

## **Aligning Efforts to Cooperatively Conserve Endangered Species**

### PRACTICUM ABSTRACT

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Clasping warea, *Warea amplexifolia* (Nutt.) Nutt., is a federally endangered annual wildflower endemic to sandhill habitat in Central Florida. The Natural Resources Leadership Institute (NRLI) Class XXI Clasping Warea Group (Project Team) identified a population of this rare plant in an unincorporated community in Marion County, Florida near Ocklawaha. This population is largely undocumented, facing many challenges associated with low community awareness, insufficient habitat management (lack of prescribed fire) and ongoing development resulting in loss of habitat. Past and present conservation efforts by government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, landowners, and residents have lacked strategy and effective coordination. The Project Team identified, contacted, and invited multiple stakeholder groups to meet as a collective on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, and discuss goals, known strategies, potential strategies, challenges, future efforts, and available resources. Techniques for organizing this effort included use of the Situation Assessment Matrix, phone interviews and questionnaires, empathetic listening, issue framing, and the circle of conflict. Many process design formats were built into the meeting agenda including presentations, structured go-arounds, listing activities, categorizing, prioritizing ideas, brainstorming and open discussion. These provided a space where attendees felt free to provide input, advance individual thinking, make decisions and empower themselves to collaboratively initiate recovery efforts at the local level. The use of NRLI techniques observed and learned during the 2021-2022 training allowed for a successful meeting that reinvigorated a shared desire, with all parties largely reaching consensus regarding plans for combining efforts, funding, and expertise in support of more collaborative, effective management moving forward.