



GROWTH AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUE: BALANCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE SUWANNEE RIVER WATERSHED

Inside this issue:

NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUE	1
REVIEW PAST LEARNING AND NEGOTIATION	2
ONE PERSON'S VISION; JERRY SCARBOROUGH	2
TWILIGHT FIELD DAY	3
WAY DOWN UPON THE SUWANNEE WILDERNESS TRAIL	4
WATER QUALITY/QUANTITY FOR CROPS	5
NEGOTIATION TRAINING PART II - UNHAPPY TRAILS	6
STAKEHOLDER PANEL	7
DOWN THE LAZY RIVER	8

The Suwannee River Basin's growth is expected to double the population from 310,000 to 750,000 over the next 45 years. Although these numbers are small compared to the rest of Florida, critical local resources will be stressed if this growth is not managed to meet the needs of both the people

and the place.

A regional approach to planning for the future has moved the SRWMD to the forefront of this process. This is in addition to strategic items that the District is statutorily responsible for such as water supply, flood protection, water quality and natural systems. The District has several major

partnership initiatives to enhance a region wide approach to several key activities. The Suwannee River Partnership and the River Wilderness Trail are two important resource partnership projects that NRLI fellows learned about during our short 3 day visit.

NRLI FELLOWS REVIEW PAST LEARNING AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Jon Dain walked the group through a review of past sessions and the multitude of lessons learned and tool box items for our use. We were quite surprised by the amount of material covered over our first four short sessions around the State. Some of the tools introduced to NRLI Fellows during these sessions include:

- Decisions by Dots
- Brainstorming
- "Stacking"
- Evaluating Data Quality
- Role Plays

Example: Ten principles of Economic Values Learned - "Drama by the River"

- Facilitated Discussion
- Use of Flipcharts
- Energizers/Openers
- Small Group Discussion
- Situation Assessment
- Process Design
- Agenda Design
- Scenarios Planning
- Example: Blue World/Green World
- Strategic Planning Models
- Setting the Environment
- The Groan Zone (Dynamics of Group Decision Making)
- Dealing with Difficult People/Behaviors
- Group Task and Group Maintenance Functions

- tions
- Setting Group Norms
- Getting All Expectations
- Room Arrangement
- Empathetic Listening
- Meeting Management
- Techniques for Multi Stakeholder Processes

CONT. PG2



Team leader Jon Dain and Fellows Scott Christmas, Sarah Carte and Ed Wright review and discuss negotiation skills.

NRLI FELLOWS REVIEW PAST LEARNING AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS—CONT. FR PAGE 1

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2006 NRLI FELLOWS

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Session V Summary

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Jon continued with a story of 3 people, and 3 parts on “How to Cut that Watermelon.” A simple process expanded into other scenarios. The bottom line message was how to expand the pie/or the watermelon for all stakeholders. With this short introduction the group was thrust head long into negotiating skills with key points from the bible of negotiation skills called “Getting to Yes” by Fisher and Ury. Key points of the Basic Principles are included in the *Four Pillars of Principled Negotiations*:

1. Separate the People from the Problem
2. Focus on Interests Not Positions
3. “Expand the Pie”
Mutually Verifiable Agreements and
4. The key concept of *BATNA* and *WATNA*:

Best (or Worst)

Alternative

To a

Negotiated

Agreement

The NRLI Fellows broke up into four groups and discussed their lessons learned from Jon’s session on negotiation. These lessons included:

- Go to correct person
- Clarify needs not wants
- Know when to hold your ground
- Know when compromise won’t hurt
- Don’t get emotional, use

facts

Know your facts/be prepared

Don’t allow to go too long

Don’t be afraid to offer alternatives

Base on reality of what is accomplishable

Realistic goals

Practical alternatives

Don’t become too attached to your ideas, plans, etc.

Anticipate potential responses

Understand limitations

Realize some people will not negotiate (hidden agendas, etc.)

Know when to speak and when to listen

Don’t get emotionally involved

Set high expectations up front, then:

Know when to accept/bottom line

Know when to decline/walk away

Get it in writing

Strategic use of “markers”

Know what you want in the beginning

Don’t give up on key points

Negotiate on points of strength

Use team approach if necessary

Don’t change chief negotiators in the process

Perseverance

Patience

Trust

Prioritize building long-term relationships and benefits/outcomes

Understand other’s points of view/motivation/needs

Give and take, yet know your bottom line

Negotiation is about power... and that power is rarely inherent, but mostly given

Preparation

Over the next two days NRLI Fellows put these skills to work through a series of exercises.

ONE PERSON’S VISION FOR THE REGION – JERRY SCARBOROUGH

As Bob Heeke introduced our next speaker, four words rang over the next hour – *Vision, Resources, Leadership and Passion.*

Jerry Scarborough has been the Executive Director of the Suwannee River Water Management District since 1990. He has brought a regional vision to reality over the past 16 years. The four topics discussed in quick succession were:

1. Awareness of regional leadership
2. Regional challenges
3. Setting priorities
4. Passion for values

When Mr. Scarborough was a young boy his father told him to succeed in Florida he only needed to, “be a Democrat, be a Baptist and go to the University of Florida.”

CONT PAGE 3

SCARBOROUGH - CONT. FR PAGE 2

The lesson he has learned since, is how Florida has changed in the last 30 years and how we need to adjust if we live in Florida.

The Suwannee River Watershed is a region of 15 Counties which cover 7600 square miles. Current population in the watershed is 310,000 and it is expected to double over the next 45 years. Though rich in natural resources, if the area has any hope of a great future it must get outside the DCA Growth Management box.

Mr. Scarborough then led a group discussion about Regional Agencies (DCA, DACS, FDOT, etc) and the advantages and problems they present. Regional challenges in the Suwannee River Basin were also reviewed.

The area will transition from agriculture/silviculture to residential land uses over the next 50 years. Land values have already quadrupled from \$2500 per acre to \$10,000 per acre. It is expected that large equestrian communities will be drawn to the region similar to the Ocala area. Eighty percent of the coastal areas are owned by various Federal/State and Regional Agencies, so the pressure of coastal development is less than other areas of Northwester Florida.

Much talk in Florida has to do with the need to deliver inexpensive water to fuel the State's expected growth. Though the Suwannee River Basin is rich in water resources, limited local infrastructure (mainly water and wastewater systems) is actually inhibiting large scale

growth within the basin itself. Whether rumor or fact, some parts of South Florida and the West Coast view the Suwannee River Basin as a cheap limitless supply of fresh water to feed their growth.

But a science based approach toward water resources known as Minimum Flows and Levels may be used to block any water transfers out of the Basin. Trends of increasing nitrate levels in the basin's Springs has proved a vexing problem but the Suwannee River Water Management District has initiated several partnerships with DACS, NRCS and others to promote BMP's in all agriculture areas. The Suwannee River Partnership is a great example of collaboration between DACS, NRCS, IFAS, and others to reduce nitrogen levels.

The District has set priorities of water quality and quantity with a parallel goal of helping the local economy by promoting its' natural resources. Common goals, trust, integrity and sharing were keys to developing these successful partnerships. In closing, Mr. Scarborough reiterated how to maintain these values. From the rich traditions that a fire and brim stone preacher could do well to match, he left the Fellows with a few parting ideas...

Can you be innovative and increase your knowledge?

Can we make the commitment?

"The one you feed is the one that wins!!!"

BMP TWILIGHT FIELD DAY – IFAS IN ACTION / THE MELLON FIELDS

After excellent seafood smorgasbord at the Dixie Grill, the NRLI Fellows were whisked off to a twilight tour of BMP's and technology in action. Yes, there is an exact science to growing watermelons, managing water use, and reducing potential nitrogen seepage into the Suwannee Spring Shed. We visited the farm of Donell Gwinn who was using the latest technologies of plastic mulch and drip irrigation for his beautiful watermelon crop. Several activities were squeezed into a short sunset session including:

Irrigation scheduling using TDR (electronic soil moisture pipes) and dairy moisture records.

Using blue dye to see how irrigation water moves in the sandy soils of the McAlpin area.

Monitoring crop nutrient needs with an electronic meter.

Calibrating nutrient rates for drip irrigation.

Using GPS "auto steer" technology to plow the field and not the watermelons.

This was a great way to see IFAS field staff work with local growers to meet the end goal of minimizing irrigation and fertilizer use for maximum crop yield. This event was one of many field days focused on marketing opportunities, innovative cash crops (cut flowers, grasses, and tomatoes) fruit and nut crops for north Florida, vegetable and ag crop BMP's, on farm pond management, and forestry and wildlife management.



Bob Heeke and Jerry Scarborough



Tracing nutrient depth through watermelon root zone.



Through these events IFAS Extension assist farmers to use the latest technology to improve crop production and minimize impacts on local natural resources.

WAY DOWN UPON THE SUWANEE RIVER WILDERNESS TRAIL (SRWT)



After a short drive from Live Oak, NRLI Fellows were warmly welcomed to the Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park. If Steven Foster could have only envisioned how the River has come full circle from the Hay Days of the 1800's when the small town of White Springs had 4-5 major resort hotels. The Stephen Foster Center is the main booking site for the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail (SRWT).



While at the Center, Ben Harris (Manager, SRWT) and Edwin McCook (Greenways Coordinator, OGT/SRWMD) gave us the past, present, and future story of the trail. Planning for the SRWT began in 2001 for three primary reasons:

1. Protect the river resource.
2. Provide recreational opportunities along the river.
3. Promote economic development along the river corridor.



We also learned that Stephen Foster Center staff make personal efforts to develop trips based on the visitors needs. In addition the staff also mentioned a joint effort with the National Geographic Society to provide web based mapping/destination information with 100 points of interest for the SRWT. This should greatly increase access to traveler information about the SRWT.

Some in our group ques-

tioned the staff as to whether the trail is ready for the national/international recognition this joint effort is likely to bring. The staff was confident that the planned amenities along the SRWT would keep the area poised for the influx of ecotourism.

Next stop was a visit to the newly constructed cabins at a SRWT hub site. From a peak into the windows, it was clear the cabins' two bedroom accommodations were not only spacious, but chock-full of modern conveniences. "Book early for future events," all the NRLI Fellows thought.

The canoe launch was just a quick stroll from the cabins. It was there where we got our first good glimpse of the beauty of the Suwannee. After a wild ride on the local dirt roads, we arrived at a washout area severely eroded from logging and misuse and laden with trash from people who frequently access the river or camp on its sandy banks.

The SRWMD staff explained that the site is planned for repairs and a canoe launch was being designed for the area. As might be expected from our group, Several NRLI Fellows removed cans and bottles from the degraded site.

Our last stop was the Woods Ferry River Camp just a few miles from White Springs. This rustic archaeological site is located above the 100 year floodplain making it prime land for preser-

vation and incorporation into the SRWT. One of many river camps along the SRWT, this facility included four screened and roofed platforms with electrical outlets and space suitable for 8-10 campers each. A series of more primitive camp sites were located on the other end of the campground with a modern restroom and shower facility in between. The SRWT plans to have amenities every 10 miles in the form of either a full-service park or one of these more primitive river camps accessible only to river travelers. Several of the Fellows made mental notes about booking one of these screened platforms for a future family outing.

The Woods Ferry River Camp also included an extensive boardwalk and ramp with complete ADA compliant handicap accessibility so all river goers may enjoy the campgrounds. As we stood and looked down 40 to 50 feet from the river camp to the Suwannee's current water level, it was hard to imagine the river at flood stages 40 – 50 foot up the sand banks. More information on the SRWT and the Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park can be found at:

[http://
www.floridastatepar
ks.org/wilderness/
default.cfm](http://www.floridastatepark.org/wilderness/default.cfm)

[http://
www.floridastatepar
ks.org/stephenfoster/](http://www.floridastatepark.org/stephenfoster/)

SRWT highlights. The 240 miles of river include rocky outcrops, sandbars and springs as well as public and private facilities, services and outfitters.

THE STORY OF THE SUWANNEE RIVER WILDERNESS TRAIL

The quiet town of White Springs is the entrance to the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail (SRWT).

The Concept

For more than 20 years local residents, civic leaders and planners shared a vision of what the 240 mile long river could bring. The SRWT has been a cooperative partnership between Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) since 1995 with over \$10 million dollars appropriated from 2001 – 2006 to start the process. From White Springs to the Town of Suwannee on the Gulf of Mexico, the 160 mile river segment will provide single and multi -day trips along the corridor for nature and heritage based tours.

Hubs

Through a series of 8 hubs, each site will provide day use and overnight activities as well as overnight accommodations in cabins, developed and primitive camping and/or private sector lodging.

River Camps

In addition to the hubs, seven river camps will support multi-day river, hiking, bicycling and riding tours allowing visitors to camp near the river. The Woods Ferry River Camp was visited

conceived as a way to stimulate the local economies in the watershed while simultaneously financing the protection of the river through nature and heritage-based tourism. “The successful implementation of the SRWT vision will be the result of synergistic and symbolic relationships between the public and private sectors. These relationships will be based on a shared understanding of the values, the opportunities, and the constraints of the river ecosystem and the culture of the region.”

Resource Management & Protection

Resource management and public recreation are the primary purpose of the SRWT Project. Public use is already increasing so the core of the SRWT is to manage future recreation uses of the river through proper planning and administration. The site selection process for all the facilities is designed to minimize impacts to the resource while also providing convenient public amenities at locations spaced approximately one day’s journey along the river (i.e. a camp every 10 miles). Long term management plans have been developed to ensure minimal impacts to the river in the future.

WATER QUALITY/ QUANTITY BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR FLORIDA VEGETABLE AND AGRONOMIC CROPS

The passage of the Federal Clean Water Act (FCWA) of 1972 required the states to assess impacts of Nonpoint sources of pollution from surface and groundwater, and then establish programs to minimize those impacts. At a national level, little progress was made with non-point pollution clean-up until the mid 1990s when several environmental groups filed suit to bring the program up to the legal requirements enacted in the original and subsequent legislation. Section 303(d) of the FCWA also required states to identify Impaired Water Bodies and establish Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for pollutants entering those water bodies. TMDLs establish the maximum amount of pollutants that can be discharged into a water body and still meet it’s designated uses of fishable and swimmable.

To address the TMDL issue, Florida passed the 1999 Florida Watershed Restoration Act which gave FDEP and Department of Agricultural and Consumer Sciences (DACS) certain responsibilities. DACS identified and adopted Best Management Practices (BMPs) for agricultural non-point pollutant sources. Through this program, agricultural producers who voluntarily implement specific BMPs will receive

CONT. PAGE 6

COLUMN 3

For more than 20 years local residents, civic leaders and planners shared a vision of what the 240 mile long river could bring.

NEGOTIATION TRAINING PART II - UNHAPPY TRAILS



NRLI Fellows role play what felt like a real life negotiation.

In this exercise the group quickly moved through a heated and sometimes emotionally charged learning session. The scenario unfolded with the Old Southern Railroad pulling up its rails leaving a somewhat ambiguous claim on the title of the underlying property. The Dixie Rails Trust (stakeholder group 1) was working with the Old Southern Railroad to purchase the abandoned land and help the County (stakeholder group 2) build a multi-use rail trail. However, the small hamlet of Greenleaf (stakeholder group 3), which the trail would bisect, had other ideas as to the ultimate public use for the trail. Though our learning scenario was only fictional, it was symbolic of a very real process that has been going on in the state over the past 10 to 15 years with the Rails to Trails Program.

Each of the three groups and the observers were asked to brainstorm their desired outcome for the process. Then they were asked to negotiate a workable resolution to the impasse always remembering their respective BATNA and WATNA (i.e. **Best/Worst Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement**).

Bruce Delaney served as the mediator. In the early stages of the negotiation, each group stood firm to their respective "positions." However, Bruce demonstrated how a good mediator works to bring the groups together by separating the people from the problem and focusing on "interests" instead of "positions." By the end of the first day of the negotia-

tion, all three groups seemed confident that they were near an acceptable negotiated agreement.

The second day of the negotiation took a dramatic turn as the County Government stakeholder group quickly backtracked to their BATNA. As can happen in multi-day negotiations, one negotiating group (in this case the County) decided that they had slipped into too many concessions on the first day and rethought their interests on Day Two.

Due to perceived financial liabilities from the previous day's proceedings, the County made it very clear that they viewed their interests as being more firm and less negotiable than they appeared the day before. This resulted in an emergency County meeting on the evening of Day One. Though it was open for comment from the general public, the representatives of Greenleaf were never personally invited and thus felt the County acted in an underhanded way. This caused the representatives for Greenleaf to walk out of the negotiation on Day Two.

Additionally, the original mediator (Bruce Delaney) also walked out of the negotiation feeling that the County was acting in "bad faith." Eventually a new mediator (Dan Armstrong) took over and helped the groups reach an agreement. One of the key components that lead to the agreement was a sincere apology from the County to the Greenleaf representatives that helped to rebuild trust. The ultimate agreement was

seen as less than ideal for the citizens of Greenleaf, but it was accepted as Greenleaf's BATNA once the County made it clear how existing laws and previous legal precedence put Greenleaf in a very poor negotiating position.

WATER FOR CROPS CONT. FR PAGE 5

"presumption of compliance" with state water quality standards.

There was some question from the Urban Stormwater professionals whether DACS and the Agriculture community would embrace any of these requirements developed over the next several years. However, as evidenced in other NRLI sessions, the Departments and producers have embraced the intent of the Act and are making great strides. The Manual was the start of the process.

The Manual covers a multitude of issues using a common sense approach to BMP implementation. It includes Pesticide Management, Conservation Practices and Buffers, Erosion Control and Sediment Management, Nutrient and Irrigation Management, and Water Resource Management. As we continually see in our travels across the state, this was a truly collaborative effort with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, FDEP, NRCS, IFAS, the Water Management Districts and the Agriculture Community.

BATNA and WATNA
(i.e. **Best/Worst**
Alternative To a
Negotiated
Agreement).

STAKEHOLDER PANEL DISCUSSION – MODERATED BY SARA CARTE

This session’s stakeholder panel consisted of three local leaders:

Jacqui Sulek, President of Four Rivers Audubon Society

Johnny Wooley, Suwannee County Coordinator

Harvey Campbell, Columbia County Tourist Development Council

The speakers had a wide knowledge of the region. Mr. Wooley has lived in Suwannee County nearly his entire life. He spent his first twenty-plus years in private business and he dedicated the next twenty to serving the public sector as the Clerk of the Court for one term and then with Suwannee County in various capacities. Mr. Wooley wears several hats in his current job including land use coordinator and EMS director. He noted that the counties in the Suwannee River basin have abundant natural resources but little financial ability to keep up with growth with some areas about 20 years behind in local transportation issues.

One factor in this previously limited growth was the State previously saddling the counties with hundreds of miles of the “farm to market” roads that used to make up the state road program. Some of the counties spend 70% of their budget for road system repairs and maintenance. Mr. Wooley also described Suwannee County as one of the

poorest counties in Florida. Despite somewhat slow growth compared to other regions of Florida, the Suwannee River basin has still been impacted by rural sprawl with many larger landholdings being parceled out into 5-acre ranchettes.

Harvey Campbell, Lake City resident for over 40 years and former sports editor for the Lake City newspaper, has been the “cheerleader for the community” during his past 18 years as the Tourism Coordinator. His tourism group began marketing the 14-county area as the “Original Florida” in 1992. The two biggest cities in this 14-county area are Tallahassee (Leon County) and Gainesville (Alachua County), though most of the area is rural.

The tourism group has also promoted the area by hosting over 17 travel writer trips over the past 3 years. A new marketing idea has taken advantage of the internet through Discover Hidden Treasures at Geocaching.com. Participants go to real locations throughout the area to discover a “treasure” through GPS coordinates. Mr. Campbell felt tourism is the quickest and easiest form of economic development. Yet he also understands that the burgeoning eco-tourism of the region will bring both positives and negatives as the Suwannee River gets discovered both nationally and internationally.

Jacqui Sulek is the newcomer to the area after mov-

ing from the crowds of South Florida only a year ago. She describes herself as an environmentalist and acknowledged that development will come and that she is working to guide it responsibly. She noted that clustering 20 homes in 100 acres while leaving tracts of preserved land is more responsible than parceling out 20 homes on 5-acre lots. She is learning how best to participate in local government.

The panel agreed that most residents of the region are not very well educated about the natural resources in the area and they all-too-often take them for granted. Mr. Campbell noted the region is seeing positive impacts from Partnerships on water resources, such as the Itchetucknee Basin Working Group. They are working to improve water quality in the basin. In general, the panel agreed that the SRWMD and the Regional Planning Council have been significant allies for the basin through educational campaigns, visionary leadership, and resource management plans.

Economic issues loomed large in the discussion noting that all the small counties are at the statutory cap on millage rates so they cannot even generate needed revenue to keep up with growth in the region. Mr. Wooley noted that it is critical for the state to assist these rural counties with growth issues. Impact Fees common in larger communities have not been



Suwannee River.



Stakeholder panel.



Rest assured that NRLI fellows and leaders enjoyed nourishment and delicious meals, ice-cream and of course pie at the Dixie Grill!

STAKEHOLDER PANEL (CONT. FROM PAGE 7)

adopted in the area and a few have been overturned by legal means resulting in the Counties being forced to refund all of the revenue generated.

Several “Fly – In” and “Equestrian” communities are in the planning stages for the area, with the some of the panel giving a thumbs up to this type of high end development for the area because of its economic impact packaged with natural habitat preservation.

When asked what tools and resources would most benefit the region in its efforts to manage the coming urban growth, the responses included:

- Guidance on how to deal with rural politics.
- Ways to educate on the value of relationships.
- Ways to empower the public to get more involved with their local governments.
- Ways to help the burgeoning private businesses optimize their natural resource management through strong contracts and sound regulations from the public sector.
- Ways to overcome the negative impacts that the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has had on the region.

During a discussion on impact fees and funding sources for urban infrastructure improvements, the panelists mentioned issues and concerns such as:

Why has Florida relied on urban development as the only means of economic stimulus for its people and their local governments?

How can we do a better job of compensating people for their land rights (i.e. paying for preservation, etc.)?

How can small counties with modest growth pay for new infrastructure when the impact fee model used in large, fast-growing counties does not appear to work as a scaled-down model for this region?

How can this region get a handle on managing water quality when they can't afford to pay for new infrastructure like central water/sewer and yet their current infrastructure is on the verge of creating moratoriums on building as a result of water quality issues like in Columbia County?

How can Florida better balance the inequitable politics between the rural and urban counties?

The panel ended with a positive outlook for the future of the region and the opportunities that the SRWT will bring to the economy of the area. They left the NRLI Fellows with a few parting thoughts:

- Communication is key! Create win/win situations through understanding.
- Wastewater treatment! The region can't go the septic tank route.

Tap into, educate, and collaborate with state leadership. Rural North Florida does not have the financial capability to deal with the coming growth on its own.

DOWN THE LAZY RIVER – HANDS ON AND UP CLOSE

Friday night's stakeholder panel was followed by another fine meal at the Dixie Grill in which we were served surf and turf practiced the Cattlemen's motto “Beef, real food for real people.” After dinner, we launched a twilight canoe trip from the Spirit of the Suwannee recreational complex. The limestone cliffs were full of interesting wildlife and some of the group spotted a variety of reptiles along the way. Sandy beaches and outcrops of jagged limestone excited even the quietest members of the group.

Saturday morning brought an opportunity for the NRLI Fellows to review their practicum status reports. Curtis Brown provided an excellent Session Debrief while Steve Johnson, Scott Christmas, and Mark Flomerfelt offered one of the all-time great Feedback Sessions that had both the NRLI Fellows and NRLI Project Team in stitches with laughter.

The group departed to meet in Ellenton and Sarasota to discuss the South Florida Water Use Caution Area.



Fellows enjoy a twilight canoe trip down the Suwannee River.



NRLI fellows and team leaders reflected that there is always more than one way to split a pie.