



Business in the Springs Heartland

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The Issue: Recreation and Springs Protection

- Learn from business owners and managers whose livelihoods are dependent on the rivers and springs.
- Engage businesses in springs and manatee protection, outreach, and education.
- Foster relationships between businesses.
- Facilitate conversations about protecting the waterways.
- Discuss stewardship opportunities and ecosystem needs.





Stakeholders

- Private business owners/managers
 - Recreational outfitters
 - Campgrounds
 - Marinas
 - Dive shops
- Tourism boards

Consider for the future:

- Local government
- Realtors and developers
- Students



RE: Parking for focus group tomorrow

info@yellowjacketrvresort.com
To: Lindsey Pavao

You replied to this message on 3/27/2024 2:55 PM.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization.

NOT FOR US

Yellow Jacket RV Resort
55 SE 593rd Ave.
Okeechobee, FL 33601

352-542-8385
Website: yellowjacketrvresort.com

From: Lindsey Pavao <lpavao@alachuacounty.us>
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 2:34 PM
To: Lindsey Pavao <lpavao@alachuacounty.us>
Subject: Parking for focus group tomorrow
Importance: High

Hello!!!

Looking forward to the focus group tomorrow! Please




BUSINESS IN THE SPRINGS HEARTLAND

A Focus-Group

A focus-group for business owners and managers hosted by fellows from the University of Florida Natural Resource Leadership Institute.

Snacks and swag provided! Enjoy mingling at the food trucks after!

GOALS

- Opportunity to share and learn from business owners/managers regarding springs and rivers
- Networking among business associates
- Guest speaker

EVENT DETAILS

Date and Time:
Thursday, March 28th
3-5:30pm

Location:
The Collective: Food Yard and Garden
293 SW Bryant Ave
Fort White, FL 32038



FLORIDA
NATURAL RESOURCES
LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Interview Results

What are some of the Biggest Issues Facing the Rivers and Springs?



Things businesses and patrons are doing for natural resources:

- Sharing manatee sightings
- Divers documenting spring conditions with pictures over time
- Scientific studies on springs
- Paddlers cleaning up trash
- Businesses wanting to plant vegetation and attract wildlife
- Informing the public through pamphlets, signage, instruction, and safety briefings
- Involvement with non-profit work
- Springs improvement projects and government collaboration
- Coral restoration

Meeting Time!



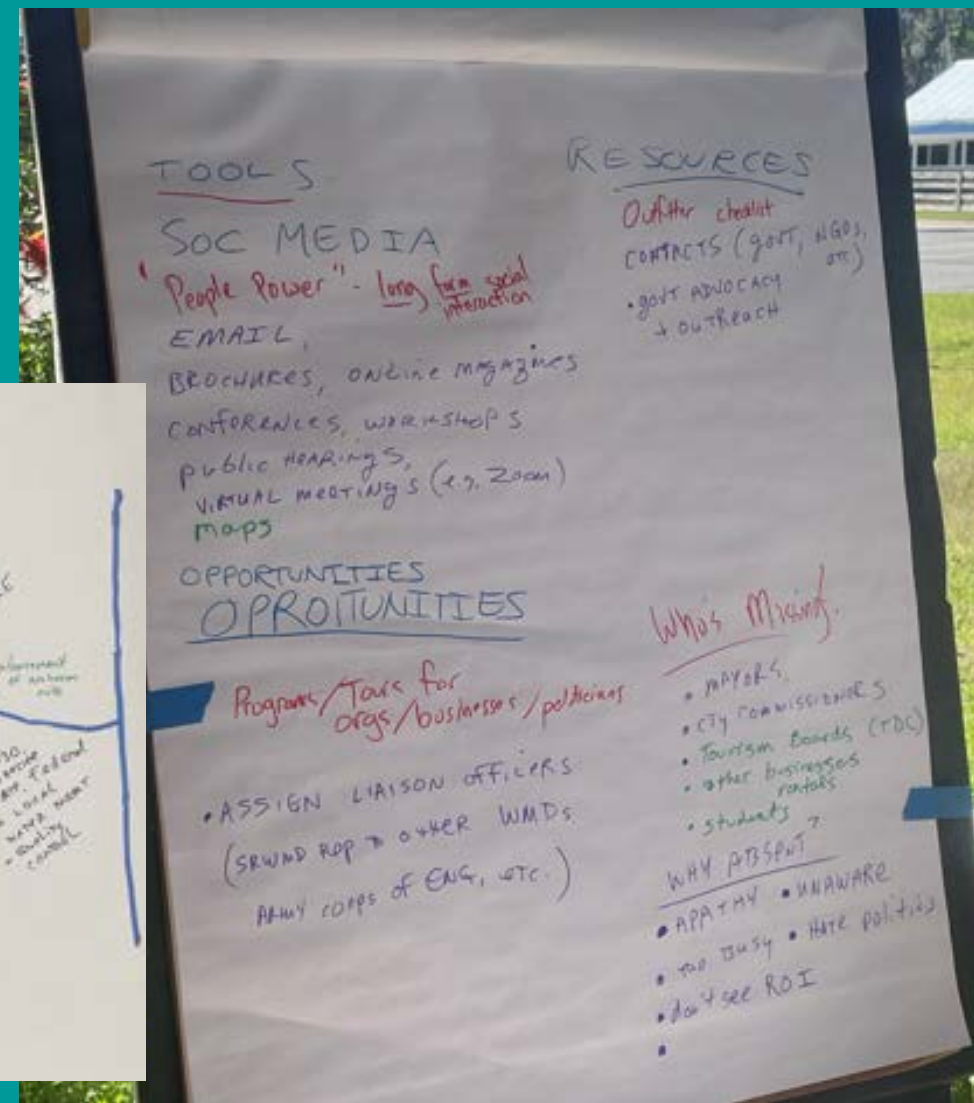
Techniques

- Pre-meeting interviews
- Flyer and RSVP
- Cofacilitation
- Agenda
- Map icebreaker
- Group norms
- Flipcharts
- Guest speaker
- Projector
- Microphone
- Timeline
- Printed survey result graphics
- Small group flip chart brainstorming
- Neutral meeting space
- Snacks
- Swag
- Exit surveys
- Follow-up email





- Personal recounts on timeline
- Future: smart agriculture, collaborating between governments
- Brainstorming how to move forward



Lessons Learned

- NRI tools and activities were well received, all participants highly engaged
- Businesses want to help protect natural resources!
- Difficulty with attendance
- Ample time for preparation was helpful
- Need to remain flexible and adapt
- Map icebreaker and timeline = same function
- Time management
- Venue



Exit Surveys

1. Can you share something that you especially enjoyed during the focus group meeting?

I enjoyed hearing about the experiences and expertise of other people that are concerned about the health of FL's waterways.

1. Can you share something that you especially enjoyed during the focus group meeting?

free flowing discussion

4. Would you like to elaborate on any of the responses above?

Stephanie, Lindsay + Robby are very skillful facilitators. They were very effective at eliciting feedback and participation.

6. Looking back, what did you (personally) get out of your experience participating in this focus group?

Relationships that will propel better business

7. Looking ahead, what do you hope will emerge from this effort?

collaboration on springs conservation

7. Looking ahead, what do you hope will emerge from this effort?

A collaborative network for best practices + resources

8. What was missing from our discussions?

More faces! We should find a way to make this seem more fun/rewarding + less input of time. It wasn't any work, but it seemed like it might be.

Next Steps

- Lindsey will continue the effort
 - During business offseason
 - Paddling trip w/ tour guide
 - Grant funding for signage/educational materials
 - Continued collaboration with SRWMD?
 - Manatee sighting network involvement
 - Pursue involvement of tourism boards
 - Alternate between zoom and in-person to elicit more participation
- Work on time management
- Better explain goals and tangible benefits for better participation
- Continue to use NRLI tools for engagement
- Seek participation from as many voices as possible
- Collaboration is key to progress!





QUESTIONS?