

## Lessons in Communication

Amanda, Dan N, Tommy

Vertical communication is often a hurdle in large organizations that are spread across a large landscape. Communication through a chain of command is key to sharing a unified agency message, collaborative problem solving, and maintaining a positive work environment. This practicum focused on obtaining feedback on positive and challenging communication scenarios within the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) with the intention to use the information to improve overall communication. Employees with various job responsibilities and supervisory duties, time within the agency, and backgrounds were selected from the Division of Law Enforcement and the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute to partake in discussions about their experience with communication within FWC.

Hiring, and promoting, leaders with trainings or tools to handle a variety of communication scenarios and a leader who was visible to their team members consistently were discussed as tactics to create positive change in communication. Specific positive examples were leaders that took the time to have small group or individual check-ins and were able to explain 'the why' when giving direction. Challenges that are faced were the extended time period needed to move communication through a chain-of-command, leaders having to convey messages to large groups of personnel across the entire state, and the emphasis placed on academic accomplishment when communicating important information. Using this information, we are going to plan an in-person workshop to work on skills like framing, finding common ground, and empathic listening in hopes to improve the effectiveness of communication within FWC.