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Introduction: Question of Fact

Restoring the Ocklawaha River by draining the Rodman Reservoir would be “logical and just.”

But wait, isn't the reservoir a tremendous recreational and water-retention resource? Just what are the facts about this environmental setting anyways?

“Facts,” “opinions,” “rumors,” etc., NRLI Fellows were warned to be aware of those words during the Palatka session.

If this particular session seems more ripe with values and attitudes than other sessions, it is probably due to the Cross Florida Barge Canal and Ocklawaha/Rodman debate, which is

one of the longest running environmental conflicts in Florida's history. Time has allowed opponents to become more entrenched in their respective views and more adept at using tactics like “The Myth of the Majority” (e.g., “Everyone knows the reservoir is underused as a recreational resource”) and personal attacks against representatives of each group. Recognizing those styles is a step toward unraveling the knot of the value-laden debate, seeing the issues for what they are, and improving advocacy skills. ■

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Photo by Teresa Watkins

Stage Setting with Dr. Jeffrey Burkhardt and Dr. Steven Noll

Dr. Jeffrey Burkhardt, who is a professor in the University of Florida Food and Resource Economics Department and specializes in philosophy and ethics, made the presentation “Ethical Considerations of Policy Decisions.” He opened the presentation with a brief clip from a video that favored the restoration of the Ocklawaha River and was produced by Florida Defenders of the Environment (FDE). Alluding to particular points seen in the clip, Dr. Burkhardt illustrated various ways in which people attempt to influence environmental policy-making.

He then presented a list of “Values in Nature” that people hold. For example, a person may wish to preserve a particular part of an environment for symbolic, historical, recreational, and/or political

reasons. Dr. Burkhardt grouped those values into three, descriptive categories (intrinsic/inherent, amenity-related, and instrumental) and then correlated those categories with three attitudes toward decision-making (trade-off, top-priority, and absolute constraint). He pointed out that values and attitudes are important in policy-making because they form judgments about right and wrong and influence actions and decisions. According to the theory, for example, a person who wants to preserve a particular part of an environment for historical reasons (an intrinsic value) may feel this value constrains all others and that no trade-offs can be made unless the goal of historical preservation is guaranteed. In contrast, a person who wants to preserve a particular

part of the environment as a political concession (an instrumental value) may feel this could be subject to a trade-off in order to accomplish a balanced solution.

The next speaker was Dr. Steven Noll of the University of Florida Department of History. Dr. Noll made a lively presentation to NRLI Fellows and staff about the history of the Cross Florida Barge Canal and its legacy. He spoke about how throughout the decades diverse rationalizations have been discussed concerning the construction of the canal - from the facilitation of merchant shipping to the protection from Russian submarines - until construction was permanently halted by Richard Nixon's executive order in 1972. However, to the dismay of FDE and other environmentalist groups, much of the area dedicated to the construction of the canal had already been altered (sometimes by radically destructive methods like the massive tree bulldozer known as "The Crusher"). The most significant alterations were the Rodman Reservoir and the adjacent Buckman Lock, constructed to join the Ocklawaha and St. Johns rivers. The resulting conflict between those who want to drain the reservoir and "free the Ocklawaha" and those who want to preserve the reservoir (mainly for recreational use) has lasted for more than three decades!

Those two presentations set the stage for the session's skills and strategies component on effective advocacy. They also framed the discussion concerning debate tactics, such as those employed by particular participants in the stakeholder panel the following day. ■

Reservoir



Photo by Teresa Watkins

During Session VI, we saw a beautiful habitat instead of stagnant water enclosed within the confines of the Rodman Reservoir.

River



Photo by Teresa Watkins

On the other side of the reservoir, we saw the attractiveness of a free-flowing Ocklawaha River.

Buckman Lock & Visitor Center

On Friday, August 17, 2007, we were introduced to the Buckman Lock and Visitor Center, which was created by DEP and the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT). At the visitor center, Mickey Thomason, central region manager of OGT, introduced us to the Rodman Reservoir and the Buckman Lock. The lock is controlled through hydraulics, which allows boats to enter the Rodman Reservoir from the St. Johns River. The major use of the lock is recreational boating traffic, as well as allowing the occasional manatee to enter or leave. ■



BOAT RIDE INTO RODMAN RESERVOIR

We ventured out into the reservoir to learn about what makes this body of water so special. What makes it so compelling was that there is a fight over whether to keep the Kirkpatrick Dam or to destroy it in order to allow the Ocklawaha River to flow freely to the St. Johns River. We were joined by Adele Mills, Dave Bowman, and Mickey Thomason of DEP and the Office of Greenways and Trails.

During the trip, we found that it was difficult to navigate through some of the places in the reservoir because of tree stumps and hydrilla, an aquatic weed that restricts navigation. The discussion focused on how the Florida Department of Environmental Protection is managing the reservoir for recreational activities. Through aquatic herbicide applications and dredging of the channels, DEP keeps the reservoir available for bass fishermen to enjoy.

The trip turned out to be a relaxing and enjoyable time that brought the big picture of the reservoir to the class. For those Fellows who had never seen the Rodman Reservoir or heard about the issues at hand, they were surprised by the amount of time, money, and effort expended by both sides in this long-running dispute. ■



Photos by Teresa Watkins

On top left: Mickey Thomason, central region manager of OGT, gives an orientation. **Two on bottom right:** Our first boat ride of the session allowed us to explore the Rodman Reservoir. While we encountered tree stumps and hydrilla and saw various wildlife, we continued to ponder the debate concerning the area.

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY:

Session with Jon Dain

What is advocacy? What are three outcomes of effective advocacy? What kinds of activities does advocacy involve? Those were the three questions asked when we began our “Effective Advocacy” discussion on Friday afternoon. After dividing into three tribes, we were presented with those three questions and given a short period of time to come up with answers.

What is advocacy? There were several answers to that question. One group saw it as “showing support or representing an issue.” Another defined it as marketing a cause. The third group described it as taking a position and promoting that position. All of the definitions were very similar to the one that *Jon Dain Dictionary* provided: “A strategic action that influences decision-making.”

What are three outcomes of effective advocacy? The main three were:

- 1) Getting what you want
- 2) Educating or increasing awareness
- 3) Resolution

What kinds of activities does advocacy involve? Successful advocacy requires effectively framing the issue and the stakeholders. Activities include: meetings, research, marketing, campaigning, organizing, surveying, listening, litigating, building partnerships, communicating, and persuading.

After we defined what advocacy was and how it could be effective, Jon asked us to give an example of what makes an effective advocate and an example of an effective leader. One person brought up in the discussion was Martin Luther King Jr., who was an effective advocate because he was articulate, passionate, educated, and respected and had charisma, integrity, morals, and ethics. The perceptions of the messenger can have a profound effect on the message.

The last thing discussed was “framing the issue.” Framing refers to defining the way the issue is to be discussed; it is most effective when done early in a debate. Is the issue “restoring the river” or “maintaining an important recreation area”? The question can define the answer. Framing can make all the difference in how the public perceives an issue.

The art of being an effective leader involves becoming an effective advocate. People must be able to show their passion but in a manner in which they still respect another person’s ability to think differently. By successfully framing the issue, one can control the momentum of a meeting as well as impacting the potential outcome. ■



Photo by Teresa Watkins

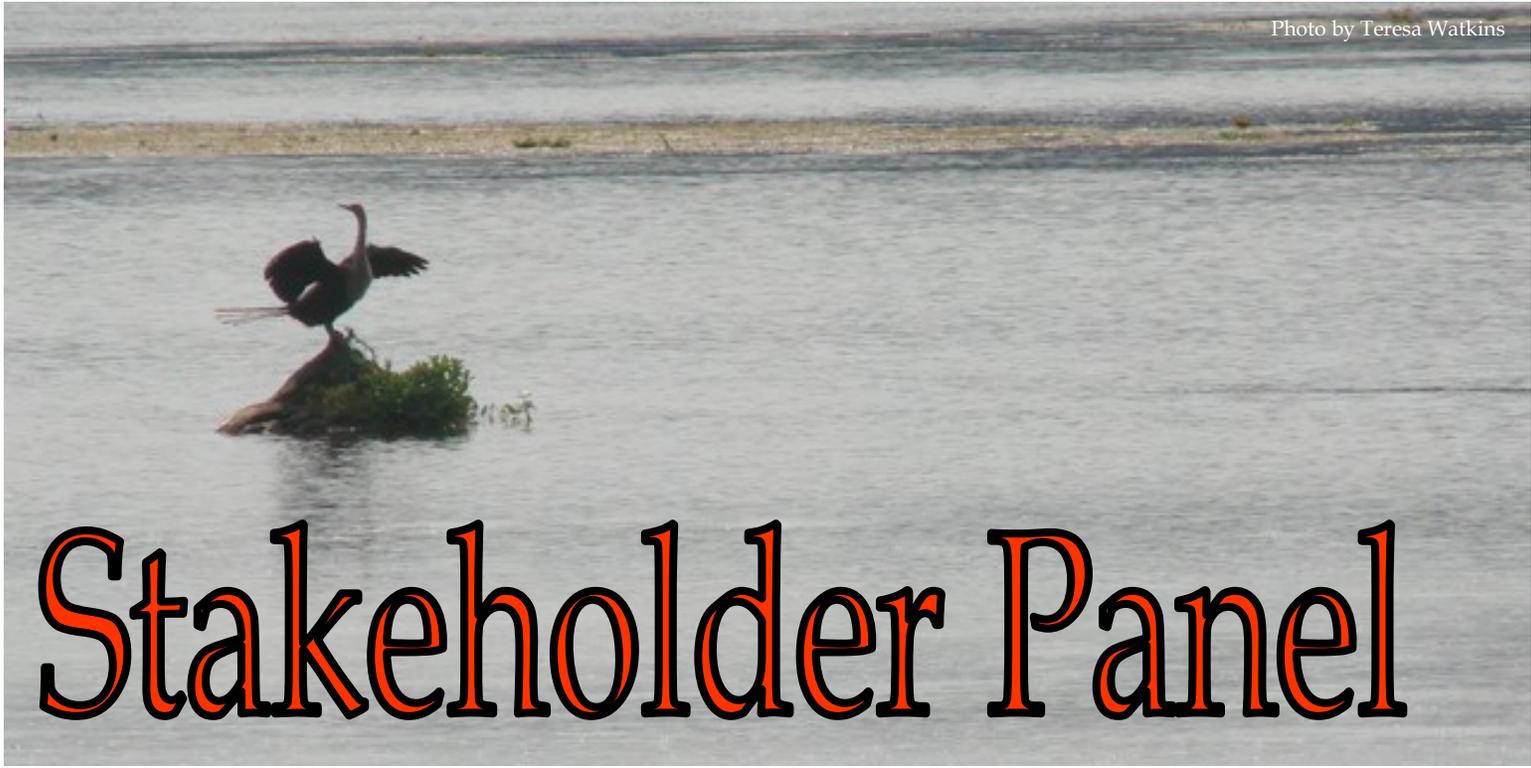
Jon Dain delves into the meaning of advocacy and extracts points to what makes advocacy effective. He points out that a good advocate practices successful framing and, thus, helps the meeting to move in the necessary direction.

Characteristics of an effective advocate:

- researches well
- ability to garner support
- focuses passion
- persuasive
- strong support base
- learns from mistakes
- doesn't make enemies

... and of an ineffective advocate:

- speaks at wrong place and at wrong time
- attacks people (insult)
- “too much tin man, not enough scarecrow”



Stakeholder Panel

We were privileged to have an excellent panel of stakeholders. The panel was moderated by Class VII Fellow Sarah Owen and consisted of: Dr. Richard Hamann, representative of a pro-restoration non-governmental organization; George Hemingway, scientist with the U.S. Forest Service; Jimmy Darby, bait and tackle shop owner who is pro-dam; Ed Taylor, local governmental representative who is pro-dam; Sam Aversa, community representative and fishing guide who is pro-dam; Guy Marwick, community representative who is pro-restoration; Jeff Elledge, scientist with the St. Johns Water Management District; and Captain Erika O'Lenick, local fishing business guide who is pro-restoration. There were also a number of guests invited to observe the stakeholder panel. Invited guests included Nick Williams, executive director of Florida Defenders of the Environment; John Burns, principal scientist of MACTEC Engineering & Consulting, Inc.; and Virginia Longhi, president and owner of Messer Stores, Inc.

Sarah began the discussion by asking what each stakeholder wanted to be the result at the end of the day. Those who were pro-restoration wanted to educate and influence support for a free-flowing river, which would provide a greater fish diversity and restore 16 miles of river to everyone with all the benefits associated with

restoration. In response to the pro-restoration argument that the reservoir water was low quality, those who were pro-dam felt that the water was clean and that the fish species and habitat of the reservoir could exist with no problems. They also commented that the water has been recognized as a possible source for drinking water in the future. The U.S. Forest Service favored restoration for the purpose of restoring the hardwood river bottom ecosystem.

It was mentioned that former-Senator George Kirkpatrick asked the University of Florida and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to conduct studies to see whether restoration was needed. The final report stated that restoration was necessary because the natural system was disrupted by the reduced flow of water. Despite the report, the political fight over the existence of Rodman Reservoir has led to no action being taken to remove or

modify the dam.

When asked about lessons learned in the past 40 years, there was general agreement that the Cross Florida Barge Canal was a bad idea. When the canal was de-authorized by President Nixon, the reservoir was already in place and in use and remains so to this day.

When the panel was asked what makes an effective advocate, the answers were similar to those that we had discussed earlier in the afternoon: Members of the panel

“ [We] hoped that the two sides would pursue their common interest in protecting the volume of water available to the Ocklawaha system.”

*- Fellows,
after the panel session*



Photo by Teresa Watkins

The panel of professionals included Captain Erika O'Lenick, George Hemingway, Jimmy Darby, Sam Aversa (not pictured), Guy Marwick, Jeff Elledge, and Dr. Richard Hamann (not all in order as seen in photo). Either pro-dam or pro-restoration, each provided different perspectives to the three-decade heated debate.

The Debate Continues...

stated that it was necessary to be one who was tenacious and passionate, never giving up, having nerves of steel, researching the issue, looking to the future and not the past, laying all on the line, educating, providing reliable information, and building trust and respect.

By the end of the time, Ed Taylor, representing the pro-dam group, and Guy Marwick, representing the pro-restoration group, identified some common concerns with transferring water out of the reservoir. The concern was that the water transfer could ultimately reduce the water levels in the river system. To those of us observing the panel, this discussion about possible removal of water from the river to other parts of the state felt like a moment of agreement between adversaries. However, the moment passed, and both sides seemed to settle comfortably back into their adversarial positions.

Nevertheless, we took some satisfaction from the fact that our panel process did seem to provide a rare moment of agreement and hoped that the two sides would pursue their common interest in protecting the volume of water available to the Ocklawaha system. ■



Photo by Dr. Laila Racevskis

Sarah Owen moderates the session and asks the questions that the Fellows have been considering after their own observations of the Rodman Reservoir and discussion about advocacy.

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Photo by Teresa Watkins

Match the Term with the Definition

What FOE believes restoring the Ocklawaha would be	A Big Pan
A verifiable statement	Bob Graham
A statement not supported by proof	Timber Salvage
A statement of uncertain, unverifiable origin	Framing
The act of defining a reality	Logical and Just
What steamboat voyagers down the Ocklawaha liked to shoot	Insignificant
Established the stage line between Palatka and Tampa	"The Crusher"
Poet of the South	Fact
Image of this was used by FOE to illustrate environmental devastation	Hubbard Hart
Believed that "logic and reason" would resolve the Rodman Reservoir / Ocklawaha River debate	Opinion
How one of our panelists described the pro-dam activists	Alligators
How Mike Green and Mark DuBois plan to fund their retirement	Rumor
How Marjorie Carr described the Rodman Reservoir	Sidney Lanier