



COASTAL DUNE LAKES: MANAGE- MENT OF A UNIQUE NATURAL RESOURCE

The Walton County area in Florida’s panhandle is home to 15 named “coastal dune lakes”. Dune lakes are rare geological/ecological features that are found in only five locations around the world. The lakes are freshwater bodies separated from the ocean by a sand bar and subject to interaction with salt water when the sandbars break or shift. Depending on the weather and tides, there are times when salt water and organisms flow back into the freshwater lakes meaning that individual dune lakes can vary from completely fresh water to quite saline. These lakes are classified as “critically impaired because of their extreme rarity” in Florida and in the world and because they are often threatened by development. While the resource issue and human population focused on at the session were the dune lakes and related stakeholders, the conceptual and skill focus of the session was on “Framing”, the understanding values and perceptions, the dynamic importance of listening skills, and designing and running “Focus Groups”. On the final day of the session Fellows also had the opportunity to share their progress to date on Practicum projects and get feedback and suggestions from the rest of the group.

Social Media News



Want to know what people are seeing when they view your social media page. *EyetrackShop* recently completed a study for *Mashable*, an online news site dedicated to covering digital culture, social media and technology, to find out what a person sees when they view a social media website. They studied the eye movements from Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Klout, Reddit, Digg, Tublr, Twitter StumbleUpon and Pinterest. Although it was not a perfect study and the sample size was small (30), *Mashable* made a few observations:

- Profile pictures matter—This feature attracted the most attention.
- Job title garnered more attention than profile photo on LinkedIn
- Who you know gets noticed—people do look at the little thumbnail of your friends.
- Content on top wins—The further something is down the page the fewer people look at it.

For more information on this study go to <http://mashable.com/2011/11/30/social-profile-eye-tracking/>

Where We Have Been: A Review



Carolyn Cox, Kelly Keefe, Chris Martinez and Lindsay

As this session marked the “mid-term” NRLI session for class XI, we began with a re-cap of what had been covered in the first 3 sessions; Daytona Beach, Wakulla Springs, and Port St. Lucie. We have come a long way in the way we look at resource management and in

terms of the skill set we have developed with regard to conflict management. Jon Dain led a summary discussion of the learning experiences to date. In Daytona, fellows studied sea turtle habitat protection and coastal development issues while being exposed to introductory conflict management concepts, social media, stakeholder panels, and the complexity of natural resource issues. In Wakulla, we learned about springs health and restoration and watersheds while practicing listening skills, stakeholder analysis (including a focus on interests and positions). We also learned how to use conflict management tools/frameworks like the circle of conflict and the triangle of satisfaction and **Review**. (Continued on page 7).

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Practicum The Margolis Wheel

Around, around she goes.... In order to give the Fellows an opportunity to articulate their practicum ideas, Jon Dain employed the use of the Margolis Wheel. In this participatory learning technique participants are asked to sit in two circles, with the chairs facing each other. The group outer circle is given 5 minutes to tell the person sitting opposite them a quick outline of their practicum and problems they face or may be facing and then receiving from the listener feedback on potential solutions.

After going through this exercise, Fellows felt they had a better understanding of the issues facing them and their fellow classmates.

Brooke Saari welcomes NRLI to Walton County

Brooke Saari, UF/IFAS Extension Marine Agent for Okaloosa and Walton Counties welcomed the NRLI Fellows to Walton County and provided a quick overview of the area. Walton County has a population of 55,000, a large portion of which is made up of military personal and geographically has a land area of 677,120 acres and 115,520 acres of water. She made special note of the fact that county residents tend to identify themselves as being from either North Walton or South Walton, a distinction that was reinforced by comments during the stakeholder discussion. Brooke was also instrumental in arranging the fieldtrip and background for the session which was greatly appreciated.



Brooke Saari, UF/IFAS Extension Marine Agent. (file photo)



Left: Mark Hoyer speaks with the NRLI Fellows about the Dune Lakes preservation efforts in Walton County. Photo by Candy Kaswinkel

Coastal Dune Lake Management

Mark Hoyer began his presentation by stressing that dune lakes each have their own individual and distinct issues and then discussed his work with LakeWATCH, a volunteer program that helps deal with 530 lakes, 129 coastal sites, 124 river sites, and 5 springs statewide. The group is part of an NSF (National Science Foundation) project designed to "Engage the Citizen Scientist" in environmental research. Through LakeWATCH volunteers gather data and monitor the lakes that they live near through baseline and trend analysis, research, extension, and teaching. Mark's group now has 40 publications and the reliability of the data collected by volunteers has been shown to be equal in quality to that collected by professionals. The training the volunteers receive is focused in particular on phosphorous and nitrogen con-

tent, chlorophyll and visibility, lab analysis, and trend analysis. It was also noted that a Florida Statute from 1993 stipulates that volunteer-collected data cannot be used in a regulatory proceeding which has proven to be both good and bad for lake management decisions. Issues of concern to dune lake stakeholders were identified as: Issues of concern to dune lake stakeholders were identified as:

1. Who is in charge? (Do nothing or get experts)
2. Outlet management plan (No land dev. plan until 1996)
3. Water quality
4. Watershed, inlet management
5. Aquatic plant management
6. Education (Do nothing or advisory board)
7. Fish and wildlife





READING DISCUSSION

The reading discussion was held in Candy's room which provided a very homey, intimate environment for sharing. Patricia began with a summary of the intractable conflict concepts covered in the readings. The common characteristics are that they are long-term, elude resolution, create division, involve values, and may be part of a social system or organization. Fellows were each given one of the 16 listening skills and were asked to identify instances where a NRLI team member may have used one. She then moved on to discuss framing with regards to interest and position and determined that the most powerful interests are basic human needs like security, economic well-being, sense of belonging, recognition, and control.

Drama by the River: A values based exercise

This is a story of human conflict, failure, and values"... The Drama by the River exercise is focused on highlighting the role that values play in decision-making. To begin, Fellows are instructed to draw the backdrop of a story in which controversial choices are made by all 5 main characters. Once the story is told and the drawings completed, individual Fellows are asked to rank the characters from worst to best based on the behaviors and choices exhibited in the story. The challenge comes when small

groups are formed and tasked with reaching consensus about the behavior rankings. The NRLI team was surprised, and a little disappointed that the groups' rankings were quite similar and that consensus was quickly reached, but a rich discussion of the role of values and perceptions ensued. This drama activity was beneficial in showing that our values play a larger role than we sometimes imagine, that some beliefs are not worth fighting for and some are, and that sometimes agreeing merely for

the sake of consensus (vs. expressing true sentiments) can later cause resentment and even lead to broken agreements. The values discussion segued into a discussion about reaching consensus in work meetings with highlighted concepts including the importance of letting the group decide what the decision process will be, letting the group know that the decisions made can be revisited and also letting the group know what the time frame and change options may be.



NRLI Fellows rank behavior severity in a mock scenario "Drama by the River" This exercise helps participants understand the impact of values on groups decision making. Photo by Candy Kaswinkel



Patricia Negreros Castillo leads the reading discussion in full NRLI style Photo by Candy Kaswinkel

A Visit to the Dune Lakes

With winds gusting and temperatures in the 40s, Day 2 in Walton County began with our tour of three dune lakes with explanations of how they form, how they are managed and the threats that they face. Starting at the Hilton, we drove to Topsail Hill Preserve State Park and were taken by a tram to Campbell Lake where the Park Manager, Jason Cutshaw and Dan Burton, Park Specialist, gave us some background on the lake. Campbell Lake is considered one of the more pristine lakes in the area so there are no fuel powered vehicles allowed near the lake shore; protection of this area is critical to maintaining the ecosystems and lake health. The only road into the area was closed years ago after having been used for military operations. There is camping, cabin rental, and canoeing/kayaking available in this park. No outside canoes/kayaks are allowed as an additional protective measure against the introduction of invasive species. The Howard development group which owns an upscale mall in Destin wanted to build a hotel nearby and use an airtram to transport guests to the beach by crossing through this area. The idea was abandoned following a cost/benefit analysis which considered the impact on dune lake health. The second stop involved a walk on a beautiful beach and was a look at Deer Lake from coastline. The

Fellows were able to see how the dunes have, in the past, allowed for the exchange of salt and fresh water between Gulf and lake. The final stop prior to lunch was at an area near Oyster Lake and located between 2 houses involved in contentious litigation. In response to shifting sands and water one landowner, in an attempt to protect his lot, bought sand to raise and protect his property. The result was the creation of a water outlet that veered close to a neighbor's lot. This water has caused structural damage to the latter home and both houses are now for sale while legal proceedings are pending. A lack of understanding of coastal dune dynamics led to the conflict.

For lunch the groups stopped at Stinky's, a very local, very authentic looking Florida fish house. There was a mix of business people and bikers which added to its charm. The very rustic décor inside and out was complimented by an adjoining bait and tackle shop. The staff was efficient, the food good, and the atmosphere comfortable.

Pictured at left from Top to bottom: Campbell Lake; Jason Cutshaw and Dan Burton, speak with the Fellows; NRLI Fellows stand on the bank of the Deer Lake outfall; Brooke Saari explains to the Fellows the significance of the lake; Oyster Lake outfall; Sarah Kalinski speaks to the group about the problems surrounding Oyster Lake; Fellows enjoy lunch at Stinky's. Photos by Candy Kaswinkel





Photos at top from L to R: Fellows speak with stakeholders; Billy McKee speaks as Camille Soverel looks on; Carolyn Cox listens as Sarah Kalinoski shares with the group; Bottom row L to R: Jackie Markel, Jon Dain and Becky Raulerson listen while other panelist share their views; Billy McKee sits with the Fellows during the Stakeholder Panel. *Photos by Candy Kaswinkel*

Feedback on Stakeholder Panel – Holly Abeels

Following the panel discussion, the panelists left and Holly had fellows break into groups with 3 tasks relevant to the discussions. Each group was to identify the 3 biggest issues, 3 stakeholders who could have been invited and their interest, and 1 positive outcome or impact discussed. The results were as follows:

Issues: Swimming, Research Use, Dune Walls, North vs South, Permitting, Politics and Money, Sources and tax allocation, enforcement, and County structure.

Stakeholders: Developers, County Commissioners, BP, DEP and Property Owners.

The whole group then discussed the panel dynamics and interaction, the body language, the physical arrangement, and the facilitator setting. Many felt that the stakeholders all seemed to get along pretty well and all had the best interests of Walton County at heart. Brief discussion followed comparing the various panels/interview styles to date.

Camille Soverel, Moderator

We warmed up back at the hotel before our stakeholder discussion which again was organized in a new format to provide Fellows with additional examples of models for group discussion. This time the “panelists” sat in the same conversation circle as the Fellows and the NRLI project team. The issues raised during the discussion involved homeowners’ and property rights, flooding, lake/water health and security, permitting, control over decision-making, business investment and development, and emotional investment. The panelists all lived in Walton County but had very different backgrounds. Jackie Markell, a local resident transplant from Atlanta, volunteers with South Walton Community Council, a watchdog agency. She has lived on

Oyster Lake for 4 years and believes in trying to balance natural resources protection with development. Though she is not a native of the area, she seemed very invested in the community. Sarah Kalinoski, from the CBA, Choctahatchee Basin Alliance, provided information about sampling sites, oyster reefs, seawalls, and lake health. Billy McKee from the Walton County Environmental Department, is a 5th generation Walton County native who lives in North Walton. Billy’s position with the county, as well as his family’s long history in the county provided both a government and long-term resident perspective on the issues.

How to Conduct Focus Groups

With Paul Monaghan



Paul began this session by providing background information about the purpose and use of focus groups. He noted that they are widely used, yield qualitative information and that they bring stakeholders together in a format that affects the information gathered. Some pre-issues to pay special attention to include thanking the group, providing a specific time frame, being careful to value people's input, giving clear instructions, defining roles, intro-

ducing participants, repeating comments to confirm understanding and in general determining feelings of members about eth topic at hand. We also discussed how to analyze the data collected in focus groups by using transcripts and organizing/coding responses.

Framing activity with Citibank

For this activity led by Bruce Delaney, we split into 3 groups of 4-5 fellows and attempted to frame issues relating to the OWS (occupy Wall Street) movement from two perspectives: 1) Citibank, and 2) "the other 99%". Each group was asked to characterize the movement in a way that made them sound "right". To accomplish this several reframing concepts were discussed and employed such as narrowing the issue, changing wording from specific to general, identifying overall goals of the group seeking to frame the issue, prioritizing the values and interests of the group, and that in negotiating it is OK to agree to disagree. We also touched on "cynical framing" which can be used in deceptive arguments.

As seen in Santa Rosa Beach...



Feedback and Debrief

Debrief of Santa Rosa Beach Session – Kelly Keefe

Kelly led the debrief session with a NRLI version of Jeopardy using material from the current session. She utilized a good mix of resource content with process information from the NRLI team activities. .

At the conclusion of the debrief, Kelly asked each fellow make a personal promise to themselves to concentrate on a specific NRLI-related concept to help in either their job or a personal life issue.

Feedback Panel – Shannon McGee, Hugh Thomas, Citlalli Lopez-Binnquist

The feedback panel used the colored dots that were introduced in the Wakulla session to vote on the various components of this Walton County Session. Green dots were positive feedback, yellow was ok, and red was a negative opinion.

There was agreement on many of the topics but the practicum session received the most mixed review due to time constraints and lack of opportunity to meet with advisors.

Review. (Continued from page 1). continued to gain a healthy respect for the recognition that there is a reason we have two ears but only one mouth. The visit to Port St. Lucie provided lessons about the housing boom and subsequent bust and insights into group dynamics, our roles in meetings, the “diamond of decision making” and associated “Groan Zone” and effective agenda design including the concept of content vs. process. The session also incorporated stakeholder interviews, a follow-up segment on social media, and an opportunity to further discuss our practicum project.

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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.