

## **GROWTH AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

### **THIS SESSION'S ISSUE—TAMPA BAY AREA WATER WARS**

*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

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#### **AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUE**

**Amanda Koonjebharry**

This month's NRLI session focused on one of the more conflict-laden topics discussed with Class VII to date. This contentious topic, almost portentously dubbed, the "Water Wars," is a prime example of conflict management at work.

Contenders in this battle of water rights, land rights, and the environment, included the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), Pasco, Pinellas, and Hillsborough Counties, the cities of Tampa, St. Petersburg, New Port Richey, and the infamous Tampa Bay Water (TBW), which grew out of the West Coast Regional Water Supply Authority (WCRWSA).

In a nutshell, the water wars erupted, in large part, because St. Petersburg and Pinellas County purchased wellfields in Pasco and Hillsborough Counties and had permits from SWFWMD to withdraw water. By 1975, the impact of nearly unregulated pumping was clear enough that a regional water authority was formed (WCRWSA), but it lacked the power necessary to develop new sources of water. As 1997 dawned in Tampa Bay, nearly two million people relied primarily upon the Florida Aquifer for their drinking water. Increased water use in the rapidly growing region, combined with an ongoing drought, resulted in shrinking lakes, vanishing wetlands, dried-up wells, a surplus of sinkholes, and finger-pointing between local governments that degenerated into the now infamous "Water Wars."

Instead of local governments fighting over wellfields, the state's largest regional water supplier, TBW, was created in 1998 to eliminate the economic competition for

water that contributed to the area's water wars and was charged with reducing ground water pumping from 11 long-producing wellfields, ending litigation, and developing new water supply sources in an environmentally responsible way.

While developing environmentally sustainable water is important everywhere in Florida, the situation is even more critical in the Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA), established in 1992 to minimize the impact of saltwater intrusion. Across the 5,100-square mile SWUCA, which includes much of southern Hillsborough County and stretches south to Charlotte County, nearly 6,000 wells are lowering water levels in lakes and rivers and allowing saltwater to intrude into the aquifer. In the Tampa Bay watershed, the region's most rapid growth is occurring in the SWUCA, including South Shore near Apollo Beach and the northern segments of Manatee County.

Across the region, the long-term goal is to reduce reliance on groundwater and rivers, both of which have resulted in significant environmental degradation. In Southwest Florida, including Tampa Bay, off-stream reservoirs, built to store water harvested from rivers at high flow, may be a key part of the solution to the region's water problems. As a result, instead of relying entirely on groundwater, approximately 15 billion gallons of surface water are now stored at the C.W. Bill Young Reservoir.

In addition to the current solutions to alternative water supply in the Tampa

**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 Koonjeberry  
 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

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Mark DuBois  
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 Theresa Watkins

Unmarked photos:  
 Jennifer L. Seney

**WATER WARS—continued**

Bay area, there is also the much-anticipated \$157 million desalinization plant in Apollo Beach. Currently, the plant is not operational, however, as we heard, the plant is expected to come online in March. It is expected to contribute an average of 17.5 million gallons per day (mgd) to the region's water supply by the end of this year, when groundwater pumping must be reduced to 90 mgd from 113.45 mgd withdrawn last year.



**Photo Explanation:** C.W. Bill Young Reservoir in south Hillsborough County, FLA. Completed in March 2005 and filled during the rainy season that year, the C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir in south Hillsborough County can provide 25% of the region's water needs for six months. Pumping modifications at the reservoir are expected to provide enough new water to meet increased demands through 2017. After that, a second reservoir may be built on adjacent land. To fill the reservoir, water is piped from the Alafia and Hillsborough rivers and the Tampa Bypass Canal during high flows. Two miles long and one mile wide, the reservoir holds 15 billion gallons — 33 times the volume of Raymond James Stadium.

*Photo courtesy Tampa Bay Water*

**Mandated Groundwater Pumping Reductions —by December 31, 2007**  
**90 MGD\***  
 (down from 158 mgd in 1998)

**Pictures: Please don't sit on important reservoir equipment—the consequences for such a transgression should be painfully obvious.** Actually, these are to discourage bird loitering, not people lingering.



Photos by Mark DuBois



## NRLI SECOND SESSION

By Theresa Watkins

Our second NRLI weekend, set in Ruskin Florida with the goal of learning the history and competition for water in the Tampa Bay area, started off with a wonderful "NRLI 15" buffet luncheon on Thursday for the fellows and fellas at the Inn at Little Harbor. That set moods high and piqued conversations as familiar faces greeted each other.

Dr. Burl Long began the session by passing the baton to Laila Anna Racevskis, PhD. as the new FNRLI Director. Laila, also the Assistant Professor of Land Use Economics and Policy at UF, is not Spartan in her educational accomplishments with a doctoral degree in Agricultural Economics from Michigan State University, two degrees from Ohio State University, a Master of Science degree in Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics, and a BA in French and International Studies. Welcome aboard, Laila!

Jon Dain continued momentum in the nautically decorated room, called the Captain's Quarters, with comfortable boat cushions, ropes, and low overhead lights that you hit your head with just like in a real boat. Recollecting the last session in Clewiston and insight into what the future holds in store for the NRLI participants, Jon spoke about "Looking Back, Looking Forward."

Bruce Delaney joined Jon for an "Introduction to Conflict and Collaboration" followed by a module of "Effective Communication" facilitated by Marta Hartmann.

The Stage setting speaker on Thursday afternoon was Dr. Honey Rand, who was well known to two of the NRLI participants, Pat Carver and Jennifer Seney, as one of the key players in the Tampa Bay water wars. Dr. Rand, author of "Water Wars: A Story of People, Politics, and Power," gave the NRLI's the background of the Tampa Water Company, the largest utility in the southeast United States during the late 1980's and 1990's. (See Amanda's Koonjebharry's front page article)

Dr. Rand's Power Point presentation showed the contrast between available water in the Big Fish Lake in 1983 and 1994. By 1994, Big Fish Lake was virtually dried up and wetlands were devastated. from the effects of the over-pumping of groundwater. Dr. Rand discussed the major players such as Roy G. Harrell Jr., who led the Southwest Florida Water Management District through the water wars and David Fischer, the mayor of St. Petersburg, who chaired the Tampa Bay

Water governing board during part of this time. The phrase "Leave egos and logos at the door" during the public meetings and behind the scenes strategizing enabled dialogue under stressful conditions.

In a 2003 article for Enviro-net, an environmental website, Dr. Honey Rand had key points that are keystones for the public to remember. She states:

"When contemplating the need for more water governance, please consider the following:

- The water management districts may not be perfect, but their structure is among the best in the world. Delegations travel here to gain insight and ideas about how to manage resources in their countries.
- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the agency responsible for coordinating the efforts of the water management districts. The districts are more coordinated than ever before-given their very different issues.
- 'Local Sources First' means local sources first, not local sources forever or local sources only. It presumes that BEFORE you ask another community to share their water resources, you should have explored all of the alternatives available to you.
- "There may well be a role for the private sector in infrastructure and water supply development-especially given the need for local governments to direct limited financial resources to safety, security, health and other critical services. But the private sector's role needs to be fully debated and negotiated within the framework of policy developed in an open, public forum."

The last paragraph of Water Wars: A Story of People, Politics, and Power states this:

"Studying water issues around Florida, it's not hard to see where the next battles will be. Look for places with vibrant growth and limited access to fresh water. Look for places where a community with growing needs is next to one with a limited population, limited financial resources, and plenty of water. Watch for a move to modify "Local Sources First" and watch who's behind it. Watch for a movement to create a statewide water board or a statewide distribution system. When you look, you will see what's next, and it

will be up to you to decide what's in the public interest." (Rand, 2003)

It was an inspiring and educational talk dotted with unique perspective, humor, frank words, and encouragement for the future.

We ended the night with a delightful dinner, NRLI fellowship, along with Mrs. Long, great conversation, with Kathleen McGee and Pat Carver providing lessons in traditional card games.

### **FRIDAY SESSION:**

Friday morning we woke up to chilling temperatures that seemed to get colder as the morning progressed.

We left after a delicious breakfast for a two-stop tour of the C.W. Bill Young Regional reservoir in south Hillsborough County and the Tampa Bay Salt-water Desalination plant.

After playing "follow the directionally dysfunctional NRLI van", a cheerful discussion ensued on NRLI drivers having other NRLI drivers' cell phone numbers, and we arrived at the reservoir location.

Standing in the open with the cold wind blowing vigorously, we huddled together as we listened to representatives of the Tampa Bay Water Authority give an overall perspective of the reservoir facility, land management practices, partnerships, and issues faced by the Tampa Bay Water Authority. At the completion of overview, we jumped into the vans to drive to the top of the reservoir.

Unfortunately we did not have access to the desalination plant as scheduled. Instead the NRLI group was given an introduction to the process and history of the Tampa Bay Surface Water Treatment Plant by representatives of the Veolia Water North America, one of the country's leading water services provider for local and federal governments, business, and industry. Even though it was a last minute maneuver, the Veolia staff was gracious and provided access to their operations. After a question and answer session by the group, especially the NRLI Fellows toured the facility.

After a great hot lunch, Marta conducted an "Active Listening" session with the NRLI students breaking up into small groups of three, two persons having a conversation, one person talking randomly, one acting as a listener, while the third person would be aware of the conversationalists' various body movements and reactions. The activity was very enlightening and provided some thought-provoking

self-awareness from sincere comments of the other participants.

Dr. Burl Long and Beth Kacvinsky facilitated Friday afternoon's session. The agenda was a Stake Holders Panel that consisted of six key players in the Tampa Bay area:

- Ms. Koni Cassini, CPA, Tampa Bay Water representative
- Ms. Patsy Symons, Citrus Grower, Water Management District Board of Governors
- Mr. Hugh Gramling, Tampa Wholesale Growers Association representative
- Mr. Pick Talley, Director of Utilities, Pinellas County
- Mr. Andy Smith, Hydrogeologist, formerly with SWFMD
- Mr. Phillip Compton, Private business owner and citizen activist

The panel began by introducing themselves and explaining how they were particularly involved with the Tampa Bay water issues. Each one of the speakers calmly talked about their own perceptions of the events and then took questions and answers from the NRLI audience.

NRLI fellows expressed surprise how the panel participants talked about how they got over the major obstacles of personal issues, financial and industry concerns, and politics, to come together and work towards partnership among agencies and utilities instead of airing dirty laundry, relating all the political and emotional upheaval that went on during the various agency meetings, city and county commissioners meetings, and public sessions. There was not much new information provided by the panel that was not known already by the NRLI's already familiar with the tri-county water situation despite leading questions by the water-savvy audience.

It was noted by one Fellow after the panel concluded that the Stakeholders are still in the process of having to work together to resolve their ongoing water issues and couldn't talk openly about how they really felt during the previous years.

The dinner Friday night was again a great meal, creating a wonderful ending to a chilly start.

**SATURDAY: LAST DAY OF SESSION**

By Andrew Walmsley

Laila was our facilitator for the day's session with Pat Carver co-facilitating. We started the session promptly after our usual breakfast routine with practicum prep and situation assessment led by Jon.

Roy Carriker gave us an overview on Florida Water Law: *Packaging Policy for a Fugitive Resource*. This led into many discussion topics and some great ideas were exchanged. Kathleen McKee then did a wonderful job debriefing the session. The debrief had plenty of group interaction and discussion. The day was brought to a close with a round of NRLI Jeopardy, hosted by the feedback panel which included Hank, Rainer, Chris, with help from Brian.

I believe this session was useful in creating awareness about the current potential problems of urban water use in Florida. We are a growing state with many demands, and we, as leaders along with our elected officials, must use sound reasoning in the development and growth of Florida. There are many challenges facing us, but hopefully what we learn in NRLI can give us the skills and techniques to positively influence the changes needed to keep Florida the best state in the union.



Our Saturday reporter: Andrew Walmsley



Brian before Thursday's session

Sarah Owen waiting for Thursday's session to start.



**SPECIAL REPORT  
Legislative Session 2007**

**DATELINE: Tallahassee, March 9, 2007**

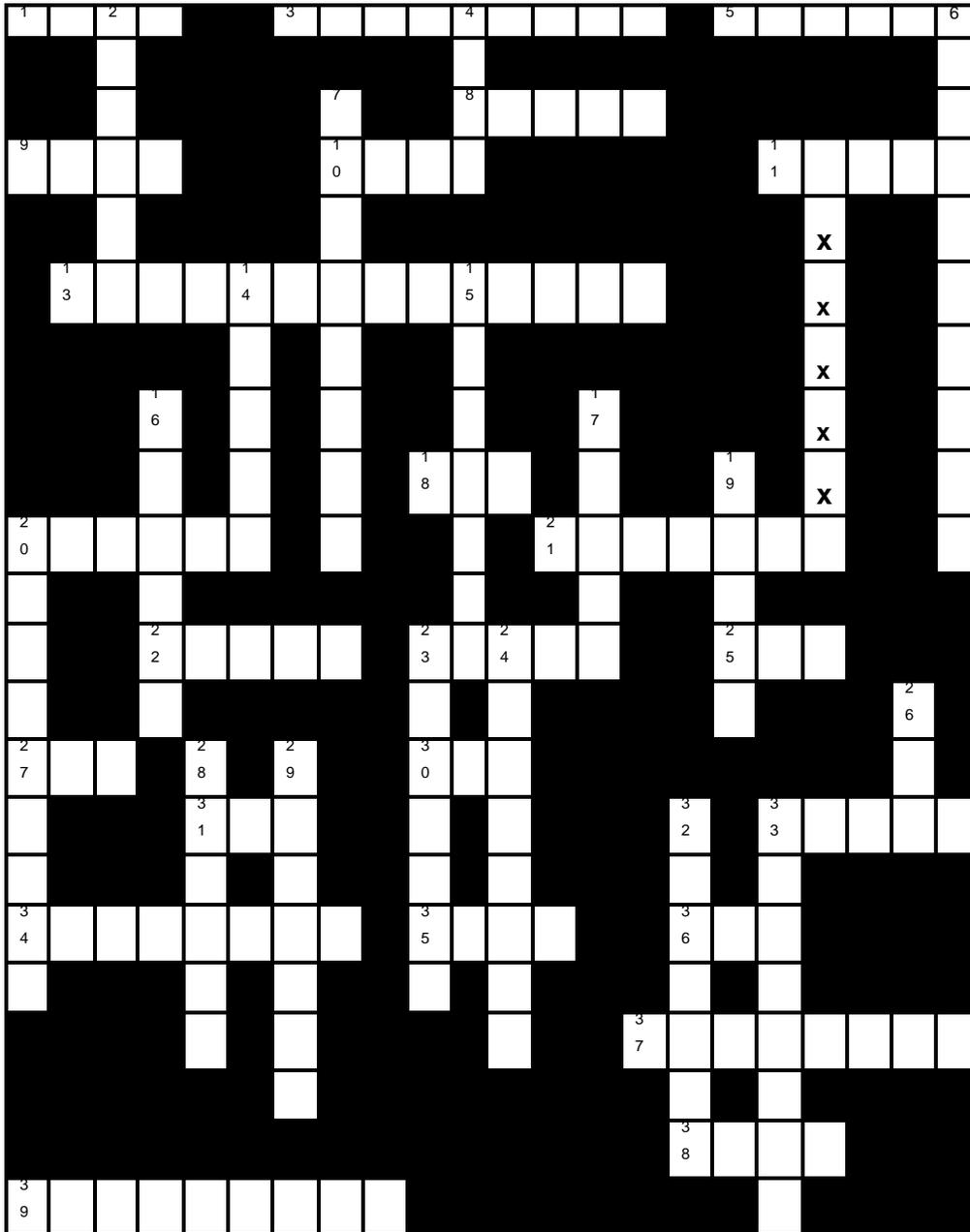
by Andrew Walmsley.

As a side note from our first session, there has been some progress with legislative action and the Everglades. On the third day of session, the Senate Environmental Preservation Committee passed – unanimously – a major piece of environmental legislation: SB 392. This bill, sponsored by Chairman Burt Saunders (R-Naples), is headed to the Appropriations Committee next week, where proponents will lobby for \$200 million in funding. After that it's off to the floor of the Senate during Week Three of Legislative session. A bill moving like this is almost unheard of.

The bill addresses the problems of the Lake Okeechobee Watershed stretching from the Caloosahatchee River/estuary on the west coast to the St. Lucie River/estuary on the east coast. It calls for detailed technical plans inclusive of infrastructure required to manage and store water, provide water quality improvements, institute best management practices, monitor water quality, and control sources of phosphorus in an enormous region stretching from just south of Orlando in basins tributary to Lake Okeechobee to the estuary-to-estuary corridor described above.

Plans will be implemented through the establishment of TMDL Best Management Action Plans under the state's existing TMDL program. The bill is based on the fact that the headwaters of the Everglades begins north of Lake Okeechobee and that water flowing through this region needs to be stored, cleaned up and managed better before it enters the lake and eventually makes its way to the coastal estuaries. I just figured y'all would like an update before we head up to the Panhandle for Session III!

**NRLI CROSSWORD**  
 By incredibly talented, Amanda Koonjebharry



**ACROSS**

- 1. Honey Rand's solution to putting an end to the Tampa Bay Area water conflict (4)
- 3. Local "nickname" for the water conflict issues in the Tampa Bay Area (9)
- 5. Una cerveza por favor? (6)
- 8. What most stakeholders can't do (5)
- 9. This Mr.'s Mrs. once politely requested that he not use "that NRLI \*\*" on him (4)
- 10. One word to describe last session's weather (4)
- 11. The starring topic of our Tampa Bay Area session (5).
- 13. The next great hope ? (as long as it's up and running by March) (14).
- 18. Number of member governments belonging to Tampa Bay Water (3).
- 20. One of the river sources used to fill the C.W. Bill Young Reservoir (6).
- 21. Director of Tampa Bay Water (7).
- 22. Wendy-Lin took care of our tummies by passing these around on the first day (5).
- 23. "Blessed are the flexible for they shall not ----." (5).
- 25. Ignoring the "no acronym" rule it's one of the many available solutions to further reducing water use (3).
- 27. What many of our wetlands and lakes are due to groundwater withdrawals (3).
- 30. Sarah G. and Mike G. show great skill with this necessary pool tool (3)
- 32. Although sometimes few and far between - these are the "moments" we treasure at FNRLI (3).
- 33. Rally on Jennifer and Pat - this county has lots to thank you for (5)

34. What NRLI teaches to manage (not resolve!!!) (8)
35. What, as mediators and facilitators, we would all love to hear from all parties when trying to manage conflict (4).
36. It's always there to at NRLI (3).
37. Several areas of the northern Tampa Bay Area have lost these as a result of the use of groundwater (8).
38. We might need his ark to get across the C.W. Bill Young Reservoir (not really - I needed another clue) (4).
39. What Amanda needs to be in order to be a more effective communicator at work (9).

**DOWN**

1. This type of listening is one of the key factors to being a good facilitator (6)
4. Where Marta's skills are somewhat lacking? (4)
6. A communication style that can sometimes be off-putting (10)
7. The site for FNRLI's next session (8)
14. Our new director - Welcome aboard!!! (5)
15. A once almost depleted source of groundwater (5)
16. Again, ignoring the "no acronym" rule: a key player in the cause and solution to the Water War issue (6)
17. Pat's new nickname? (5)
19. What, SWFWMD board member, Pat Symons had to abandon on her citrus farm (5)
20. A communication style that is not always that effective (9)
23. According to Dr. Burl Long - "a quite useless nut" (7)
24. With Terry and Mark as ears and Andrew as a trunk - one of our many NRLI de-stressers (8)
26. Where Terry and Bill work (yes, acronyms) (3)
28. Pinellas County's "beloved" Utilities' Director (6)
29. Honey's dominant communication style? (7)
32. The # of mill. of gallons needed to fill up the reservoir (or the # of lbs. your weight increases because of NRLI) (7)
33. This County supposedly "gave up" all of their groundwater sources (8)



Cold day at the C.W. Young Reservoir in Tampa Bay area



NRLI VII headed towards the surface water treatment facility waterworks.



Thursday's speaker: Dr. Honey Rand and Terry Doonan

A Great pair of shoes!



**NOTABLE QUOTABLES**

**From NRLI 2007**

*“Watch the negative space. It tells as much as the open speech.”*

Sarah Graddy, NRLI VII fellow

*“The choice to do nothing carries as much consequence as doing something”*

Steve “Torch” Miller, NRLI VII fellow

**FEEDBACK PANEL:** From the Twelve Days of Christmas to NRLI Jeopardy. The feedback challenge grows with each session—will we be able to find our way (smirk) to even more creativity?

**PRACTICUM:** Topic due for March Ecofina Creek session. Don’t forget *different time zone from the rest of Florida.*

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