

The Margolis Wheel

Jon Dain introduced the group to The “Margolis Wheel” as a good brainstorming tool. Ten chairs were placed in a tight circle facing outward, while ten chairs were placed in a larger circle facing inward towards the first set of chairs. As the concentric circles rotated every 2 minutes, the person on the outside chair described their ideas for the NRLI Practicum to the person sitting on the inside chair. The person on the outside chair then stood up, moved over one chair, and described their ideas to the next person. After 10 lightening rounds, we switched from inside to outside chairs to allow all members of the group an opportunity to brainstorm their practicum ideas.

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Local Planning Efforts to Address Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

Welcome to PUNTA GORDA

On August 13, 2004, Hurricane Charley ripped through Punta Gorda, its 140 mph winds impacting the lives of of city residents and causing extensive physical damage to houses and infrastructure. The city and its inhabitants are recovering and rebuilding, but have also used the experience to better understand their vulnerabilities and plan for a future of possible impacts from climate changes and sea level rise. It is this planning initiative that provided the context for NRLI Class XII to examine the participatory process and decision-making used in Punta Gorda.

The group arrived at the Sheraton Four Points hotel from various points around the State and used lunch as an opportunity to become reacquainted with each other a month after meeting for the first time in Cedar Key. After lunch, Laila Racevskis welcomed the NRLI group to Punta Gorda and prompted us to reflect on that first session including our initial impressions of the differences between Cedar Key and Punta Gorda. She also introduced us to Candy Kaswinkel, a key behind the scenes member of the NRLI Project team, and Charlie Vavrina, the District Extension Director for SW Florida REC, UF. A review of the agenda concluded the Introduction/Overview and the second session was underway.

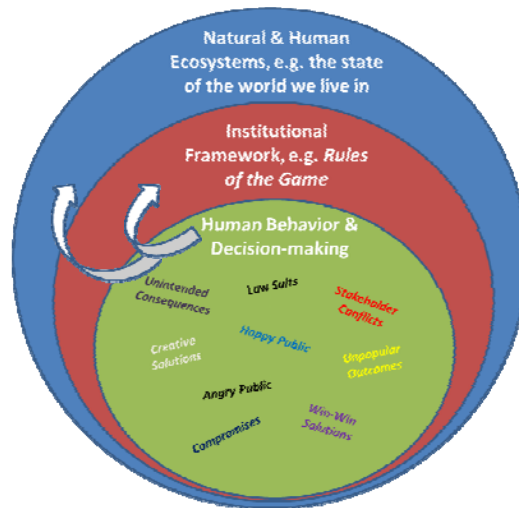
Guiding Questions for Natural Resource Conflict Management

1. *Why do natural resource conflicts arise?*
2. *How do they manifest themselves?*
3. *Who are the actors?*
4. *In what ways can the conflicts be managed?*
5. *What is needed to effectively manage natural resource conflicts?*

NRLI believes that we can all be more effective participants and leaders in this process of NRDM if we better understand the factors that influence human behavior and find more effective ways of working together through PDM approaches



THE NRLI FRAMEWORK



To situate the session within the overall NRLI approach to capacity-building, Laila Racevskis introduced what she called the NRLI Conceptual Framework. The framework is a series of concentric circles that represent a hierarchy in which the largest scale is the “Natural and Human Ecosystems” (i.e., state of the world we live in), within which is nested the “Institutional Framework”, the “rules of the game” that govern those systems. Within the Institutional Framework circle lies the third level, “Human Behavior and Decision-making”. This third level is where the NRLI focus lies; because understanding the factors that influence these behaviors and decisions can make us more effective participants

and leaders.

To minimize destructive behaviors, the anger, mistrust, and debilitating conflict that often result from disagreements over natural resource management, NRLI advocates “Participatory Decision-making” where group members share responsibility for the process and outcome of decision-making. Laila emphasized how the outcomes of human behavior, both constructive and destructive may feedback and affect both institutional frameworks and the state of ecosystems and natural resources. It was a great introduction to the focus of the Punta Gorda session.

There is no substitute for the wisdom that results from a successful integration of divergent points of view.

Sam Kaner, *The Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making*

Punta Gorda Plans for Change:

A citizen driven planning process

Whitney Gray, Sea Level Rise Coordinator for Florida Sea Grant and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, set the stage for NRRI's Punta Gorda session with a dynamic presentation on "Punta Gorda Plans for Change: a citizen-driven climate change planning process led by SWFPRC and CHNEP". First setting the bigger picture for southwest Florida, Whitney described the establishment of a database of potential climate change effects developed from an extensive literature review and the subsequent efforts to project the impacts of future scenarios of climate change. Changes in three variables were considered – temperature, climate instability, and sea level rise – along with their potential impacts on infrastructure, health, agriculture, forest, water resources, and coastal areas. These initial analyses provided useful information for environmental planning by southwest Florida municipalities. Whitney described how Punta Gorda, a city of ~17,000, was open to the idea of environmental planning, and how as a result a citizen-driven



Above: Whitney Gray speaks with the group regarding the Punta Gorda planning process and the Charlotte Harbor Regional Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment. Photo by Candy Kaswinkel

planning process was initiated in collaboration with the SW Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) and the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Project (CHNEP). Whitney described how a diverse and representative group of citizens gathered over three meetings as they participated in the planning process. After an initial survey of participants and sharing of information from the previous studies, the citizens were led through a series of participatory exercises to determine the most important vulnerabilities. They then brainstormed what could be done (i.e., how Punta Gorda might adapt), and developed a list of priorities in terms of adaptation, including identifying what would not be acceptable. At the final meeting the citizen group was asked to review the draft plan.

To give NRRI Class XII a sense of the participatory process used in the planning exercises done in Punta Gorda, Whitney led the class through a similar exercise in which our goal was to determine the most important features of a vehicle if it were to be bought for NRRI.

EFFECTIVE LISTENING: a core skill

Bruce Delaney and Joy Hazell teamed up to discuss effective or empathic listening, which NRRI identifies as a core skill. Empathic listening is a manner of listening and responding to another person to improve mutual understanding. If done effectively, empathic listening focuses us to listen attentively to others, helps to avoid misunderstandings, encourages individuals to open up and say more, builds trust and can help to mitigate or manage conflict. To practice this skill, we separated into groups of three – speaker, listener, and observer. The roles were switched until everyone had a chance to speak, listen and observe. After each round, the listener and speaker reflected on their experiences and the observer commented on their perceptions of the listener and the conversation. Bruce explained that empathic listening is difficult to do, but that there are a number of approaches that can assist in achieving this core skill. Among these are attend/acknowledge, restate/paraphrase, reflect/mirror, summarize/synthesize, probe, support, check perceptions, and respect pauses. The key phrase, made famous by Stephan Covey is "Seek first to understand, then to be understood"



At Left: NRRI Fellows work together on the simulation of the Punta Gorda Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Photo by Candy Kaswinkel

Touring the City

Day two was focused on learning more about Punta Gorda and its efforts to adapt to the Hurricane Charley and other significant storms; to plan for the future. The day was spent on the ground visiting sites, meeting with stakeholders, and learning more about how issues were framed.

Fieldtrip:



Punta Gorda City Manager, Howard Kunik, leads the Fellows on a historic tour of the city.

NRLI Class XII hopped on the *Green Hibiscus* Trolley and, led by City Manager Howard Kunik, toured the city of Punta Gorda..

Heading first to the historic downtown area, we passed two of 30 large murals around the city that depict key events or people from Punta Gorda's history. We learned about how the city was rebuilt following Hurricane Charley, including how buildings that suffered >50% damage were torn down and rebuilt according to new codes put in place by the City. As part of this rebuilding effort, Howard told us about the efforts to build a Harbor Walk that will one day connect all parts of the city through a pedestrian walkway and linear parks. Information about fund-

ing, limitations to filling commercial and residential spaces, the role of community volunteers, new mitigation efforts to limit flooding, public-private partnerships in city parks and recreational areas (among other topics) provided for a lively discussion during the 2-hour tour. Following the field trip, a small break before lunch enabled NRLI participants to take advantage of the city's free yellow bikes to tour on their own or take a walk or run along the Harbor Walk and visit Fishermen's



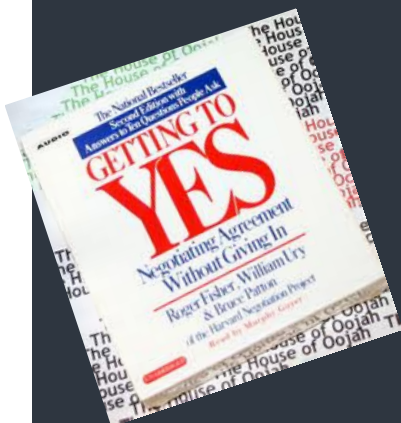
The Green Hibiscus Trolley provided transportation through out the tour.



Above is an example of the new building codes adopted by Punta Gorda as a result of the Climate Change Adaption Plan.

Reading Discussion:

After a delicious dinner at the restaurant in the hotel, the group reconvened, and Bob Progulski led the group discussion of the readings for the month. The room layout remained in the familiar chair circle as Bob used flip charts with main points to prompt discussions of "Getting to Yes" (Ch. 1-2) and a New York Times article called "Why Isn't the Brain Green?" A vibrant discussion followed on both sets of readings. Considerable attention was devoted to the concept of "nudging" and its relation to the framing of issues. NRLI Fellows also spent some time discussing how one can move individuals from positional to principled negotiation.



STAKEHOLDER PANEL DISCUSSION

Laila began the afternoon session by prepping the group for our stakeholder panel discussion. She introduced a version of the Fish Bowl technique in which the panel sits at a table at the front of the room with an empty chair next to it. The audience sits in a semi-circle facing the panel in order to watch the discussion as if it were taking place in a fish bowl. When someone has a question they occupy the chair next to the panel which enables them to have a one-on-one conversation with panel members. Others interested in asking questions walk to the front and stand behind the “questioner’s chair” until it is their turn to take a seat and engage the panel.

The panel consisted of people involved with the Climate Change Adaptation plan:

Dr. Jim Beaver, Planner with the Southwest Regional Planning Commission

Don McCormick, Councilmember, City of Punta Gorda 2008-2010

David Holston, Urban Design Planner, City of Punta Gorda

Nancy Prafke, CEO, TEAM Punta Gorda

The stakeholder panel discussed the process of developing the Climate Change Adaptation Plan, its implementation and their vision for the future of Punta Gorda. The development of the plan was led by Dr. Beaver with assistance from TEAM Punta Gorda. They agreed to approach the issue by talking about the fact that the climate is changing and dealing with what can be done to prepare versus wor-

rying about *why* the climate is changing. This proved to be a good strategy for finding common ground and reducing potential conflict. The process was driven by stakeholders who were given ample opportunity to guide its development. This was done through a variety of “participation games” conducted at the public meetings. The activities allowed the stakeholders to provide input on what was important to them and to rank issues without any one person or group dominating the process. The “Envelope Game” was discussed as a favorite of those involved. In addition to asking the stakeholders what they would like to see done, it gave them the opportunity to list things that they would not like to see done, a unique twist on ranking exercises. The overall process led to great support from the public that might not have been there if the plan had been developed by an outside consultant.

When asked about their vision of Punta Gorda for the future, the panelist discussed embracing New Urbanization ideals where buildings are designed for commercial use on the ground floor and residential space above, keeping citizens engaged and attracting “a younger demographic”. It is believed that programs such as the “Ring Around the City” initiative) which includes the Harbor Walk) and continued efforts to reduce car



Scott Johns leads the Stakeholder Panel discussion on Friday afternoon in Punta Gorda. Stakeholders from L to R are Nancy Prafke; David Holston,; Jim Beaver and Don McCormick.

usage by encouraging walking and biking will help attract younger residents.

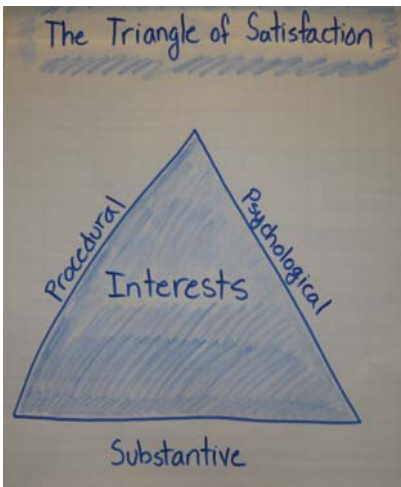
During the subsequent panel debrief session after the stakeholders had left, Fellows discussed the “Fish Bowl” technique and made observations about what was said by panel members. In general the Fish Bowl technique was liked by most because it provided a more balanced, intimate conversation than conventional panels and made you think before going up to ask a questions. On the downside it was noted that having to walk through the middle of the circle to go up front seemed a bit distracting while the line behind the person asking questions made the person asking a question feel hurried at times. Discussion about the content of the discussion included observations that city planning became a technical issue without much conflict due to efforts to seek common ground and that the main driver for the plan was maintenance of a high quality of life; many people in Punta Gorda come from other areas and are secure in their ability to meet basic needs such as food and shelter.

Stakeholder Positions and Interests/Situation Assessment

Jon Dain started Saturday morning by facilitating a discussion about “stakeholders”. The group discussed that a stakeholder is anyone that can impact, can be impacted by, or has expertise in a particular issue. It is important to accurately identify stakeholders in a given initiative in order to help generate sustainable ideas and get perspective on the issues. Effective stakeholder involvement also builds ownership, reduces polarization, and helps prevent stakeholder pushback down the road. Jon used the example of planning a wedding to remind us that we often do stakeholder analyses even if we do not call it that.



Jon Dain teaches the concept of Stakeholder Positions and Interests and how to identify at the Saturday session.



A visual depiction of the Triangle of Satisfaction.

After Positions and Interests were defined as “what stakeholders want and why they want it”, respectively, a tool called the Triangle of Satisfaction (CDR Associates) was introduced. The Triangle of Satisfaction is to illustrate how three types of issues must be considered to satisfactorily address

someone’s interests. These three types of interests include: 1) Substantive—the tangible issue, 2) Procedural—the process for interacting and communicating, and 3) Psychological—how we want to feel and be treated.

To practice assessing interests of stakeholders, we once again split into small groups. Each group was asked to choose a stakeholder in the Punta Gorda Climate Change Adaptation Plan and from their perspective fill out a Situational Analysis/Assessment Matrix that helped them consider that stakeholder’s positions, interests, power, likelihood of engagement, and history of interaction with other stakeholders. After discussing each group’s

practice matrix, the each Fellow was assigned to fill out a matrix for their practicum project.

ISSUE FRAMING



Following the stakeholder panel, Bruce and Paul introduced the concept of issue framing. The began by noting that we frame issues all the time in order to focus our messages and produce predictable responses.

Following this introduction, Fellows were split into four groups to work through an issue framing exercise. Groups were assigned one of two situations (Buying iPads for state employees or dealing with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill) with instructions to frame the situation from the perspective of opposing sides. Each group was then given a chance to present their issue in the way they chose to frame it, providing the class with an opportunity to see how framing changed the way issues are perceived.

In the discussion that followed Fellows noted how it is often hard to frame an issue for a side you do not personally support and how framing is often done to evoke emotions. It was also discussed that how you frame an issue has ethical implications, and how it can be either a good way to find common ground or a way to lose credibility depending on how it is done.

Debrief:

Maria Merrill led the session's debrief segment. Maria prepared a slideshow of pictures taken during the session and used it to spark brief conversations about the things we had seen and done. She then had each Fellow draw a colored card from a bag.



Each color represented a topic such as “What will you take back to your job from this session?” or “What new tool did you learn this session?” Each person wrote one item to fit their topic on their card. Each color group then got together and recorded their items on a flip chart and presented to the full group.

Feedback:

Earlier in the morning the Fellows responsible for the Feedback Panel handed out index cards and instructed everyone to write one positive comment or one suggested improvement on each card as thoughts occurred to them throughout the morning. After providing a few final minutes to fill out cards before beginning the actual feedback activity, small groups were formed and asked to sit in circles. Each person was instructed to select their most important positive and most important suggestion card and place the rest of their cards on the floor in the middle of the circle. Each person could then trade the card in their hand for any others they now saw on the floor. After everyone had selected their final two cards, one positive and one suggestion, they returned to their seats. At this point we were given instructions to trade cards with someone in the overall group...and then to do it again. The result was that everyone had in their hands one positive and one suggestion card that was not their own. At that point everyone took turns presenting the cards they held in their hand. This proved to be a good way to provide positive feedback and constructive suggestions for improvement in an anonymous and non-threatening way.

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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.