



Building Skills to Preserve Florida's Shores and Beaches: The Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute

Jonathan Dain, NRLI Director

Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association
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Why was NRLI founded?

- We are all dependent on Florida's natural resources.
- Decisions about natural resources involve complex sets of issues and stakeholders.
- Expensive and time consuming disputes often emerge over issues such as endangered species, land use, **coastal** and marine resources, and water quality and quantity.
- Effective leadership in managing such issues requires a specialized set of skills, tools, and strategies to build trust and promote collaboration among competing interests.



The need

In recognition of the need for leaders who can effectively build trust and promote collaboration among competing interests, the Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute was founded in 1998.

NRLI brings together professionals from sectors that impact or are impacted by natural resource issues to develop the skills required to work towards collaborative solutions.



What is NRLI?

- An innovative training program for natural resource management professionals
 - Conflict management
 - Collaborative leadership
 - Public engagement
 - Communication and leadership
- A UF/IFAS Extension program
- A center of expertise
 - Source of information, training, and conflict management
 - Collaborative links with other UF Centers and Institutes
- A network of rising and established leaders



NRLI Project Team

- **Jonathan Dain**, Director, Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute; Food and Resource Economics Department, Latin American Studies. Fellow, Florida Climate Institute
- **Bruce Delaney**, Director, Agricultural Mediation Program, UF/IFAS; former elected official
- **Jessica Ireland**, Program Coordinator, Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute
- **Paul Monaghan**, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Education and Communication
- **Joy Hazell**, Sea Grant Extension Agent, UF/IFAS, Lee County

NRLI Vision

NRLI seeks to impact decision making in Florida by creating a network of professionals prepared to effectively address natural resource issues through conflict management and collaborative leadership.



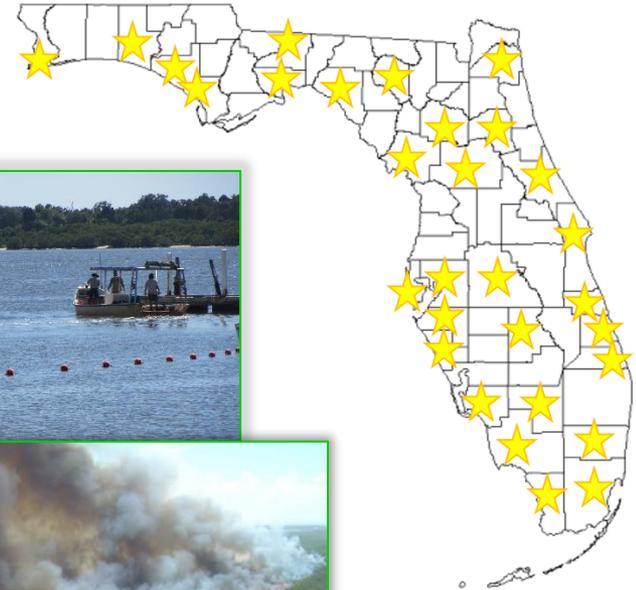
How does it work?

- 8 month professional development program
- Intensive three-day sessions held in different parts of the state, focused on contentious natural resource issues.
- Each session includes:
 - immersion in the issue/topic through first-hand experience with the resource;
 - engagement with stakeholders from diverse institutions/organizations and perspectives; and
 - experiential training in skills, concepts, tools, and strategies related to collaborative decision making, conflict management, communication, and negotiation.



NRLI sessions and topics

- Space coast in transition
- Sea level rise
- Aquifer withdrawal & springs health
- Wildland/urban interface
- Endangered species & recreation
- Agriculture south of lake Okeechobee
- Spring health/endangered springs



Impacts: Who we've trained

- **NRLI has trained over 255 Fellows** from 95 organizations:
 - Federal government:
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - U.S.D.A. Forest Service
 - USFWS
 - State government:
 - FWC
 - FDACS
 - WMDs
 - Local government
 - Non-governmental organizations
 - Community organizations
 - Agriculture
 - Engineering, law, and consulting
 - Academia
 - Extension



NRLI Class XV

- Fellows from:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (FDACS)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

Private Consultant – Landscape Architecture

Polk County Local Government

Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida

Town of Sewell's Point Local Government

UF/IFAS Manatee County Extension Office (Florida Sea Grant)

Cindale Farms (Dairy)

St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD)

Florida Farm Bureau Federation (FFBF)

University of Florida Southeast Climate Consortium (SECC)

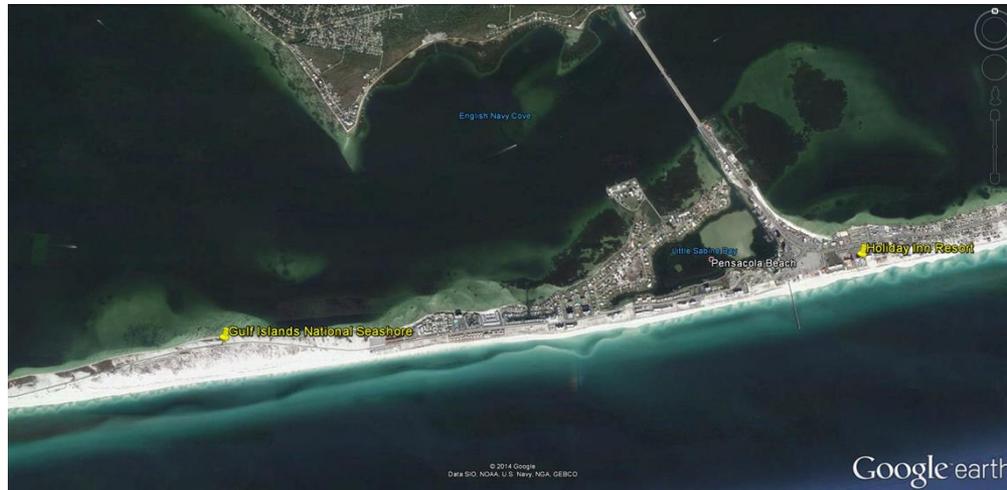
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Case Study: Santa Rosa Island

“Beaches, hurricanes, and sea level rise”

The NRLI five-pronged approach: typical session

1. See/experience the resource
2. Hear from recognized experts (plus readings and briefing guide)
3. Meet stakeholders with different perspectives
4. Experiential training in skills, concepts, and strategies
5. Debrief with your cohort (diverse sectors)



See/experience the resource

- Field trip:
 - Santa Rosa Island
 - Beach ecology & origins
 - Beach development
 - Hurricanes - 1906, 1916, 1926, 1955 [Erin, Opal], 1998 [George], 2004 [Ivan] 2005 [Dennis], ??
 - Threats and needs (2003 - 1st Beach nourishment)
 - Gulf Islands National Sea Shore
 - Beloved, well-visited fort
 - Access by road and boat
 - Next wash-out, no more road
 - \$5.9 million plan to extend the life of the road and maintain public access.



Hear from recognized experts

- Dr. Klaus Meyer Arendt (Dept. of Env. Studies, UWF)



- Dan Brown (Superintendent, Gulf Islands Nat'l Seashore)



Meet stakeholders with different perspectives

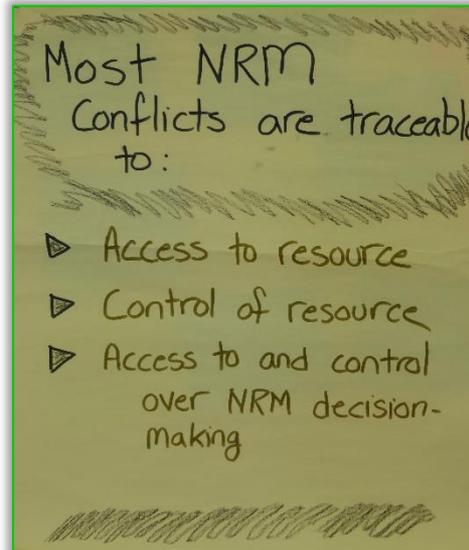
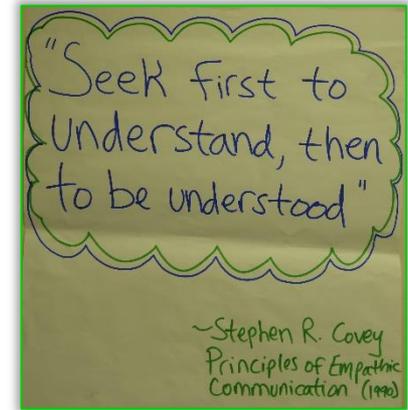
Stakeholder panel discussion

- Christian Wagley, Principal, **Sustainable Town Concepts**
- Rick O’Conner, Sea Grant **Extension Agent** Escambia County
- Paolo Ghio, Dir. of Developmental Services, **Santa Rosa Island Authority**
- Kimberly Blair, Beach/environment reporter, **Pensacola News Journal**
- Beverly McCay, General Manager, **Holiday Inn Express** Pensacola Beach
- Terry Wells, Special Projects & Enforcement Branch, **USACOE**
- Cliff Payne, Special Projects and Permitting Branch, **USACOE**



Experiential training in skills, concepts, & strategies

- Effective listening
- Negotiation: Positions vs. Interests
- Issue Framing
- Situation and Stakeholder Assessment
- Practicum work



Debrief with diverse cohort

Comparing your interpretations with those of others



Why should you care?

- Shore and beach preservation involves multiple sets of stakeholders with diverse and competing interests. Effective stakeholder engagement can be challenging.
- Permitting and rule-making are scientific and political processes impacted by values and legal frameworks.
- We live in a time of polarizing debates and lawsuits—there are alternative ways to address differences!
- *A specialized set of skills and strategies is required to effectively address the complex mix of interests, values, relationships, and science needed for shore and beach preservation efforts.*
- NRLI is building a network of professionals across sectors and populations who are prepared to move from confrontation to collaborative problem-solving.

Thank you!

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