

# COST SHARE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Florida Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services

Office of Agricultural Water Policy

Chris Denmark

NRLI Class XXIII





# Let's Talk About Ag BMPs

What is Cost  
Share?

*NRLI-fication*

OAWP GENERAL COST  
SHARE PROGRAM

Identify Challenges

Steps toward  
Change

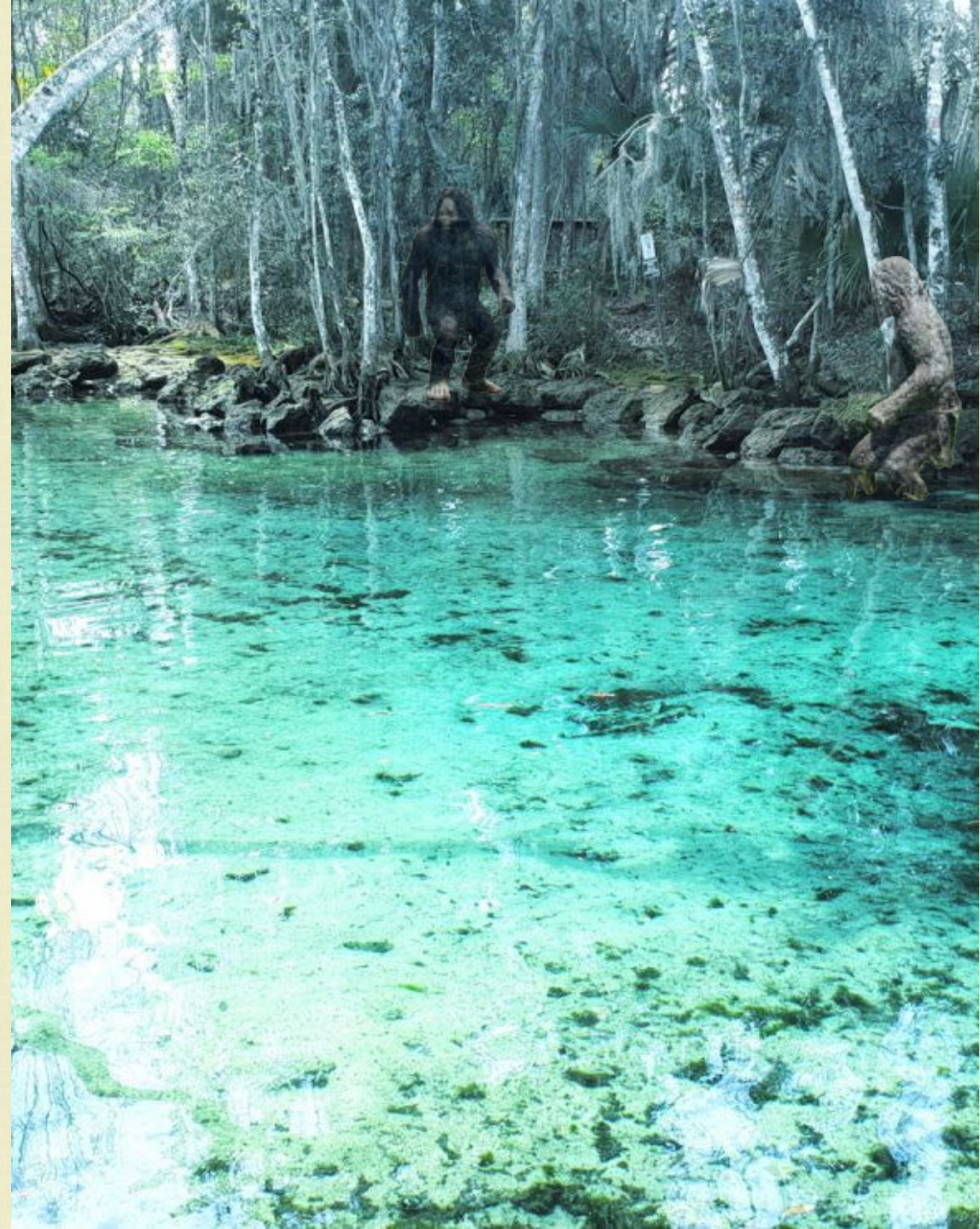
Need for  
Assessment

# WHAT IS COST SHARE?

Enhances implementation of BMP practices where they have the greatest impact on water quality.

Makes innovative agricultural practices more affordable for producers

Producers can meet water quality goals while remaining financially viable.



# Common Cost Share Projects

- Precision Nutrient Application Equipment
- Cover crops to benefit soil health
- Water treatment projects on agricultural land
- Irrigation upgrades
- Automate irrigation and nutrient application
- Reduce movement of nutrients offsite





# CHALLENGES

- STATEWIDE - GREAT DIVERSITY IN CROPS
- SOUTH FLORIDA – SURFACE WATER
  - Phosphorus issues
  - Lake Okeechobee & Everglades Restoration
- NORTH FLORIDA – GROUNDWATER
  - Nitrogen issues
  - Adopted later



# ASSESSMENT

## **Programatic:**

- Challenges of regional project types
- Application and Approval process is cumbersome

## **Communication:**

- New staff unfamiliar with program guidelines
- Limited understanding of eligible equipment and projects
- Communication challenges between management, Field Staff and producers

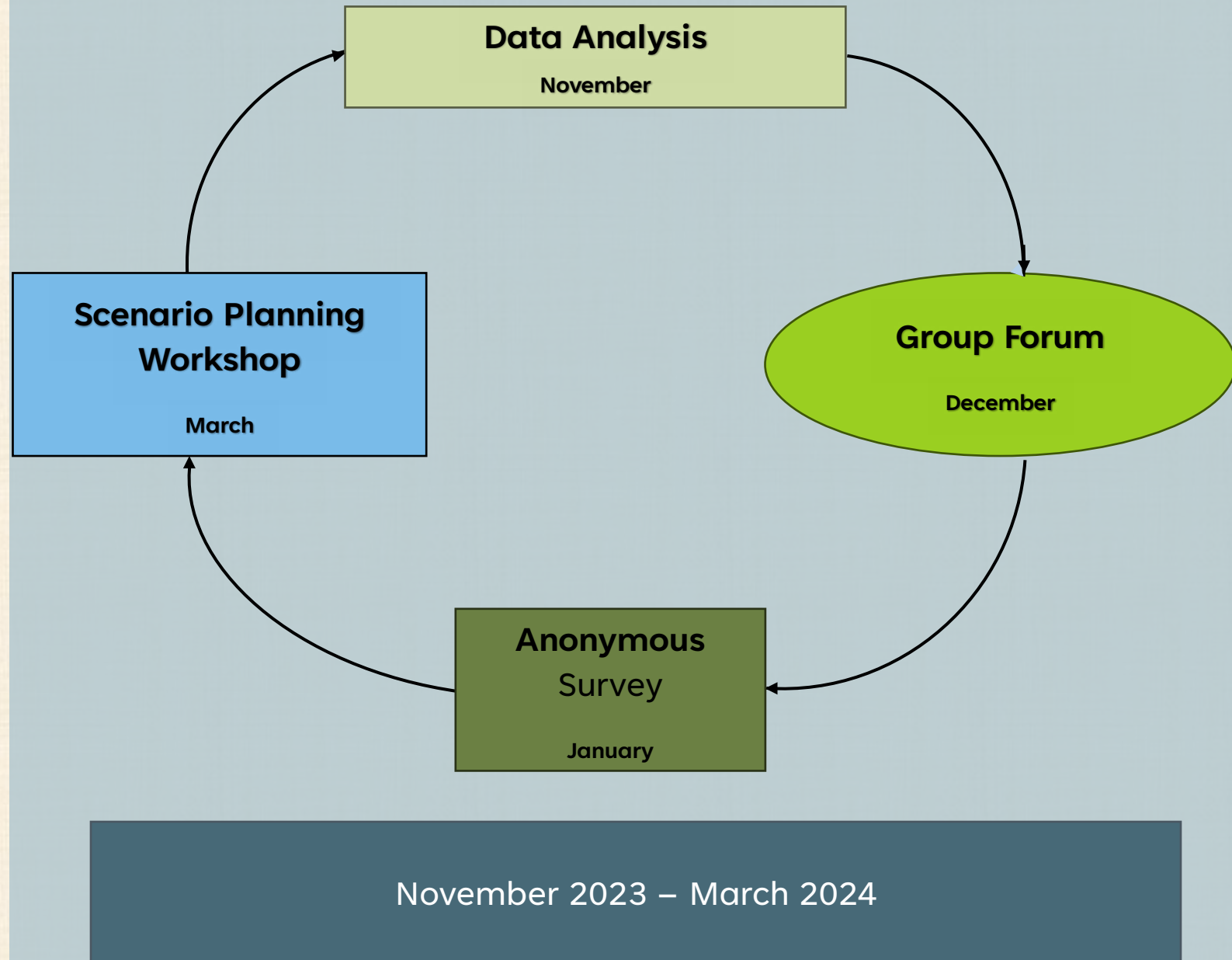
# BUILDING TRUST

- Interactive conversations during staff meetings
- Group input exercises
- One-on-one discussions
- Develop surveys
- Scenario Planning Exercise



DYNAMIC  
INTEGRATION OF  
MULTIPLE  
FACILITATION  
FORMATS

Over five months,  
multiple formats were  
used to facilitate three  
events culminating in  
Scenario Planning



## PREPARATION AND ANALYSIS

Preliminary meetings  
were held with  
producers, Field Staff  
and OAWP Leadership.



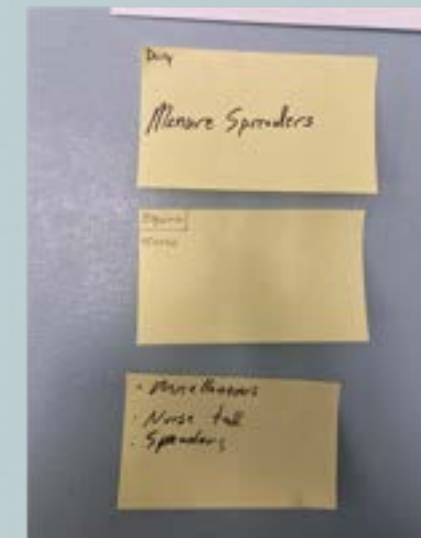
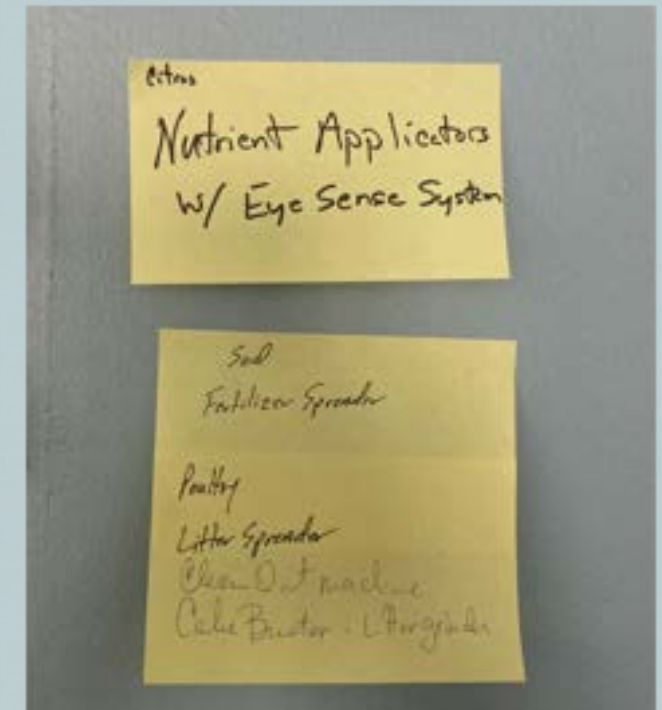
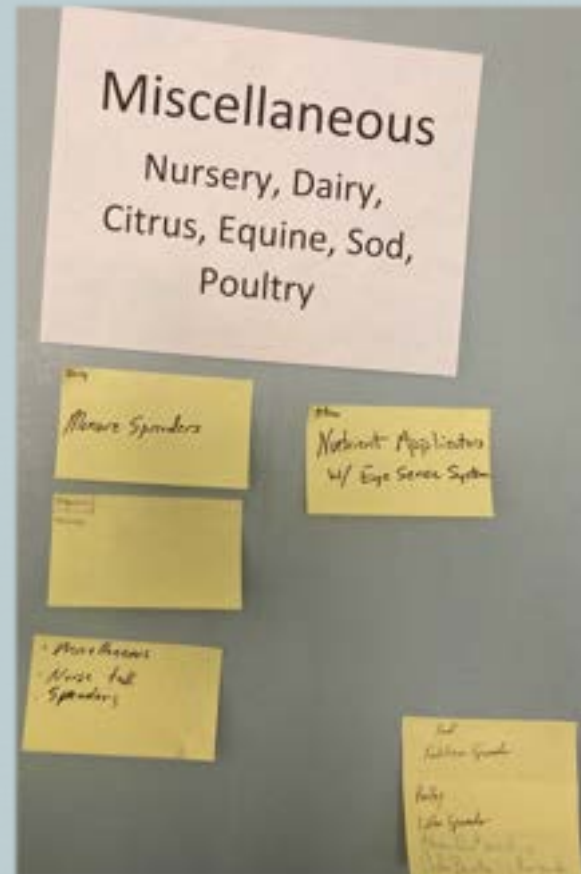
# GROUP FORUM FACILITATION

## Integrated Concepts:

- Ice Breaker
- Set Group Norms
- “No Judge Zone”
- Post-It Notes

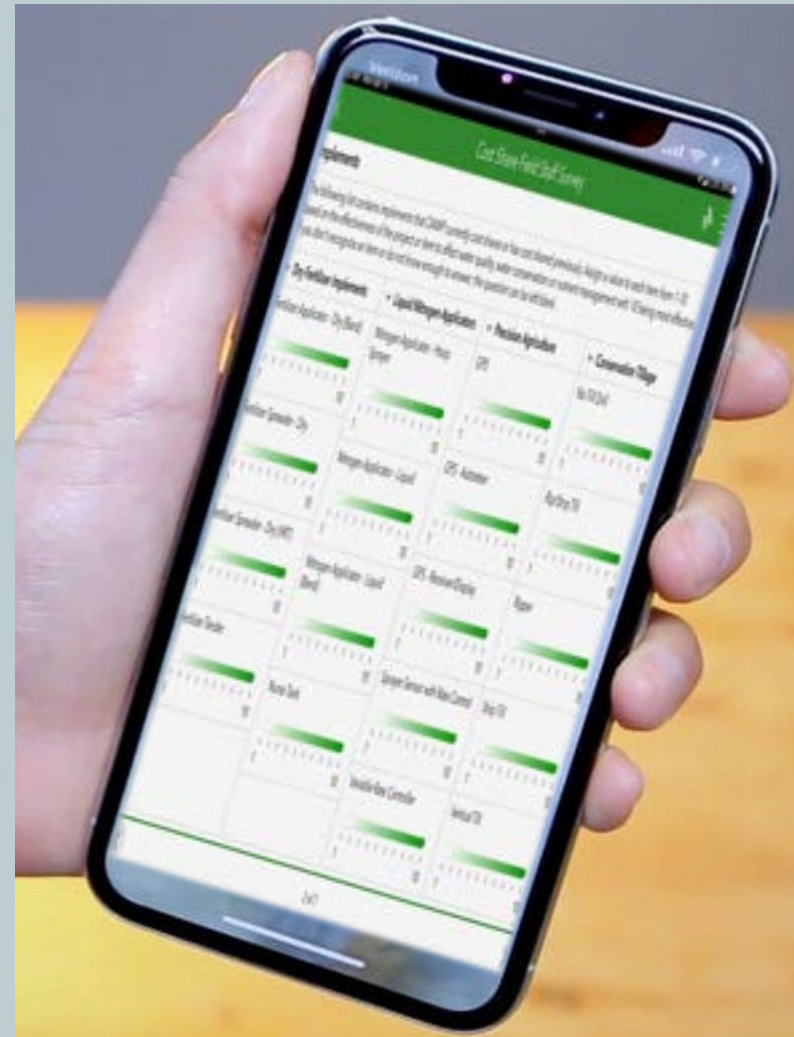
## Experience:

- Open Dialogue
- Group Memory
- Paraphrased to draw out more details



# ANONYMOUS SURVEY

OAWP's GIS Team  
created an in-depth  
survey accessible by  
iPhone or iPad to rank  
current project types.



Survey available via i-Phone or i-Pad

# ANONYMOUS SURVEY

Integrated Concepts:

Building Trust

Anonymous comments

Requesting Feedback

Experience:

Took out the group  
tendency to defer to  
Person-in-Charge



**Field Staff filling survey on i-Pad**

## SCENARIO PLANNING

A group forum was held in March to elevate the Cost Share program to a higher level.

The group worked in the Green-Blue-Yellow world scenario method regarding the OAWP cost share program.



# SCENARIO PLANNING

Buy-in was necessary to  
get participation

Experience:  
Used personal and  
shared experience to  
build a sense of realism  
to the process



## SCENARIO PLANNING

### Integrated Concept:

Small groups were created with a mix of “seasoned” and new staff in each group.

### Experience:

Facilitated established practices and allowed for teachable moments.



# SCENARIO PLANNING

Integrated Concept:

Flip Charts

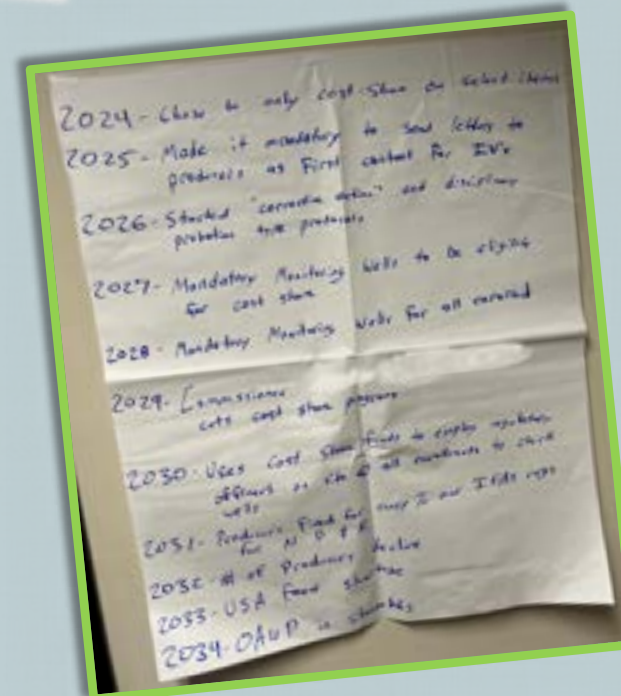
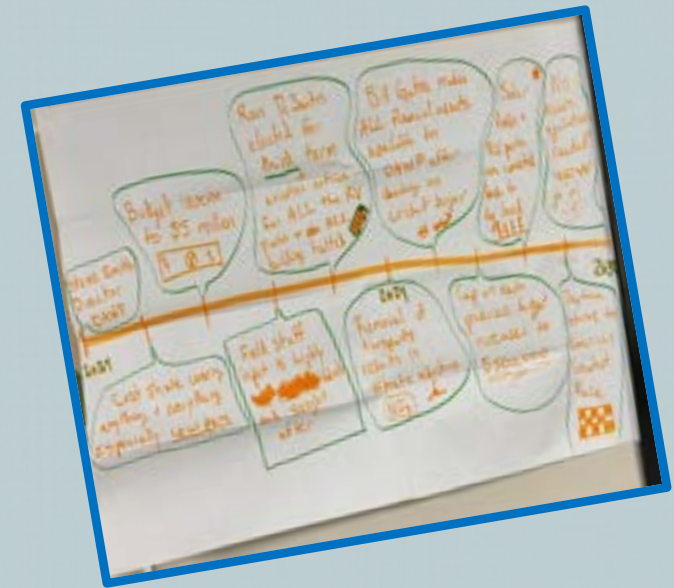
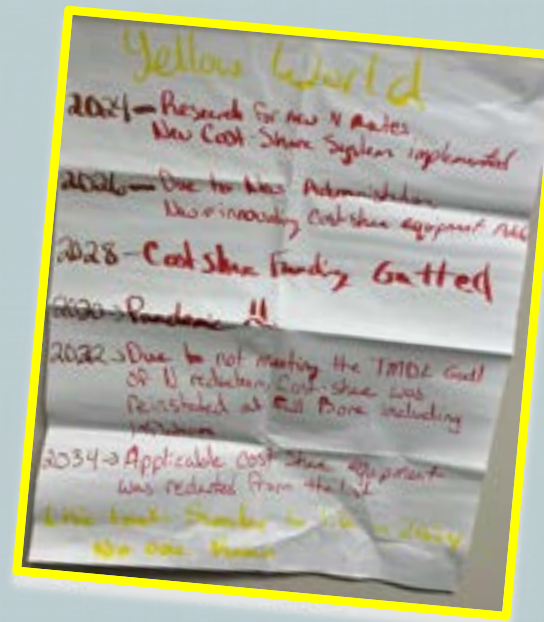
Real-World Experience

Rotating through groups

Experience:

Real-World experience  
lends credibility to the  
process.

Canned War Plans



# FEEDBACK

## Integrated Concept: Individual Request

### Experience:

It was important that I get feedback. Negative or critical feedback is an important step in getting to the root of issues. Once someone is comfortable with that, I have gained trust.

Re: Feedback Request - Scenario Planning



To: Denmark, Chris  
You replied to this message on 4/15/2024 3:07 PM.

Positives:  
-Collaboration amongst peers to share individual ideas  
-group resolutions  
-relatively quick problem solving decided by the group.

Cons: None.

“That wasn’t as bad as I thought it would be.”

“Yeah, it was actually kinda fun!”

Feedback--> Scenario Planning



To: Denmark, Chris  
You replied to this message on 4/15/2024 3:08 PM.

Hi Chris,

I don't really have much feedback for you but here's what I came up with:

- I liked the change of pace and getting to engage with other folks that I might not normally get the chance to.
- I thought it was a shame online folks couldn't participate but also don't know if I have a great solution for that → maybe they could break off and have their own group discussion online? Wouldn't have really worked for this exercise but maybe for future ones that could work.

Overall, I thought having an activity kept everyone more engaged and willing to chat about things honestly since they felt more comfortable. I wasn't around yet for the cost share exercise so no feedback for you there!

Best,

Environmental Specialist II  
Office of Agriculture Water Policy  
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

RE: Feedback requested - Cost Share exercise last November



To: Denmark, Chris  
You replied to this message on 4/15/2024 3:07 PM.

Hey Chris,

I vaguely remember the cost share survey from January, but I thought the meeting in November was helpful. Overall, I find it beneficial to have discussions in these types of settings.

Pros:

- Provided an opportunity for field staff to collaborate with upper management and determine what cost share projects would benefit producers while working towards accomplishing the goals of the Department.

Suggestions:

- If feasible, it would be helpful to have a list of items/projects that we can cost share on. This would be solely for field staff to use as a reference so that we can have answers ready for when the producers have questions.

Conservation Technician

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Office of Agricultural Water Policy

RE: Feedback requested - Cost Share exercise last November



To: Denmark, Chris  
You replied to this message on 4/15/2024 3:36 AM.

Really enjoyed the survey about how field staff weighted cost share items in regard to demand by producers and how they impact the environment. Also appreciated when we were able to present items and argue for said items that we either need to continue cost share on or try to have them brought into the program. Very much appreciate being heard by you and others on what we think needs to happen in our regions.

Thank you sir,

CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN  
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## INTEGRATION OF MULTIPLE FACILITATION FORMATS

Over five months,  
multiple staff were  
engaged to facilitate  
three events.

| Stakeholders | OAWP<br>Field Staff | Soil and Water<br>Conservation<br>District<br>Technicians | Mobile<br>Irrigation<br>Laboratory<br>Technicians |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Participants | 46                  | 22                                                        | 3                                                 |

| Timeline                  | December                                    | January             | March                |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Engagements<br>and Events | Group Forum and<br>Individual<br>discussion | Anonymous<br>Survey | Scenario<br>Planning |



# OUTCOME

- More comfortable asking questions/giving feedback
- Less likely to bring projects that will be rejected
- Well-thought plans - unsolicited

## FINAL TIPS & TAKEAWAYS



### Personal Goal

To continue learning and expanding skills as a facilitator for those who depend on me.

- I wish I could have set an agenda as well as this worked out. I struggled with that.
- Better facilitation creates a more efficient meeting and fosters better work from staff
- Reading the book AFTER the sessions makes much more sense. Homework is backward!
- Encouraged me to enlist colleagues to listen & provide feedback

# THANK YOU

**Chris Denmark**

FDACS

Office of Agricultural Water Policy

Natural Resources Leadership Institute

Class XXIII

