



# Building a Natural Resource Issues and Public Policy Education Program in South Florida



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# Presentation Goals

- To share...
  - Extension agent perspective
  - Challenges of natural resource issues and public policy education
  - “Logic Model” guiding program development and implementation
  - Examples of program activities



# The Challenges

- Natural resource issues facing south Florida are numerous and complex
- The stakes are high - environmentally, economically, and socially
- Stakeholders are diverse and value aspects of natural resources differently
- Management and decision-making is complex and ongoing



# The Challenges

- Limited Resources
  - One multi-county Extension agent (11 counties)
- Many...
  - Natural resource issues
  - Audiences
  - Opportunities for public input
  - Barriers to participation



# Logic Model

INPUT S	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES		
	Activities	Audiences	Initial (Learning)	Inter- mediate (Actions)	Long-Term (conditions)



# Logic Model

OUTCOMES		
Initial (Learning)	Inter-mediate (Actions)	Long-Term (conditions)
Increase <b>AWARENESS</b>	<b>SHARE</b> knowledge	Florida's natural resources are preserved and protected.
Increase <b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>CHANGE</b> behavior	
<b>ASPIRE</b> to...	<b>PARTICIPATE</b>	Improved public policies that reflect society's values.
	<b>LEARN</b> more	

# Selected Activities

- Everglades Citizen Mail Survey and Key Informant Interviews
- Natural Resource Issues Facing South Florida Course
- Loxahatchee River Watershed Science Symposium
- Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Bus Tour



# Everglades Citizen Survey

- Background
  - Not much known about citizen awareness
- Purpose
  - Explore awareness of Everglades issues, efforts, public decision-making processes, and citizen desires to participate
- Audience
  - Knowledgeable informants
  - Citizens



# Everglades Citizen Survey

- Activity
  - Key Informant Interviews (16 1 hour interviews)
  - Citizen Mail Survey
    - Sampling frame of 1,200 households
    - Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade
    - 388 completed survey (39% response rate)
- Impact
  - Will be used for program development
  - Shared with others



# Loxahatchee River Watershed Science Symposium

- Background
  - National Wild and Scenic River
  - Part of Everglades restoration
- Purpose
  - Increase awareness of restoration efforts and research
- Audience
  - Policy makers, natural resource managers, scientists, and stakeholders



# Loxahatchee River Watershed Science Symposium

- Activity
  - Watershed Science Symposium
  - 2 days (free)
  - April 2006
- Impact
  - Over 170 participants
  - 53 responded (~30%)
  - The symposium was above average in meeting learning expectations (70%)
  - Will attend future symposium (94%)



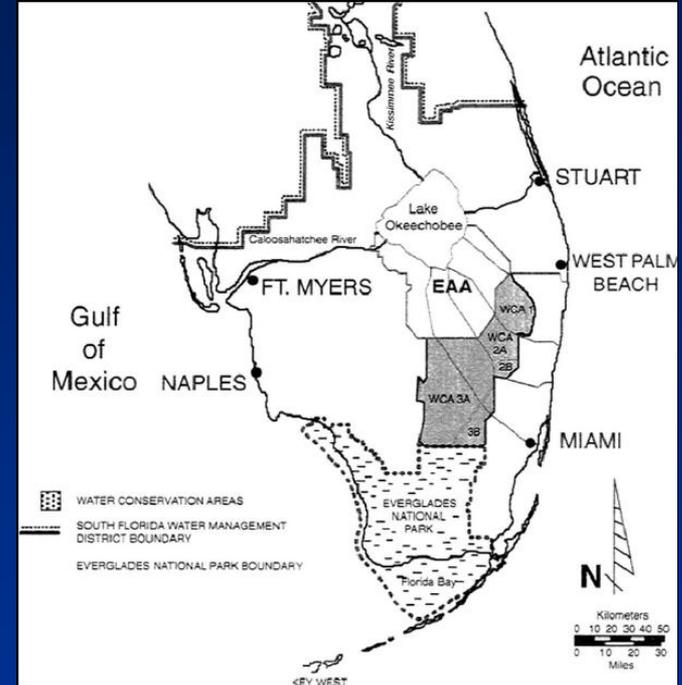
# Natural Resource Issues Facing South Florida Course

- Background
  - Many environmental education opportunities
  - Few address the tough management issues
- Purpose
  - Increase understanding of natural resources issues
  - Inspire participants to learn more and participate
- Audience
  - Citizens



# Natural Resource Issues Facing South Florida Course

- Activity
  - Continuing education
  - One topic per week
    - Overview of South Florida
    - Everglades Restoration
    - Lake Okeechobee
    - Exotic Invasive Species
    - Sustainable Agriculture
    - Endangered Species



# Natural Resource Issues Facing South Florida Course

- Impact
  - 15 citizens participated
  - Participants increased their knowledge of all topics covered by at least 20%
  - Greatest knowledge gains during the classes devoted to...
    - Everglades restoration (38% increase)
    - Lake Okeechobee (35% increase)



# Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Bus Tour

- Background
  - Historically part of the Everglades
  - Many stakeholder interested in the future of this area
- Purpose
  - Increase knowledge of agriculture, water management, and stormwater treatment areas
- Audience
  - Citizens



# Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Bus Tour

- Activity
  - Farm visits and presentations
- Impact
  - 41 citizens participated
  - Over 80% strongly agreed they increased knowledge of the economic and environmental importance of the EAA
  - Over 60% agreed they increased knowledge of STAs



# Summary

- A need exists for natural resource issues and public policy education
- There are interested audiences – including local citizens!
- A variety of educational methods are necessary
- A major challenge is moving audiences beyond increases in knowledge to active participation
- Timing is important, and success will take time
- Partnerships are key



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...and others!

