

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

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## ABSTRACT

Water management issues facing South Florida are numerous, complex, and affect the lives of all Floridians. Just two examples include "getting the water right" (quantity and quality) for Everglades restoration and Lake Okeechobee management.

Extension has an opportunity to increase citizen understanding and involvement in water management decisions. However, this is challenging due to the scale and complexity of issues, the large number of diverse stakeholders, and the dynamic nature of water management.

So how does a multi-county Extension agent begin building a natural resource issues and public policy education program? This poster presents the logic model framework guiding program development and implementation. It also highlights four selected activities within the logic model framework emphasizing that the Extension program is truly "more than the sum of its parts."



## LOGIC MODEL

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES		
	Activities	Audiences	Initial (Learning)	Intermediate (Actions)	Long-Term (conditions)
<b>STAFF</b> •Extension Agent •Staff Support  <b>VOLUNTEERS</b> •Advisory Committee •Master Naturalists/Gardeners  <b>MONEY</b> •Salaries •Grants •Registration  <b>PARTNERS</b> •UF/IFAS Colleagues •Non-Governmental Agencies •Government Agencies  <b>TIME</b> <b>MATERIALS</b> <b>EQUIPMENT/TECHNOLOGIES</b>	<b>NEEDS ASSESSMENT</b> • Everglades Citizen Mail Survey/Key Informant Interviews  <b>TEACHING</b> • Florida Master Naturalist Program • Natural Resource Issues Facing South Florida Course • Invited Community Presentations  <b>PLANNING SCIENCE SYMPOSIUMS</b> • Loxahatchee River Watershed Science Symposium • Lake Worth Lagoon • Everglades Restoration and Social Science  <b>TOURS/DEMONSTRATIONS</b> • Everglades Agricultural Area Bus Tour  <b>PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY EVENTS</b> • South Florida Fair/Earth Day/River Fest  <b>VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT</b> <b>DEVELOPING EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS</b> <b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	Interested Citizens  Natural Resource Managers  Local Government Officials  Researchers  Extension Colleagues	Increase <b>AWARENESS</b> of natural resource issues  Increase <b>AWARENESS</b> of stakeholder views  Increase <b>KNOWLEDGE</b> of Florida's natural resources and how they respond to human activity  Increase <b>KNOWLEDGE</b> of how to participate in public decisions  <b>ASPIRE</b> to make a behavior change  <b>ASPIRE</b> to share learning with others  <b>ASPIRE</b> to learn more	<b>SHARE KNOWLEDGE</b> of Florida's natural resources with others  <b>CHANGE BEHAVIOR</b> to protect Florida's natural resources  <b>PARTICIPATE</b> in public decisions impacting natural resources  <b>LEARN MORE</b>  <b>STAKEHOLDER VIEWS CONSIDERED</b> in public decisions	Florida's natural resources are preserved and protected.  Improved public policies that reflect society's values.

## 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
 <p><b>BACKGROUND</b> Before an effective educational program can be developed to increase citizen understanding and involvement in Everglades restoration, there is a need to better understand citizen awareness and knowledge of Everglades issues.</p> <p><b>ACTIVITY</b> Using input from key informants, qualitative data was collected to identify attitudes and opinions of citizen engagement in Everglades restoration. Next, quantitative data collected through a mail survey of residents identified factors shaping awareness of Everglades issues, intergovernmental efforts, public decision-making processes, and citizen desires to participate.</p> <p><b>IMPACT</b> A sampling frame of 1,200 households was compiled from Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade County property and telephone records. Survey results from 388 completed questionnaires, representing a 39% response rate, is currently being summarized.</p>	 <p><b>BACKGROUND</b> There are numerous educational programs and activities that focus on learning about Florida's unique natural resources. However, few address the tough issues facing natural resource managers and the diversity of stakeholder views.</p> <p><b>ACTIVITY</b> In partnership with the Palm Beach Community College, a six week continuing education course was created to provide an opportunity for citizens to explore Everglades restoration, Lake Okeechobee management, invasive exotic species, endangered species, and sustainable agriculture.</p> <p><b>IMPACT</b> A total of 15 citizens participated. Evaluation results (n=11) indicate participants increased their knowledge of all topics covered by at least 20%. The greatest knowledge gains occurred during the classes devoted to Everglades restoration (38% increase) and Lake Okeechobee (35% increase).</p>	 <p><b>BACKGROUND</b> The Loxahatchee River is one of only two federally designated "National Wild and Scenic Rivers" of Florida. It is also part of the larger Everglades restoration effort. Restoration projects aim to increase water flows to the river and improve freshwater habitat.</p> <p><b>ACTIVITY</b> Spearheaded by the Loxahatchee River Watershed Planning Committee, this effort pulled together local partners (including Extension) to organize a free two day symposium consisting of over 30 oral and poster presentations. Participants received updates on restoration projects, research results, and management challenges.</p> <p><b>IMPACT</b> Over 170 individuals participated. Evaluation results (n=53) indicated that the symposium was above average (n=35) in terms of meeting expectations for learning and almost all (n=50) indicated that they would attend a future Symposium.</p>	 <p><b>BACKGROUND</b> The EAA is approximately 700,000 acres. Historically part of the greater Everglades ecosystem, it is one of the most environmentally managed agricultural areas in the nation. The future of this area is of interest to many stakeholders as Florida faces increasing development.</p> <p><b>ACTIVITY</b> An all day bus tour with farm visits and presentations was conducted to increase citizen knowledge of agriculture, the economic and environmental importance of the EAA, and the role of stormwater treatment areas in Everglades Restoration.</p> <p><b>IMPACT</b> A total of 41 citizens participated. Evaluation results (n=40) indicate 84% strongly agreed and 16% agreed they increased their knowledge of the economic and environmental importance of the Everglades Agricultural Area. Over 60% strongly agreed and 31% agreed they increased their knowledge of how constructed wetlands filter water before it reaches the Everglades.</p>



### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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