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NRLI
 P.O. Box 110230
 Gainesville
 FL 32611-0230
 Tel: (342) 846 1511
<http://nrli.ifas.ufl.edu>

GROWTH AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

THIS SESSION'S ISSUE—LAKE OKEECHOBEE

*There was an old owl
 who lived in an oak.
 The more he heard, the
 less he spoke.
 The less he spoke,
 the more he heard.
 Why aren't we more
 like that wise old bird?*

The Wee Wisdom
 Kindergarten
 Dade City, FL
 Submitted by Pat Carver

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

With what appears to be a NRLI tradition, introductions were accomplished by the group drawing an-out-of-proportion, but uncannily accurate map of a huge FLORIDA and the rest of the United States—and parts beyond. Then each fellow moved from birthplace to first job to higher education to first natural resources job to (favorite) place in Florida and then named a smell that reminded each of childhood.

It was interesting to watch how quickly and well the map task was ac-

complished and with good natured ribbing and laughter—a creative and effective ice-breaker tool.

As each fellow moved through the introduction, it was intriguing to watch where each placed the emphasis in his or her life ... some held steady for some time a one point ... literally pausing on the map. Others, flew to get to where they are today. While some ran back and forth, following a mobile lifestyle both personally and professionally.

The exercise was well received.

THURSDAY'S FOUR LETTER WORD: DISC

Access your own behavior preferences and tendencies in a group situation.

What's high D, some I, some S and C all over? Everyone.

Mr. Ed Wright, facilitator and trainer, spent Thursday afternoon teaching us the usefulness of the DISC analysis of behavior preferences in understanding group dynamics. We each have a dominate "work" behavior, which we identified through a series of exercises. Recognizing the effects of that chosen behavior can be crucial in leading a group through problem solving.

The tool DISC can help one reach the following objectives:

1) assess your own behavior preferences and tendencies in a group situation; 2) effectively utilize group members and behavioral preferences to en-

hance facilitation; 3) explain the impact of your interaction as a group facilitator; 4) quickly identify behavior preferences of individuals to respond to opportunities and problems.

DISC claims to have 85% predictive accuracy. The caveat to that is that this *group* behavior—individuals are notorious for defying standards.

But, through observation and choice, one can avoid the behavior that works miracles in one situation, but causes disaster in the next. Final point? Be adaptable.

D = Dominance
I = Influence
S = Steadiness
C = Conscientiousness

Inside this Issue:

WELCOME

DISC BEHAVIOR

ALLISON DEFOOR

HOW ADULTS LEARN

FIRST SESSION IMPRESSION

SUGAR TOWN

SESSION IN PHOTOS

ROUNDING OUT THE SESSION

GROWTH IN FLORIDA

NRLI TEAM LEADERS

Wendy-Lin Bartels
Roy R. Carrier
Jonathan Dain
Bruce Delaney
Marta Hartmann
Laila A. Racevskis
Burl F. Long
Tom Taylor

2007 NRLI CLASS VII THE FELLOWS

Brian Cameron
Pat Carver
Terry Doonan
Mark DuBois
Jeannie Economos
Joan Flocks
Sarah Graddy
Michael Green
Jennifer "JJ" Jurado
Beth Kacvinsky
Amanda Koonjebharry
Regina Lovings-Morse
Jeff McLemore
Kathleen McKee
Steven Miller (Torch)
Sarah Owen
William Sargent
Rainer Schael
Jennifer L. Seney
Christina Verlinde
Hank Vinson
Andrew Walmsley
Teresa Watkins

CONTRIBUTORS:

Pat Carver
Michael Green
Jennifer Jurado
Jeff McLemore
Jennifer L. Seney

LAYOUT:

Jennifer L. Seney

A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE ON THE EVERGLADES ISSUE: INSIGHTS OF J. ALLISON DEFOOR, State Coordinator, EarthBalance®

What can you expect from a 7th-generation hard-driving conservationist and native Floridian who has toted a gun and quotes theology?



How about thought-provoking entertainment, a plethora of insightful folk wisdom and straight, cold, hard reality on Florida's past and its future?

Our Thursday night speaker, Allison DeFoor, was infuriating and loveable, unbelievable and completely believable, a storyteller and a walking-talking Florida history.

A proclaimed "Conch", he served as president of the Florida Keys Land & Sea Trust and the Florida Land Trust Association. He is currently a director of Florida Audubon and 1000 Friends of Florida. He's a Florida historian, a seminary-trained lawyer, a former county and circuit judge, Sheriff of Monroe County, and formerly the Republican nominee for Lt. Governor in 1990, as running-mate to Gov. Bob Martinez.

Wow. That's an impressive resume! Allison's history of the Everglades covered a lot of ground (not meant as a pun). It was a little like listening to a reading from a Carl Hiassen book. Did we mention that Allison knows Carl Hiassen and considers him a friend?

Allison has an intimate knowledge of the Everglades, not only from a native's viewpoint, but for having served as former Governor Jeb Bush's "Everglades Czar."

His talk was an excellent kick-off for this session's topic—the health of Lake Okeechobee and its restoration.

A. DeFoor's Recommended Reading:
Their Eyes Were Watching God,
Zora Neal Hurston
A Land Remembered,
Patrick Smith

Fellows Recommended Reading:
Talking in the Office,
Deborah Tannen
The Swamp,
Michael Grunwald
Losing It All to Sprawl,
Bill Belleville

APPLY

HOW ADULTS LEARN

Friday speakers: Jim Laing,
Kim O'Dell of SFWMD Photo by JJ



GENERALIZE

MY IMPRESSION OF THE 1st SESSION

Michael Green

Day I

I was on my way to the first of a three-day training session in Clewiston, a small town on the southwest shore of Lake Okeechobee. Ostensibly, I was going to learn conflict management and collaboration skills; little did I know that I would learn a lot more, about different perspectives and even myself.

Driving down US 27 from Orlando to Clewiston seemed like forever, and what was once miles upon miles of rolling citrus groves was fast becoming new strip malls and subdivisions. Once I got past the last big town, Lake Placid I think, I knew I was in a different place, a different time. The land opened up to broad expanses of sugarcane fields. Sugarcane fields burned here and there, sending up black plumes of smoke. I later learned that the fields were burned to facilitate the harvest of the cane. Shortly afterwards I

arrived in Clewiston, the town built on the black gold that was once Everglades muck. Curiously, people seemed oblivious to the columns of smoke around their city. For many the sugar industry is the lifeblood in this part of the state—fires and smoke were just part of another day.

I made it to my destination, the Roland Martin Fish Camp, a combination Holiday Inn, gift shop, tiki bar, and diner. The class began shortly afterwards with introductions. We participated in an interesting exercise in which we constructed an abstract version of the continental United States with a version of Florida on steroids, i.e. relative to the US Florida was huge.

We all identified our birth place, first jobs, first natural resource jobs, and scents that reminded us of home. Immediately I think we all realized Florida is a gateway for the US, perhaps the world, with many of us coming to Florida, only to leave and return again, but few of us fortunate enough to be called a native sons/daughters.

The exercise was followed by a personality test of sorts, a tool we would later use to identify leadership styles/qualities and how people in a group respond differently based on their makeup. Little did we know at the time we were already collaborating and building bridges for greater candor for the remainder of the class. Dinner came quickly. Some of us enjoyed our meals in the restaurant, others soaked up the breeze and the smells of freshwater along the shore of Lake Okeechobee in the tiki bar.

A presentation by Allison DeFoor of EarthBalance® followed dinner, and he shared some of his experiences and insight into the convolutedly complex economic, political, social, and ecological Gordian knot known as the Everglades. Given its size, scope, and complexity, one could spend a lifetime managing conflict in this ecosystem. The NRLI staff designed it this way; every other natural resource conflict pales in comparison to this unique, world-renowned giant. If you can get your mind around this mammoth, you can probably do just about anything and, though it wasn't said, I think that was the intent: to prepare us for a larger struggle—the struggle for Florida's future and its many competing interests. What would Florida look like in 25 years? Would it be a place we'd all like to call home?

Day I ended in a different place, with my head full of sobering thoughts about my family's future in the state that I call home. (continued next page)

ACTION



From left: Kathleen McKee, Burl Long, Jon Dain, "Slim" Charlie Corbin and Mark DuBois

Photo by JJ

**HOW ADULTS
LEARN**

ANALYSE

Day II

Day Two began with a breakfast fit for royalty (Frisbee-sized pancakes, crisp bacon, fluffy eggs, etc.), and we formed a caravan and traveled to the southeast side of Lake Okeechobee to discuss restoration initiatives in Lake Okeechobee by the South Florida Water Management District.



Foggy Friday morning at Torry Island

While we were waiting for the District staff to arrive, we had an impromptu meeting with a colorful man named Charlie Corbin, owner/operator of Slim's Fish Camp.

Born in the bridge/gate house just a hundred yards from where he spoke, he offered a flesh-and-blood example of how his whole life and livelihood has been intimately connected to the lake's health and the government's attempt to fix it, sometimes to his great disappointment. He showed that the government's attempts to fix things aren't necessarily all good—some people lose their way of life, their heritage, or their place in the world. Most important, though, he gave us a real example of a disenfranchised stakeholder or, at least, a missed opportunity for better collaboration between big government and small business.

We later met with South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) staff to discuss basic science/history of the lake, its hydrological extent, and its connection to the Everglades. Immediately the sense of scale almost defies comprehension. How



can problems of this magnitude ever be solved, I thought.

After returning to the Roland Martin Fish Camp and lunch, we participated in an exercise in which we formed a circle, and secretly chose two other people to make a human triangle. Our instructions were to move and keep moving while maintaining the triangular shape with our secret partners. We began, and confusion ensued. Even though the exercise was amusing, the lesson was clear—without communication, conscious participation, and leadership, nothing constructive can be accomplished.

This activity was dovetailed with an exercise in which we listed and prioritized leadership qualities. Some qualities we discovered were important, others essential, but good leadership, team building, and collaboration embraced all personality traits that we discussed the previous day. In fact, as we engaged in another exercise in which we volunteered examples of recent leadership in our jobs, we found that we used elements of the four predominant personality types to be effective.

During dinner, we were fortunate to have a presentation by Dr. Garth Redfield, one of the SFWMD Everglades scientists. The discussion and presentation were engaging, as we learned about the Everglades ecosystem, its ecology, hydrology, history, human involvement/alterations and attempts to fix it. We recognized that it will never be what it once was—too much has been lost and cannot be reclaimed. But much remains, and it was clear that only through assiduous, constant collaboration and consensus building can we address the needs of this unique national asset.

Day III

I think a lot of us were suffering from information overload, but in a good way. Digesting what we had learned about ourselves, the basics of conflict management and collaboration, not to mention what we had learned about the Everglades, we had to plenty to take home with us and prepare for the next class. One thing was clear from this first class—effecting change for large-scale environmental initiatives is complicated. No project can be successful long-term if decisions are made unilaterally. Long-term success can only occur if all stakeholders at the table have a voice and know that the ultimate vision will be something they can call their own. This can only occur through genuine collaboration and consensus building, the fundamentals of which will be gained through great opportunities like NRLI.

EVERGLADES ECOSYSTEM, BEAUTIFUL DOWNTOWN SUGAR TOWN Jeff McLemore

Thursday afternoon's session introduced the Fellows to the NRLI teaching/interaction style and methods. Not knowing what to expect, I was a bit apprehensive about the whole affair. The map exercise helped to “break the ice” and it was also interesting to hear where people had been during their lives / careers and how they wound up in Florida (Non-Crackers). The NRLI staff seems confident and at ease with our group and (as per the subject of the course) encouraged the Fellows to speak their minds during sessions and take leadership roles during the course where appropriate.

Thursday night's speaker, Allison DeFoor, gave an interesting socio-political history of the Everglades region from the point of view of a former staff member of a Republican Governor's administration and self-described environmentalist. While all the characters and places were hard to follow he wove a story that held our attention.

He discussed the role of a women's garden club in the eventual protection of land that is now known as the Everglades National Park. It was humorous to hear that the “battle lines” for protection of the Everglades was, in his opinion, largely one drawn along gender lines; women working for protection of the area and men working for its drainage and conversion to agricultural and other uses. It showed that like many issues that affect many people and powerful interests, much of the discussion and decision making is done by a few well placed people or groups.

The Friday field trip was interesting for me, since I don't know much about the details of managing Lake Okeechobee. The SFWMD staff seemed knowledgeable about the various contentious issues surrounding the lake and its management but didn't mention one proposed solution to the problem of too much water during the wet season and subsequent discharges to the estuaries on either coast. This is the idea of purchasing enough lands in the Everglades Agricultural Area to create a flow way to restore water flow to its original path – south from the lake to the Everglades. I would like to have seen this explored and I should have raised the point myself.

Later that morning, we visited the SFWMD site of pond apple tree planting and restoration on the south edge of the lake. Unfortunately, it was a poor

example of the District's efforts on the lake. It was being overgrown by Moonvine and various other exotic plants.



Pond Apple Tree Restoration Site

Friday evening at the Clewiston Inn, Garth Redfield, spoke from the point of view of SFWMD regarding lake management and specifically phosphorous targets (10 ppm) for water discharged from the lake. While some found his presentation to be “arrogant” and one-sided, I found it to be informative and open-minded. He stated that, in his opinion, at least a portion of law suits aimed at the SFWMD had little practical effect on improving the state of the resource and other lawsuits may have been pursued for ulterior motives of the plaintiff. I was impressed with his professional manner and his seemingly comprehensive knowledge of the subject.

During the session Bruce Delaney shared examples of conflicts between individuals or groups that he has been involved in solving. These real-life examples of conflict-resolution, especially those that have not been resolved, are an important learning tool. I hope more of these are shared by more of the NRLI staff in the future, as well as by the Fellows.

The skills I hope to develop are related to dealing with conflict, both interpersonal and among groups. As Jon Dain said, this course is not so much about *resolving* conflict as it is about *managing* it. I believe that leadership is largely about dealing effectively with conflicts and problems. Anyone can be in charge when things are going well, but it is a *competent* leader that can be counted on to manage the tough issues and debates. These are the skills I want to have.

REPORT THROUGH PHOTOS

Jennifer L. Seney



Facilitator: Jon Dain

FRIDAY FIELD TRIP

Down through Belle Glade, passed no fewer than eight “fish camps”, to Torry Island—like all the islands—at one time farmed.



Some NRLI Team Members: (from left) Bruce Delaney, Wendy-Lin Bartels and Marta Hartmann



A bit foggy on Torry Island



Belle Glade Park and Trail—a collaborative effort between Belle Glade and SFWMD. Luckily, the plantings survived Hurricane Frances.



Engaged in conversation with Charlie who was born “on the dike in the old bridge house” in 1939.



On the canals and dikes—Moonvine rules. It crowds out the native Okeechobee Gourd.

FIELD TRIP THOUGHTS

Riding the dikes—invasives everywhere: Moonvine, Lantana, Taro, Primrose Willow. How will we ever restore the Everglades when we've gone so deeply and irrevocably into its demise?

Glimpses of the lake show sparkling blue—deceptive as this lake is fighting for its life.

Moment of shocking clarity—
OMG, people drink this water.

Manage for low water—destroy Charlie's life. Go high water—destroy the lake and doom south Florida to polluted drinking water.

Listening to dozens of conversations of intellectually engaged folks, wondering if we can save our Florida—our earth—for the health, safety and welfare of our children and their children.



The Pond Apple Tree, which is the original “forest” of these islands, supports the proliferation of the Okeechobee Gourd. The idea is to bring the Pond Apple back and the Gourd can follow. But, the restoration area is so tiny in the landscape of Moonvine as far as one can see.



How does one eat an elephant (the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program, i.e. CERP)? One bite at a time. But if you eat too slowly, will the elephant spoil before you can finish it?



BACK IN THE MEETING ROOM For an Everglades debriefing and discussion of CERP led by the fellows. An exercise in facilitation and team teaching. All were good, but Beth Kacvinsky deserves high praise for explaining CERP in depth and with clarity.

FRIDAY NIGHT was dinner at the Clewiston Inn and speaker, Garth Redfield, PHD, Chief Environmental Scientist for SFWMD. He spoke extensively of CERP—both the difficulties implementing it and some of the successes. He spoke for some time on the cultural and social conflict that has resulted in repeated lawsuits, which impede CERP's progress. He seemed genuinely perplexed at the motivation behind and the purpose of this legal tactic as in his view it accomplished nothing towards preserving or restoring the resource. It was a question left unanswered.

NOTABLE QUOTABLES
From NRLI 2007

“Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be bent out of shape.”

Ed Wright, NRCS

“If you’re not at the table you’re gonna be on the menu.”

Stan Bronson, Florida Earth

“If you want to reduce population growth in Florida one suggestion is to do away with air conditioning and mosquito control and just see who stays.”

Rod Clouser (and others) UF IFAS

FEEDBACK PANEL: The bar has been set high as the feedback panel for session one put their observations to the tune of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

PRACTICUM: Putting an idea to application. Bring your idea for your practicum to the February session.

FEBRUARY: See you in Tampa Bay for the session on Urban Water Supply—right at the epicenter of the water wars for SW Florida.

SATURDAY MORNING—GROWTH IN FLORIDA. Speaker: Dr. Rodney L. Clouser

There’s a new legal government coming to Yeehaw Junction in the form of an Evans’ family development known as “The Grove”. Dr. Clouser used this as an example of the “new” form of development. Don’t like local rules? Build you own government. Just do it your way.

As with most presentations on growth, the topic defies summarization. But, here are some comments by Dr. Clouser, admittedly out-of-context, but still intriguing.

- The world does not revolve around you [natural resources].
- Population follows roads.
- Impact fees do not kill development [e.g. Collier County’s fees are \$30,000 and have not stopped growth].
- Five counties have 50% of the population and the most concentration of political representation.
- Do we want agriculture in Florida? Then make it profitable.
- The average income can’t afford the average home in Florida.
- Policies are based on first on myth; second on beliefs and values and lastly on facts.

