologies. As streaming video conferencing and other technologies advance, allowing more personalized and instantaneous online collaboration, the use and benefits of this online interaction will expand exponentially.” Sandy Heierbacher as posted on govloop.com. **Key Strategies.** (Continued on page 7)



## Beach Management for Migrating Shore Birds and Human Recreation

### Welcome to Fort Myers Beach



Joy Hazell, Sea Grant Extension agent with Lee County Extension welcomed the Class to Fort Myers Beach and provided an overview of the county. *Photo by Becky Raulerson*

At the Holiday Inn, Fort Myers Beach, Project Team member Bruce Delaney welcomed the Fellows to the sixth session of Class XI. Bruce introduced Bryan Fluech, President of the NRLI Alumni Association, and Kat Diersen, NRLI Class X Fellow and context speaker for the session. Joy Hazell, Lee County Sea Grant Agent, provided an overview of Lee County which has 5 incorporated cities and is bisected by the Caloosahatchee River. The population of the county is just over 618,000 and 5 million tourists visit the county annually.

There are over 35,000 recreational salt water fishing licenses, 45,000 registered vessels, 50 miles of beaches, 240 square miles of inland waterways, and 190 miles of marked canoe and kayak trails in the county. With the abundance of waterways and recreational activities, there are many conflicts between user access and natural resources.

### “Looking Back—Looking Forward”

Jon Dain led a discussion focused on the previous session which was conducted at Key Largo. The Key Largo session examined the impacts of the Everglades on Florida Bay and associated water quality issues. Fellows learned about multi-stakeholder processes, negotiation, and public issues deliberation. Building on those themes, the Ft Myers session would focus on dealing with difficult dynamics, emotions, and people.

this issue

Welcome to Ft Myers Beach **P.1**

Florida Bay **P.2**

Difficult Dynamics **P.3**

Fieldtrip to Carlos Pointe **P.4**

Stakeholder Panel **P.5**

Scenario Planning **P.6**

Debrief and Feedback **P.8**

## Recruiting and the NRLI Alumni Association

Bruce Delaney talked with the fellows about recruiting potential NRLI Fellows for Class XII which commences in August of this year. . He explained that he would send a nomination form and information on session XII to everyone and asked that we speak to anyone who we thought would benefit from and be interested in the NRLI experience.

Bryan Fluech talked about the Alumni Association and how we are all invited to join and the opportunities for alumni such as local meetings and outings. He also mentioned that two seats on the board would be available for our class. Camille Soverel and Chris Martinez are the members of our class that we chose to occupy those seats on the board.



Kat Diersen, FWC Habitat Conservation Planner . NRLI  
File Photo

The context speaker for this session was Kat Diersen, Habitat Conservation Planner with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Kat discussed the issues surrounding a very complicated problem of clashing private property regulations and shorebird habitat. The conflict in this situation is between the property owners on Carlos Pointe and the regulations of FWC and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) concerning nesting shorebirds. The shorebirds in question are snowy plovers and least terns, which are both protected at the state and federal level and seek out wide sandy areas with little to no vegetation for nesting. The property owners at Carlos Pointe received a permit from DEP to rake the beach as long as there was no accumulation of vegetation; since the beach was heavily raked, there had been no problems in the past with vegetation and the permit. The sudden creation of a wide sandy beach as the result of a storm attracted least terns and snowy plovers that began to nest on the private property instead of the Little Estero Island Conservation Wildlife Area (CWA) directly north of the property where nesting normally occurred. A contentious conflict ensued. The Estero Island CWA had been created for

## Private Property, Regulation and Shorebird Habitat

beach habitat for birds to nest but the undisturbed dune system provided little area for the terns and plovers to nest. They moved to the Carlos Pointe property.

The conflict arose when the property owners allowed FWC and Keith Laakkonen (from the Town of Fort Myers Beach environmental unit) to rope off the area where the birds were nesting and ceased raking during the nesting season. As a result, vegetation grew and the property owners were denied a raking permit from DEP. The property owners were furious and decided to not cooperate or allow posting of nests the following nesting season unless DEP committed to issue them a raking permit after the nesting season. FWC proposed a "Safe Harbor Agreement", a possible solution that required mitigation but would allow the property owners to rake their beach. Conflicts continued throughout the following nesting season until two compromise plans were drafted. One from FWC is called the Beaches Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), a federal plan that would cover the entire Florida coastline and many species. The implementation of an HCP would imply a reduced need for mitigation. **Speaker** (continued on page 4.)

## Dealing with Difficult Dynamics and Emotions



Pictured Above: NRLI Fellows work in small groups to discuss difficult group dynamics and solutions. Photo by Candy Kaswinkel

Jon Dain led the fellows in a discussion on dealing with difficult dynamics and emotions in groups. Jon gave everyone a list of “communication styles that bug people” and asked everyone to check off those styles that bugged them and then discuss these with a partner and the group. **Commons reasons why people become “difficult” include:**

1. Threats to key interests
2. Threats to basic needs
3. Being ignored, lied to, or manipulated
4. Recalling the past. Remembering the frustration, disappointment or hurt from an earlier situation.
5. Envisioning the future. Fear or threat of losing current interests.
6. Others not taking responsibility for their own actions.
7. Physical pain or discomfort.
8. Emotional discomfort or pain.

Jon then asked everyone to write down a time when they were being difficult and what someone could have done that would have made their behavior less challenging. Small groups were formed and each group discussed their difficult behavior and potential solutions. The small groups then reported out on the difficult behaviors, triggers, and solutions. A common theme noted was that at the time of the problem or trigger, the issue felt very important but in hindsight it seemed a minor issue. Also, some issues seemed to be related to gender. The underlying message was that difficult behavior occurs all the time but if the issue or trigger behind the behavior can be determined first then the behavior can be addressed more effectively. **Difficult moments can be best managed by:**

1. Identifying difficult behavior
2. Opening a discussion regarding the behavior
3. Requesting clarification: What exactly do difficult people need? Their interests?
4. Letting them know your interests
5. Identifying creative solutions
6. Separating difficult person from group/situation and meet with him/her separately.

**One can also use emotions as tools in negotiation by:**

1. Expressing appreciation (tell the person you appreciate their work and person)
2. Building affiliation (have something in common)
3. Respecting autonomy (give people options and can change things)
4. Acknowledging status (recognize status of person)
5. Choosing a fulfilling role (idea of changing things)
6. Preparing for heated emotions (mentally prepare beforehand)

Finally, when things get hot, get a dialog going and get people talking to turn the argument into joint problem solving by asking “why”, “why not”, “what if?”, for advice, and “what makes this fair”. The take home message of this exercise is that there’s usually something behind the behavior and recognizing and understanding what that is can help to get past the behavior. Think about any argument as an opportunity for joint problem solving and mentally prepare to deal with a difficult behavior before going in to the situation.

## The Fieldtrip—Estero Bay and Carlos Point



Fellows gather to listen as Kat Diersen explains the dynamics between the property owners and the shore bird habitat. *Photo by Hugh Thomas*



Captain Jay Holloway takes the Fellows on a boat trip around Estero Bay. Boat courtesy of Fish Tale Marina. *Photo by Candy Kaswinkel*



Fellows gather on the dock of Fish Tale Marina for a group shot before heading out on Estero Bay. *Photo by Lindsay Cross*

On Friday, the group walked to Fish Tale Marina for our boat ride through Estero Bay and to Carlos Pointe. It was a beautiful day for a boat ride with plenty of wildlife to see such as manatees, dolphins, ospreys, and bald eagles. The pontoon boat brought us from the marina and dropped us off at the beach of Carlos Pointe. Kat Diersen showed us where the CWA begins just adjacent to the raked beach and private property of the condo owners. The group saw that the plants in the current dunes are starting to send off runners into the raked beach area, showing that there would be vegetation if raking stopped which might lead to dune creation. Kat discussed the different areas of the dune: the fore-dune where the first pioneer plant species become established and is an area with patches of plants in bare sand. Behind that is the primary dune where sea oats are typically found and is the initial front line and protective area for anything behind it, including buildings. The group explored the dune area and the beach for a while and then headed back to the boat and took a short, scenic ride in Estero Bay before heading back to the dock.

---

**Speaker** (*continued from page 2.*) It would also be a long term plan (25 years) and would explicitly spell out management actions but as an option will not be available for several more years.

The second plan proposal came from DEP, which suggested an Area Wide Permit for Carlos Pointe that would be valid for 5 years and allow the property owners to rake the beach during non-nesting season times of the year. This permit was suggested as a result of Kat's NRLI practicum which brought all the stakeholders together to establish a dialogue, clear up problems of misinformation and communication and used workshops to help stakeholders negotiate a long-term solution.



Pictured Above: Carlos Point. Photo by Becky Raulerson

The stakeholder panel consisted of Bill Perry, Aqua Sports Company and Beach Raker for the Carlos Pointe condo associations, Laurilee Satterfield, Castle Beach Condos Board Member, Keith Laakkonen, Town of Fort Myers Beach Environmental Sciences Coordinator, Irma Chiarcos, Carlos Pointe Condos Board Member, Brad Cornell, Audubon of Florida, and Jim Cowan, Carlos Pointe Condos Board Member. Becky Raulerson moderated the panel and asked everyone on the panel to briefly discuss how they were involved in this issue. The condo owners all are looking to rent their condo to tourists. Bill rakes the beach for the property owners and has an interest in their rights. Keith is looking out for the property owners, birds, natural resources of island, and the tourists. Brad was asked to help with the conflict and educate beach goers about the nesting birds.

Becky began by asking the panel at what point during the process did they feel most frustrated. Many of the stakeholders expressed frustration with DEP and the fact that promises were made and then broken. The property owners felt that they weren't made aware of their rights at the beginning and were given conflicting answers as the tension escalated. They did however express their gratitude to Keith and Bill for always

providing them useful feedback and noted that Keith and Bill were the right people to work with in this situation. The property owners also expressed that Keith worked really hard on everyone's behalf to find balance between bird and human needs and greatly deserved the Guy Bradley Award from the Audubon Society that they subsequently received. Several members of the panel expressed that the issue might have had a different outcome if they would have received something in writing from DEP in the beginning that clarified the beach raking permit; there was anger that DEP only wanted to follow their rules and was unable to see the bigger picture.

With the new partnerships that developed during this negotiation of this issue, the property owners now think they can use the nesting birds to their advantage and advertise rental property to bird watchers. This would allow the property owners to access a different renter clientele and rent during the time of year where they normally do not have renters. All members of the panel agreed that the partnership developed amongst the various stakeholders was one of the better outcomes of this issue.

## SCENARIO PLANNING BLUE WORLD/GREEN WORLD

**JOY HAZELL AND BRUCE DELANEY** led the fellows in a session called Blue World/Green World, which can be used during strategic planning for organizations. Basically this is an exercise in brainstorming scenario planning where the group uses a given situation projected into the future to brainstorm the events, decisions, and forces that led to the situation. Once the group brainstorms imaginary but realistic events, they order them chronologically and explain their scenario as a story. Fellows used skits, poems, and news events to present their scenario situation and events. Scenario-created formation can then be extracted and used for creating long term, realistic goals.



Above: Kelly Keefe, Brad Etheridge, Hugh Thomas, Citlalli Lopez and Chris Martinez play out their scenario of future events during the scenario planning exercise, Blue World/Green World. Photo by Becky Raulerson

## NRLI PRACTICUM

The NRLI Project Team led the Fellows in discussing the progress of their practicums. Each group had to describe the title of their practicum, description/objectives, progress to date, remaining steps, questions, and NRLI skills/concepts to be applied. The topics were varied and each group received many questions from the other fellows. Here is the list of fellows and their practicum topics:

**Chris Martinez** – Apalachicola Basin drought levels and water resources

**Gregg Eason and Camille Soverel** – Commercial landings electronic system for wholesale dealers' licenses

**Lindsay Cross** – Creating a workable solution to the increase in nitrogen load in Tampa Bay area with growth and development

**Brad Etheridge and Curt Williams** - Use of water and cost share programs in SWFWMD

Becky Raulerson and Carolyn Cox – Online modules for public issues and NRLI principle curriculum for extension agents

**Kelly Keefe** – Cabbage palm management in Picayune Strand

**Citlalli Lopez Binnquist, Patricia Negreros-Castillo, and Eddie Ellis** – Development of NRLI program in Universidad Veracruzana

**Thomas Ruppert** – Post disaster redevelopment plan in Sarasota County

**Holly Abeels and Shannon McGee** – Assessing the efficacy of extension clientele response strategies

**Hugh Thomas** – Water quality and quantity issues in Suwanee River Basin

## READING DISCUSSION

HUGH THOMAS led the reading discussion. He broke us up into 3 groups and gave each group one of the readings to discuss and then report out to the larger group. The three readings were *Emotional Intelligence*, *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions As You Negotiate*, and *The Facilitators Guide to Participatory Decision Making*. Each group had to discuss the main topics of the reading, how you would apply what was in the reading, and rate the reading from 1 to 5 with 1 being excellent and 5 being poor.

The main topics for *Emotional Intelligence* were that impulses are hard-wired, people have two minds with one being rational and the other emotional, and memory is more strongly connected to emotion. Jon Dain mentioned the concept of emotional hijacking that was discussed in this reading. Applications for this reading include awareness of information processing in dealing with others during difficult situations. The group rated this reading as a 1.75. Hugh Thomas said that emotions are there and you have to deal with them.

The main topics of *Facilitators Guide* were supportive interventions, understanding difficult behavior and seeing what's behind the behavior. Lindsay Cross said that she liked the examples in the reading because sometimes your thought of the right way to handle situations can be counter intuitive. These can be applied both at home and work. The group rated this reading as a 1 .

The main topics of *Beyond Reason* were defining emotion, you don't always recognize emotions, emotions can be positive and negative (and both are catchy), and address the concern not the emotion. These can be applied using core concerns to engage, using positive emotions to your advantage (as a lever), not allowing negative emotions to derail the process, and learn to recognize our own emotion. The group ranked this reading as a 1.

## FEEDBACK ON STAKEHOLDER PANEL

GREGG EASON led a discussion on the stakeholder panel. All NRLI Fellows agreed that the lack of a DEP representative led to a glaring gap in the discussion and it would have been nice if they had been involved so we could have heard their side of the issue. The panel was a success overall and there was obvious camaraderie amongst the panelists who noted the great benefits of their partnership. It was learned that DEP never came to see the Carlos Pointe site throughout the entire negotiation and that it is difficult to find a representative willing to serve as a stakeholder during sessions. Fellows expressed that a faster way to get DEP involved in the future might be for the property owners to contact their legislator and tell them about their issue with DEP. It was noticed that Bill, the beach-raker, was looked to by the property owners for advice and guidance and that for stakeholders involved in complex disputes can take a long time to get the whole picture. The fellows mentioned that it was noteworthy that when Keith's award was brought up that everyone on the panel started expressing how Keith's work had been instrumental in managing this issue and that positive emotion was fed off by all members of the panel. Also, the group was proud of the outcome of put together by all and the partnerships developed.

**Key Strategies.** (Continued from page 1) Here are some key strategies that may be useful for those interested in online deliberation.

- ⇒ Make it easy for people to exchange information and get informed
- ⇒ Actively moderate and facilitate online dialogs
- ⇒ Establish online neighborhood networks to facilitate neighbors supporting one another
- ⇒ Be clear how deliberative input affects final decisions of elected leaders
- ⇒ Create a strategy to achieve representative participation
- ⇒ Harness ideation or crowdsourcing technology to allow staff, residents, or other groups to submit, rank, and/or act on ideas for community improvement
- ⇒ Facilitate collaboration between residents and "expert" staff or consultants
- ⇒ Promote participation, experiment, and be patient

[www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/key-strategies-for-successful-online-deliberation-and-1](http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/key-strategies-for-successful-online-deliberation-and-1)

# DEBRIEF AND FEEDBACK

## Debrief

Citlalli Lopez Binnquist led the debrief for this session by having the fellows breaking up into two groups for a game. Citalli put words that pertained to the different topics addressed in this session on pieces of paper into a container. Each group would pick someone to draw a piece of paper and read the word and then would have to give clues to the rest of the group to get them to say the word. The group had 30 seconds to figure out as many words as they could during that time. Once all the words were guessed and all the topics reviewed, the group with the most words would win. This game is very similar to the popular game Taboo.

The fellows discussed the main topics of the session based on the concept terms, processes discussed, and the field case. The groups then discussed how they would use information learned from this session in their practicum.



Above: Camille Soverel , Eddie Ellis, and Holly Abeels help Thomas Ruppert and Curt Williams rank the Fort Myers session during the Feedback panel discussion. *Photo by Becky Raulerson*

## Feedback Panel

The feedback panel was led by Thomas Ruppert, Kelly Keefe, and Curt Williams. They listed the major sessions and the hotel/food on flip charts and asked everyone to cite pros and cons of each ranked on a scale of 1 to 10. The fellows overall loved the facility and the windows in the meeting room and the ease of getting in and out of the room into the open pool-garden area. The food was also very good at the hotel. The readings were applicable to the session and very good. The stakeholder panel included great lessons to be learned, it was well organized, and the opening and closing questions were excellent.

### **NRLI Project Team**

Jonathan Dain  
Bruce Delaney  
Joy Hazell  
Laila A. Racevskis

### **Report Contributors**

Holly Abeels  
Patricia Negreros  
Castillo

### **Report Layout**

Candace Kaswinkel

### **NRLI Class XI Fellows**

Holly Abeels  
Carolyn Cox  
Lindsay Cross  
Gregg Eason  
Edward Ellis  
Brad Etheridge  
Kelly Keefe  
Citlalli Lopez  
Binnquist  
Christopher Martinez  
Shannon McGee  
Patricia Negreros  
Castillo  
Rebekah Raulerson  
Thomas Ruppert  
Camille Soverel  
Hugh Thomas  
Curt Williams

### **Mailing Address**

P.O. Box 110240,  
Gainesville, FL 32611-0240,  
342-846-1511  
<http://nrli.ifas.ufl.edu>

*This report forms part of a series written by current NRLI Fellows. Reports represent and are a product of the experiential learning process that is a highlight of the NRLI program and have not been formally peer reviewed.*